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**KHABTAGAEVA, B. Language Contact in Siberia: Turkic,  
Mongolic, and Tungusic Loanwords in Yeniseian, Brill,  
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Peter PIISPANEN

Stockholm University (Stockholm/Sweden)  
E-mail: peter.piispanen@finska.su.se

I have been following KHABTAGAEVA's research of Siberian loanword etymologies for a few years now, presented in numerous papers published in several different journals. With this, I have come to regard her research as being meticulous, detailed and utterly convincing as she has presented concrete examples of linguistic influences between various Altaic languages (i.e. Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic). At some point, seemingly due to the influence and tutorship of Edward VAJDA, she started focusing her interests on the hitherto fairly mysterious and fairly under-researched Ket languages (here: Kott, Assan, Arin, Pumpokol, Yugh and Ket), generally considered a language isolate group. I once commended her on how detailed and valuable her research was for Altaic studies (Piispanen 2019: 57-58) little knowing that a whole summarizing monograph on

Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic Loanwords in Yeniseian was being prepared. Trying to curtail my own enthusiasm at this accomplishment, I will attempt to objectively highlight the strengths, weaknesses and accomplishments of this volume, and to draw some final conclusions regarding this work. The volume is an impressive 404 pages plus a preface, named *Language Contact in Siberia - Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic Loanwords in Yeniseian*, written by Bayarma KHABTAGAEVA, and published by Brill in 2019, as part of The Languages of Asia Series, with this being volume 19, and edited by Alexander VOVIN, and with José Andrés Alonso de la FUENTE as associate editor. This volume, available in both printed form and as an e-book (fully searchable and with hyper-linked chapters), is again given among the References of this review paper. The series also has a very extensive Editorial Board, and with Brill we have come to expect a very high standard of quality, and in this regard this volume does not disappoint.

After the important *Introduction* (Chapter 1, p. 1-19), we are treated, chapter by chapter, with detailed loanword etymological suggestions into the Yeniseian languages (or a specific language only) from Turkic (Chapter 2, p. 20-256), Tungusic (Chapter 3, p. 257-310) and Mongolic (Chapter 4, p. 311-326) sources. Each chapter is then neatly finalized by summaries of the phonological details that characterize the borrowings from each respective source. Stylistically it is straight-forward and to the point with arrows showing what is borrowed into what, and why it must be so. For example, here we find Arin *mintora* ‘ice’, borrowed from Turkic *\*mindir* ‘hail’ (with attested Turkic languages and forms given), which in turn was borrowed from Mongolic *\*möndür* ‘hail, sleet’ (also with the attested Mongolic forms given) (all etymologically referenced with details from works by Werner, Rassadin, Nugteren, as well as the standard works of the VEWT, ESTJa, and SIGTJa), with a few phonological and semantic notes of interest, with the whole entry only taking up one compact half-page (page 26).

Not only are numerous loanword etymologies from the Altaic languages into Yeniseian proposed convincingly, but a few thought-provoking notes of interest in comparing the Altaic languages themselves are also presented at places (albeit it is not clear if these are the author’s own ideas, or taken from some reference). In a few places further borrowings into other non-related languages are

also given, such as, for example, into the Samoyedic languages of Kamassian and Mator (in these cases referencing works by Joki and Helinski, respectively). As the series editor Alexander VOVIN (currently in the process of co-editing the volume *The Tungusic Languages*, again along José, for Routledge) once remarked to me, we are still very far from a clear picture about the Tungusic languages. In this regard, KHABTAGAEVA's work brings new insights not only locally about the historical situation around the Ket River (and, it turns out that the historical area of Ket language speakers used to be very much larger in historical times, as evidenced for example by toponymical studies), but also to the far away Tungusic, Mongolic and Turkic lands. The details are such that it is possible to actually tell quite a lot about the interactions of the Altaic languages as well, be they genetically affiliated or not.

The referencing throughout the volume is detailed and not lacking. At the very start of the volume, all referenced sources are presented and discussed in detail (listed on p. 373-388), which is of utmost importance, and helps anyone interested in these matters to quickly find the key works by themselves. Here we also find out that VAJDA and WERNER are currently preparing a volume titled *Etymological Dictionary of the Yeniseian Languages* (p. 2), which is tremendously interesting in itself, and that KHABTAGAEVA already has used much lexical data therefrom in this research. In this, the research in her book is to be considered a very much up-to-date comparative work. While the referencing is sufficient for all practical purposes, I did happen upon what appears to be a mistaken reference: on page 48, while reading about ducks, I checked up a reference to Nugteren 2011: 266, but could not find anything there pertaining to this data at all. Despite this, I am fairly certain that the referencing, obviously having been given a great deal of attention, is of high quality. The Index at the end of the volume (p. 390-404), then, which is grouped into Yeniseian, Mongolic, Turkic and Ewenki words, is also very helpful for the returning reader wanting to check up lexical materials and details.

