The older Mongolian layer in Ancient Turkic

Gerhard Doerfer
(Göttingen)

1. In his work “A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic” (Bloomington, 1968) our esteemed colleague Talat Tekin explains the Ancient Turkic (T) word balbal ‘statue’, assuming a syncope, < balbal < barmal (p. 73). On p. 99 he explains the word as deriving from *barmal, comparing with it 13/14th century Yuan Mongolian (Y) barimal (progressive distance assimilation -m- > -b-) and, some lines further, by a regressive distance assimilation: balbal < *balmal < *barmal. The common feature of these alternative explanations is the derivation from Y barimal, which in some fashion developed into balbal.

2. I entirely agree with Tekin that the T word is of Mongolian (Mo.) origin. Cf. Y barimal ‘sculpture’, consisting of the root bari- ‘to construct, to shape’ + a well-known suffix -mal. This form, however, must not be the direct predecessor of balbal. I am inclined to prefer a development from proto-Mo. *barmal > *barmal (in an ancient Mo. dialect) → T balbal (with double assimilation: -r- to -l- and -m- to -b-). This means (1) there are ancient Mo. loanwords in T, and (2) they do not coincide with Y. For particulars cf. A = my article “Mongolica im Alttürkischen” (submitted to Lewin-Festschrift in March 1988, forthcoming) and B = Mongolo-Tungusica, Wiesbaden 1985, 148-198.

3. But from which Mo. dialect are the T words derived? With certainty it is not Y (not documented before the 13th century). One may assume that Y was the particular dialect of Cinggis Khan’s tribe, which by its political dominance has suppressed all other dialects - with the exception only of Daghur (D), which has gone its own way, divergent from Y.

In this article we shall take the following languages into account (cf. the

4. We shall investigate the material according to 15 criteria. (For lack of space I shall normally quote only one or two examples.)

4.1. S and M, in contrast to Q, Y and D, quite often show an additional -n; e.g., S agan ‘older brother’ = Y aqa, D aga (v. 4.4), M aǰirγan, etc. Q and D, on the other hand, frequently show forms without -n, e.g., Q saya ‘bird’, jau ‘100’ (D sowō, jau) = Y sibaγun, japun. T shows some traces of the “additional -n”: qalqan ‘shield’ (Y qalqa), tajγan ‘greyhound’ (Y tayiγa). We have also to consider the many T titles in -n, such as qaγan, qatun, tarxan, tegin, erkin, tudun, sayun, etc., all of them presumably borrowed from S, cf. qaγan, qatun, deγin, and furthermore such words as toγan, laχin ‘kinds of falcons’, colpan ‘Venus’, atan ‘gelded camel’, etc. (v. 4. 15).

The formula is: T = S (and M), = Y/Q/D.

4.2. The consonantal -j (normally transcribed -i), presumably an old class suffix *-gi, is characteristic of Y, but is often lacking in Q/M/D. (S may show just one example of this lack: slil ‘high’, whereas Y sili < slil, just as toli ‘mirror’ < toli.) Cf. Q nöpö ‘dog’ M xalga ‘thief’ = D xualxa, M arfa ‘barley’ = Y noqai, qulaγai, arbai. However, we find in the Mo. languages two situations: (1) words containing -j also in S/D, e.g., S qitγičin ‘executioner’ (= qitγai ‘dagger, sword’ with a suffix -čin, in Y *qituyajči would correspond), D dalaj ‘ocean’ = Y id.; (2) words in which -j is lacking in S/D. v. supra. Seemingly, in Q/M -j is always lacking, in S/D only in some cases, in Y -j it is almost always “preserved”. T shows both situations: words with -j, such as taloj ‘ocean’ (in inherited T tajez), Umaj ‘goddess of love and parturition’, but also tábaj ∼ tábā ‘camel’, buγlaj ∼ buγla ‘wheat’ (Y dalaj, umaj ‘matrix, womb’, teme-gen - where *gi has been replaced by *-gen - , buγu-dai).

