

## **Is the Tocharian Mule an “Iranian Horse” or a “Turkic Donkey”? Further examples for Proto-Turkic \*/t<sub>2</sub>/ [ts]**

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**Abstract:** Tocharian B *etswe* ‘mule’ is a newly attested word. It has been identified as a loan from Iranian \**atswa* (< Proto-Indo-European \**h<sub>1</sub>ékwos* ‘horse’). The present study proposes a Turkic etymology for the Tocharian word in question. It has been suggested that the Proto-Turkic form \**ät<sub>2</sub>gä* [ɛt<sup>h</sup>ɣε] ‘donkey’, the origin of the Common Turkic *äsgäk* and Khalaj *äsgä*, is the source of the Tocharian B *etswe*. Tocharian /w/ is a substitution of the Proto-Turkic phoneme \*/g/.

An etymology has also been proposed for Proto-Turkic \**ät<sub>2</sub>gä*. According to this, the form \**ät<sub>2</sub>gä* originally denotes ‘eared (animal)’ and derives from the root \**ät<sub>2</sub>i* ‘ear’, which is also the root of the verb \**ät<sub>2</sub>id-* ‘to hear’ (> Common Turkic *äşid-*, Chuvash *ilt-*). The Proto-Turkic root \**ät<sub>2</sub>i* ‘ear’ is related to the Akkadian *has̄su(m)* /*hats̄su(m)*/ ‘ear; wisdom’ and further Akkadian loanwords in Turkic are discussed.

**Keywords:** Proto-Turkic, Tocharian, Iranian, Akkadian, loanword, *äsgäk*, *etswe*

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**Özet: *Toharca Katır bir “İran Atı” mı yoksa bir “Türk Eşeği” mi?***  
***Proto-Türkçe \*/t<sub>2</sub>/ [ts] için İlave Örnekler***

Toharca B *etswe* ‘katır’ yeni tanımlanmış bir kelimedir. Bu kelime, İranca \**atswa*’dan (< Proto-Hint-Avrupa \**h<sub>1</sub>ékwos* ‘at’) bir alıntı olarak teşhis edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, söz konusu Toharca kelime için Türkçe bir etimoloji önermektedir. Genel Türkçe *äsgäk* ve Halaçça *äşgä* sözcüklerinin kökeni olan Proto-Türkçe \**ät<sub>2</sub>gä* [ets<sup>h</sup>] ‘eşek’ biçiminin Toharca B *etswe*’nin kaynağı olduğu ileri sürülmüştür. Toharca /w/, Proto-Türkçe \*/g/ sesbiriminin bir ikamesidir.

Proto-Türkçe \**ät<sub>2</sub>gä* için de bir etimoloji önerilmiştir. Buna göre, \**ät<sub>2</sub>gä* biçimi aslen ‘kulaklı (hayvan)’ anlamına geliyor olup \**ät<sub>2</sub>i* ‘kulak’ kökünden türemiştir ve bu kök \**ät<sub>2</sub>id-* ‘duymak’ (> Genel Türkçe *äşid-*, Çuvaşça *ilt-*) fiilinin de köküdür. Proto-Türkçe \**ät<sub>2</sub>i* ‘kulak’ kökü ise Akadca *has̄tu(m)* /*hats̄tu(m)*/ ‘kulak; bilgelik’ ile ilişkilendirilmiş ve Türkçedeki diğer Akadca alıntılar tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Proto-Türkçe, Toharca, İranca, Akadca, alıntı, *äsgäk*, *etswe*

### 1. Various etymologies for CT *äsgäk* ‘donkey, ass’

The Common Turkic word for ‘donkey, ass’ is attested in two main forms: Kh. *äşgä* ‘donkey’ (WCh 111; Doerfer 1987: 63 §95, 287) and CT *äsgäk* ‘donkey, ass’ (ED 260; ESTJa I: 317–318; Hauenschild 2003: 47–48). The historical and modern variants such as *äşyäk* in Dīwān Luyāt at-Turk, *eşşäk* in Azerbaijani and *eştek* in Altai originate from CT *äsgäk*. Chuv. *ašak* (< \**äşäk*) ‘donkey, ass’ (Fedotov 1996/II: 76) is a loanword from Tatar.

Proposed etymologies have been extensively dealt with by Sevortjan (ESTJa I: 317), Eren (TDES 138–140) and Stachowski (KEWT 146). These can be divided into six groups:

1. CT *äsgäk* < CT *äš-* ‘to amble’ (ED 260; restated in OTWF 393 and UW Nb II.2: 303–304; endorsed by Hauenschild 2003: 48).
2. CT *äsgäk* < CT *eš* ‘companion’ (Bang 1934: 203–204, fn. 5; endorsed by ATG 62 §59, VEWT 51, TMEN II §486; rejected in OTWF 74, fn. 95, 393; doubted by Hauenschild 2003: 48).

3. CT *äšgäk* ← Arm. *եղ* *ēš*<sup>1</sup> ‘donkey’ (← Sum. *anšu* ‘donkey’) (Schrader 1901: 206, restated by Pedersen 1903: 561, Menges 1995: 98, 166, 178, implicitly rejected by Dankoff 1995: 160).
4. CT *äšgäk* < PT \**älji* ~ \**älči* ← Sum. *anšu* ‘donkey’ (Tekin 1971–1972: 357; still advocated by Parpolo 2016: 18).
5. CT *äškäk* (sic) < Pre-Turkic \**eljik-ek* and Kh. *ešge* < \**eške* < Pre-Turkic \**eljike* (KEWT 146).
6. CT *äšgäk* < CT \**äši* ‘ear’ (> CT *äšid-* ‘to hear’) (Georg 1999/2000: 154, fn. 44).<sup>2</sup>

In my opinion, the form *äšgäk* is formed with the diminutive suffix +(A)*k* (Doerfer 1987: 63 §95; OTWF 41–42). The function of +(A)*k* in *äšgäk* is obscure. Similarly, CT *ïvik*<sup>3</sup> ‘goitered gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*)’ is derived from \**ïvi* ‘deer, reindeer’ (> CT *ivi*). The former animal is somewhat smaller in size than the latter (see Hauenschmid 2003: 100). It is possible that *äšgäk* originally denoted a donkey breed that is smaller than *äšgä*. The second syllable <sup>o</sup>*gA* of CT *äšgä* is likely to be +*gA*, which is a common marker for animal names (OTWF 83–85).<sup>4</sup> The same sequence of +*gA* and +(A)*k* is also found in \**karinčga+k* > CT *karinčak* ‘ant’ (ED 662). The ultimate base of *äšgäk* is then CT \**äš* or \**äši*.

