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A Hunnic Word for Spoon: 留犁 Liuli

Kaşık İçin Hunca Bir Kelime: 留犁 Liuli

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We learn the words belonging to the language of Xiongnu (Asian Huns) through the works written by the Chinese who developed political, military and economic relations with this community. In this study, one Hunnic word carrying the meaning of spoon, remained unexplained until now, will be explained on the base of the sound passings peculiar to Turkic.

Key Words: Xiongnu Language, Turkic, Spoon, Hunnic Couplet, Buryučan.

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The single-sentence text in Huns language that survived until today through [the Chinese source *Jinshu*] is as follows. This text found in the section where the life story of the Priest Fotu Cheng is told, is a fortune telling text related to the results of the expedition to be launched on Liu Yao's forces by Fotu Cheng, who was the consultant of the commander Şi Lo, during the siege of Şi Lo's palace by Liu Yao, which was between the Hun Rulers Şi Lo and Liu Yao who struggled for power, and this text was recorded in Chinese sources as follows. (Pulleyblank, 1962: 206; Pulleyblank, 1986: 61-62; Shiratori, 1902: 6-7; Munkácsi, 1903: 244-245; Wright, 1948: 344; Krueger, 1962: 557; Tekin, 1997: 10):

秀支替戾剛僕谷劬禿當 Sūx-keh Thei-lei-kaŋ Bok-kuk giou thuktaŋ “Go out to the army (on campaign) (and) capture the commander”.

This couplet has been interpreted by Tekin in its most excellent form and has been perfectly shown to be Turkic:

“The first word in the text is the dative state of the word **sü** or **süü** which means ‘army’ and ‘war’ in Old Turkic. The second word is the *tılık* (< *talık) verb which is the l- Turkic form of the verb *taşık-* ‘getting out’ in Old Turkic of which the first syllable vowel had a vowel reduction and turned into /i/, more precisely it is the imperative of this verb and is the equivalent of the Old Turkic words *taşıqıŋ* or *taşıqaŋ* ‘get out!’. The third word is the title of Liu Yao, the leader of the enemy army that besieged the capital of the Hun leader (who is also of Hun origin) and is one and the same as the *bukuk* in the Old Turkic texts. The first syllable of the fourth word is the {-gu} (= Old Turkic -g) suffix of the accusative status of the title *bukuk* and the Chinese word is mistakenly assumed to be the first syllable of the last word; the fourth word is *t'uk-taŋ*, which consists of the last two signs, i.e., *tutaŋ* ‘tutan [hold!]?’ (= Old Turkic *tutaŋ* or *tutuŋ*). The word *t'i-lit-kang* or *tiligang* (= *tilikaŋ) in this couplet and which is equal to the words Old Turkic *tasıqıŋ* or *taşıqaŋ*, indicates that, according to Ramstedt, Huns language is not a ş- language, but a l- language, and it is important in this respect.” (Tekin & Ölmez, 1999: 13)

Turkic Reading of Text (according to Tekin):

Sükā Taliqāŋ (or **Tılıqāŋ**), Go out to the army (on campaign) **Bogukgu/Bukukgu Tuktaŋ**, (and) capture the commander (1992: 1-5; 1993: 35-55).

I will not examine here the interpretation studies (Bazin, 1948: 208-219; Gabain, 1950: 244-246; Benzing, 1986: 13; Shervashidze, 1986: 3-9; Divitçioğlu, 2004: 185-191; Divitçioğlu, 2006: 23-26; Kısamov, 2014: 22-34; Dobrev, 2015: 53-60; Shimunek, et al. 2015: 147-149) on this verse in Huns language one by one and will not attempt a new interpretation but shortly I will just touch upon the phonetic similarity between Boguk, Hunnic title, and 比車耆 *Pi-chü-ch'i* (Ssu-uma Ch'ien, 2011: 338), a title used by Xiongnu (Asian Hun) kings in the centuries

B.C. Both of them stand close to each other but with a big possibility *Pei-chü-chi/Pi-chü-ch'i* is identical with *Pi-chia ch'ieh* (Mackerras, 1972: 70), one of the titles used by the Uyghur kings. Both titles used by the Uygurs and Huns are none other than *Burgučan* (Gabain, 2007: 270; Donuk, 1998: 11), one of the titles used by Arslan Il-Tirguk, the Karluk yabghu. The title *Pei-chü-chi/Pi-chü-ch'i* seems to be the form of the title *Burgučan* in the age of the Huns [*Pi-chü-ch'i* > *Pirchü-chi* > *Pirchü-ch'in* = *Burgučan*] and has nothing to do with *Boguk*.

To get to the main point, when Ramstedt interpreted this couplet in Huns language many years ago, he saw that the verb *Thei-lei-k* is one and the same with the Turkic *Taşık* verb in the same meaning, and that only /l/ > /ş/ change exists, and suggested that Huns' language is a -l, in a more general term, Oghur dialect (1922: 30-31). The aforementioned Hunnish couplet belongs to the fourth century AD.

