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Studies in Honour of Roy Andrew Miller on His 75th Birthday

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It is surely not easy at first sight to imagine how words with two meanings as different as ‘poison’ and ‘priest’ could be associated etymologically with each other. In our Geschichte des jakutischen Vokalismus we proposed PT *aho as an etymon of Yak. aba ‘1. poison; 2. bitterness’. Now, we think, however, that this reconstruction may be somewhat altered (*aho → *aho) and more profoundly analysed which will make it possible to connect the Yakut word with OJ FaFuri ‘priest’ (>hafuri [11th/12th c.]) = the NJ reading-convention hōri ‘Priester der Suwa-Schreine²). Let us at first examine the phonetic aspects of the PT *aho.

There exists no discrepancy between *a- in PT *aho on the one hand and a- in Yak. aba, on the other because, in the Yakut phonetic history, long vowels of the first syllable of the base noun were shortened after a derivational suffix had been added, as in the well known example: Yak. hahis ‘fifth’ (<bāsin) vs. hahas ‘fifth’ (<bāsin <bāsič <bāsin+c) = other Turkic languages: bāsin+c). It was Trkm. āv ‘poison’ which seemed to force a long vowel in the first syllable of the asterisk form. On the other hand, there is a tendency in Turkic languages for the lengthening of short open vowels if they are followed by a syllable with a close vowel (e.g. Khak. at ‘horse’ vs. ādym ‘my horse’; xol ‘arm’ vs. xōli ‘his arm’). Even if the tendency is first of all typical of Siberian Turkic languages, one has to reckon with its sporadic examples in non-Siberian languages, as well, which
would possibly allow us to modify our reconstruction in *abo (for another possibility of explaining the long vowel in Trkm. āvy see 4.3).

The final *-o of the reconstruct seems to be the best solution to the -a - -u alternation, as in Yak. aba vs. Anat. avu 'poison', see (4.4); cf. also OK *pap+o- in § 5.

Let us now have a look at the previous etymological work concerning Yak. aba. Interestingly enough, all the reconstructions proposed so far can be divided into two groups: [1] bg-type etymologies in the first half of the 20th century and [2] g-type etymologies in its second half.

Vilhelm Grønbech seems to have been the first linguist that proposed a concrete asterisk form of the Yakut word: "[. . .] these forms [i.e. first of all Yak. aba and New Uig. ǭga - oga] taken together yield an original *ab; aba and oya are identical, going back to *abya.4 The same was repeated in Németh 1914, 63.

In 1949, i.e. almost precisely in the middle of the century, Gustaf J. Ramstedt connected Mo. ag '1. strength (in poison, brandy, tobacco); 2. poison' with Uig. Ott. Ćag. agu 'poison' but, typically enough, neither with Yak. aba nor with New Uig. oya.5 It was, maybe, the last work in which the *ap+ words were not mixed with *ąg+ words.

Martti Rasanen proposed in 1969 a reconstructed form *ąyu both for Yak. aba, New Uig. ǭya (Le Coq) - oya (Radloff) and for Ćag. agu.6 The phonetic shape of *ąyu does not, however, fit very well the Yakut word. Neither -b- is identical with *-g- (Rasanen used the letter <> merely as a symbol of the velar allophone of the stop /g/), nor can -a readily be traced to *-u.

In 1974, E.V. Sevortjan tried to trace all the words in question back either to a nominal stem *ąg '1. poison; 2. bitter' or to a verbal *ąg- 'to poison'. In the rich lexical material he had gathered, there are, however, words which cause essential phonetic problems. One of them is Anat. avgi - avu 'poison', a word both variants of which are (ibid.) derived from *av- + *+gu. We feel compelled to raise two objections against this etymology.

First of all, the problem why *-ag- yielded -v- if the combination of a consonant with a -g- between two vowels is quite normal in Turkic languages (to cite only one example from Lit. Tksh.: kavg 'quarrel'). Somewhat anticipating, we would instead propose *ap+gu as the etymon of avgi (see 4.3) and *ap+o as that of avu (see 4.4).

Another objection concerns the mutual relationship between the stems *av- and *ąg-. They both were proposed by Sevortjan on one and the same page of his dictionary but neither the *ą- > *a- shortening nor the *g- > *v- change was commented upon.

Under the same headword Sevortjan writes on the Yakut word as follows: "aba < *ab- + -a?". It seems much more plausible to connect the Anat. *av+ with Yak. *ab+ rather than with the hypothetical *ąg(-) (and its Mongolian counterparts, see below).

