

## ■ BOOK REVIEWS

**András Róna-Tas and Árpád Berta: West Old Turkic: Turkic loanwords in Hungarian (Turcologica 84).** 2 volumes. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2011. pp 1494.

The appearance of Róna-Tas and Berta's monograph on Old Turkic loanwords in Hungarian is a highly important event in Hungarian Turkology. This monumental work presents the professional audience with all the relevant results on this topic in English attained by Hungarian Turkologists during the past 99 years, since Gombocz's epochal investigation *Die bulgarisch-türkischen Lehnwörter in der ungarischen Sprache*, published in Helsinki in 1912 (see also Benkő 1967–1976; Ligeti 1977–1979; 1986; Benkő 1993–1997, for a detailed annotated bibliography of other works, see Dmitrieva & Agyagási 2001). At the same time, the present work (referred to popularly as “WOT” in the profession) provides solutions for many of the unresolved problems of previous research and opens up fundamentally new perspectives for the phonological, morphological and etymological research on Old Turkic loanwords in Hungarian.

The book comprises the results of ten years of research. In addition to the two authors, László Károly supplied a significant contribution to it after Berta's death in 2008. In the preparatory phases of the work the assistants and Ph.D. students of the Department of Altaic Studies of the University of Szeged and members of the Turkology Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the University of Szeged participated in the research as well. The last phase of the editing was carried out with the involvement of an international panel of consultants who advised on the concept and structure of the work.

Among the unresolved problems of previous research addressed in the work is the question of the identification of the Turkic donor language. Gombocz (1912) argued for the donor language being Bulgar-Turkic on the basis of phonological criteria (rhotacism and lambdacism), which were attested in Volga-Bulgarian inscriptions of the 13th–14th centuries.

Ligeti added another 12 of what he called “Chuvash criteria” (for their summary, see Ligeti 1986), that is, specific phonological changes of the Chuvash language, which is the only descendent of the Volga-Bulgarian language and thus, the only member of the *r*-Turkic branch. But the detailed analysis of Old Turkic loanwords in Hungarian presented in the *Historical-etymological dictionary of the Hungarian language* (Benkő 1967–1976) demonstrated that these criteria can be observed only in a small number of Turkic loanwords, and the majority of them lack the Chuvash type of phonological criteria. It became clear that the identification of the donor language was not possible any more by the application of the language family tree model that represents the divisions within the Turkic language family in a linear genealogical order. Considering the historical background and the chronological and geographical parameters of early Turkic and Hungarian contacts, Róna-Tas argued for another donor language from an areal perspective in 1998. He assumed the existence of West Old Turkic, “spoken from the 5th century until the Mongolian invasion at the beginning of the 13th century in Eastern Europe and the adjacent regions. It comprises languages which were mentioned under such names as Onogur, Bulghar, Khazar, Pecheneg, early Cuman, and others” (Róna-Tas 1998, 619). Thus, a whole new avenue of investigation opened up following the suggestion that the early Turkic loans in Hungarian are remnants of the West Old Turkic lexicon, and the Hungarian language can serve as the primary source for its reconstruction. Naturally, the first task necessary to confirm this hypothesis should be the phonological reconstruction of the donor forms.

In the present monograph the modern phonological forms of the Old Turkic Hungarian loans are used as a starting point for the reconstruction (rather than data from various Turkic languages and dialects from different periods, as was customary before). According to the authors’ intention, the reconstruction should be based on sound changes traced back to Ancient Hungarian. Only through the reconstruction of the Hungarian recipient forms is it possible to indicate the real areal and phonological differences between the donor forms.

Nevertheless, for the confirmation of the basic idea that the Hungarian data are a suitable source for the reconstruction of the West Old Turkic lexicon it was also necessary to explore the morphological structure of the borrowed Turkic words and the set of Old Turkic derivational suffixes in Hungarian loanwords – a line of research totally ignored by the previous etymological studies.