I would like to favour the etymology of Georg (1999/2000) and regard CT \**äš(i)* ‘ear’ as the common base of CT *äšgä* ‘donkey’ and CT *äšid-* ‘to hear’ (Kh. *äšit-* ~ *ešit-* ~ *išit-* ~ *išüt-* ~ *ešit-* ~ \**üšüt-*). Considering that the Chuvash cognate of CT *äšid-* is *ilt-* (< \**elt-* <

<sup>1</sup> The Armenian word has been compared both with the cognates of PIE \**h<sub>1</sub>ékwos* ‘horse’ and Hurrian *ešši* / *išši* ‘horse’ (see Martirosyan 2010: 276–277). The Indo-Iranian origin of the Hurrian word and the Hurrian origin of the Armenian *ēš* ‘donkey’ are disputed by Winter (1997). Winter argues for the Armenian origin of the Hurrian word.

<sup>2</sup> Based on Doerfer’s (1988: 172) supposition that the original Turkic word for ‘ear’ may be hidden in *äši+d-* and it goes back to \**älji*; Georg (1999/2000: 154, fn. 44) suspected that *äšgäk* ‘donkey’ may have derived from the same base, namely CT \**äši* ‘ear’.

<sup>3</sup> OU *yïvik* ‘gazelle’ (Tezcan 1974: 107) rather suggests CT \**hïvik*.

<sup>4</sup> Erdal (OTWF 83) derived CT *karga* from CT *kara* ‘black’ and assumed a syncope from \**kara+ga*. Considering that it rather goes back to \**kariga* (cf. CM \**kerie* ‘crow’), its base may be \**karig* ‘bad voice’, which also underlies the verb *kar(i)g+a-* > *karga-* ‘to curse’ (ED 655).

\*älit-), it is possible to reconstruct the Bulgar Turkic word for ‘donkey’ as \*älgä(k).

This etymology is perfectly plausible since donkeys stand out with their long ears, and it is certainly not unique. Mo. čikitei, which derives from čikin ‘ear’ and literally means ‘having ears, eared’, also denotes ‘wild ass of the Asiatic steppe, kulan, Equus hemionus’ (Lessing 1995: 182, 984). Man. cihetei ‘Equus hemionus: wild ass’ (Norman 2013: 55) is a borrowing from Mongolic čikitei. Moghol urluchighalu (recte urtuchighatu) (Weiers 1971: 165) and colloquial German *Langohr*, which literally mean ‘long-eared’ and ‘long ear’ respectively, signify ‘donkey’.

CT *kulan* ‘wild ass’ (ED 622; ÈSTJa VI: 127–128; Hauenschild 2003: 149–150) possibly represents a similar semantic derivation. Its base may be identified with \*kul ‘ear’ (> CT *kulkak* ‘id.’) (Georg 1999/2000: 152–157; see also OTWF 75). Its second syllable is likely to be a marker for animal names. Numerous Old and Common Turkic opaque animal names end in °An and °lAn: *aplan* ‘type of rat’, *arslan* ‘lion’, *atan* ‘gelded camel’, *burslan* ‘tiger’, *čādan* ‘scorpion’, *ingän* ‘female camel’, *ktüzän* ‘type of rat, gerboa’, *tajan* ‘white-headed crow’, *yayan* ~ *yagan* ‘elephant’, *yamlan* ‘type of rat’, *yilan* ‘snake’. Ramstedt (KWb 196) already implied a connection between *kulan* and \*kulku-, which gave *χulχvχv* ‘die ohren an den kopf legen’ [to put one’s ears back] in Kalmyk.

## 2. Possible Altaic connections of CT äšgäk ‘donkey, ass’

In the Altaistic literature, CT äšgäk has generally been considered cognate with Mo. *eljigen* ‘donkey’ and Man. *eihen* ‘donkey’ (Ramstedt 1903: 97; Gombocz 1912/13: 18; Poppe 1927: 114; KWb 119a, 130b; Ramstedt 1957: 177; Poppe 1960: 86, 140; EDAL 503). In this comparison, Mo. -lj- is argued to correspond to the Common Turkic \*-š-<sup>5</sup> and the postconsonantal -g- is simply neglected.<sup>6</sup> In a

<sup>5</sup> There are indeed Turco-Mongolic cognates where Mo. -lj- corresponds to CT -š-, e.g., MM *qoryalji* ‘lead’ (Gül 2016: 204), WM *qoryoljin* ‘lead’ (Lessing 1995: 966) : CT *korgašin* (*korgošin*?) ‘lead’ (ED 656–657).

<sup>6</sup> Doerfer (TMEN II §486) reconstructed PT \*el'd'ägen, which doesn’t solve the problem. Gombocz (1914: 28) traced Mo. *elčigen* (sic) back to \*eltigen and

few instances including Mo. *eljigen*, Mo. *-lj-* clearly corresponds to CT *-šg-*. These words are borrowed from Bulgar Turkic. Thus, Mo. *-lj-* is, in fact, a substitution for BT *\*-lg-*. We find this Turco-Mongolic correspondence in at least three Turkic loanwords in Mongolic.

