Hungaro-Raetica II.

BY

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1. Introduction into Sumerian-Rhaetic research

The Transylvanian Tordos/Turdaş culture was proven by C14 method to go back to around 5000-5000 B.C. and showing striking parallels to the Sumerian Uruk-Warka IV- (ca. 3500-3200 B.C.) and Jemdet-Nasr (ca. 3100-2900 B.C.) cultures (von Torma 1894, Vlassa 1963, Badiny 2001, Tóth (2007a). Thus, the official assumption that the Sumerians were already present in Mesopotamia since the 6th millennium B.C. (Edzard 2003) cannot be true, since it is completely out of discussion to assume that a part of Sumerians wandered to Transylvania where they lost their traces still in the 6th millennium B.C. Therefore, it must be assumed (1) that the Sumerians are of Transylvanian origin and must have come to Mesopotamia between ca. 5000 and 3500 B.C., (2) that the Sumerians are thus not autochthonous in Mesopotamia (which was already suggested by Ungnad 1936, p. 7), and (3) that there may be well “Proto-Tigridian” and “Proto-Euphratean” substrates in Mesopotamia as assumed by Salonen (1967) and Bauer (1998) and implicated by the many non-Sumerian place names in Mesopotamia (cf. Edzard 1974, 1977; Frayne 1992), but contradicted for example by Rubio (1999) and Michalowski (2000).

The Transylvanian Proto-Sumerians used a writing that was partly pictorial and partly runic and is preserved on several of the findings of the Tordos archaeological site. Labat and Zakar (1976) proved that this Tordos writing corresponds exactly to the Hungarian rovásírás (runic writing) that was still used by the Székely people in Transylvania until the 18th century (Sebestyén 1915). Moreover, Labat and Zakar (1976) also showed that the Tordos writing was the origin of the cuneiform writing developed by the Sumerians in Mesopotamia, whose pictorial origin was confirmed by Glassner (2003), and later borrowed and changed by the Akkadians and the Ugarits. Tóth (2007a) showed that the Tordos writing is also the origin of the “Northern Etruscan” Alphabets used for example by the Etruscans, the Venetians, the Rhaetians and the Germanics.

Since Tóth (2007a) also proved that the Etruscans, who were early Hungarians (Alinei 2003, Tóth 2007b), must have borrowed their Runic writing from the Rhaetians which gave it to the Germanics which whom they stood in direct geographical contact in Southern Germany, this implicates a very intimate relationship between the Sumerians and the Rhaetians. But the Rhaetians may not only have borrowed their runic writing from the Sumerians, but also many words. Since it was proved in Brunner and Tóth (1987) and in Tóth and Brunner (2008) that the Rhaetians were the closest relatives of the Akkadians, we have good reason to assume that many if not most of the Sumerian borrowings in Akkadian – Lieberman (1977) lists almost 1000 words – are in reality Rhaetic or came at least mediated by the Rhaetians in the languages that originated or still originate from Sumerian, and amongst them - as shown in the 5 volumes of EDH (Tóth 2007) – Hungarian is clearly the most direct successor language of Sumerian.

In “Hungaro-Rhaetica” (Tóth 2007c), I have already shown that Hungarian rejteni “to hide” and Hungarian gede, gida, gödölye “little goat, kid” have cognates in Sumerian and in Rhaetic that exclude change, borrowing and Wanderwörter (migrating words). In “Hungaro-Rhaetica II” that I present here, I continue my research about the intrinsic relationship between Sumerian and Rhaetic showing not only more word-cognates but also grammatical phenomena in 5 little studies. Since we know alread the time-frame when the Pre-Sumerians came to Mesopotamia, a special study is dedicated to the relative chronology of the question when the Sumerians left Mesopotamia and where they migrated first.
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2. Sumerian kab, Akkadian kappu(m) “wing of a horse bit”, Hungarian gebe “worn out horse” and gép “horse-driven machine”

In the oldest times, the Sumerians did not yet know the horse and thus neither a word for “horse”. But we find in the “Sumerian Dictionary of the University of Pennsylvania” the following entry:

kab (8x: Ur III, Old Babylonian) “wing of a horse bit; noserope”

Sumerian kab was taken into Akkadian in the form kappu(m) (von Soden 1965, p. 444) already in Old Babylonian, i.e. before ca. 2000 B.C. (cf. Lieberman 1977, p. 335, no. L370), thus at a time, when the horse started to be used for riding, but in the special technical meaning given above, because the normal Akkadian words for “horse” were sīsū (also Raetic, cf. Tóth and Brunner 2008, p. 106) and pethallu. Yet with the upcoming of the horse, the Sumerians themselves must have used their own word kab in the generalized meaning “horse” instead of borrowing one of the Akkadian words. This implies, by the way, that around 2000 B.C. Sumerian must still have been a spoken language!

Shortly after 2000 B.C., the Sumerians must have left Mesopotamia because of the increasing pressure by the Akkadians who had come into the Euphrates-Tigris area already in the 26th century B.C. Now, since Sumerian kab survived only in Hungarian and in Sino-Tibetan languages, we can assume that the first two Sumerian emigrations lead to Hungary on the one side and to Tibet and China on the other side. So, we find in Hungarian gebe “dógrováson levő, sovány, kicsigázott, elnyomorodott ló” (Czuczor-Fogarasi 1862-74, p. 1042), in Tibetan čibs “horse”, čib-pa “to get on horseback, to mount, to ride” (Jäschke 1987, p. 157) and in Chinese kie, Hokkjen kiep, kep “Schindmähre (worn out horse)” (Podhorszky 1877, p. 59).

According to Finno-Ugrists, Hungarian gebe is “wahrscheinlich Wortartwechsel einer Ableitung eines fiktiven Stammes (derived from a fictive stem)” (EWU, p. 452), i.e. without etymology. Still worse is the etymology given by Bárczi: “talán egy geb- hangfestő (?) eredetű igei tő származéka” (1941, p. 93), since the question arises which sound a fictive stem “geb-” should imitate: for sure not that of a horse. But we find also in German Klepper “worn out horse” that is derived by Kluge (2002, p. 495) from the German verbs “kleppern, klappern (to clatter, to rattle)”, which is as bad as the “explication” of Bárczi, since horses do neither clatter nor rattle. But Kluge forgot, however, Latin caballus (> Italian caballo, French cheval, Gaulish caballos, Middle Irish capall, Bretonic caval, Cymric cafall, etc.), cf. Walde (1910, p. 103) and Greek kaballēs “working horse” which Hofmann (1950, p. 128) wants to derive from an unknown (!) Illyrian word. Given our language data, it should be clear, that Sumerian kab went in the meaning of “horse” directly into Hungarian and from there to Latin on the one side and to German on the other side, since German Klepper cannot be borrowed from Latin caballus on phonetical reasons. The Celtic words are borrowings from Latin, as already stated by Walde (1910, pp. 103s.).

But we have not yet finished, since in German we also find Göp(p)el “mit Pferden betriebene Fördermaschine (horse-driven mining-machine)”, which is, according to Kluge (2002, p. 365), “probably derived from an Upper Sorbic word *hibadlo ‘motion instrument’, that is, however, not directly testified”. Phonetically, this etymology is impossible, and it is negligent to mislead non-linguists with etymologies that are based on non-existing words. Kluge and also Seebold, the new editor, oversaw Hungarian gép “horse-driven machine”, which cannot be borrowed – as both Bárczi (1941, p. 93) and
the EWU (p. 455) propose – from German Göppel, since we would await a German form *Göpfel instead of Göppel like German Apfel = English apple. Thus, the Germans must have borrowed from the Hungarians. Moreover, the ending –el clearly points to the fact that the Germans borrowed not the Hungarian noun gép, but the verb stem gépel-. And this must have been recently, since we do not have German *Göpfel, but Göppel. We are thus not astonished that German Göppel is only testified since the 16th century (Kluge 2002, p. 365). Semantically, it was thus the horse (Hungarian gebe) who gave the name to the machine driven by the horse (Hungarian gép), cf. French “Deux-Chevaux” for the Citroën 2CV. That the horse and not the machine was the original meaning of Hungarian “gép” is confirmed by the word-combination Hungarian gépkocsi, thus originally “horse-driven car”.