The formula is: T = in part Y (and S/D), ≠ Q/M, and in part = Q/M. ≠ S/
4.3. The suffix -sUn, characteristic of Y, is frequently lacking in M/D. Since these languages are close to pre-Yüan Mo. it is likely that -sUn often lacked in S/Q, too. (The example Q u ‘river’ = Y u-sun is not satisfactorily secured.) Here are some examples of M: anʃasun, (h)utasun, (h)oyimasun; D anʃi ‘plow’, gata ‘stake’ = Y yadasun (Buriat gatahan, Barguzin Evenki gata-hun). In T -sUn never appears, cf. yez ‘esparto grass’ = Y dere-sün, oima ‘felt for boots’ = Y hoyimasun, baltq ‘town’ = Y balagasun. M shows, along with the forms mentioned above, such examples as deresu, which are loan-words from Y, and so does D (derese, anʃas).

The formula is: T = M/D, presumably also = S/Q, ≠ Y.

4.4. ‘Older brother’ is agan in S, aga in D, but aqa in Y (apparently a baby word). We find -G- instead of -K- also in Q, e.g., töγo ‘buckle’ (Y tuu-qaj < *toγuqoj, M tooxan). The same holds true for M: xülga ‘thief’ (v. 4.2), ferge ‘thumb’ (Y herekej). The original consonant -K-, preserved in Y, is also found in T: toqo ‘buckle’, torgo ‘silk’, saqal (D sagal), baltq (v. 4.3). Y, however, which preserved -K- only at the outset of a second syllable after a vowel (e.g. saqal), mostly changes it to -G- after a consonant or in a third syllable (torgo, balag-a-sun).

The formula is: T = Y (but representing a still earlier stage), ≠ S/Q/M/D.

4.5. The proto-Mo. combination *tildi had been preserved in S: bitigčin ‘secretary’ (Y bičigeči), modi ‘(chief of a) province’ (Y moji). (N.B., alleged S gucin ‘30’ = M gūsin, but Evenki gutin ← proto-Mo. *gutun is no counter-proof, since this is no S word, but Tu-yū-hun of the 8th century, cf. Ligeti in Mongolian Studies, Amsterdam, 1970, 290-1.) No example of this combination could be found in Q; but *tildi is likely there, since Q has loaned many words to M. To be sure, Manchu of the 17th century shows *ti > *či > ši and *di > ž̄, but the older Manchu dialect Jurchen, 16th century, still shows such forms as tifa ‘mud’ = M čifaxan, dirga- ‘to rejoice’ = M žirga-. In Y ži, či are usual: čina- ‘to listen’, žirga-. In T tildi have been preserved, e.g. in ad̄γr ‘stallion’, tua- ‘to listen’ = Y afγra-, čina-. However, in Y the change di > ž̄ (and presumably also ti > či) is a recent and secondary phenomenon, v. B 181: in the Mo. history of the 12th century a tribal chief was called Qadir (= T
qadr ‘powerful’), whose name was later on pronounced Y qaḻr.

The formula is: \( T = \frac{S}{Q/M} \), formerly also \( = \frac{Y}{D} \).

4.6. In S a feminine suffix -tun is documented: qa(\( \gamma \))a'tun ‘queen’, (a)matun ‘mother’. This suffix is lacking in all other Mo. (and Tungus) languages. In T, too, it is found only in the S loan-word qatun. (The same word is found in Y and M.)

4.7. It may be supposed that Y Inicial has developed a) from older *dia-, etc., b) from older *gia-, etc. Some traces of *gia- are still found: S giamčin ‘chief of a post-office’ (Y jamči), borrowed \( \leftarrow \) Chinese giam. Cf. as non-Chinese term: Q gialr ‘to invite’ (= Y jala-, D jalr). For M cf. giyamun ‘post-office’ \( \rightarrow \) D giamčn. For T cf. yalavac ‘ambassador’ (v. 4.11). The question of whether T y- derives from a Mo. form with ja- or gia- cannot definitely be resolved; however, a derivation from S is likely, as will be shown in 4.11.