1. CM *\*eljigen* ‘donkey’ (Nugteren 2011: 328) : CT *äšgäk* ‘donkey, ass’ (ED 260).
2. MM *qaljan* (= Chag. *qašqa*) ‘s plešinoj’ (Poppe 1938: 289), WM *qaljan* ~ *qaljin* ~ *yaljin* ‘bald-headed; blaze on the forehead (of a horse, ox, etc.)’ (Lessing 1995: 922–923, 1203) : OT *kašga* ‘(of an animal) with a white head and darker body or with a white blaze on the forehead’ (ED 671–672), OU *kišga* ‘weißlich’ (Zieme 2015: 222).
3. MM *bolja-* ‘(e. Termin) verabreden, bestimmen (約會)’ (Haenisch 1939: 19), WM *bolja-* ~ *boljo-* ‘to agree on; to make an appointment; to determine beforehand, prearrange; to foresee, surmise, know beforehand’ (Lessing 1995: 119) : CT *\*bošgu-* ‘to learn’ > OT *bošgun-* ‘to learn, receive instruction’ (ED 379), OT *bošgur-* ‘to teach, instruct’ (ED 380), OT *bošgut* ‘instruction, teaching’ (ED 379).

Given the comparisons above, I propose explaining the Mongolic *\*-lj-* as having changed from an earlier *\*-lg-*, which corresponds to BT *\*-lg-*. For the change of *\*g* to *j* in front of front vowels, there are many examples in Mongolic: MM *jam* ‘Post(stelle), Relais (站)’ (Haenisch 1939: 85), WM *jam* ‘route, road, way, pass’ (Lessing 1995: 1033) < Tabg. *\*yiam* (cf. Man. *giyamun* ‘relay station, relay post’) (Vovin 2007: 195), Mo. *jidə* ‘spear’ < *\*gida* (cf. Man. *gida*) (← Ch. jiá 夏 LMC kja:t) (MT 24; Pulleyblank 1991: 144), CM *\*kürjeg* ~ *\*kürje* ‘spade, shovel’ (Nugteren 2011: 436) < *\*kür(i)gä(k)* ← CT *kürgäk* ‘spade, shovel’ (ED 742–743), CM *jala-* ‘to invite’ (Lessing 1995: 1029) < *\*giala-* > Kit. *\*X(i)aL(i)-* ‘to invite (請)’ (Shimunek 2007: 100).

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compared its assumed base *\*el-t-* with Shor and Teleut *äš-t-äk*. Menges (1995: 98) instead argued that the variant *äšyäk* might well be from an older *\*äšdäk*, which he further compared with Mo. *\*älji-gän* and *äštäk* (< *\*äšd'äk?*) in Teleut and Shor.

Thus, we can show the history of CM *\*eljigen* and Jurchenic *\*eliken* as follows:

CM *\*eljigen* ‘donkey’ (Nugteren 2011: 328) < \**elgiken* < \**elgeken* ← BT *\*älgäkä* (corresponding to CT *äšgäk*).

Man. *eihen* ‘1. donkey, ass; 2. brown’ (Norman 2013: 91), Jur. [額黑] \**ehe*<sup>7</sup> ‘donkey (驢)’ (Kane 1989 §436), Jur. [厄恨] *eihen* ‘ass (驢)’ (Kiyose 1977: 105 §141), Xibe *e'ixəN* ‘donkey, ass’ (Yamamoto 1969: 108) < \**eyihen*<sup>8</sup> < \**eliken* ← Mo. *\*eligen* ← BT *\*äligä* (corresponding to Kh. *äšgä*).

### 3. Two competing etymologies for Tocharian B *etswe* ‘mule’

#### 3.1. Tocharian B *etswe* ‘mule’ as an Iranian loanword

Tch. B *etswe* ‘mule’, which occurs in a Tocharian B–Old Uyghur bilingual text as *etswentsa* (perl. pl.), is first identified by Peyrot (2015: 222–223). The full edition of the bilingual is published by Peyrot, Pinault, and Wilkens (2019).

Peyrot (2015: 223; 2018) regarded Tch. B. *etswe* as a loanword from the Old Iranian *\*atswa-* ‘horse’ (cf. Avestan *aspā-*, Sogdian *'sp*, Khotanese *aśśa-*, Sanskrit *aśva-*). This etymology is restated in Peyrot–Pinault–Wilkens (2019: 84). According to Peyrot (2018: 272), the Tocharian word is borrowed from an Old Iranian dialect other than “Old Sakan”, in which *\*ču* was depalatalised to *\*tsw*. Another Iranian loanword that features the same depalatalization is Tch. B *tsain*<sup>9</sup>, pl. *tsainwa* ‘weapon’ < PTch. *\*tsainu* ← Old Iranian

<sup>7</sup> Kara (1991: 151) proposed emending this reading to *\*e[i]xe* or *e[l]xe*.

<sup>8</sup> The change of *\*Vli* > *Vyi* is also observed in Jurchenic *\*aličin* ~ *\*aličun* ‘gold’ > Jur. *\*alčun* / *alčuqu* (personal and place name) [金] (Sūn 2004: 198–199), Jur. [安春溫] *ančun* ‘gold (金)’ (Kiyose 1977: 128 §568), Jur. [安出] *\*anču* ‘gold (金)’ (Kane 1989: §1064), Man. *aisin* ‘gold’ (Norman 2013: 10), Spoken Manchu *'a'išin* [?aɪʃɪn] ‘gold (金)’ (Yamamoto 1969 §2118), Xibe *ajšin* [aj'.ɿŋ] ‘gold (金)’ (Kim et al. 2008: 52), Bala [antʃugun] ‘gold’, Alchuka [anʃin] ‘gold’ (Mù 1987: 11). Note that Ligeti (1953: 225) reads Jur. *alčun*. Jurchenic *\*aličin* ~ *\*aličun* is clearly related to Mo. *altan* ‘gold’ and Tu. *altun* ‘gold’. See also Krippes (1992: 101–102).