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3. Hungarian substrate words in German and English

1. Introduction

This article doesn’t deal with the Hungarian borrowings in Germanic languages (cf. Simonyi 1907) like German Husar (< huszár), Ballasch (< pallos), Hajduke (< pl. hajdúk), Tolpatsch “clumsy idiot” (< talpas “infanterist”), Pandur, Tornister “knapsack” (< tarisznny < tanisztra), Säbel (< szablya), Kutsche (< kocsi < Kocs, town in the district of Komárom), Paprika (< paprika), Gulasch (< gulyás, but the meaning of the German word is that of pörkölt), hurrah! < huj-rá = hajrá! or English biro (< László Bíró, the Hungarian inventor of the ballpoint pen), coach (< kocsi, cf. Spanish coche), sabre (< szablya), czardas (< csárdás), goulash (< gulyás), hussar (< huszár), komondor (< komondor), kuvasz (< kuvasz), paprika (< paprika, in English mispronounced), puli (< puli, Hungarian dog of Sumerian origin, cf. Badiny 2003, p. 5), Köter “cur” (< kutya, cf. Menges 1964) and Ausbruch “dry Hungarian wine” (< aszú bor), but it does deal with Germanic words that are genetically related to Hungarian words.

According to a guess of von den Velden (1912), about 80% of the German vocabulary is non-Germanic, mostly even non-Indo-European. During my work on EDH (Tóth 2007), I came to the conclusion, that the Non-IE component in German is about 75% (cf. EDH-4). In a personal communication, Professor Theo Vennemann (University of Munich) wrote me on 09th of July that he believes that the Non-IE component in German is also 75%. But while Vennemann tries to trace back the non-IE component of German basically to Basque and Semitic languages, I try to show the Sumerian and Semitic components (cf. EDH-4, Brunner 1969). I purposely speak here about German and not about “Germanic”, and this on two reasons: First, English, the other Germanic language researched here, has a huge amount of borrowings from French while German doesn’t, and second, I do not consider in this article other languages than German and English, even such a task would without doubt be illuminating.

I am following here the observation of von den Velden who wrote “dass die germanischen Sprachen vieles aus den uralaltaischen übernommen haben... . Überall finden wir dunkle Worte, die ihre Aufklärung meist in den uralaltaischen Sprachen finden, ja ich kann getrost behaupten, dass Wortstämme, die in mehreren uraltaltaischen Sprachen vorkommen, fast mit Sicherheit sich auch in den germanischen Sprachen finden lassen” (that the Germanic languages have taken many words from the Ural-Altaic ones ... . Everywhere, we find dark (dubious) words that find their explication in the Ural-Altaic languages. I can even assert safely that word-stems that show up in several Ural-Altaic languages, can be found almost definitely in the Germanic languages, too) (von den Velden 1919/20, p. 791).

2. Hungarian substrate words and their Sumerian and Rhaetic origin

The Hungarian substrate words in German and English are of course much older then the Hungarian borrowings and unlike these genetically related with one another. In accordance with our earlier studies (Tóth 2007a-e), we can differentiate between Sumerian and Rhaetic origin, Rhaetic being closely related
to Akkadian, the other big language spoken in Mesopotamia, but unlike Sumerian a Semitic language (cf. Brunner and Tóth 1987; Tóth and Brunner 2008).

EWU, p. 70: “borrowing from German”
Kluge, p. 137: “... origin unclear”

Although there seem to be no Sumerian or Rhaetic roots, nothing speaks against the assumption that the German word may be borrowed from Hungarian. The latter assumption is even to prefer, since a > o is much more common than o > o.

2. Hung. balta “axe”, German Barte “axe”
EWU, p. 76: “borrowing from a Turkish language, probably Kuman”
Kluge, p. 93: “to Germ. Bart ‘beard’”

Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 789): Manchu purta, parta, hurta, Mongolian, Buryat, Osmanli, Samoyed balta, Turkish (dialects) purti, borta, palti etc. “axe”, Old High German barta, Old Nordic bárda “id.”. The etymology proposed by Kluge is mistaken, because the double meaning of German Bart “beard; bit (of a key)”, on which this etymology lies, comes from Yiddish bart, bár(t)zel “crowbar” < Hebrew barzel “iron”. Up to know, no Sumerian or Rhaetic etymology.

3. Hung. béka “frog”, Lower German Pogge “frog”
EWU, p. 91: “probably borrowing form a Turkish language before the land-taking”
Kluge, p. 710: “perhaps IE origin”


4. Hung. berek “grove”, German bergen “to hide”, borgen “to borrow”, English to borrow
EWU, p. 98: “controversial origin”
Kluge, pp. 111, 141: “... unsafe; ... unclear”

Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 790): Eastern Mongolian, Kalmük bürkü- “to cover”, Eastern Mongolian bürgü-l “lid”, Germanic *berg-, *borg- “to hide”, Old High German borgēn “to spare, to save, to borrow”. The original meaning “to save” seems to be preserved in the Hung. saying “illa berek, nádak, erek “they are off and away (i.e. disappeared, hidden)”. To Sumerian bur (176x: ED IIIb, Old Akkadian, Ur III, Old Babylonian, uncertain) wr. bur2; bur “to release, free; to reveal; to spread out, cover” (UPSD).

5. Hung. birkózni “to wrestle”, German werfen “to throw”
EWU, p. 108: “unclear origin”
Kluge, p. 984: “perhaps IE origin”

Von den Velden 1919/20, p. 790: Turkish braq-maq “werfen”, Pre-Germanic *werp- > Germanic *werp-, Gothic wairpan “id.”. Sumerian bir (7x: Old Babylonian) wr. bir7; bir6; bir9 “to shred” (UPSD).
6. Hung. bogyó “berry”, German Beere “berry”, English berry
   EWU, p. 117: “inherited from FU, perhaps Uralic”
   Kluge, p. 100: “origin unclear”
   Tóth (2007e, pp. 225s.): Rhaetic enb-, unb- “fruit”, Akkadian enbu, inbu “berry” (Tóth 2007e)
   < Sumerian bilga (4x: Ur III, Old Babylonian) wr. bil2-ga “fresh fruit; male ancestor” (UPSD).

7. Avaric chagános, Mongolian khan, chan “king”, German König “king”, English king
   EWU: — (Hung. király is not related)
   Kluge, p. 519: unknown origin
   Moravcsik (1983, pp. 332ss.): Turkish qagan (Moravcsik 1983, pp. 332ss.). Sumerian kingal (23x: ED IIIa, ED IIIb, Ebla, Old Babylonian) wr. kingal; kin-gal “grandee; crown authority over land, labor recruiter” (UPSD). Astonishingly, the Sumerian word stands closer to the English one than the others do. Since Avaric chagános was substituted by the etymologically unrelated király, we must assume that there existed a common Avaric-Hungarian proto-form *khan(g)- which already lost in Turkish its –n-.

8. Hung. csal-, csel- “trick; to cheat”, German schelten “to scold”, English to scold
   EWU, pp. 186, 197: “unknown origin”
   Kluge, p. 798: “no certain comparison”

9. Hung. csempe “tile”, German Wimpel “pennant, flag”
   EWU, p. 199: “unknown origin”
   Kluge, p. 990: unknown origin
   Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 788): Eastern Mongolian tseñme, tsembe, Buryat sembe “cloth, towel”, Old High German wimpal, Anglo-Saxon wimpel “veil” > Middle High German wimpel “flag”. Sumerian zandara (1x: Old Babylonian) wr. zandara “a clay object; a drainage tile” > Akkadian zad(u)rû (UPSD).