4.8. S/Q and older M (Gin-Jürčen) have preserved Mo. (and Tungus) *p-, e.g., S pörtogčin ‘post-office clerk’ (Y örtőgeči), Q po ‘time’ (Y on ‘year’), M ferge ‘thumb’ (Y erekei); as to older M p- cf. P. Pelliot: Les mots à h initiale ..., Journal Asiatique 1925, pp. 193-4 (e.g., puangwen ‘young lad’ = M fiyanggǎ). In older Y we find h- (hon, herekej, etc.). Some dialects show zero, others h-, x-: oŋ ~ hon, etc. The change *p-> h/-x- > zero in D is recent, as the loanwords prove: akur ~ xakur ‘trousers’ \( \leftarrow \) M fakuri ~ eijǐ ‘brick’ \( \leftarrow \) Chinese pěj (v. B 155), and even xulug/hulug ‘plough’ \( \leftarrow \) Russian plug. (The Dagur-Russian contacts belong to the middle of the 17th century!) For T cf. B 148-150: Proto-T had *p-, which has become h- in about the 7th century (terminus ad quem). Cf. Y hoyimmasun ‘felt boot’ = M fomon = T ojma (Samoyed pāymâ); T arq, Khalaj harq = Y harqal = M fajan < *pargan.

Conclusion: all “Altaic” languages had *p-, which nevertheless became h- in T at a very early date.

4.9. In Y the former *-p- has (via *-β-) become -’- (transcribed -γ-, -g-). Therefore cf. T qap(a)- ‘to cover, to close’, qapγr ‘door’ = Y qaγra-, qaγl'ra-. In S ano Q we still find -b- (perhaps to be pronounced -β-, bilabial fricative): S qabagčin ‘doorkeeper’ = Q qabagči = Y qagagči (pronounced xa’agči, later
on xagč) = T qapaγči. In D -g/-g- has vanished, just as in the other modern dialects: xa- ‘to close’, xalgā ‘door’. In M -f- (> older -p-) has been preserved, e.g., xefeli ‘womb’ = Y kegeli, read ke’eli, keli, D keli. In T -p- has been preserved, v. supra.

The formula is: T = S/Q/M, ≠ Y/D.

4.10. Y preserved the vowel of the middle syllable of trisyllabic (or polysyllabic) words, but some of its dialects drop it in a very recent development. Therefore we find, e.g., qulaγai ‘thief’ (modern Khalkha xulgaj). The situation in D is sophisticated; we find, e.g., xualg ~ xualag ~ xualγo ~ xualγa ~ xualxa, etc. We may explain these variants a) as partly influenced by Western Mo. dialects (xualxa > xualγa) or b) as secondary vowel dropping (xualγa > xualxa). At any rate, there are some cases where D secondarily even inserts vowels, e.g., Y maγlai ‘forehead’ = D mangila. This may also have happened in such cases as *qulaγai(i), and that means: proto-Mo. *qulaγai(i) > D *qulγa > xualxa ~ xualγa. M shows dropping: xulxa ‘thief’, ferge ‘thumb’, argāi ‘canine tooth’, dabsun ‘salt’, gurgu ‘(wild) animal’, čurxu ‘pike’, etc. = Y qulaγai, (h)erekei, araγan, dabusun, göröge, čuraqalčuruqai. Vowel dropping (or reduction) is found in both older Mo. languages: S kelmörcin ‘interpreter’, pörtögcin ‘post-office clerk’, qitγajcin ‘executioner’, sagdagcin ‘quiver-bearer’, etc. (8 examples) = Y kelemerci, örtögeçi, *qitγajci, sayadagçi. For Q cf.tauwosə ‘dust’ (Sien-pi tauγcin, Y toγosun, T toγ), also 4.12 (dausu < dabusun); by the way, the loanwords in M are in all probability from Q. T balbal shows dropping, and so do buydai ‘wheat’, yägrän ‘brownish’, bärgä ‘whip’ = Y buyudai, fegeren, beriye.