<sup>9</sup> The Tocharian B noun was brought into connection with Chinese *jiàn* 箭 ‘arrow’ by Schuessler (2009: 248), which he reconstructed as *\*tsens* for Old Chinese.

\**dzainu*<sup>-10</sup> (cf. Avestan *zāena-* ‘weapon’, *zāenuš-* ‘baldric’) (Peyrot 2018: 270). Adams (HCHIL 2: 1369) mentioned Tch. B *tsaiññe* ‘ornament’ as a further instance, which he traced back to the Pre-Proto-Iranian \**dzai*<sup>-11</sup> ‘to equip’ (see also Adams 2013: 811).

Peyrot (2018: 280) concluded that this dialect may be the steppe Iranian, which he called “Scythian”. Peyrot’s proposal for the changes in Iranian and the borrowing from Iranian to Tocharian can be reproduced as follows: PIE \**h₁ékwos* ‘horse’ > Proto-Indo-Iranian \**áćya-* ‘horse’ (HCHIL 3: 1946) > Proto-Iranian \**átsya*<sup>-12</sup> ‘horse’ (HCHIL 1: 574; see also ÉSIJa I: 243–246) > Old Iranian \**atswa* → PTch. \**ætswæ* > Tch. B *etswe* ‘mule’.

Although Peyrot’s etymology is convincing regarding its vocalism, it remains unclear in which Old Iranian dialect \**ću* was depalatalised. Attested Old Iranian languages exhibit only /s/ and /θ/ as the reflex of \**ć*. Mayrhofer (2006: 25) emphasized that Scythian and its descendant languages such as Sarmatian and Ossetian reflect only a form in \**aspas-* ‘horse’ with \*/sp/. In this case, Tch. B *tsain*, *tsaiññe* and *etswe* must be better classified as Proto-Iranian loanwords in Tocharian. Adams already acknowledged that these loanwords “show very early, even pre-Proto-Iranian phonology” (HCHIL 2: 1369).

Semantics is the soft spot of Peyrot’s etymology. Iranian \**asya-* first and foremost denotes ‘horse’ and ‘steed’. In the Old and Middle Iranian periods, the meaning ‘mule’ is not attested (ÉSIJa I: 243). If Tch. B *etswe* is of Iranian origin, the meaning ‘mule’ must have emerged in Tocharian itself. Although semantic changes are generally trivialised in diachronic linguistics, it must be

<sup>10</sup> The Iranian word derives from the Proto-Iranian \**zai-* ‘to set in motion, impel’ < PIE \**ǵʰei-* ‘to impel, to drive’ (Cheung 2007: 461–462).

<sup>11</sup> The Pre-Proto-Iranian \**dzai-* corresponds to \**zai-* ‘to equip, adorn’ in Cheung’s (2007: 462) reconstruction who noted that “this root is apparently exclusively Ir[anian] with no I[ndo-]E[uropean] cognates”.

<sup>12</sup> “In Proto-Iranian, the first series (\**ć*, \**j*, \**jʰ*) is widely held to have been composed of affricates, but their exact point of articulation cannot be decided [...] In the transition from Proto-Iranian to the Old Iranian languages, their treatment diverges. In all Iranian languages except the southwestern ones, the alveolar or prepalatal affricate /ts/ evolves to the corresponding alveolar sibilant /s/.” (HCHIL 1: 492)

demonstrable that the proposed semantic change is not only possible but also likely in the given cultural context. In summary, even though the Iranian origin of Tch. B *etswe* cannot be falsified, it leaves a question mark behind.

### 3.2. Tocharian B *etswe* ‘mule’ as a Turkic loanword

In a previous study (Ünal 2022), I demonstrated that CT /š/ and Chuv. /l/ go back to the Proto-Turkic \*/t<sub>2</sub>/ with the phonetic value of [ts]. Proto-Turkic \*/t<sub>2</sub>/ [ts] evolved to [θ] in Late Proto-Turkic and [θ] changed to [š] and [l] (or a similar lateral) in Common Turkic and Bulgar Turkic, respectively. According to this, CT äšgä and BT \*älgä(k) can be safely traced back to PT \*ät<sub>2</sub>gä [ət<sup>h</sup>ɣε].

In my view, Tch. B *etswe* ‘mule’ is a direct loanword from PT \*ät<sub>2</sub>gä, which later yielded CT äšgä and the more common äšgäk. If this is the case, Tch. B /w/ is a substitution for the Turkic \*/g/ [ɣ] because a voiced velar fricative was missing in Tocharian B. Yaqui, a Uto-Aztec language of Mexico whose phonological system lacks /g/, substituted the same consonant in Spanish loanwords with /w/ (or /k/) (Fernández 2009: 834). From the semantic point of view, an evolution from ‘donkey, ass’ to ‘mule’ is more likely than from ‘horse, steed’ to ‘mule’. Russian ишак –a borrowing from Common Turkic– also means ‘donkey, ass’ as well as ‘mule’ (Fasmer 1986–1987/2: 146).

At this point, I would like to add one more piece of evidence for PT \*/t<sub>2</sub>/ [ts]. This piece of evidence stems from the Old Paekche language, which was spoken in the Paekche (百濟) Kingdom, one of the three kingdoms of Korea, which lasted for the first seven centuries of the common era. Old Paekche 俱知 \*kuti or \*kutI ‘bird name, falcon’ (Miller 1979: 36–42; To 1987: 458; Bentley 2000: 425–426; Vovin 2005: 128; Vovin 2013: 222) may be seen as an indirect loanword from PT \*kut<sub>2</sub>i (or \*gut<sub>2</sub>i) > CT kuš ‘bird (in general), bird of prey, eagle, falcon’ (ED 670; TMEN III: 547–548; ÉSTJa VI: 180–182). Miller (1979: 37–38) has already put forth that these two words are related. However, he could not establish the equation and solve the encountered problem because he stuck to the traditional Altaic reconstruction \*kül<sub>2</sub>. Between Proto-Turkic and Old Paekche languages, Mo. \*gut<sub>2</sub>i or \*kut<sub>2</sub>i must have served as an

intermediary.<sup>13</sup> The semantic change from ‘bird’ to ‘bird of prey, falcon’ is also found in the development of CM \**sibaun* ‘bird’ to MNT *šibao’un* ‘small bird’ and Dag. *šɔyɔ:*, *šɔwɔ:* ‘falcon’ (Nugteren 2011: 488).