10. Hung. csillogni “to sparkle, to twinkle”, csillag “star”, etc., German gleissen
    EWU, p. 214: “inherited from FU”
    Kluge, p. 361: “The word has no useful comparison”
    Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 789): Manchu gilta “to dazzle”, Turkish (dial.) jild-rim “lightning”, juld-us “stone”, Old Nordic glita, Old High German glīzan “gleissen”. To the semantical connection between “lightning” and “stone” cf. Hung. menny “heaven” and mennykő “lightning”. Sumerian zalag (135x: ED IIIb, Old Akkadian, Ur III, Old Babylonian) wr. zalag; zalag2; su-lu-ug; sulug “(to be) pure; (fire) light; (to be) bright, to shine” (UPSD).
EWU, p. 226: “controversial”
Kluge, p. 504: “probably ... perhaps”
Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 789): Swedish-Lapponic čončo-m “thigh”, Chagatai sönge-k, Old Osmanli sönū-k “bone”, Middle High German knoche, German Knochen/Schenkel. While English has substituted German Knochen by bone = German Bein “leg”, both German and English share Schenkel = shank. The word Knochen is built without, the words Schenkel and shank are built with the suffix –k preserved in Chagatai. Sumerian zingi (2x: Old Babylonian) wr. zi-in-gi4 “ankle bone” (UPSD).

12. Hung. far “buttocks”, fark, farok “tail” etc., German Ferse “heel”
EWU, p. 356: inherited from Ugrian, perhaps Uralic time
Kluge, p. 287: “fully unclear”
Von den Velden (1912, p. 32): Latin perna, Greek ptérna “back-leg (of an animal)”, Gothic faizna “heel”, Estonian pera “the back part”, pera-n “behind”, Ostyak pir-na “behind”. Sumerian murub (446x: Old Akkadian, Ur III) wr. murub6; murub4; murub2; murub; murub3 “middle; female genitals, vulva; buttocks, rump; knob; mouth; gate (of city or large building); space between, distance; link; hips” > Akkadian bir-itu (UPSD). Thus, our words seem to come for Rhaetic *fir-/far (with Rhaetic and Arabic f- for Proto- and Common-Semitic *p-, cf. Tóth and Brunner (2008).

13. Hung. gebe “worn-out horse”, gép “horse-driven machine”, German Göp(p)el “car (pejorative)”
EWU, p. 452: “fictive stem”
Kluge, p. 365: from a non-existing Upper-Sorbic word, thus a Slavonic borrowing

EWU, p. 449: “loanword from a South Slavonic language or from Slovakian”
Kluge, p. 333: “unknown origin”
Tóth: Hung gát > German Gatter, English gate. The English word may come directly from Hungarian or via German, but it cannot be original, since German uses the etymologically related words Tür = English door and Tor “gate”, while German Tor was replaced in English by gate which is also believed to be of “unknown origin”. Sumerian gidua (6x: ED IIIa, Ur III, Old Babylonian) wr. gi-du3; gi-du3-a “reed fence” (> Akkadian kikkišu) (UPSD).

15. Hung. gede, gida, gödölye “kid, little goat”, (Swiss) German Geiss, Gitzi, English goat
EWU, p. 460: onomatopoetic origin
Kluge, p. 340: IE origin

16. Hung. ger-inc “backbone”, German Rücken “back”
EWU, p. 458: “fictive stem”
Kluge, p. 773: “perhaps of IE origin ... suffix unclear”

17. Hung. had “war”, German Hader “argument, fight, war”, Hass “hatred”, English to hate
EWU, p. 507: “inherited word form Ugric, perhaps Uralic time”
Kluge, pp. 381, 395: “unclear; the connections to Non-Germanic languages are very divergent”
Tóth: While Hung. had got directly to German Hader, German Hass < *hatj- like English to hate, and both < Proto-Germanic *khatojanan with intial *kh- like Wogul chōnt. Thus, the latter words must have been taken from a much earlier stage of Hungarian. Sumerian ada (5x: Ur III, Old Babylonian) wr. a-da “fight, contest?” (UPSD).

18. Hung. határ “border” > German (dialect, place names) Hotter “border fence”
EWU, p. 537: “inherited word from Uralic time”
Kluge: —
The Hung. etymology of the German word has been communicated to me by Prof. Dr. Johann Knobloch (Institute for Comparative Linguistics, University of Bonn) in 1994. Up to know without Sumerian or Rhaetic etymology.

19. Hung. hullani “to fall”, hulla “corpse”, etc., German Hülle “hull”, Kleid “cloth”, English hull, cloth
EWU, p. 586: “controversial”
Kluge, pp. 400, 425, 494: “IE origin; origin unclear”
Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 788): Manchu hül-d-a, chulla, hulla “blanket, cover, cloth”, Old High German hulla “coat”, Anglo-Saxon clāŧ, Old Nordic klaeŧi. German Hülle and English hull are related to German (ver)hehlen “to hide, to conceal” which is related to Latin celāre < IE *ekl- “to hide” and thus shows initial *k- like the Manchu form chulla and Wogul chol- “to loosen”. A semantical problem is the connection between “to fall” and “to hide”. Sumerian ki la (25x: Old Akkadian, Ur III, Old Babylonian) wr. ki la2 “to fall to the ground” (UPSD).

20. Hung. iga, German Joch “yoke”, English yoke
EWU, p. 601: “loanword from a Slavonic language, probably Slovenian”
Kluge, p. 452: IE origin
Von den Velden (1912, p. 5): Lapponic juoks, Finnish joutse < *joukse, Mordwin jonks, Cheremis jongež, Ostyak jōgol, jangol “bow”, Turkish jük. Given the FU cognates, it is thus
astonishing that EWU proposes a borrowing. Since the word is also present in Turkish, it must the Ural-Altaic, and since initial j- is present in Ugric due to the Ostyak form, German Joch and English yoke must come directly from Hungarian. Up to now without Sumerian or Rhaetic etymology.

   EWU, p. 611: inherited from Uralic time
   Kluge, p. 837: unclear

   22. Hung. keverni “to mix”, kavarni “to stir”, habarni “to stir, to gush”, German Geifer “slaver”
   EWU, pp. 504, 713: without connection between habarni and keverni/kavarni; “Uralic”;
   “fictive stem”
   Kluge, p. 339: unclear etymology
   Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 789): Turkish köbür “to gush up”, kabar “to boil”, Samoyed köwû, Estonian kobr “foam”, Finnish kopru “maelstrom”, Middle High German. geifer “slaver”. In Hung., k- and h- can exchange, cf. homályos “dark”, komóly “(dark >) serious”, moreover Hung. h- often originates from *k- > *ch-, testified in other Uralic or Finno-Ugric languages (cf. Szinnyei 1910, p. 22). Probably composition of two Sumerian words: hi (2735x: ED IIIb, Old Akkadian, Lagash II, Ur III, Early Old Babylonian, Old Babylonian, Middle Babylonian, unknown) wr. hi “to mix (up); process (skin; wool, in the latter possibly a stage between combing and spinning); alloy” + bara (7x: ED IIIb, Ur III, Old Babylonian) wr. bara2 “to mix?” (UPSD).

   23. Hung. kecske “goat”, German Kitz “little goat, kid”, English goat, kid
   EWU, p. 718: “controversial origin”
   Kluge, p. 491: uncertain
   Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 789): Turkish keći “goat”, Old High German khizzi “young goat”. English kid (which is the same in English to kid-nap) has also the meaning “child” < “little goat”. Up to now without Sumerian or Rhaetic etymology.