The necessity of carrying out a comparative historical linguistic investigation in a contact linguistic framework was first recognized in the WOT. This means that special attention should be paid to the historical relationship of the Old Turkic and Ancient Hungarian phonological systems. Surprisingly, the differences between Ancient Hungarian and Proto-Ugric phonology had not been explored in Finno-Ugric studies until the present work appeared. Therefore, the phonological system of Ancient Hungarian and the reconstruction of its changes leading to the appearance of the first Old Hungarian written sources in the 10th century were not discussed either. This gap came to be filled in the WOT by one of the authors, the turkologist András Róna-Tas.

The monograph is published in two volumes and contains the following chapters. Chapter 1 gives a brief overview of previous research on Turkic elements in Hungarian and works on Turkic historical lexicology (pp. 3–17). In chapter 2 the historical background of Turkic–Hungarian language contacts is described, presenting the short history of the contemporary ethnic formations in Eastern Europe mentioned in various sources: Turks (pp. 19–24), Iranians (pp. 24–25), and Slavs in Eastern Europe (pp. 25–26); Hungarians in Eastern Europe (pp. 27–36) and in the Carpathian Basin on the eve of the Hungarian conquest (pp. 36–38), and Hungarian–Turkic contacts after the conquest of the Carpathian Basin (pp. 39). Chapter 3 describes the structure of the lexicon in 8 subchapters (General questions; The head word; Etymological status; Database; Turkic etymology; Hungarian etymology; Bibliography; Transcription and transliteration, pp. 41–49). It is followed by the discussion of the lexicon (chapter 4) – words from *A* through *K* in the first volume (pp. 53–618), and *L* through *Z* in the second one (pp. 619–1008). Conclusions of the etymological investigation are elaborated on in the next three chapters. Chapter 5 presents the historical phonology of Hungarian in a chronological order, including methodological remarks on the structure of the Ugric protolanguage and its reconstruction (pp. 1011–1015), changes of Proto-Ugric consonants (pp. 1015–1036), changes of Proto-Ugric consonants in Early Ancient Hungarian and Old Hungarian (pp. 1036–1040), and the origin and the history of Proto-Ugric vowels (pp. 1040–1069). Chapter 6 deals with the phonology of West Old Turkic – consonants, vowels, and changes in the vowel system (pp. 1071–1124), West Old Turkic derivational morphology (pp. 1124–1135), the morphological adaptation of West Old Turkic verbal roots in Hungarian (pp. 1136–1142), and provides a lexicological overview of the word classes of the borrowed words, also listing words shared by Chuvash and Hungarian (pp. 1143–1146). Finally, chapter 7 is devoted to the

question of “who spoke West Old Turkic, where and when?” (pp. 1147–1176). The final chapters are devoted to the critical apparatus: chapter 8 contains the list of uncertain etymologies and indices: an index of East Old Turkic words, an index of West Old Turkic words, an index of Mongolic words, a list of Hungarian words of (Finno-)Ugric origin, a list of Proto-Finno-Ugric and Proto-Ugric words in Hungarian, Hungarian words of problematic Finno-Ugric and Ugric etymologies, Hungarian semantic copies of Old Turkic words, a list of Alanian and other Middle Iranian loanwords in Hungarian, a list of Cuman words, an index of Slavic words, an index of Hungarian words (pp. 1179–1369); chapter 9 provides the bibliography (pp. 1371–1459), chapter 10 the abbreviations (pp. 1461–1483), chapter 11 the maps (pp. 1486–1487), and chapter 12 the numerical data, addenda and corrigenda (pp. 1489–1494).