As a loanword from Turkic, Old Paekche 俱知 *\*kuti* or *\*kutI* ‘falcon’ is not isolated. More loanwords of ultimately Turkic origin can be found in Old Paekche. Only to name a few, the following examples may be given. Further research on this subject, however, lies beyond the scope and purpose of the present study.

**1.** Pkch. *\*arosi*, *\*arusi* ‘bottom, below’ (cf. MK *àlá*, *àláy* < *\*àlá-*  
*áy* ‘below, bottom’) (Bentley 2000: 424–425; Vovin 2005: 125–126) ← Tu. *\*al* or *\*äl* (DLT *altin*, Kh. *a:lt*, *alt*) ‘below, under’ > OU *al* ‘place beneath’ (GOT 182), OU *altin* ‘unten, unten befindlich, unter, untere(r, -s), Unter-; (mit Abl.) jünger (als); Nadir’ [below, situated below, under, lower, sub-; (with ablative) younger (than); nadir] (HWAU 38–39), OU *aldırti* ‘von unten, unten; nach unten; unter’ [from below, down; downwards; under] (HWAU 28), OU *aldırtın* ‘vorn, nach vorn; unten’ [in front, towards the front; below] (HWAU 28).

**2.** Pkch. *\*hol* ~ *\*kol* ‘valley’ (To 1987: 460) ← Tg. *\*gol* (cf. Man. *golo* ‘river bed; province, district’ [Norman 2013: 147]) ← Mo. *\*gol* ‘river, brook, streamlet, ditch’ (Nugteren 2011: 343) / Tuyuhun *\*kɔl* ~ *\*kʰɔl* ‘river (ʃʃl̥)’ (Shimunek 2017: 175–177, 347) ← Tu. *kɔl* (Tkm. *gɔl*) ‘valley’ (ED 614–615).

**3.** Pkch. *\*soy* ‘iron’ (To 1987: 459) ← Mo. *†soi*<sup>14</sup> ← Tu. *čoy* ‘cast iron’<sup>15</sup> > Teleut *čoy* ~ *šoy*, Kumandy *čøy*, Sagai *soy*, Koibal *soy*, Tuvan *šoy* (TMEN III: 124; VEWT 113b).

<sup>13</sup> WM *yuji* (*tagai*) ‘a kind of a bird’ (Lessing 1995: 371) or WM *qučan qoular* ‘hawfinch, Coccothraustes coccothraustes’ (Lessing 1995: 979) may be a relic of Mo. *\*gutii* or *\*kutii*. For the former, we can assume a change as follows: *yūji* < *\*gudii* < *\*gutii*. For the latter, the following change is possible: *\*kučān* (spelt *qučan*) < *\*kuči+yan* < *\*kuči* < *\*kutii*.

<sup>14</sup> The change of onset *\*č- > s-* in Turkic loanwords in Mongolic is also attested in *\*sīgai* ~ *\*sīa* ‘anklebone; bone used in games’ (Nugteren 2011: 489) borrowed from Tu. *\*čīkā* > CT *čīk* ~ *čik* ‘a technical term in the game of knucklebones, the concave side of knucklebone’ (ED 413).

<sup>15</sup> It is uncertain whether Turkic *\*čoy* ‘cast iron’ und *čōdīn* ‘bronze’ (ED 403) are related.

4. Pkch. *\*tumōn* ‘ten thousand’ (To 1987: 460) ← Jur. *\*tumen* ‘ten thousand’ (Krippes 1992: 104–105) ← Mo. *\*tümen* ‘ten thousand; multitude’ (Nugteren 2011: 527) ← Tu. *tümän* ‘ten thousand’ (ED 507–508).<sup>16</sup>

#### 4. An excursion on the Turkic loanwords in Tocharian

Turkic loanwords in Tocharian have been the subject of scientific studies since Pedersen (1944: 10–11) and Van Windekens (1964: 595–596). Only three of the proposed loanwords discussed in these studies can be deemed *probable* (Lubotsky–Starostin 2003: 257–262; Dybo 2003: 92–94).

1. Tch. B *ām* ‘silence; quietly, still’ [without IE etymology] (Adams 2013: 47) ← PT *\*am(̄V)* ‘quiet, calm’ > *\*am+i-* > CT *\*amī-* (> *amil*<sup>17</sup> ‘quiet, mild, peaceful’, *amīrt-* ‘to quieten, to calm’, *amrīl-* ‘to be at peace’) → Mo. *amu*<sup>18</sup> ‘to rest, to relax’ (Ünal 2019: 522).
2. Tch. B *pärseri\** ~ *pärseri\** ‘(head-)louse’ (?) [without IE etymology] (Adams 2013: 401) ?← PT *\*birčä* (or *bırča*) ‘flea’ (Tatar *borča*) (ED 362), Chuv. *päršä* ‘flea’ (Fedotov 1996/I: 402).
3. Tch. B *peske*<sup>19</sup> ‘clarified butter, ghee’ (Adams 2013: 430) ?← CT *\*bišig* < CT *\*biš-* ~ *\*biš-* ‘to stir, to churn; to smear’ (ED 377; ÈSTJa II: 309–310; Stachowski 1993: 61, s.v. *bis*).<sup>20</sup>

Only two or three loanwords can be deemed certain. I formulated the first one in a previous study (Ünal 2022: 43, fn. 84, 66). The

<sup>16</sup> The Turkic numeral is probably a loanword from Tch. A *tmām* ‘ten thousand’ whose origin itself is uncertain.

