

Dravidian and Altaic parts of the body
4. Liver, spleen

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0. The following paper follows the subject of the parts of the body in Dravidian and Altaic, which was first discussed in my paper dealing with the 'breast' (Vacek 2005a) and continued by 'hair, feather' (Vacek 2006c) and 'heart, chest, inside, mind, thought' (Vacek 2007a). The study of the relationship between Dravidian and Altaic is a part of a broader context, which can be seen in the work of K. V. Zvelebil (1990, 1991 including further references). As for the method, it was particularly expounded in my latest summary (Vacek 2004b, repr. 2006a). An important role in the comparison is played by the verbs.¹ For other types of lexical parallels cf. Vacek 2001a, 2001b, 2002c and 2004a. Like the kinship terms (Vacek, Lubsangdorji 1994), parts of the body appear to be a very interesting lexical field, which yields many new parallels between the two language families. There are also parallel terms for the parts of the body between Dravidian and Uralian, which were discussed by T. Burrow (1943-6; repr. 1968).²

The following etyma refer to the two internal organs, liver and spleen. The semantic range in the case of these 'internal' organs is to be seen within the context of the semantic variation found particularly with the individual lexemes listed below (e.g. *Mo.elige* and other examples³), and also with the previously compared lexemes relating to the body (cf. Vacek 2006c, 2007a).

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¹ On verbs cf. Vacek 2006b (p. 183, note 1, plus further references) and also Vacek 2005a, 2007b; the last paper lists a complex group of parallels between a group of verbs meaning 'to bow, bend' etc. and specific body parts (elbow, knee, ankle) in all the languages concerned and in that sense it is also related to the present subject. Of special interest are the verbs related to speaking and uttering sounds (*verba dicendi*) (Vacek 2003ff).

² For further references concerning the lexical comparison of Dravidian and Altaic cf. Vacek 2004b/2006a. A systematic discussion of a rather broad etymological nest can be seen in Vacek 2002a. Both works also discuss the basic principles of the formal aspect of the correspondences (especially the sound correspondences) and of the semantic principles involved in the comparison.

³ Cf. also the semantic 'dispersal' e.g. with Ma. *kara*, *karu* lungs and heart, liver, bowels; heart, mind; Ka. *karu*, *kara*, *karu*, *karu* an entrail, the bowels; love; Koç. *kari* intestines; Tu. *kara*, *karu* the bowels, the liver (DEDR 1274).

The first two etyma (Ta. *īral* / Mo. *elige* / MT. *ĪLEN* I and Kol. *taryguḍ* / Mo. *deligüü* / MT. *DELKIN* / OT. *tala:k*) seem to be formally close, except that the second etymon has a dental initial. The first one designates 'liver' and 'spleen' (in Dravidian and MT.) and also 'bile' (in MT.).

The second one (displaying initial dental/nasal [*t-/n-*] variation) designates 'liver' [*t-*] and 'spleen' [*n-*] in Dravidian (only in Tulu does it also designate 'lungs', in Gondi 'the heart' [*t-*] or 'an internal organ', possibly the 'sweetbreads' or the 'pancreas' [*n-*]). In Altaic it designates 'spleen', only in Evenki does it also mean 'diaphragm' (further cf. below).

The third etymon (Tu. *pallè* / Mo. *bulčirxai* / MT. *BOROḶTO*) designates just 'spleen', only in Mongolian is it an unspecified gland. The formal features of the following etyma correspond to the principles established in my monograph on Dravidian and Altaic 'water – viscosity – cold' (Vacek 2002a) and also in Vacek 2004b (repr. 2006a).⁴

Some formal aspects will be treated below. I was unable to locate Turkic words which could be related to the first and third etyma (which, however, does not mean that they cannot be identified later). It would seem that at the moment the second etymon is most universally represented.

1. Both 'liver' and 'spleen', plus 'bile'

Ta. *īral, īru!* internal organ of the body, as liver or spleen

Ma. *īral* liver

Ir. *i·ralu, i·rvo* id.

ĀIKu. (one dial.) *i·ruvu* id.

Ko. *i·ruv* id.

To. *ū·ruf* id.

Ka. *hīri* id. (DEDR 546)

Kur. *aṛxā* spleen

Malt. *aṛgu* id. (DEDR 91)

Mo. *elige* liver; (fig.) breast, belly; blood relative(s) (used attributively)

MT. *ĪLEN* I spleen, bile; liver (Evenk.) (MTD I,312)

ELIGEN liver (Evenk. < Mo.) (MTD I,447)

⁴ I should not repeat what was said in great detail on several occasions (particularly in the above 2004b/2006a paper, and also Vacek 2002a). Therefore I should invite both those who feel that there is something in these lexical parallels and that they need further attention, and also (or particularly) those who find these similarities to be only a list of 'lookalikes', to see the discussion of the method in the above paper and consider the implications of the variability of forms and meanings in the context of this comparison. That the material (not only in this paper but in all my papers) offers more than a statistically expected number of coincidences is evident. I have also underlined that this material cannot be treated within the narrow confines of the Young grammarians' method and that we should therefore look for support in the sphere of contact linguistics and sociolinguistics projected into the past, no matter how hypothetical that past may be. It was also emphasised that concerning these parallels we are only in the heuristic phase and attempting something like the Young grammarians' reconstruction etc. is definitely premature.

In fact the narrowly applied Young grammarian method is not satisfactory in this context. As G. Doerfer (1973, p. 122) put it: 'Die Junggrammatiker sind tot, es leben die Junggrammatiker der Zukunft!' (The Young grammarians are dead, long live the Young grammarians of the future.)