The chapter on the lexicon is based on words considered to be of Turkic origin by two basic Hungarian etymological dictionaries, Benkő (1967–1976; 1993–1997). This corpus has been extended to include dialectal words from Hungarian Cumania. First, 561 words were selected for study by the authors, but in the end the Turkic origin of 70 items was rejected by them. From the remaining words 72 are listed under other head words due to the fact that they turned out to be derivatives. A total of 35 words are classified as of Cuman origin and 384 as West Old Turkic loans. However, the etymological status of these words is not equal. The etymologies of words that are unquestionably of West Old Turkic origin are not commented on. In all other cases, one of the following remarks are added: “of Cuman origin”, “of possible Turkic origin”, “of debated Turkic origin”, or “of Turkic origin, but unclear derivation”. As a result of the investigations, more than 100 new etymologies were set up and the etymological status of more than 120 words has been changed from those given in Benkő (1967–1976).

The entries are arranged into six sections and include the head word, the etymological status, the language data, the Turkic etymology, the Hungarian etymology, and the bibliography. The sections on the head words provide concise summaries of the entire etymologies. The head word is followed by the pronunciation in a simplified transcription and the primary meanings. In the next section of the entries historical data are cited, retaining the orthography of the Old Hungarian sources. After the historical and dialectal data, the reconstructed recipient form or the steps of the historical changes in Ancient Hungarian are given. The head word sections end with the reconstructed Old Turkic donor forms showing their morphological segmentations, which are identical with the Old Turkic etymologies. The

Turkic phonological reconstruction shows that the assumption about West Old Turkic being a spoken language with some territorial varieties is well founded, because Hungarian consonants are shown in cases to correspond to different Proto-Turkic consonants (for more on this, see Agyagási forthcoming). All of these variations can be explained on the basis of changes in the *r*-Turkic languages. This is the reason why Róna-Tas proposed to refer to West Old Turkic with the common name *Oghur* in contrast with its historical East Turkic counterpart *Oghuz*.

The data set of the head words is a well documented, rich part of the monograph. Although West Old Turkic has no written sources of its own, its contemporary territorial variety, East Old Turkic (and also Middle Turkic) appears in numerous written sources in Runiform, Uyghur, Arabic, Manichean, Brahmi, Sogdian, and Tibetan alphabets. The source material of the WOT is presented using the unified international Turkological transcription based on the Latin modified script. Data are organized according to historical and regional order, while each piece of data is followed by a short abbreviation identifying the type of script and the source. The Modern Turkic literary and dialectal correspondences of the head words are also represented following the international Turkological transcription, and the same practice is followed in the identification of the sources.

The linguistic data are followed by remarks on the Turkic and Hungarian etymologies. Commenting on accepted or rejected etymologies is not a usual practice of etymological dictionaries, in the present case, however, it proves to be very useful. It provides a very detailed annotation of previous works and contains a full list of all relevant references from Europe, Asia, and North America.

The phonological reconstruction of the donor (and recipient) forms is based on a meticulous application of the comparative method and is combined with a new theoretical and methodological approach of contact linguistics called code-copying, developed by Lars Johanson. Johanson (1992) suggests that in the course of a contact between two languages, the active reproductive code (the system of rules) of one of the languages becomes the object of partial or total copying by the other, and the result of the process, the copy, fits in and functions hereinafter in the latter language. Originally, this framework was created for the interpretation of influences induced by non-lexical contact, but it can be successfully used for the description of lexical borrowing processes as well. This is so because any word of any language demonstrates important details of the system of rules operating simultaneously in that language: a number of genuine phonemes, structural rules of their linkage, possible morpho-phonological peculiarities (in case

the word is derived), the rules of the order of morpheme sequences, the formal marking of the word classes or lack thereof, suprasegmental characteristics of the word, and so on. This approach, (and the new term “copy” instead of “borrowing”) can highlight the substance of the adaptation of a word by another language better than those working with other concepts, such as loaning or borrowing.

In the course of presenting the code-copying process from West Old Turkic into Ancient Hungarian the WOT relies on Erdal’s (1991) monograph on Old Turkic word formation, which contains a functional analysis of the derivational suffixes occurring in East Old Turkic written documents. The historical comparative study of Turkic loanwords in Hungarian in the WOT shows that more than 80% of the East Old Turkic derivational suffixes of West Old Turkic were preserved in Hungarian.