<sup>17</sup> If OT *amil* is cognate with Kh. *havul, ha·vul* ‘gut’ (WCh 127), the Proto-Turkic form must be reconstructed as *\*pam(̄V)*. If this is the case, the Turco-Tocharian etymology must be discarded.

<sup>18</sup> Nugteren (2011: 348) reconstructed the same verb as *\*hamu-* ‘to rest’.

<sup>19</sup> Róna-Tas (1974: 502) regarded PT *biš-* as a borrowing from Proto-Tocharian B *\*peš-* (< PIE *\*bhei(ə)-, \*bhī-* ‘to beat’). Isebaert (1980: 162–163) considered Tch. B *peske* a loanword from Middle Iranian *\*pēšk* ‘milky’ < *\*payuška-*, derived from *\*payu-* or *\*payuš-* ‘fat; milk’. Having mentioned the possibility of separate borrowings from Iranian into Turkic and Tocharian, Reinhart (1994: 77–78) objected to the Tocharian or Iranian origin of the Turkic verb.

<sup>20</sup> CT *\*biš-* ~ *\*biš-* ‘to stir, to churn; to smear (tr.)’ (> DLT *biš-*, Kirghiz *biš-*, Kazakh *bis-*, Tuvan *biš-*, Yak. *bis-* etc.) is to be strictly distinguished from CT *\*biš-* ~ *\*biš-* ‘to come to maturity, ripen (intr.)’ (ED 376–377).

second one is the focus of the present study. The third one is a new comparison.

1. Tch. AB *tsit* ‘to touch’ [without IE etymology] (Malzahn 2010: 992–993; Adams 2013: 807) < CTch. \**tsit* ← PT \**d<sub>2</sub>et,ā-* ['dzeth<sup>h</sup>ε-] ‘to reach’ > \**det(ā)-* > CT *yet-* ‘to overtake, catch up with (someone Acc.); to reach’ (ED 884–885), Chuv. *sít-* ‘to reach; to arrive; to catch up, to overtake’ (Fedotov 1996/II: 123–124).

2. Tch. B *etswe* ‘mule’ ← PT \**ätgä* ‘donkey’ > Kh. *äsgä* ‘donkey’.

3. Tch. B *kärś-* (†*kärc-*) ‘to chop up’ (Malzahn 2010: 578–579), *kärś-* ‘to cut up’ (Peyrot 2013: 584, 734), *kärc-* (or *kärś-*) ‘to hack up’ (Adams 2013: 172)<sup>21</sup> ← PT \**kirkă-* > CT *kirk-* (Tkm. *girk-*, Yak. *kirt-*, Kh. *qırq-*) ‘to shear (wool), to shorten (hair), to cut (paper etc.)’ (ED 651; VEWT 266; ÈSTJa VI: 236–237; HWAU 373),<sup>22</sup> Chuv. *xäräx-* (< \**kirk-*) ‘1. česat’ (grebnem, ščepkoj); 2. podrezat’ (napr. baxromu), podravnivat’ (kraja tkani)’ (ČRS 548), cf. CM \**kürga-* ‘to shave, shear, scrape’ (Nugteren 2011: 413).

Regarding the chronology of the borrowings, I guess that these words entered Tocharian from Proto-Turkic in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. This dating approximately corresponds to the “Common Tocharian” of Carling (2005: 60, 64–66). The contact might have occurred between Xiongnu and the Lesser Yuezhi. Further research on the contact between Turkic and Tocharian can bring more loanwords to light. For example, Tch. B *patsa* ‘bottom’ (Adams 2013: 387) may turn out to be the origin of CT \**(h)aš* > CT *ašāk* (Tkm. *ašāk*) ‘the foot of a mountain; low, below; humble’ (ED 259; ÈSTJa I: 214–216) and CT \**aš+garu* > HS (5a11) 〈’šrw〉 *ašaru*<sup>23</sup> ‘downwards’<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Aydemir (2014) equated this Tocharian verb to the Proto-Turkic \**kär-* ‘to hack up, cut (a notch)’ > \**kär-t-* ‘to gash, cut a notch’, \**kär-k-* ‘to hack up’. Phonologically this equation is problematic because Tch. B <ä> renders the mid high vowel [i].

<sup>22</sup> As already noted by many scholars, CT *kirk-* might be related to CT \**kür-* ‘to break, to smash, to crush; to annihilate; to scrape, to strip (hair)’ (ED 643; HWAU 373).

<sup>23</sup> Read as *aširū* by Şehsuvaroğlu (1961: 5) and *aširū* in TS (265).

<sup>24</sup> The context makes the meaning clear: *Götürdü kändöziünü ol kuyudan ašaru attı* ‘[The dog] went and threw himself down into the well’.

(Şehsuvaroğlu 1961, Pl. V), Tt. dial. *ašari*<sup>25</sup> ‘[Zf.] aşağı’ [(adv.) downwards] (DD I: 120; Mollova 2003: 19) if the unattestedness of \**h*- can be accounted for due to the scarcity of data. The borrowing of the Tocharian B word into Proto-Turkic and its change within Turkic can be shown as follows: Tch. B *patsa* ‘bottom’ → PT \**pat₂ā* [‘pʰatsa] > \**paθə* > CT \*(*h*)*aš* > \*(*h*)*aš+āk* ‘low, below’ (unattested in Kh.), \*(*h*)*aš+garu* ‘downwards’.<sup>26</sup>

### 5. On the Proto-Turkic word \**ät₂i* ‘ear’

As pointed out above, both CT *äsgä(k)* ‘donkey’ and CT *äsid-* (~ *eṣid-*) ‘to hear’ derive from \**äši* ‘ear’, which goes back to PT \**ät₂i*. CT *äsid-* ‘to hear’ must have been formed with +(A)d-, which forms only intransitive verbs (OTWF 485ff.).<sup>27</sup> Like all +(A)d- verbs, CT *äsid-* has /U/ in the converb and aorist (UW Nb I.2: 38). The adequate explanation for the unexpected transitivity would be that CT *äsid-* and Chuv. *ilt-* were originally intransitive (‘to have an ear’) and have secondarily become transitive.