4.11. Dropping of final vowels is characteristic of Q. M is not concerned, since at the end of the word only vowels and -n are admissible. The situation in S is not very clear, since most of its words end in -n (25 of 33), v. 4.1. However, preservation of auslaut vowels is likely, cf. čino ‘wolf’, modi ‘province’, toki ‘old’, törö ‘law’ = Y čino, moji, toki, törö. Y preserves the final vowels, and so does D (where, however, secondary dropping occurs). Q shows reduction or dropping: mörə ‘river’, närə ~ när ‘day’, sür ‘month’, tauhə ‘hare’, tauwosə ‘dust’ = Y mören, naran, sara, taulaj (D taula), toγosun. T shows dropping, e.g., in yalavač ‘ambassador’ (cf. 4.7.), ilər- ‘to be dimly visible’ = Y ilere- (the root is ile ‘visible’). However, this may represent an
internal T development: T and Q may have dropped auslaut vowels independently from each other (cf. author in Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yılığı - Belleten 1975-1976, 19-22, 37-39).

The formula is: $T = Q, \neq S/M/Y/D$.

4.12. Proto-Mo. -b- has been preserved in Y and M: Y \textit{dabusun} ‘salt’ = M \textit{dabsun}. It is also found in S: \textit{tabagçin} ‘infantryman’, cf. Y \textit{tabay} ‘foot sole’. Q shows dropping of -b- (at least before u/ü): \textit{daysu} ‘salt’, \textit{tau} ‘five’, \öğl ‘winter’ = Y \textit{dabusun}, \textit{tabun}, òbül. (The exception \textit{ebüge} ‘old man’ may be explained as $< *\textit{ebge}$.) D has \textit{täu} ~ \textit{tawu} ‘five’, but \textit{uhul} ~ \textit{uʒłe} ~ \textit{ugul} ~ \textit{eule} ‘winter’; before -a- -b- became -w-, e.g. \textit{dawa-} ‘to cross over’ ~ \textit{day-} (Y \textit{daba}-); cf. Khalkha \textit{tawan}, \textit{daw-}. This may (but must not) have been an early development: \textit{tabun} > \textit{tawun} > \textit{taiw}). In T -b- (or -β-) has been preserved, later on becoming -v- > -w-: \textit{yalavač} (4.7), \textit{tābā(j)} (4.2), \textit{yabcan} ~ \textit{yavčan} ‘wormwood’, also in such words as may be of T origin: Y \textit{aba} ‘hunt’. This is a conservative form.

The formula is: $T = S/M/Y, \neq Q, (?) D$.

4.13. Q shows palatalisation in such cases as \textit{när}, \textit{sär} (v. 4.11), \textit{št} ‘good’ (Y/M/D \textit{sajin}, T \textit{ṣaj}). \textit{nọγə} ‘dog’ (Y \textit{noqaj}). It is unclear if M \textit{nioxe} ‘wolf’ may be compared to \textit{nọγə}; at any rate, M does not normally palatalize. S/Y/D, show conservative, unpalatalized forms, and so does T.

The formula is: $T = S/Y/D, \neq Q, (?) M$.