   24. Hung. kend(e) “title of a noble; you (formal way)”, German Adel “nobility”
   EWU, p. 727: no connection between kend and kende; loanword perhaps from Chazar
   Kluge, p. 16: “the various attempts of an etymology cannot fully convince”
   Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 790): Mongolian kündu, Manchu kundu, Buryat xondo “heavy; honorable”, Old High German uod-il “inherited castle”, ad-al “nobility” (k- > *h- > ø), sumerian gin (924x: ED IIIb, Old Akkadian, Lagash II, Ur III, Early Old Babylonian, Old Babylonian) wr. gin6; gi-na; gi-in; ge-en; gin “(to be) permanent; to confirm, establish (in legal contexts), verify; (to be) true; a quality designation; medium quality” > Akkadian kânu; kînu (UPSD).
25. Hung. kert “garden”, German Garten, English yard
   EWU, p. 739: “uncertain”
   Kluge, p. 332: uncertain
   Tóth: Akkadian, Rhaetic kirītum “garden”, Phenician k-r-t “city” (cf. Carthago). The root kir-
also also Sumerian: kiri-mah (14x: Ur III), wr. ĝeškirī6-mah “pleasure garden, park” (UPSD).
   The Sumerian-Semitic word is also preserved in names like Irm-gard, Kierke-gaard, in Slavonic
gorod, grad “city”, etc (cf. Vennemann 2006, p. 149). English garden is because of inherited
yard and of g- a borrowing from Old French (New French: jardín).

   EWU, p. 814: “loanword from Turkish”
   Kluge, p. 827: “the etymology is ambiguous”
   Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 790): Koibal kolti-k “armpit”, Old High German scult-arra
“shoulder”. The semantic change from Altaic “armpit” via Hungarian “navel” to Germanic
“shoulder” is remarkable, but not without parallels in other languages. To Akkadian šalāqu(m)
“to cut, to cut off”?

27. Hung. könnyű “tear”, German weinen “to weep, to cry”, English to whine
   EWU, p. 817: inherited from Ugric time
   Kluge, p. 980: uncertain
künö, Vepsian küñ-al, Gothic qainōn, Old High German weinōn “to weep, to cry”. To
Akkadian nāqu(m) “to cry” with metathesis?

28. Hung. mondani “to say”, German Mut “courage”, -mund “guardian (of a child)”, Mündel
   “ward”
   EWU, pp. 990s.: “problematic”
   Kluge, pp. 637, 640: without connection; IE origin; unclear
*mōda-, Old High German muot “sense, courage”, besides Germanic mund- “advice, shelter”
in German Vor-mund “guardian (of a child)”. Up to know without Sumerian or Akkadian
etymology.

29. Hung. mony “egg; testicles”, Swiss German Muni “bull”
   EWU, p. 993: inherited form Uralic time
   Kluge, p. 637: “origin unclear”
   Von den Velden (1912, p. 59): Koibal muno “egg; testicles”. Sumerian nunuz (130x: ED IIIa,
ED IIIb, Old Akkadian, Ur III, Old Babylonian) wr. nunuz; na4nunuz “ovoid bead; egg”
(UPSD) with dissimilation n-n > m-n.
30. Hung. ontani “to pour out”, omlani “to stream, to fall”, etc., German eitel “vain, conceited”,
    English idle
    EWU, p. 1062: “unknown origin”
    Kluge, p. 237: “origin unknown”

  Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 790): Koibal kündai, köndääi, Mongolian, Lapponic ont-si “empty,
    hollow”, Old Saxonian id-al, Old High German it-al “empty, hollow”. Probably to Akkadian
    nadū(m) “to throw (f. ex. in the water)”.

31. Hung. perem “edge, rim, brim, margin”, German Bräme “fur rim”, ver-bräm-en “to border, to
    trim, to fur”, English brim
    EWU, p. 1145: “loanword from German”
    Kluge, p. 950: “origin unclear”

  Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 788): Eastern Mongolian xormoi, tung. kormie “border of a
    cloth”, Middle High German brame, Anglo-Saxon brimme “border”. The only reason, why
    EWU is assuming a loan from German and not opposite is FU and Uralic *p- > f- in
    Hungarian, but many Sumerian words with initial p- appear also with p- in Hungarian (cf. EDH,
    Tóth 2007). Moreover, cf. the name of the river O-Perint in Vas megye: According to the
    Hung. Place-name dictionary, its name is “bizonytalan eredetű” = “of unknown origin” (Kiss
    1997, p. 336), but it borders (unlike the other river Gyöngyös) the older and the newer part of
    Szombethely. Probably to Sumerian par (130x: ED IIIa, ED IIIb, Old Akkadian, Ur III, Old
    Babylonian) wr. pa5; pa6 “(small) canal, irrigation ditch” (UPSD).

32. Hung. rejteni “to hide”, German Rätsel “riddle”, raten “to guess”, English riddle
    EWU, p. 1245: “fictive stem”
    Kluge, p. 745: uncertain

  Tóth (2007c): Sumerian ri, re “to take away” > Akkadian re’ītu “sherpherdess” > Rhaetic RITU
    “Ritu (goddess)”; > Hung. rejteni.

33. Hung. róni “to carve”, German Rune “rune”, English rune
    EWU, p. 1273: “inherited word from Finno-Ugric time”
    Kluge, p. 776: uncertain

  Hung. róni, the stems of which are ró- and rov-, must have gone as infinitive into German and
    English, from which the Germanic (Pre-Gothic and Gothic) runes have their name. As a matter
    of fact, both the Germanic and the Rhaetic (“North-Etruscan”) as well as the Etruscan and
    some other Mediterranean “runes” are based on the same type of writing. That all of them go
    back to the Hungarian rovásírás (runic writing) which originated in Transylvania was shown in
    Tóth (2007a). Perhaps the same etymology like no. 31 (rejteni) to Sumerian ri “to be far, to
    disappear” (with already Sumerian ablaut?).

34. Hung. sírni “to weep, to cry”, sírál “seagull”, German grell “loud”, English to glare
    EWU, p. 1332: “onomatopoetic”
    Kluge, p. 372: suggests onomatopoetic origin
Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 790): Turkish djir-la-, ir-la- “to cry”, Middle High German grëllen “to cry”. Probably to Sumerian aššu, wr. aššu2 “lamentation; clamor, uproar, voice, cry, noise” (UPSD).

35. Hung. suba “sheep fur”, suba alatt “secretly”, German Dieb “thief”, English thief
EWU, p. 1364: “Wanderwort” (i.e. without etymology)
Kluge, p. 198: “origin unclear”

36. Hung. súrolni “to scour, to scrub”, Swiss German, Swabian schoren “to plow, to shovel snow”
EWU, p. 1369: “onomatopoetic”
Kluge: — (p. 800, s.v. “scheuern”: “origin unknown”)
Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 789): Turkish sjor-, sur-al “to scour, to scrub”. Probably related with Akkadian šurabuṭu “to blow (wind), to sweep”.

37. Hung. szúnyog “midge”, German Schnake “kind of mosquito”
EWU, p. 1460: “loanword form Turkish, perhaps Pecheneg”
Kluge, p. 816: “origin unclear”
Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 789): Turkish sinäk “midge”, Middle High German snāke “kind of mosquito”. Probably to Akkadian zumbu “fly, insect”.

38. Hung. támadni “to attack; to originate”, támasztani “to support”, etc., German tapfer “brave”
EWU, p. 1476: “the stem if of unknown origin”
Kluge, p. 906 “hard to understand ... strange”
Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 790): Turkish tam-, dam “to be solid”, tam-ur “root”, Mongolian tam-ir “solidity, strength”, Germanic *dam-ra > *dapra, Middle High German tapfer “solid”, Old High German tapfar “important, heavy”. Akkadian dannu “strong, solid”.

39. Hung. tanú “witness”, German Zeuge “witness”
EWU, p. 1479: “loanword from a Turkish language”
Kluge, p. 1010: “probably”
Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 790): Old Osmanli tanú-q, Old High German gi-ziug-on “to testify, to witness”, probably also related to Hung. tanulni “to learn”, tanitani “to teach”, cf. Eastern Mongolian, Chagatai, Osmanli tani- “to recognize, to know”. Up to now without Sumerian or Rhaetic etymology.