One more word, namely *äšič* ‘cooking pot’ (ED 257), may have been formed from the same base unless it goes back to \**häšič* (unattested in Kh.).<sup>28</sup> The formative +(A)c forms mostly opaque names for containers (Ünal 2022: 23). Regarding the semantic

<sup>25</sup> Severtjan’s (ESTJa I: 215) explanation for *ašāri* (sic) as coming from *ašak* + *ari* is unacceptable.

<sup>26</sup> In two other nominal Tocharian loanwords in Turkic, the coda vowels of the Tocharian forms entered Turkic as reduced vowels: (1) Tch. B *ňyätse* ~ *ňätse* ‘danger; plague, distress’ → PT \**ńäsä* [‘ńa:sa] ~ \**ńät₂ä* [‘ńa:tsa] ‘loss, damage, death; mourning’ > CT *yās* ~ *yāš*, BT \**jās*; (2) PTch. \**jētse* ‘(outer) skin’ → PT \*(*i*)*äsä* [‘(*i*)eṣe] ~ \*(*i*)*ät₂ä* [‘(*i*)etse] ‘placenta’ > CT \**äs* (in Tuvan *esterji*) ~ *äš* ‘id.’ (Ünal 2022: 43–44). This is clearly related to the fact that in Tocharian B disyllabic words retract the accent to the initial syllable (HCHIL 2: 1307).

<sup>27</sup> Bang (1925: 49), Severtjan (ESTJa I: 318–319), Johanson (1978: 129) and Stachowski (KEWT 189) regarded *äsid-* as a disguised causative of \**äš-* (> Tatar dial. *iš-*, Kača *eš-*, Khakas *is-*, Kürük *äš-*, Sagai *es-*, Koibal *es-*). Tekin (1986: 151) argued for “an intensive stem in -d- derived from the simplex \**eš-* (< \**el²-*)”. Doerfer (1971: 444–446), on the other hand, regarded *äsid-* as a simplex.

<sup>28</sup> Elsewhere (Ünal 2022: 23), I tentatively identified the unattested base of *äšič* with CM \**hesi* ‘handle, grip’ (Nugteren 2011: 354) and PTg. \**päsin* ‘Stiel, Griff’ (Benzing 1956: 44) provided that it had an onset \**h*-.

relation of \**äši* ‘ear’ and *äšič* ‘cooking pot’, Tt. dial. *kulaklı* (lit. having ears) ‘1. büyük tencere, kazan; 2. iki kulplu sahan, yumurta tavası’ [1. large pot, cauldron; 2. two-handled frying pan, egg pan] (DS 2994) offers a perfect parallel.<sup>29</sup>

I think that PT \**ät<sub>2</sub>i* is an indirect loanword from Akkadian: PT \**ät<sub>2</sub>i* [ɛ'ts<sup>h</sup>i] or [æ'ts<sup>h</sup>i] ‘ear’ < PPT \**ät<sub>2</sub>it<sub>2</sub>V* ← Akk. *has̄tu(m)* /*hats̄tu(m)*/ ‘ear; wisdom’ (CDA<sup>2</sup> 109–110). The Akkadian word is also the origin of Hitt. *hazzizzi-*, *hazzizzu-* ‘ear; wit(s), wisdom’ (HED 3: 284–286) and Hurr. *hazzizzi* ‘hearing, perception, mind, intelligence, wisdom’ (BGH 141). If PPT \**ät<sub>2</sub>it<sub>2</sub>V* had ever existed, it must have undergone haplology and been simplified to PT \**ät<sub>2</sub>i*.

PT \**ät<sub>2</sub>i* is not a single instance. Two more Akkadian loanwords can be found in Turkic.

1. CT *baltu* ~ *baldu* (br. 〈b<sup>h</sup>a ltu〉 *baltu*) ‘(battle) axe’ (ED 333; Maue 2015: 249–250) ← Akk. *pāštu(m)*, *pāltu*; j[ung]B[abylonisch] pl[ural] also *pālātu* ‘axe, adze’ (CDA<sup>2</sup> 270).<sup>30</sup>

2. CT *älти* ~ *eltü* ‘lady, wife; sister-in-law’ (Li 1999: 304–305), VB *elti* ~ *elči* ‘a title for women (wife of a Khawaja)’ (Erdal 1993: 126) < PT \**älти*<sup>31</sup> ← Akk. *aššatum*; st[atus] constr[uctus]

<sup>29</sup> Pinault (2003: 176) saw in Old Turkic “*išič* or *äšič*” a loanword from Tch. A \**išäc* ‘a kind of clay’. This etymology is neither phonetically nor semantically cogent. The resemblance is coincidental. Moreover, Adams (HCHIL 2: 1369) gave the same word as *išcem* ‘brick, tile’ (< Proto-Iranian \**ištyám*).

<sup>30</sup> First put forward by Poppe (1953: 24–25) and Menges (1953: 302–303). Tremblay’s (2005: 425) Iranian etymology for this word, i.e. \**palatu* or \**pađu*, is unconvincing. Wilkens (UW Nb III.1: 102–103) regards the Iranian etymology as likely.

<sup>31</sup> The Yeniseian languages have a similar word for ‘woman, wife’: Kott *alit*, *alît*, *alat*, Arin *alte*, Assan *alit* (Werner 2002/I: 25) < PY \**?alit* (~ -í-) ‘wife, woman’ (Starostin 1995: 180). Werner (2004: 99–100), instead, reconstructed PY \**al-at* ‘woman’. Werner (2006: 21, 71, 78) analysed Kott *alit* as a compound of *al* ‘half’ and *hit* ‘man, human’. Vovin (2003: 392) read the Xiongnu gloss *yānzhī* 閼氏, 閼氏 ‘shān-yū’s wife’ as *?at-tij?*, *?at-tej?*, *?en-tij?*, *?en-tej?* and connected the supposedly underlying \**alte* or \**elte* to the Yeniseian forms above. Schuessler (2014: 268), instead, gave *?ian-kie* and interpreted it as \**Arke* ‘Queen of the Xiōngnú ruler’. Both OC *?ian-kie* in Schuessler’s reconstruction and \**qeēn-kje* in Zhèng Zhāng’s (2003: 463, 539) reconstruction is reminiscent of CT *yāngā* ~ *yāggā* ~ *yājā* ‘the wife of one’s father’s younger brother; junior aunt-in-law, senior sister-in-law’ (ED 950; Li 1999: 273–276), which must better be read *yānkā* since the Oghuz forms retain the postconsonantal velar.