The most important merit of this new monumental monograph is that the authors were able to trace the results of the long-lasting Turkic influence in the early history of the Hungarian language. It has become unquestionable that at the beginning of the Turkic–Hungarian contacts two independent phonological and morphological systems confronted each other, and during the intensive Turkic influence Hungarian preserved its own Finno-Ugric roots, and even after the partial copying of some of the Turkic peculiarities, its own specific, individual Hungarian properties prevailed.

The etymological analysis of Turkic loanwords in Hungarian sufficiently proves that Turkic loanwords in Hungarian are the earliest written sources of the Oghur language, which – reflecting the high quality of work done by the authors – can become a reliable source for further research. The authors have set a very high standard for those investigating historical Turkology in Hungary and worldwide in the future.

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**Sándor Klára: Nyelvrokonság és hunhagyomány. Rénszarvas vagy csodaszarvas? Nyelvtörténet és művelődéstörténet [Linguistic affinity and the Hun tradition. Reindeer or miracle stag? Historical linguistics and cultural history].** Budapest: TypoTEX, 2011. pp 468.

Although the bulky book under review is written in Hungarian, it offers interesting and noteworthy thoughts based on original research, fully deserving international attention as well. I thus deemed it appropriate and necessary to give a short overview of the contents and message of the work and touch upon a few questions treated therein. I do it in the hope that the author will be encouraged by these lines and will compile a much shorter and structured English variant for the benefit of the international readership.

First, I would like to say a few words about the title which, in its present form, is highly ornate and baroque. Here applies the truth “the

shorter the better". *Linguistic affinity and the Hun tradition* totally elucidates what the whole book is about, namely, that the author treats the alleged contrast existing between Hungarian being a Finno-Ugric language and the medieval native and European tradition concerning the Hun origin of the Hungarian people. For a long time, the two theories have been seemingly at variance with each other. The two subtitles do not add much to the main title, and especially the first one, *Reindeer or miracle stag?* may remain an enigma for a foreign reader and presumably for many Hungarians as well, the reindeer symbolising the Finno-Ugric origin of the language and the miracle stag referring to the Hungarian legend of origin.

Be that as it may the continuation is much better than one would think judging by the title. Practically, the whole gamut of early Hungarian history and its role in the Hungarian national consciousness is condensed into one voluminous tome written in a manner digestible for the broader public. Originally, the chapters were written over a longer span of time and put separately on the internet between 3 July and 24 December 2010 ([www.galamus.hu](http://www.galamus.hu)). Though the book was thoroughly edited and the text of the articles rewritten, it is not a really coherent work since it displays a certain fragmentary character that reflects the structure of the original essays. Certain themes and topics are recurrent and the book is replete with repetitions.

The main idea of the book that permeates the whole work is that the Hungarian language belonging to the Finno-Ugric language family and the native and European tradition concerning the Hunnic origins of the people are not contradictory, as thought by many. For more than 800 years the Hungarian political and cultural elite was convinced that the Hungarians are descendants of the Huns of Attila's Empire in the fifth century AD. The Hun origin of the Hungarians must have been included already in the 11th-century, by now lost, Hungarian "Old Gesta" preserved only in 13th–14th-century chronicles. The Anonymous Notary of King Béla II wrote his *Gesta* in ca. 1200, and it is the first work that contains a direct hint at the descent of the Árpád dynasty of the Hungarian kings from the Hun ruler Attila. Later, in 1282–1283 it was Simon de Kéza in his *Gesta Hunnorum et Hungarorum* who overtly connected the history of the Huns to that of the Hungarians. In the first part of his chronicle he narrates the history of the Huns until the death of Attila (453 AD), then proceeds to the history of the Hungarians from their conquest of the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century to 1280. In his assumption, the Hungarian conquest was nothing else but the second "introitus" of the Hungarians to the homeland of their Hun predecessors. The Hun–Hungarian narrative was embellished