I will now present further evidences to substantiate this argument of Ramstedt but those evidences presented below date back to the third and first centuries B.C.

One of Hunnic words which occurs in Chinese annals is 谷蠡 *Luli/Lùlí* (210 B.C.E) which is the title of an officer under the yabghu degree, who governs the military and administrative affairs in Huns. (Ssu-ma Ch'ien, 2011: 261, 337). Other readings of [谷] *Lù* are *Gǔ* or *Yù* (Pulleyblank, 1991: 201; Schuessler, 2014: 259) and So-yin, the commentary of Shiji "The Grand Scribe's Records", glosses *Ku* 谷 as *Lu* (Ssu-ma Ch'ien, 2011: 337). As it is seen below, readings [*Kuli* < *Guli* < *Lùlí*] of this kind points to an historical truth, It is said that Hunnic title is associated with *Gyula/Yula*, which is a title used by the Hungarians in medieval age (Csornai, 2009: 35) and indeed a Turkic borrowing (Rady, 2000: 13).

This title in Huns' language is clearly related to the words *kula* 'judge, leader, prince, ruler' (Tavkul 2000: 279) in the Karachay-Malkar dialect, *gola* ['kolağası (rank in the Ottoman army between captain and major), senior captain'] (DS 1972/VI: 2097) and the word *kol* which means 'military unity, army and soldier' (Çağbayır, 2007/III: 2713) in Turkish. Apart from all these, the title mentioned is the exact equivalence of the words *koşu* 'soldier' (DS, 1975/VIII: 2934), *koşuun* meaning 'army, soldier' (Yudahin, 1998: 493) in Kyrgyz, *qoşun* 'army, military unit' (Necip, 2013: 245) in Uighuri and etc.

The fact that Hunnic *kuli* is identical with *koşu* is a good evidence in favour of the view that the Huns' language had Oghuric character even in third century B.C. because there is change *-l* to *-ş* between both words.

As to the main Hunnic word which will be explained. The Chinese source mentioning the experiences during the oath-taking ceremony due to the reason that Hun shan-yü Huhanye was subject to China (or rather 'swearing' due to this reason) cites two words in Huns language: 徑路 *Kinglu* [Hunnic knife] and 留犁 *Liúli* [a rice spoon made of gold] (Taskina, 1973: 46, 142).

F. Hirth has revealed that the word *kinglu* [kingluk < kingrak] is *kingırak* 'a two-edged knife, a sabre' used in Turkic dialects (1908: 66-67). Hunnic word was borrowed by the Mongols as *kingar* 'large knife (often with two blades)' (Lessing, 1960: 470). The fact that Hunnic *Kinglu* is identical with Turkic *kingırak* is a well-known fact but 留犁 *Liúli* has not been explained by any linguists until now.

The word *iro* 'fork' (Naskali, 2007: 2005) in Khakass seems to be the equivalent of the word, which was reconstructed as a final pre-form *Ruri* (Dybo, 2007: 94) [> *Uri* > *Iro*] and means spoon. The words *çatal* 'fork', *kaşık* 'spoon' and *kepçe* 'scoop' in modern Turkish are commonly used interchangeably in Turkic dialects. To give an example, Turkish word *kaşık* 'spoon' is mentioned in Chagatai dialect as *kişik* 'fork'. The forms *kuiiri* 'big spoon' in Finnish and *kuirri* 'spoon made of wood' (Collinder, 1955: 26) in Karel dialect confirm that the word in Khakas meant spoon in old times. The word *iro* in Khakass may be associated with Hunnic word within this context but I don't favour this kind of inference.

The reason that *Liúli* is constructed as *Ruri* is based on the linguistic view that Han period initial *l-* was used for foreign *r* and *l*. This may be true for some examples but as it is seen above, *Lùli* title appears to be the exact equivalent of Turkic words *kola*, *gola*, *kol* and *koşu* and it confirms that initial *l-* was used for also foreign *g-*, *k-* and *y-*.

If we accept that initial *l-* is equal to foreign *k-* as a linguistic rule and apply this to Hunnic *Liuli* a form such as *Kiuli* [> *Kuli* > *Kulik*] will appear.

Kulik is identical with *kalak* which means 'spoon' in Kazakh, Uigur, Shor, Baraba Tatar, Kazan Tatar, Tobol dialects (Räsänen, 1969: 225; Shaw, 2014: 135). The word *kalak*, the equivalent of *kaşık* 'spoon' in other Turkic dialects, carries

Oghuric character because it has letter *-l*. The form *Kulik* is much closer to the form *qoşuk* ‘spoon’ (Necip, 2013: 245) in Uighur and *kuşik* ‘spoon’ (Öztopçu et al. 1999: 141) in Uzbek rather than the form *kalak* and there is the change /l/ > /ş/ between words. Hunnic *kulik* is identical with *kuşik* in Uzbek. I have no doubt that the original form of Hunnic *liuli* is *kulik* and this points to the fact that Hunnic was a language having Oghuric character even in the first century B.C.

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