In 1978, Stanislaw Kaluzynski tried to avoid the -b- - -v- - -g- problem by suggesting a bilabial stop in the etymon *ąblu > Yak. aba.9 It is true, he mentions Trkm. āvy with its long ā but he does not solve the problem of its origin. Moreover, there is probably still another problem involved in this etymology. Kaluzynski (ibid.) writes as follows: Yak. aba 'poison' = Mo. ag '1. poison; 2. bitterness'. If the Yakut word is to be understood as a Mongolian loan word, then the Yakut proto-form *ąblu seems to call for a Mo. *ągu which, in its turn, confronts us once again with both the phonetic problems presented above: -g- vs. -b- and -u vs. -a.
with Yak. *ap 'whitchcraft, magic, sorcery' appears to have been fully overlooked. Thirdly, only after thirty years, the question about the further etymology of the proto-form *pap was picked up (and solved). In order to understand the problem better, we are going to begin with the last-mentioned aspect of the topic.

In their extremely interesting study on OJ FaFuri 'priest', R. A. MILLER and N. NAUMANN examine carefully a great deal of lexical material which belongs here and they etymologize the PA *pap—for the first time after POPPE's publication of his reconstruction—as a loan word from Middlle Chin. *pāp/, phonetically *[pǐwàp] > Modern Chin. fa '1. law, model; 2. style, fashion; 3. religion'.11 The same stem *pap > Modern Tkc. *ap is attested in numerous Turkic verbs, as e.g. (PT *ap+āri> >) Çağ. arba- 'hexen, bezaubern' = Tel. arba- 'zanken, schelten' = Yak. arba- '1. den bösen Geistern unter Mitwirkung des Hexenmann ein Stück Vieh weihen; 2. jemandes bosen Krankheitsdämon in ein Opfertier iiberfiihren [ ... ]', and also in secondary nominal derivatives, as Gag. arbak '1. 

Nothing can be said about Old Uig. oprə- because in RÖHRBORN 1981 (169a) only a reference to Old Uig. oprə- can be found: "älter Fehler für oder Var[iante] von → oprə-"; however RÖHRBORN'S Uigurisches Wörterbuch has yet to reach the letter <o>. But it is beyond doubt that Old Uigur attestations like arvəs '1. [Subst.] magische Praktik, Zauberformel, Zauberlust; 2. [Adj.] magisch, Zauber-', arvəşiç '1. [Subst.] Zauberer, Beschworung, DharaQI-Kenner; 2. [Adj.] Zauberer-, arvəsilg [Adj.] 'mit ... Zauber'13 also belong to the word family and that they point to a verb like *əbrə- or *əbər-, cf. also [1] Dolg. abar- 'sich ärgern, böse werden' (< Dolg. *aba = Yak. aba 'poison'; to the meaning cf. Pol. za-klińac '1. to bewitch, to cast a spell; 2. to entreat' vs. przeklińac 'to curse, swear', as well as Pol. za-klić '1. to bewitch, to cast a spell; 2. to curse, swear'); [2] Kirg. arba- 'zavorazivat', zakoldovyat, zaklinac' and arbaq 'duchi sjatyjili ili čimyjih predkov'.14

The Ottoman-Turkish counterpart of Çağ. arbag 'Lüge, Betrug' was arpağ [arpay] - [arpə] 'zaklinanie, koldovstvo',15 but still more interesting is another derivative, namely Ott. arpağçe = [arpəgy] - [arpəq] 'šaman, znaxar', koldun; volšebnik,16 a word which obviously was fairly early contaminated with Ott. arpağ 'barley' and therefore misinterpreted as Ott. arpağy (i.e. [arpəgy], in lieu of *arpəçē = *arpəgy [arpəgy]) 'eine Art Wahrsager, die sich zu ihrer Kunst der Gerste bedienen'.17

At the same time it should be emphasized that this verb must not be confused with Kar. abra- 'to protect, guard, defend' (= Sr. abira- 'to calm down') < *əbəra.18 < abər 'peace, harmony'.19

As can be seen, the Turkic languages seem to attest exclusively derivatives of the PA *pap. This same holds true for almost all other Altaic languages, as well, so that MILLER and NAUMANN could write as follows:

"Das so übernommene altsächsische Nomen *pap unterliegt einer Vielzahl der nominalen Verben und deren sekundären Derivaten in allen altsächsischen Sprachen, den 'inneren' wie den 'äußeren' [...]."20

On the other hand, cf. also Mo. ab and Yak. *ap (see above), the direct descendents of the reconstructed PA *pap and note that it remains (for the time being?) open whether Yak. *ap is a Mongolian loan word or a direct reflex of *pap.

We could, then, find modern reflexes of the stem *pap as nominal and deverbal nominal derivatives (i.e. *pap → verb; verb → nominal). What is missing, is an example of a direct nominal nominal derivative (i.e. *pap → nominal). As we think, Yak. aba 'poison', see (4.4), seems to fill the gap very well.