4.14. Y -i- finds its parallel in modern -jV₂- (V₂ = vowel of the following syllable, which phenomenon is called \textit{i breaking}), e.g., Y \textit{singqor} ‘a kind of falcon, Hierofalco gyrfalco’ = Ordos \textit{sogxor} or Y \textit{sibagun} ‘bird’ = Khalkha \textit{suwū} (\textit{ṣibūn} > \textit{siboun}). S has i, as has Y: \textit{čino} ‘wolf’, \textit{qirγajčin} ‘executioner’ (> \textit{qiγγajčin}). Q has breaking: \textit{sawā} ‘falcon’ (D \textit{sowō}) = Y \textit{sibagun}. M follows (like D) the pattern of Q: \textit{šongkon} ‘falcon’, \textit{sara-} ‘to whiten’ (Y \textit{šira} ‘yellow, pale’, \textit{šira-} ‘to gild, to roast’), \textit{nioxu-} ‘to stamp’ (Nanai \textit{nixo-} ‘to knead’; Y \textit{niqu-}). In T we find \textit{songqor} (11th century, i.e., before the Yüan period), but \textit{Singqor} in personal names of the Y period, as a loan from Y. (Han-Woo Choi, in Central Asiatic Journal 35, 1991, 48 explains T \textit{songqor} from Ancient Chinese \textit{ziwong} ‘pine and kindred trees’ + \textit{ku'}t ‘migratory bird, larger than but resembling the crested lark, a falcon’. A through evaluation of
this assertion would cover at least four pages; here only I want to hint at the fact that ziwong-ku't as an ensemble, and that songqor means Hierofalco gyrfalco, wingspan 51-56 cm, without crest, a northern bird of prey - which by no means resembles the crested lark, wingspan 17 cm, a song-bird.) A further sample may be çuglan 'title of the Qarluq tribe', perhaps comparable to Y çiçul- 'to gather, to collect' (rather than to çuyla-, same meaning). Yet we also find T qirgun 'sparrow-hawk' = Y qirgun (ordos xurgun). We may assume several layers of borrowing, partly from S (with i), and partly from Q (with breaking); the T forms of the Yüan period go back to Y, as I explained. That is to say, Q is a progressive dialect which has influenced both T (partly) and M.

We may presume: T forms with i ← S (and Y), such ones with breaking ← Q.

4.15. 'Iron' is tämür both in T and S. In the small vocabulary of S this notion is not documented, M has Tungus sele. In Q, on the other hand, we find not on qašo, to which D kasö (and also Bargu Mongolian xasu) may be compared. For the history of this word cf. Ligeti in Acta Orientalia Hungarica 1, 150-168 (in 8th century Kirghis qaša, perhaps a loanword from South Samoyed). Further samples of the Mo. Vocabulary in T cf. in A and B. These are mostly titles, astronomical terms, (such as çolpan 'Venus', (h)ülkär 'the Pleiades') and terms of camel breeding.

Of interest is the preservation of -lp- in D, e.g., çolpon (Y çolbon, çolmon), cf. also M arfa 'barley', not ← T arpa, but ← S/Q *arpa (Y arbai), cf. 4.2.

5. Let us summarize:
   (1) D must clearly be distinguished from Y (and all its modern dialects). The tradition of the Daghur people that they are descendants of the Qitai can be confirmed from the linguistic view-point. Other features link it with Y. (These may, but must not, be secondary.) D takes a middle place between Q and Y; but Q is in most cases the older layer (found in 4.2/3/4/8/12/14/15).
   (2) M shows features both of S (4.1) and Q (4.13/14); several features are common to S and Q, in contrast to Y (4.2/4/7/8/10). It takes a middle position between S and Q. (Recent loanwords from Y are also to be found.)
   (3) T shows some features resembling Y which, however, are rather ar-
chaic-conservative (4.4/5/12/13), particularly in 4.4. T is more archaic than Y itself. Other features resemble S (4.1/6) or Q (4.11), or are common to S and Q (4.2/??3/910), or are T loanwords in Y (4.15). 4.8 resembles Y, but is assuredly an internal development within T itself. In 4.14 T partly follows the S/Y pattern, partly that of Q. One may conclude that T, in its permanent contacts, has borrowed from several Mo. layers, as well as giving loanwords to M.