One of the major strengths of the research presented is the detailed involvement and discussion about suffixes. Indeed, everything is presented in terms of phonetics, morphology and semantics. Suffixation patterns and types

(all well referenced) clearly show which is the donor language and which is the recipient language for each borrowing, if such facts are not made readily obvious by the breadth of attestation of said roots in the first place. This, along detailed phonological studies and correspondences, is exactly the type of details one would have desired to be found in many of the earlier etymological works to such a high degree. Then, the Semantic section does not leave anything lacking as numerous sections and tables are presented, and various reasonable conclusions are drawn. However, as a point of criticism, some materials separated into different chapters, could perhaps better have been collected in the same place; should phonetic and semantic considerations for the same words be presented in different chapters? It may be a matter of personal style and preference, but I found that the book would have considerably shorter and a bit more compact had the groupings been done differently, and thus avoiding repeating roots in different places, perhaps needlessly inflating the number of pages. On the other hand, analyses of semantic groups, or groups showing phonological criteria, may require brief repetition of data for the evaluation and presentation itself for a clear overview. Otherwise, regarding style, KHABTAGAEVA presents her results in a humble manner, which is much appreciated.

In Chapter 5 (p. 327-358) all the phonetics of all the suggestions in the entire volume are summarized, and the detailed phonetics about the Ket languages themselves are of course very valuable. There are numerous groupings, and in just a few places I would have liked to see a little more speculation and detail, but all in all it is enlightening. The section of Compound Words was perfectly detailed and utterly believable. The section on Semantic Peculiarities might be helpful not only for understanding the argumentation here, but also for etymological research done on other languages in the world, by showing possible parallels to unusual changes. Perhaps so-called hybrid compounds, which mix elements from Yeniseian and Turkic words, are of particular interest. As a matter of fact, some of the compounds and other cases of dubious semantics could, at this point, have benefitted from drawing upon examples of similar changes found in other languages. An example: Proto-Ob-Ugric \**pEkkV-ttV* 'black' (Rédei 1988–1991: 882) has been tentatively connected with Kolyma Yukaghir *pugučie*

‘black fly’ (Piispanen 2013: 187), which semantically bears similarities to Arin *ka-rasek* ‘fly’, borrowed from Turkic *\*qara sēk* ‘lit. black fly’ (page 58). Reading through the volume, it also struck me that quite a few of the words borrowed into the Yeniseian languages are even more extensively borrowed into other languages than what is readily referenced and presented under each entry, such as into Tungusic or Yukaghir from Turkic or Mongolic (for example: Proto-Mongolic *\*sokar* ‘blind’ (Nugteren 2011: 500), borrowed into Turkic *\*sogor* ‘blind’, borrowed into Kott *šugur* ‘one-eyed’ (p. 188) is also borrowed from Mongolic (through Ewenki *sokor* ‘blind’ as proxy) into Tundra Yukaghir *soquor* ‘blind’ (Piispanen 2019: 72-73), as well as into Udmurt *sukir* ‘blind’, cf. Tatar *suqâr* (id.) (Belykh 2007: 33). Of course, it would be an overly tedious task to list every possible minor language or dialect which may also have been the recipient of the same words that were borrowed into Yeniseian, and listing those would serve little purpose for the thesis at hand. As it is, the main situation is made sufficiently clear under each entry without expanding it with further details. Perhaps such words, however, are representatives of typical cultural vocabulary in Siberia, and could be summarized elsewhere in the future (albeit one must wonder why, in the above example, a word meaning ‘blind; one-eyed’ would be so extensively borrowed; what cultural context does it signify?).

I was utterly fascinated by Chapter 6 (p. 359-368) of the book, which is entitled *False Etymologies or Coincidences*. Here she bravely corrects some of her own earlier research, and shows how easy it is to be led to falsely believe that coincidental similarities between two non-related languages must indicate borrowing. That is a worthwhile lesson for any etymologist, including myself. It is practically the linguistic equivalent to presenting commonly failed experiments performed in the natural sciences of chemistry and physics, the details of which many would also have liked to see in publications along successful experiments in order to not repeat the same mistakes themselves. Here we find such interesting examples as: Ket *kudab* ‘wrinkle’, which is a native Ket compound of *\*kud* ‘bend, roll, furrow’ and *\*ep* ‘skin, surface’, instead of being related to semantically and phonologically very similar Ewenki *koti-* ‘to wrinkle a face’ (p. 366-367).