40. Hung. tenger “lake”, German Teich “pond”
EWU, p. 1502: loanword from Chuvash
Kluge, p. 910: unclear

Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 788): Mongolian tengo-s, Manchu tenge-r, Turkish tengo-r, Tatarian dengi-s “sea”, Manchu tanga-r, tängi-n “lake”, Middle High German tidge, Old Nordic diki “Deich, Teich”. Probably also related are Greek ténagos “ford, shallow place” and Latin stagnum (with s- mobile) “pond, lake”. Probably not related are Northern German Deich = English dyke, and English ditch. Sumerian digir, dingir (1837x: ED IIIb, Old Akkadian, Lagash II, Ur III, Early Old Babylonian, Old Babylonian) wr. digir, dim3-me-er; dim3-me8-er; dim3-mi-ir; di-me2-er “deity, god, goddess” (UPSD). The known semantic connection goes from “deity” > “heaven” (testified in several Altaic languages) > “sea/lake” (the same blue color or the heaven mirroring in the lake/sea).

41. Hung. tolvaj “thief”, German stehlen “to steal”, English to steal
EWU, p. 1527: “of uncertain, perhaps Ugric origin”
Kluge, p. 879: “no exact comparisons”

42. Hung. tők-életes “perfect, complete”, German taugen “to be suited”
EWU, p. 1539: uncertain
Kluge, p. 908: “without being ... satisfactorily clear”
Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 790): Chagatai tük-el, Old Osmanli dük-eli “all, complete”, tuk-üz “wholly”, Old High German tugan, touc- “to be sufficient, to be suited”. Sumerian gu-tuku (10x: Old Babylonian) wr. gu2-tuku “perfect; rich” (UPSD).

43. Hung. tönk “stem”, German dick “thick”, dicht “dense”, English thick
EWU, p. 1543: “uncertain origin”
Kluge, p. 198: uncertain

44. Hung. unoka “grandchild”, German Enkel “grandchild”
EWU, p. 1578: “loanword from a Slavonic language”
Kluge, p. 245: suggests borrowing from Slavonic languages, too
Tóth: Since the origin of the Slavonic words like Old Russian vunuku is also unknown, nothing speaks for a common, but still independent borrowing both of Hungarian and German from Slavonic, and moreover it does not exclude a German borrowing from Hungarian. Since the oldest testified Hung. form is the personal name Vnuca (1209), the stem may be identical to Sumerian bunga (3x: Old Babylonian) wr. bunga “child, suckling” (UPSD, what also points to the youngest child of a family which is normally the grandchild.
45. Hung. várni “to wait”, German warten “to wait”, English to ward
EWU, p. 1606: inherited from Ugric time
Kluge, p. 973: without etymology shown
Von den Velden (1919/20, p. 790): Turkish bar-maq “to shelter, so save, to guard”, Old Saxonian waron “id.”. Since Mc Callister (1999) mentions a Semitic root w-r-d “to descend, to serve”, the etymology may be Rhaetic, but derived from Sumerian ĝiri gub (65x: Old Babylonian) wr. ĝiri3 gub “to wait for”, wherby ĝiri “foot” and gub “stand” (UPSD).

46. Hung. veréb “sparrow”, German Sperber, English sparrow
EWU, p. 1622: “loanword from a Slavonic language, probably Russian”
Kluge, p. 863: unclear
Akkadian arabū “kind of a bird” < Sumerian arabu (9x: Old Babylonian) wr. a12-ra2-bumušen; adabmušen; a2-tabmušen; udu-buadabmušen “a bird” (UPSD).

3. Conclusion

From our 44 Hungarian words that are genetically related with German and English and thus are part of the 75-80% of the non-IE substrate, in the IE languages, all are connected with Finno-Ugric, Uralic, Altaic or Ural-Altaic words and 38 of them with Sumerian and/or Akkadian/Rhaetic roots and stems. Since our selection of Hungarian words was limited first to the sources mentioned in the bibliography and second to a rather superficial glance for obvious cases, there is reason to assume that a much bigger part of the non-IE substrate in Germanic is Hungarian, this statement in accordance with the observation of von den Velden quoted in the beginning.

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UPSD = University of Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary. http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/epsd/nepsd-frame.html [UPSD brings the Akkadian equivalents of each Sumerian word and is continuously updated.]


Tóth, Alfréd, Sumerian kab, Akkadian kappu(m) “wing of a horse bit”, Hungarian gebe “worn-out horse” and gép “horse-driven machine” (= Tóth 2007b)


Tóth, Alfréd, Hung. gede, gida, gödölye “kind, little goat”. In: Tóth, Alfréd, Hungaro-Rhaetica. The Hague 2007 (= Tóth 2007d)

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4. Ablaut in Hungarian

1. Introduction

Ablaut (apophony) is a typical morphosyntactical feature in flexive languages, i.e. in the Indo-European (IE) and the Semitic language families. Simple examples are the vowel alternations in verbal paradigms like in English “sing – sang – sung” = German “sing-en – sang – ge-sung-en”. Ablaut is so typical that it is commonly used as the most important feature for flexive languages, that have been, because of inflexion, considered to be “superior” than agglutinative languages. Throughout his whole book “Die ungarische Sprache. Geschichte und Charakteristik” (Strassburg 1907), the German translation of his original work “A magyar nyelv” (Budapest 1899, 2nd edition 1906), Zsigmond Simonyi was urged to defend the alleged “inferiority” of the Hungarian language imposed by Indo-Europeanists: “Wenn all dies richtig ist, dann ist es gleichzeitig eine wirksame Widerlegung jener Theorien, die in den finnisch-ugrischen Sprachen, bloss weil sie agglutinierend sind, minderwertige, untergeordnete, ‘formlose’ Sprachen erblickten und ihnen ziemlich geringschätzig begegneten.” (English translation by A.T.: “If all this is correct, then it is at the same time an effective proof against these theories that considered the Finno-Ugric languages, only because they are agglutinative, to be inferior, subordinate and shapeless and treated them with pretty little respect”.)

The idea of most Indo-Europeanists at Simonyi’s time (as well as today) was the concept that there is a hierarchy of ranks between the basic types of language structures: isolating languages (e.g. Chinese) < polysynthetic languages (e.g. Eskimo) < agglutinative languages (e.g. Hungarian and all Finno-Ugric and Altaic languages) < flexive languages (IE, Semitic). Thus, languages like Hungarian are not that “primitive” like Chinese, but still “more primitive” than the IE and Semitic languages, they just did not reach the top step of the linguistic-cognitive ladder. But already the famous Count von Trubetzkoy wrote in one of his posthumous papers that the agglutinative languages would present a higher development than the flexive ones: “Thus, we incline to believe that the structure of the IE languages originated on the way to overcome a primitive, flexive type, but without having reached the higher developed agglutinative type” (Trubetzkoy 1939, p. 89). Another important argument against the IE-based hierarchy is that Ablaut also appears in non-flexive (and mostly agglutinative) languages like the Athabaskan, Mon-Khmer, Tibeto-Burman and other language families. And, last but not least, Professor Linus Brunner pointed out that the common ancestor of the IE and the Semitic languages must have been agglutinative (Brunner 1969, p. 4).