O[ld]/j[ung]B[abylonisch] also *ašti*, j[ung]/N[eo-]B[abylonian]  
freq[uent(ly)] *alti* ‘wife’ [DAM] (CDA<sup>2</sup> 29).

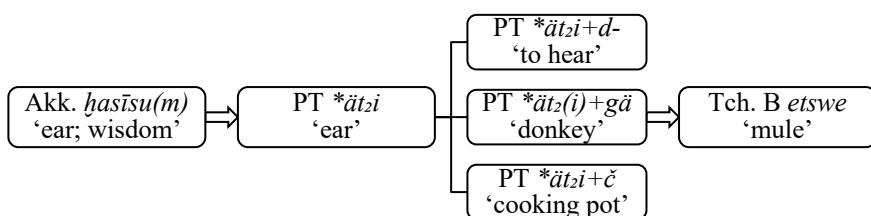
Doerfer (TMEN I §78) strongly doubted whether CT *baltu* ~ *baldu* is an Akkadian loanword since the word concerned does not occur in the vast linguistic area between Turkic and Akkadian. Róna-Tas (2022: 71) admitted that Turkic *balta* and Mongolian *haluka* < \**paluka* ‘(small) hammer’ can be traced back to a Semitic word but identified the latter with a form related to the Akkadian *pilakka* (stem: *p-l-k* ‘to cut’). He argued that the word was brought to the Turks and Mongols through the mediation of different Iranian languages at different times.

In the case of the Old Uyghur *käväl* ‘Zuchtpferd, Rennpferd’ [breeding horse, racehorse] (HWAU 359) and Qarakhanid *käväl* ‘a well-bred fast horse’ (ED 689), which are somehow related to the Latin *caballus* ‘horse, esp. workhorse’ (de Vaan 2008: 77), Greek καβάλλης ‘workhorse, nag, ἐργάτης ἵππος’ (Beekes 2010: 611), Modern Persian *kawal* ‘a baggage-horse, clumsy and slow’ (Steingass 1963: 1063), Proto-Slavic \**kobyla* ‘mare’ (Trubačev 1974–2013/10: 93–98) and perhaps to the Khotan Saka *kabä* ‘horse(?)’ (Bailey 1979: 52), we are faced with the same situation although the loanword character cannot be doubted. This group of words probably originated from PIE \**keb-* ~ \**kob-* ‘±horse’ (Simon 2005). Even if this is the case, the Old Turkic *käväl* can neither be a borrowing from the Khotan Saka *kabä* [kabə] nor the Modern Persian *kawal*. The Khotan Saka word does not fit phonetically,<sup>32</sup> and the first attestation of the New Persian word (*al-Sāmī fi'l-asāmī*, 1104) is later than that of the Turkic one (Zong 總 8782 T, 82 [Manichaean], 9<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> c.; MaitrH, 1067; KB, 1069/1070; DLT, 1072–1074).<sup>33</sup> As regards *käväl* and the Turkic words of ultimately Akkadian origin, intermediary languages must be dead and unattested.

<sup>32</sup> Despite Simon (2005: 410–411), OT *käväl* cannot be explained as a derivation from \**káβə* with +(V)*l*. There is no denominational formative +(V)*l* in Old Turkic. The example given there is reinterpreted as belonging to +*sII* by Erdal (OTWF 99–100).

<sup>33</sup> Further occurrences of the word are listed by Zieme (2020: 67–69).

In conclusion, the borrowings and changes proposed in the study can be schematised as follows:



### Abbreviations

adv.	adverb
Akk.	Akkadian
Arm.	Armenian
br.	Brāhmī script
BT	Bulgar Turkic
c.	century
Ch.	Chinese
Chag.	Chaghatay
Chuv.	Chuvash
CM	Common Mongolic
CT	Common Turkic
CTch.	Common Tocharian
Dag.	Dagur
dial.	dialectal
DLT	Dīwān Luyāt at-Turk
fn.	footnote
Hitt.	Hittite
HS	Hzazā'in as-Sa'ādāt (Ottoman Turkish, 15 <sup>th</sup> century CE)
Hurr.	Hurrian
IE	Indo-European
intr.	intransitive
Jur.	Jurchen
KB	Kutadgu Bilig
Kh.	Khalaj
Kit.	Kitan
lit.	literally

LMC	Late Middle Chinese
MaitrH	Maitrisimit (Hami)
Man.	Manchu
MK	Middle Korean
MM	Middle Mongol
MNT	Mongqolun Niuča Tobča'an (Secret History of the Mongols)
Mo.	Mongolic
OC	Old Chinese
OT	Old Turkic
OU	Old Uyghur
perl.	perlative
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
Pkch.	Paekche (Baekje)
pl.	plural
Pl.	Plate
PPT	Pre-Proto-Turkic
PT	Proto-Turkic
PTch.	Proto-Tocharian
PTg.	Proto-Tungusic
PY	Proto-Yeniseian
Sum.	Sumerian
Tabg.	Tabgač (Tuoba 拓跋)
Tch. A/B	Tocharian A/B
Tg.	Tungusic
Tkm.	Turkmen
tr.	transitive
Tt.	Turkish
Tu.	Turkic
VB	Volga Bulgar Turkic
WM	Written Mongol
Yak.	Yakut

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