In the final concluding chapter (p. 369-372), KHABTAGAEVA summarizes some facts: there are around 230 Turkic borrowings into Yeniseian (which are presented through approximately half of the book!), some 70 Tungusic borrowings, and a few Mongolic borrowings which reached Yeniseian through Turkic proxy languages (evident by various listed phonological criteria). While it may look like a lot of pages, the data is discussed in adequate detail so the space is both required and used properly; this contrasts with some other larger comparative works which just list enormous amounts of lexical data without much discussion or critical evaluation of said data (like I would suggest, for example, the authors of the Starostin et al. 2003 do). Mongols and Yenisei populations were not in direct contact with each other in contiguous zones, while the south Siberian Turkic languages, as well as the Tungusic Ewenki language seemingly have. This large amount of lexical borrowings conclusively also demonstrates very extensive contacts between Turkic and Yeniseian speakers in earlier times. The Tungusic loanwords, however, are mostly found in the Ket dialects and in Yugh. A full 29 semantic fields are summarized for all the borrowings into each respective Yeniseian language. Here I would have liked to read speculations about how the prominence of borrowings into each of the semantic categories could be interpreted in a historical context, how the early social life of the Ket must have been, and what nature the contacts between these various populations took and had. I believe such exercises may be left to the reader, although we do have some smaller insights given at different places in the book.

Further, as answers to questions breeds new questions, some thought-provoking matters do materialize: for example, given that the Mongolic languages are so much younger than the Turkic ones, how then can so many Turkic words (with great geographical spread) be of Mongolic origin? Should such early borrowings not really be from Pre-Proto-Mongolic languages, or from earlier Para-Mongolic languages? Also, I would have liked to read more about why the phonetic correspondences look like they do: are there substratal features at hand (this is only briefly touched upon in the initial chapter)? Which uncertain Turkic, Tungusic and Mongolic reconstructions are clarified by the form found in Ye-

niseian? Do we know a lot about borrowings in the other direction, i.e. from Yeniseian into the Altaic languages? When did all of these borrowings occur approximately, and also where did they occur? Here I will speculate that since, according to KHABTAGAEVA's research, most borrowings into Yeniseian are from Turkic sources, and since Turkic borrowings into Mongolic are generally believed to chronologically have preceded the Mongolic borrowings into Turkic (Schönig 2003: 404), that the Turkic borrowings presented herein into Yeniseian chronologically also constitute a layer of older borrowings. Were the Yeniseians multilingual, and did they live in mixed tribes? (perhaps population genetics studies is useful here) Such questions could have been expanded upon a bit, building and extending a bit further upon the materials of the original papers that were summarized here. Given the materials of this volume, perhaps we can properly start to answer such questions.

Furthermore, looking a bit further on the Altaic angle, there are many facts that point at the Tungusic and Mongolic languages being much older than commonly believed, and of course they should earlier have existed in some Pre-Proto-form around Mongolia or Manchuria because languages as such do not just spring up from a vacuum. In the case of Yeniseian, these are, with VAJDA as the originator and probably main proponent behind the idea, genetically affiliated with the Na-Dene languages in faraway North America (Kari-Potter 2010); while the details and argumentation are still being discussed, surely such a connection is possible. Are they really related? Well, while not being directly connected to such questions, KHABTAGAEVA's etymological research at least shows us which words, having been borrowed into Yeniseian, cannot be etymologically connected to the Na-Dene language, and even that is helpful for the Yeniseian-Na-Dene hypothesis (i.e. the elimination of false cognates).

I understand that the English of the book has been edited, and while there are still a handful of errors to be found in places (for example a missing comma or word here and there), this does not hinder the argumentation or, actually, the pure pleasure of reading this work in the slightest. Enlightening historical details, which reveal much about the social life and culture involved, are added in

places, and all in all, the book is an excellent and valuable and informed contribution not only to the study of Yeniseian languages, but also to general Altaic studies, which I hope I have made clear in this short book review. Here KHABTAGAEVA has delivered a worthwhile and important book on the Yeniseian languages, which herewith are left somewhat less mysterious than before. She has succeeded in her stated goal (p. 372) of: “*I hope my research has revealed new results not only for Yeniseian studies, but also for Altaic and Siberian studies*”. The volume should be a mainstay on the bookshelf of any linguist involved in such (and the pricing at around 150 Euros seems reasonable. Naturally, it also comes highly recommended to any enthusiast of the study of any of these aforementioned language groups, as well as to those interested in learning more about Yeniseian itself, etymological research methods and likely historical language contacts of the larger Siberian area!

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