2. Ablaut in Hungarian

In this paper, I will show that ablaut exists both in the vowel and in the consonant system of Hungarian. All vowel and consonant changes concern of course phonemes. In the vocalic systems, all mathematical combinations are shown, in the consonant system only the most important ones, since the amount of all combinations is enormous. For each instance stands only one example, but in Czuczor-Fogarasi (1862-74), from which all examples are taken, one can find hundreds of other examples.
## 2.1 Vocalic ablaut

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/o/ : /ú/: hozni : huzat
/o/ : /á/: hozni : hůzni
/o/ : /ő/: omlik : ömlik
/o/ : /ű/: oldal : Őgylegni
/o/ : /ü/: -tt : -üt

/ó/ : /ő/: al-ől : ház-ul-
/ó/ : /ú/: -ból : -bűl
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/ö/ : /ű/: -ből : -bűl
Furthermore, many vowels have ablaut with the (consonant) zero-phoneme (ø), f. ex. álom : álømot, fészek : fészøket, hatalom : hatalømat, ökör : ökørøt, etc. In fenyú : fenyvet and ölyü : ölyvet /v/ as Hiatustilger due to /ü/ : /ø/.

Result: All phonemes are mutually exchangeable, while the exchanges serves either morphological (f. ex. here-and-there deixis: ez vs. az) or semantical (f. ex. keverni, kavarni) functions.

2.2. Consonant ablaut

/b/ : /f/:   bor : forrani
/b/ : /m/:   bírni : merni
/b/ : /ny/:  bírni : nyerni
/b/ : /p/:   bizsegni : pezsegni
/b/ : /r/:   bomlik : romlik
/b/ : /v/:   bal : válni

/c/: /cs/:   cib : csibe
/c/: /k/:    cammogni : kammogni
/c/: /s/:    cadarni : sadarni

/cs/: /b/:   csetlik : botlik
/cs/: /d/:   csömöszölni : dömöszölni
/cs/: /gy/:  csik : gyik
/cs/: /h/:   csengeni : hang
/cs/: /k/:   csecsegetni : kecsegtetni
/cs/: /p/:   csattanni : pattanni
/cs/: /s/:   csik : siklani
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<td>/g/ : /cs/:</td>
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<td>/gy/ : /cs/:</td>
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<td>gyönni : jönni</td>
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<td>gyík : siklni</td>
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<td>gyporodni : szapora</td>
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<td>gyanú : tanú</td>
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<td>habarni : kavarni</td>
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<td>/h/ : /m/:</td>
<td>hőrögíni : morogni</td>
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<td>hajó : sajka</td>
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<td>/h/ : /z/:</td>
<td>hang : zengeni</td>
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<td>/h/ : /zs/:</td>
<td>hang : zsongani</td>
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<td>/j/ : /s/:</td>
<td>áj-ni : ás-ni</td>
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<td>Character</td>
<td>Example 1</td>
<td>Example 2</td>
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<td>ned-ves : med-ence</td>
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<td>szög : zug</td>
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<tr>
<td>/z/ : /zs/</td>
<td>zengeni : zsongani</td>
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<tr>
<td>/ø/ : /b/</td>
<td>omlik : bomlik</td>
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<tr>
<td>/ø/ : /f/</td>
<td>ürögni : fürögni</td>
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<tr>
<td>/ø/ : /g/</td>
<td>enyv : genny</td>
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<td>uhogni : huhogni</td>
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<td>ihar : juhar</td>
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<td>/ø/ : /m/</td>
<td>illantani : millingeni</td>
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<td>/ø/ : /p/</td>
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<tr>
<td>/ø/ : /r/</td>
<td>omlik : romlik</td>
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Result: While in most Western languages only such consonants can be exchanged that have the same place of articulation (f. ex. the labials b, w, m, etc.), but not the same kind of articulation (f. e.x. the obstruents p, t, k, ...), in Hungarian principally all consonants – like all vowels – can be exchanged, disregarding their place or kind of articulation. Since also nasals stand in exchange with obstruents, f. ex. nyerni : merni : bírni, morogni : korogni, the Hungarian consonant ablaut system leads to a table of consonants that resembles strongly to the Indian and Tibetan ones that are ordered from left to right according to their kind of articulation (obstruents and nasals) and from to top to bottom according to their place of articulation (cf. Jäschke 1929), i.e. a rotated and mirrored IE consonant system in which to each obstruent there is a corresponding nasal. Thus, the only basic difference between the Indian-Tibetan and the Hungarian consonant system is the lacking of the phoneme /ŋ/ in Hungarian, which is only present as a place-bound allophone of /n/, f. ex. hang, zengeni, tönk, etc., but cf. f. ex. /töm-/ : /töŋ-).

3. Conclusions

Putting together the results for our research of the Hungarian vowel and consonant ablaut system, we conclude that all vowels and all consonants can be exchanged. This leads to the further conclusion that in a very early stage, Hungarian vowels must have been inherent to its consonants like in Indian, Tibetan and other languages with syllabic letters, cf. f. ex. bal “left”, bel-é “into”, bél “inside”, bill- “to tilt”, -bul/-bül/-ből/-ből (elative suffix). This important conclusion goes together with the fact that the Hungarian runic writing (rovásírás) was originally a syllabic writing developed from the Sumerian cuneiform writing (Labat and Zakar 1976, Tóth 2007a). Furthermore, already Sumerian had an ablaut system, cf. f. ex. si, sā, sū “to be of dark color”, sig, sā, su “to be loaded, to be sad”, urum, erum, ere, öröm “servant, maid” (examples from Delitzsch 1914). The Sumerian ablaut system – totally neglected by all Sumerian grammars - seems to have as basic function a kind of counterbalance to the enormous homophony, which strategy may even explain the phenomenon of ablaut generally, since, as we have seen in Hungarian, ablaut is by no means restricted to flexive languages. Since it was proven in EDH-3 and EDH-4 that Sumerian, Hungarian, the IE and Semitic languages share a considerable amount of cognates, we must also conclude that Brunner (1969, p. 4) was correct when he stipulated that Common-Proto-IE-Semitic must have been an agglutinative language. Since ablaut is present not only in flexive languages, it is redundant in them. Therefore, the idea postulated by Indo-Europeanists since over a hundred of years that flexive languages are “superior”, is bare nonsense.

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5. When did the Sumerians leave Mesopotamia?

1. Introduction

Already Ida Bobula had found that many Hungarian words do not go back directly to Sumerian, but to Akkadian words (Bobula 1951, 1966, 1967), and thus she concluded that the Sumerian language that had to become Hungarian must have been in a relatively late stage: “In the period of flux in Mesopotamian affairs which lasted from the fall of the Sumerian power in the second millennium B.C. to the rise to full power of the Persian Empire in the seventh century B.C., several groups of people, preserving the language and customs of Sumer, began a gradual migration, northward and later westward, that lasted in total from most of two millennia” (Bobula 1951, p. 141).

From our previous studies (Tóth 2007a), we know about intensive contacts between the Sumerians and the Raetians, the closest relatives of the also Semitic Akkadians (Brunner and Tóth 1987). From a recent study about the origin of Hung. gebe “worn-out horse” and gép “horse-driven machine” (Tóth 2007b), we know that around 2000 B.C., Sumerian was still a spoken language – in contradiction with the common opinion, cf. Edzard (2003, p. 5) and Michalowski (2005) – and that thus at this time the Sumerians could not yet have left Mesopotamia in order to reach the Carpathian basin. From history, we know that still around 1700 B.C., when the Hyksos stormed Egypt, the Egyptians still did not know the horse and that it must have been introduced thus only after (Anthony and Brown 1991). Since Hungarian gebe goes back to Sumerian kab “wing of a horse bit”, the Hungarians must have still been in the Euphrates-Tigris area around 1700 B.C. From the same study about Hung. gebe, we also know that the first Sumerian exodus did not only lead north- and westwards, as assumed by Bobula, but at the same time also southwards, since relatives of Hung. gebe live outside of Hungarian only in Tibetan and Chinese.