with many details that owe much more to the medieval western literature on the Huns than to the Hungarian traditions of the pre-conquest times. Hungarian historical research has long clarified that the Hun tradition of the Hungarian chronicles echo the western conception of the Scythian and Hunnic origin of all nomadic peoples coming from the Orient. If there existed any Attila-tradition in the Árpád dynasty this could have infiltrated into the Hungarian tradition through the Turkic Bulgarians, part of whom were assimilated into the Hungarian ethnic. So from the 13th century onward the Hunnic origins of the Hungarians became an inseparable part of the world-view of the Hungarian nobility which later, as “*untersunkenes Kulturgut*”, found its way also into the folklore. Since nothing was known of the Hunnic language (and this situation has hardly ever changed since then) it was a natural move to consider the Hungarian language, so unique and isolated within the sea of Indo-European languages in Central Europe, to be the sole descendant of the ancient Hunnic language. The apparent similarity of the ethnonyms **Hun** and **Hungarian** (in fact the name *Hungarian* has nothing to do with the name *Hun*) must have also corroborated the conviction of their being related. The Hunnic origins of the Hungarian language and people seemed to be an irrefutable fact and became so firmly rooted in Hungarian national consciousness that the first appearance of modern comparative linguistics (18th–19th centuries), which tried to connect Hungarian to the Finno-Ugric languages, caused a long-lasting shock. A part of Hungarian general public cannot accept it even in our days and sees a humiliation of the nation in the fact that the “glorious” Huns have been replaced with “terrible northern barbarians”. This amateurish approach makes no distinction between the language spoken by a people and the ethnogenesis of that people. According to current scholarly opinion, the separate Hungarian language and the community speaking it emerged during the first half of the first millennium BC. Consequently, the earlier history of Ugric-speaking communities cannot be the part of early Hungarian history, only a precursor to the history of the Hungarian language.

This leads us to our second theoretical issue, the question of ethnogenesis and ethnic history. With regard to the formation of ethnic groups, linguistic affiliation is only one side of the issue, consanguinity and genetic relationships are just as important. Thus, even if the final formation and separation of the Hungarian language from the other related, Finno-Ugric languages happened in the first millennium BC, that was only the first step towards the formation of a separate ethnic group. The history of the community of Hungarian-speakers started, but the characteristic

form of the Hungarian ethnic group was only taking shape during the first two millennia through various historical changes, mainly through contact with Iranian and Turkic ethnic groups. The investigation of these ethnic aspects is just as important as the unravelling of the questions related to membership within the Finno-Ugric language family.

Nevertheless, the traditional Hunnic descent invented by western and Hungarian chroniclers and preserved throughout the centuries deserves our full attention due to it being an extremely intriguing cultural phenomenon that permeated Hungarian culture and literature as late as the end of the 19th century. The motif of the miracle stag that led the two brothers, Hunor and Magor (eponyms of the Hunnic and Hungarian peoples) to their new homeland, or of the *turul*, the totem bird of the ruling dynasty of the Árpáds, as well as many other sagas and folklore motifs became an integral part of Hungarian culture. But the membership of the Hungarian language in the Finno-Ugric family and the medieval theory of the Hunnic origins of the Hungarian people are facts of two different orders. The former is a scientific fact that belongs to the realm of mind and reason while the latter is a phenomenon that pertains to the realm of medieval imagery and must be evaluated accordingly.