4

If the PA stem was *pap it had to yield *ap in PT. An *s+o derivative of the stem (*ap+s) yielded then aba in Yakut and possibly also avu in Anatolian-Turkish dialects. The -g- and -v- variants, however, should rather be

11 MILLER/NAUMANN 1991, 13 and fn. 7; the semantics of the whole word-net is rather complicated, for details see ibid. 23, 77-91.
12 MILLER/NAUMANN 1991, 15; for Old Uig. oprə- (without metathesis!) see ibid., 18f.
14 JUDACHIN 1985, 61.
15 BASKAKOV 1977, 64c.
17 ZENKER 1866, 24b.
18 ZAJACZEKOWSKI 1931, 160.
19 ZAJACZEKOWSKI 1931, 131.
20 MILLER/NAUMANN 1991, 98.
interpreted as a different morphological formation, i.e. one with the *+go
(or *+gu) suffix: *ap+go > *abgo, *ap+gu > *abgu. The differentation be­tween *apo and *apgo seems to be rather unavoidable because *abgo
would have in, Yakut, been changed into *abga, and then further > *abä
(as to *Çga > Yak. Çä cf. *bulğak > Yak. bylax 'Troig', *udgar > Yak.
utäär 'treiben, weg-/ fort-/jagen').

Concerning the long vowel (in TrkM. äv), it can be explained as a
secondary result of the *-bg- > -gb- metathesis, see (4.3).

Let us recapitulate now what has been suggested above:

(4.1) Middle Chin. */piap/ > PA *pap > [a] Mo. ab; [2] PT *ap. Unfortu­nately, the etymological status of Yak. ap 'sorcery' remains open, i.e.
either Chin. */piap/ > Mo. ab > Yak. ap, or Chin. */piap/ > [1] PT
*ap (Yak. áp); [2] Mo. ab.

(4.2) PT *ap + *+go/a > *abgo/a > (with a vowel metathesis: *abgo
> *abga, or without metathesis but with a secondary rounding of the
initial vowel [under the influence of b]: *abga > *abga) Uig. öga
(and ~ oga).

(4.3) PT *ap + *+gu > *abgu > *agü (or directly > OT agu) > *aby
(Anat. avö), and further on: with metathesis > *aby (TrkM.
avöv).

(4.4) PT *ap + *+o > [1] *abo (Yak. aba); [2] *apu > *avu (Anat. avu).

Students of the Ottoman-Turkish philology may think of the opposition:
Ott. adı 'his name' (< *ät+ı) vs. adı 'his horse' (< *ät+y), when seeing the
voiced consonant of Anat. avu. However, the -v- does not necessarily point
to an original long vowel *ä- . If the intervocalic *p- (in *ap+o, see 4.4)
became spirantized it could not possibly yield an *f- because there
existed no *f- in Oguz languages. The only consonant which could have
resulted from the spirantization of the original *VpV was, then, a voiced
*vp. This is why Anat. avu cannot be viewed as parallel to Ott. adı < *ät+y
'his name'.

Some phonetic details can possibly still be changed or more precisely
specified in the scheme above (so e.g. the problem of *+o or *+a in the
suffix; cf. in this context also the OK derivative *pap+o- in § 5; another
possible change is interpreting *abgu as a result of the phonetic develop­
ment of *abgo, i.e. *abgo > [1] *abga; [2] *abgu > *abgy > *agby). Nevertheless,
the scheme contains all the decisive elements and guidelines of the
morphological and etymological development. It allows us to make one
more inference:

(4.5) It does not make much sense to discuss the stem *äg 'bitter' in tan­
dem with *ap 'witchcraft', and the (most?, all?) Turkic words for
'poison' presented above should better be derived from *ap and sepa­rat­ed from *äg.

If OJ FaFuri 'priest' is a deverbal +i nominal from the verbal stem *FaFu­ni
< PA *pap+(u)=22 < *pap (< Chin. *piap/), then the three first sounds of
FaFuri, i.e. FaF correspond etymologically to Mo. ab, Trk. *ap, Yak. ab+
in (aba); interestingly enough, the morphological structure of the OJ verb
*FaF+ur- is almost identical with that of Dolg. ab+a+ etc. 'sich ärzern, böse
werden'. The PA stem *pap survived also in an Old Korean poem, in
which it is attested as pap+o-salP'0n 'ihr werdet geopfert', i.e. "eine
adnominales, honorativ-unterwürfige Formation an einem Sekund­
ärstamm auf -o."23 and, on the other hand, in Tungusic languages, as e.g. in
Nan. papö ~ papö ( ~ dial. fafo) 'prohibition' = Ma. fafun '1. id.; 2. law'.24
Thus, the stem *pap is attested in all five groups of Altaic languages.

It is interesting how differentiated meanings of the *pap derivatives are.
However, traces of the original meaning 'law, rule; religion' and its va­riety 'witchcraft, magic, sorcery' can be seen in all attestations, so also in
Yak. aba 'poison', probably < *magic drink/substance' (cf. Lat. pótô
'Getränk, Gifttrank, Liebestrank, Heiltrank' :: Fr. Engl. poison 'Gift').
Abbreviations

1. Languages

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