2. Towards a relative chronology of the Sumerian exodus from Mesopotamia

In his “Comparative grammar of the Semitic languages”, Brockelmann stated: “In the oldest Babylonian, w- was still preserved in the initial position of words, as for example in Hammurabi wālīḍīja ‘my progenitor’, wāšību ‘sitting’ etc. [...]. But at the same time already, w- must have started to vanish, since we find besides warchum ‘month’ already archu” (Brockelmann 1961, p. 139). In the name of the Akkadian death-ghost which as appears in Akkadian as Itammu, Etemmu, etc., w- (v-) is preserved only in Raetic VITAMU in the Raetic inscription PNAKE VITAMU LAKHE “I have asked you for help, Vitammu” (PID 196; Brunner and Tóth 1987, p. 61; Tóth and Brunner 2008, p. 68). Fortunately, we have also in Hungarian such a case with preserved w- (v-): virág “flower”, virítani “to bloom” etc. which go back to Sumerian gir-ag (Tóth 2007, EDH-4, no. 596; Deimel 1928ss., no. 483; Gostony 1975, no. 799; Brunner 1969, no. 771). Since in Hungarian, v- is preserved and since the time of the rule of Hammurabi lasted from 1792-1750 B.C., this gives us a first date, when the word must have been borrowed by the ancestors of the Hungarians.

According to the newest Sumerian dictionary of the University of Pennsylvania, Sumerian gir- “flower, fruit” is testified not less than 91 times in Old Babylonian time, i.e. between 1728-1686 B.C. (Ungnad and Matouš 1969, p. 4), which gives us a more precise date when the Hungarians still must have been in
Mesopotamia. Since Sum. gir- appears in Akkadian as arāqu “to bloom” (Brunner 1969, no. 771), where v- is disappeared, it also follows that the Hungarians must have taken their word virág from the Raetians and not from the Akkadians. Since this all happened in Old Babylonian time, one could assume that the Sumerians left Mesopotamia still in the early 17th century. But since virág is not the only word that the Hungarians took from the Raetians – other examples are Hung. rejteni “to hide” and gebe “worn-out horse” and probably many more - and because we also know from one of my studies about Raetic that the Raetians left Mesopotamia only in the 13/12th century B.C. during the Sea People’s Wars (Tóth 2007c), it follows that at least the big part of the Sumerians must have left Mesopotamia between the 17th and the 13th centuries B.C. This is therefore also the time span when Sumerian stopped to be a spoken language in Mesopotamia, i.e. almost one thousand years later than normally assumed (only Lieberman 1977, p. 20 assumes that Sumerian was still spoken in Old Babylonian time).

In is not worth mentioning that both Bárczi (1941, pp. 339s.) and the EDU (Benkő 1992ss., p. 1640) give as “etymology” of Hung. virág “ismeretlen eredetű tőből (from a stem with unknown origin)” and “ohne Etymologie (without etymology)”.

There is another strong proof that the Sumerian-Hungarians did not (or not only) borrow words directly from the Akkadians but from the Raetians, since initial p- gets f- only in Hungarian, in Arabic and partly in Raetic. Arabic that is testified only since the 5th century B.C. (Stempel 1999, p. 13) is thus without relevance for our present study.

For Hungarian *p- > f- cf. fél “half, side” vs. Vogul päl, pal, Ostyak pēlek, Zyrian pöl, Votyak pal, Cheremis pele, Mordvin päälä, Lapponic pel’l, Fennic piel’ (Szinnyei 1910, p. 24; Lákó and Rédei 1967ss., p. 194s.), for Semitic *p- > f- cf. Brockelmann (1961, p. 136) and Akkadian palū(m) “to plow”, Hebrew palah, Aramaic p’lah vs. Arabic falāhā (Klein 1987, p. 509), Raetic *palāh- (> English plow, German Pflug “plow”) and falāh- (> Rhetoromanche fleua, flia, etc.), the only word by that is expressively testified as Raetic by Pliny the Older in his “Naturalis Historia” XVIII 172 (cf. Tóth 1988, Tóth 2007d). Cf. also the village name from the Grisons (Switzerland) in former Raetic territory: Falera < Raetic *farzill- vs. Akkadian parzillu (< Sum.?), Hebrew barzel “iron” (same etymology for Fursill in South Tyrol, also in former Raetic territory) (Tóth and Brunner 2008, p. 115). Thus, the following Hungarian words listed in EDH-4 (Tóth 2007) must have been taken from the Raetians:

- bőr “skin”, bőrönd “suitcase”
- féreg “worm; wolf”

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férfi “to fit (in a space)”
EDH-4, no. 146; Deimel (1928ss., no. 132); Gostony (1975, no. 379); Brunner (1969, no. 31)
Sumerian par > Akkadian pâru > Raetic *far-

fü (fűvet) “grass”
EDH-4, no. 156; ŠL 318; MSL III 69/13; Gostony (1975, no. 698); Brunner (1969, no. 44)
Sumerian pu > Raetic *fu (vs. Akkadian patânû)

In the following example, Sumerian b- appers also as f- in Hungarian:

faragni “to carve”
EDH-4, no. 133; ŠL 349/65; Gostony (1975, no.) 575; Brunner (1969, nos. 84, 733)
Sumerian bur-gul > Raetic *fur-/far- (cf. Akkadian barâmu, barmu)

But since we have 5 instances of Akkadian b- appearing as PH- = f- in Raetic inscriptions, initial Sumerian b- is treated in Raetic like initial p- and obviously appears like Sumerian p- as f- in Hungarian:


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6. “Sumér = Magyar” (“Sumerian = Hungarian”)?

1. Introduction

Since ca. 1965, Dr. Elemér Novotny wrote various papers in which he tried to prove by aid of word comparisons the identity of Sumerian and Hungarian. The alleged identity “Sumér = Magyar”, quoted in the title, was established by Novotny (1977). An enlarged version of Novotny’s book was published in the Ősy Gyökér, edited by the late Prof. Jós Ferenc Badiny at the Chair of Oriental Studies of the Catholic University of Buenos Aires (Novotny 1978). In 1985, the Szathmáry collection of the University of Chicago was given a bound copy of photocopied typoscripts of Novotny (Novotny 1985). Novotny’s writing were only quoted by his friend Badiny, for example in the English written and thus relatively widespread book “The Sumerian Wonder” (Badiny 1974). Badiny himself was also convinced about the “equation” quoted above: “We gave this book the title of ‘The Sumerian Wonder’ in order to highlight the reality of a linguistic wonder. The language of mankind’s most ancient culture is identical in grammar, vocabulary and word usage to the Hungarian language. We also can find in this ancient language idiosyncracies that are found in only one modern language: Hungarian” (Badiny 1974, p. 15).

This equation is quite astonishing, since earlier works on comparative Sumerian-Hungarian linguistics did not exclude the possible relationship of Sumerian with other languages than Hungarian (for example Hincks, Rawlinson, Oppert, Sayce, Lenormant and others, cf. Érdy 1974). The very influential German professor for Semitic languages Fritz Hommel who was the only Non-Hungarian to defend still in the 20th century Sumerian-Uralic-Altaic linguistics against traditional Finno-Ugristics and Altaics, compared Sumerian also with Turkish and Mongolian (Hommel 1915, 1926). On the other side, Sumerian was not only compared to Hungarian, but also amongst many other languages to African, American Indian languages, Basque, Caucasian, Chinese, Dravidian, Egyptian, Indo-European, Mayan, Polynesian, Tibetan (cf. Römer 1999, p. 44).