What is astonishing is that the Finno-Ugric origin of the Hungarian language remains a scientific fact that has not much relevance to the national consciousness of the Hungarian people while the Hun tradition is an ideology that basically influenced Hungarian culture for long centuries. The relationship between science and ideology must be clarified here. Ideology is a socially effective consciousness, and social effectiveness is independent of the truthfulness or falseness of this consciousness, i.e., even a consciousness demonstrated to be wrong from an epistemological point of view can be socially effective. We have to add, however, that, with the development of thought, the use of science as ideology has become increasingly widespread, and it is beyond doubt that in the modern societies of our age, ideologies are made up, or are formed predominantly, by scientific, or seemingly scientific, notions. This, of course, does not mean that the content of modern ideologies is necessarily closer to the truth than that of older, non-scientific ideologies; it only means that other, non-scientific conceptions cannot overtly contradict scientific statements any more today, since that would endanger the efficiency of that ideology. This is why it happens so often that non-scientific theories appear under the disguise of science, since this is the only way to secure their success. False scientific theories can become successful ideologies for shorter periods (e.g., the false theory of Daco-Roman–Romanian continuity as one of the ideological

underpinnings of Romanian nationalism), but in the long run, historical development questions the aims themselves (in this case nationalism) these false theories are supposed to serve. Consequently, scholars today must feel an increased responsibility and have to realise that their results may be used for various social aims in an ideological fashion. But a scholar cannot mix up the aspects of epistemological truth and ideology, since that could cause major problems. Whereas it is generally accepted in society that, for example, a doctor's only aim must be healing people, and all other aims must be subordinated to this, it is often forgotten that the only aim of a scientist must be revealing the truth. This is especially true in the case of humanities and social sciences, where often the work of scholars is influenced by unconscious presuppositions, questioning immediately the correctness of their results.

Let us examine one of the amateurish theories, that of the alleged Sumerian–Hungarian affinity, from this perspective. If we investigate the issue from a scientific point of view, we see a false theory, which is not only wrong, but ignores the principles and methodological frameworks of linguistics and historiography worked out during the last hundred and fifty years. This entitles us to dismiss this theory since it appears under the disguise of science, but the characteristics of modern scientific inquiry do not apply to it, it can be considered pseudo-scientific. Here we could wrap up the examination of the issue, but the aspect of ideology interferes. The above view, namely, is not solely the personal theory of one or two scholars, in which case we could simply expel it from the field of scholarship, but seems to be an organic part of the Hungarian national identity of certain social groups. This identity regards the ancientness of a language and a people as a value and merit, and believes in a direct correlation between ancientness and national importance. Such a national consciousness is well-known from the time of feudal societies, where ancientness was an important ideological power, even a source of legitimation. Thus, the Sumerian theory was called into being by an ideological need, in particular by social groups that have preserved this archaic, premodern, we could say medieval, national identity. The Sumerian theory cropped up in Hungary at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, as one of the numerous dilettante substitutes for the weakening Hunnic theory, and placed the origins of the Hungarians to an ancient time by connecting them to a more glorious past than the Huns could ever pride upon. It is no coincidence that the intellectual centres of this trend could be found primarily in Hungarian diasporas during the communist era, and since 1990 they flourish in Hungary as well. In the case of the Sumerian theory, the separation of the scien-

tific and ideological aspects demonstrates the futility of a scientific polemic with this, and other similar, dilettante concepts, since these are in fact not scientific theories, but ideologies in a scientific disguise. And an ideology can be challenged only by another ideology, thus the national identity of the proponents of the Sumerian theory should be challenged by another national identity, in which the worth of a nation is determined primarily by its historical achievements. Of course, every one is well aware that the Sumerian theory, similarly to other pseudotheories, is only a national surrogate, in which eastern and central European nationalisms abound.

The above thoughts, and much more, are expounded in rich detail in Klára Sándor's book which is based on thorough research work, a first-hand knowledge of linguistic and historical sources and a mastery of scholarly methodology. Since it was destined for the wider public it lacks a detailed annotation, only short notes and a rather exhaustive (though far from being "complete") bibliography are attached at the end of the book. In conclusion, I would return to one of my opening thoughts: I deem it extremely useful that the author should compile a more concise, lucid and clear-cut English version of this book destined for a non-Hungarian readership that would benefit from it a great deal. I do hope that my critical remarks concerning the perspicuity of the work will not dishearten the author, but on the contrary, will inspire her to provide the English readership with a basic work on an essential facet of Hungarian cultural history.

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