Yet, most astonishing are three facts: First, hardly any of the researchers who compared Sumerian to Hungarian also considered other Uralic languages, thus they more or less openly denied the relationship between Hungarian and the other Uralic languages, even this was criticized already by Bobula (1966). Second, although the Sumerian-Hungarian researchers knew very well about the comparisons of Sumerian with other languages than Hungarian (for example Wanger’s extensive book about Sumerian and Bantu from 1935 served for many Hungarian researchers as repertory of Sumerian word forms, since Deimels “Šumerisches Lexikon” (1928ss.) was not finished until 1947 or unavailable at all). Third, although Sumerian-Hungarian researchers knew about earlier comparisons of Hungarian with other Oriental languages, mostly Semitic, since the ground breaking study of Otrokócsi Fóris (1706), they did not try to connect them with their Sumerian research. The latter fact is the more astonishing, because mutual borrowings between Sumerian and Akkadians have been known since at least the studies of Leander (1903) and Zimmern (1917).
2. Sumerian, Hungarian and other languages

EDH, in the four parts that have already appeared (Tóth 2007), compares (in the order of the chapters of EDH-1 to EDH-4) Sumerian with Hungarian, Uralic, Georgian, African, Etruscan, Tibeto-Burman, Munda, Dravidian, Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, Polynesian, Mayan, Egyptian, Semitic, Penutian and Indo-European. Other comparisons may follow. Only from this long list of languages and language families that share word-cognates between Sumerian, Hungarian and other languages to a degree between 100% and 3%, it follows that the idea of Hungarian being the one and only successor language of Sumerian is absurd. Moreover, the fact that in EDH only Hungarian shares 100%, i.e. 1042 cognates, with Sumerian, is simply due to the fact that I used a corrected and updated version of the Sumerian-Hungarian word-list of Gostony (1975). 1042 etymologies, however, are a very small part of the Hungarian lexicon as it appears most complete in Czuczor and Fogarasi’s about 6000 pages long dictionary (1862-74). The reason, why I restricted myself to Gostony’s corpus was that this corpus is the only existing one that proves with sound-laws the identity of the 1042 Hungarian words with its Sumerian cognates. So, what I did NOT in EDH, was to compare Sumerian with the above mentioned other languages, but I compared this 1042 common Sumerian-Hungarian words with phonetically and semantically corresponding words in the other languages, provided that there were comparative dictionaries of these languages that are also based on sound-laws.

Now, we will have a look at words that appear in at least 5 other languages than Sumerian and Hungarian. This restriction is arbitrary, but reduces massively the little corpus of words appearing thus in at least 7 languages in order to give a panorama of the spreading of Sumerian-Hungarian words over four or five continents. We get 45 words that are common in Sumerian, Hungarian and 5 other languages:

1. akarni  EDH-1, pp. 304, 433a, 685, EDH-2/3, pp. 4, 64, EDH-4, p. 3
2. aratni  EDH-1, pp. 397, 802, 803, EDH-2/3, pp. 5, 66, EDH-4, p. 5
4. csillag  EDH-1, pp. 91, 359, 360, 370, EDH-2/3, pp. 9, 70, EDH-4, p. 13
5. ejteni  EDH-1, pp. 5, 188, 189, 429, EDH-2/3, p.13
6. ék  EDH-1, pp. 305, 561, 600, EDH-2/3, pp. 13, 73, EDH-4, p. 20
7. el-  EDH-1, pp. 328, 860, 874, EDH-2/3, p. 73, EDH-4, p. 21
8. élni  EDH-1, pp. 151, 332, 405, 874, EDH-2/3, p. 73, EDH-4, p. 22
9. fél, felet  EDH-1, pp. 67, 205a, 382, 631, 862, EDH-2/3, pp. 8, 17, 75, EDH-4, p. 27
10. folyik  EDH-1, pp. 68, 385, 555, EDH-2/3, p. 9, EDH-4, p. 29
11. fúrni  EDH-1, pp. 665, 703, 710, EDH-4, p. 30
12. görbe  EDH-1, pp. 126, 161, 162, 283, 416, EDH-4, p. 33
14. gyöngy  EDH-1, pp. 150, 157, 701, EDH-2/3, p. 20, EDH-4, p. 37
16. járni  EDH-1, pp. 231, 314, 606, EDH-2/3, pp. 27, 81, EDH-4, p. 49
17. kar  EDH-1, pp. 152, 205, 522, EDH-2/3, pp. 28, 83, EDH-4, p. 52
3. Conclusion

Sumerian and Hungarian share, as already stated, 1042 words. The sharing rate for Sumerian-Hungarian and the other languages treated in EDH are as follows: Uralic (286), Georgian (78), African (83), Etruscan (280), Tibeto-Burman (340), Dravidian (377), Chinese (638), Japanese (235), Turkish (577), Polynesian (82), Mayan (111), Egyptian (382), Semitic (294), Penutian (149), Indo-European (607). This makes a total of 5793 Sumerian-Hungarian-X cognates, whereby X stands for one of the fore-mentioned languages other than Sumerian and Hungarian. Thus, our 45 words that are shared by at least 5 other languages than Sumerian and Hungarian, make only 0.8%. From this very low
percentage it follows that the 45 words cannot have been brought by Hungarians in the countries where the other languages are or were spoken. These 45 words must have been brought in these countries by the common ancestors of all the speakers of the mentioned languages, i.e. by the Sumerians themselves, before a part of them split in order to become the Hungarians.

The equation “Sumerian = Hungarian” and the “Sumerian Wonder” must therefore be corrected:

1. Hungarian cannot be the only successor language of Sumerian, since Sumerian words are present in nearly all language families of the world. The different percentages of cognates in these languages may indicate a) the relative chronology of the wandering of Sumerian groups into the different countries, b) the persistence of Sumerian people amongst autochthonous people in these countries. Generally, the percentage of shared Sumerian words in the language families of the world diminishes from the North to the South.

2. The fact, presented in EDH, that only very few words – less than 1% - are shared between Sumerian-Hungarian and at least 5 other languages proves clearly that not the Hungarians, but their Sumerian ancestors wandered to the countries where these languages are or were spoken. The widely spread idea of expatriated Hungarians who believe to find Hungarian words in the languages spoken in the land of their exile and their conclusion that the Hungarians themselves (anticipating the fate of the expatriates) brought these words in an early emigration to these lands, is also mistaken. However, it goes together with the results of history and archeology that the Sumerians, attacked and suppressed by the intruding Akkadians since the 17th century B.C., flew all over the ancient world, where they settled and their language became to build first an adstrate and then a substrate.

3. To conclude for example from word-equations like Hung. ördög “devil” = Sum. u-dug, or Hung. isten “god” = Akk. istēn (status absolutus) “one” that Sumerian or Akkadian = Hungarian would be the same as to conclude from the identity of the Proto-Indo-European stem *rei(d)- “to reason, count” with the stems in English “to read” and German “reden” = “to speak” that Proto-IE = English or German. Proto-IE was spoken some thousands of years ago, while English and German are only a few hundred or years old, which is shown by their oldest testified common ancestor language, Gothic. So, English “to read” and German “reden” are not, but go back both to the Proto-IE stem as Hung. ördög and isten are not, but go back to the respective Sum. and Akk. words. The many other words that continue the Proto-IE stem in modern IE languages underline this fact as the many other words that continue the Sum. and Akk. words in several other languages do. Moreover, words may be related not in the same language families, but in an older common family. For example English “house” and German “Haus” are not directly related to Latin casa “house” and the k- in Fennic kotta “house”, the h- (from *k- as the Fennic word proves) in Hung. ház and the already mentioned words German Haus, English house, Italian casa (in Tuscany pronounced as “hasa”), French case, one could conclude that all these words are related to one another. But being aware that the Italian and French words go back to Latin which belongs to the Italic branch of the IE language family, while the English and German words belong to the Germanic branch of the IE family, shows, that the initial k- in Latin casa has nothing to do with the k- in Fennic kotta and that the Tuscan development k- > h- is independent of the same development from Proto-Finno-Ugric to Hungarian (ház < *kat-). Therefore, the Germanic words are not directly related to the Italic words, but all of them to the older common ancestor language, Proto-IE, and the Finnic and the Hungarian word for
“house” are not related to the IE words, what does indeed, as shown in EDH-4, for exclude at all that the IE languages are not related to Sumerian. Only for the special case of Fennic kotta, Hungarian ház and the Germanic and Italic words for “house” this is not true, since the FU words are related to German Hütte = English hut, but not to the semantically similar words Haus and house.

4. Bibliography

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