2. 'Spleen' and 'liver'

The meaning of the words in this group is considerably consistent, leaving only a few 'fuzzy extensions' (cf. above). The group is represented by two forms, one with an initial dental stop – one with an initial dental nasal – which are related.⁵ The second consonant is a liquid, which appears to have been lost in some Dravidian languages (Tulu and Naiki). Besides that, in Dravidian the medial liquid can be cerebral and can alternate with a cerebral nasal. The third consonant is a velar (stop or nasal/stop), which seems to agree in most of the forms in Dravidian, Mongolian and Manchu-Tungus. The initial dental may alternate with a sibilant (Tulu in Dravidian). The structure of the lexeme could be summarised as follows:

T-V-L-(V)-K/D(G)
N-V-L-(V)-K/D(G)

However, with the words having initial nasal, the third consonant is not always preserved (Dravidian, MT.).

Tu. *taṅka* lungs, liver⁶
 saṅka liver
Kol. *taṅguḍ* id.
Nk. *taṅguṛ* id.
Nk. (Ch.) *taṅ* id.
Pa. *taṅuṅ* id.
Ga. (Oll.) *taṅiṅ* id.; *taṅaṅil* (pl.) id.
Go. *taṅaki, taṅak, taṅki, taṅk, taṅkī, taṅike, taṅākī, taṅēkī, taṅēki, tāṅḍ'ki* id.
 tudakee the heart
Konḍa *taṅki, taṅāki* id.
Pe. *trākiṅ* (pl.) id.
Mand. *trākeṅ* id.

⁵ In this etymon the initial nasal is represented in Dravidian, Mongolian (with some reservation regarding the meaning, cf. Note 9 below) and Manchu-Tungus.

⁶ The Tulu and Naiki (Ch.) forms have lost the medial liquid. Could the Tu. meaning 'lungs' be a result of contamination with a different etymon? Cf. e.g. Ka. *tolle* 'lungs'; Kui *sōḍa* 'the lungs' (Burrow 1943–6, repr. 1968, p. 93, No. 42; not in the DEDR), and also the following DEDR etymon with an occasional medial liquid, where the Tulu form is missing:

Ka. *domme* lungs of cow
Koḍ. *tombe* lungs
? Te. *dobba* piece of flesh, clot of blood
Kol. *dobba* lung
Pa. *dorba* (pl. *dorbel*) id.
Ga. *dobba* (pl. -l) id.
Go. *dorba* id.; *dobbā* id.
Konḍa *dobo* id. (DEDR 3515)

There is one more word for 'liver' in Tamil, which is not to be found in the DEDR: Ta. *mūkai* (TL s.v. No. 1; cf. also Burrow 1968, p. 93, No. 44, which Burrow refers to Uralian, e.g. Fi. *maksa* 'liver'; Osty. *mūyət* id., etc. (for that cf. Dolg. *maksu* Leber der Aalquappe, gebraucht bei Lederbearbeitung; Stachowski, p. 185, s.v.).

Kui *tlāḍa*, *trāḍa*, *trāḍaṅga* id.

Kuwi *thrā'na*, *tra'na*, *tra'na*, *tālla* id. (DEDR 3120)⁷

Pa. *nereñal* spleen

Go. *nirañjal* an internal organ, possibly the sweetbreads

nirjaṣ the spleen of animals

naṛnjaṛi an internal organ (? pancreas) (DEDR 3751)⁸

Mo. *deligüü* spleen⁹

MT. *DELKIN* spleen (MTD I,233; < Mongolian, cf. Starostin, p. 1373)

Evenk. *delkin* spleen, diaphragm

Sol. *delkī* spleen

Ud. *deligi* spleen

Ma. *del'axun*, *delixun*, *del'exun* spleen

N'IRŪ II spleen (MTD I,640)

⁷ The DEDR further refers to Skt. (lex.) *tāḍya-* = Skt. *kloman-* 'lung', which may eventually be explained as a distorted borrowing, something which is not an unexpected feature in the event of a borrowing!

⁸ The DEDR refers to Kol. (Kin.) *mirjeṣ* 'intestines' with a question-mark. However, the variation of initial dental and labial nasals may occasionally be encountered, cf. also Burrow (1943–46, repr. 1968, p. 74; repeated *ibid.*, p. 137), setting a condition for the alternation: initial *n-* > *m-* before the vowels *o* and *u*, which, however, would not concern the above example. But cf. also Vacek 2004b, No. 29, and particularly Note 55, where a few examples with front vowels are quoted for both Dravidian and Mongolian: e.g.

Ta. *meḷuku* to cleanse the floor with a cowdung solution, smear as the body with sandal paste, gloss over, varnish; cowdung, wax, gum (etc. 6 languages; DEDR 5082) vs.

Kur. *nīmā* to rub down, powder, scrape into bits (as medicinal rock, kitchen nuts, etc.)

niḡnā to besmear, soil with dirt, rub (DEDR 3691b)

Plus an etymon with a medial sibilant:

Kur. *niḡnā* to overlay with a coating of earth carefully smoothed down, stop a hole with earth, besmear with any adhesive substance

Malt. *nisḡe* to smooth

nisye to shampoo (DEDR 3666)

To be compared with:

Mo. *milaya-* to anoint, smear with oil; to perform the ritual of anointing new-born children, new dwellings, and other newly perfected objects by smearing them with butter, milk, etc. for securing good fortune

bila-, *bilaya-* to coat with, smear, spread; to soil

nila- to smear, rub

There are also some more pairs in Mongolian with the initial *m-/n-* alternation:

Mo. *melijed* for the most part, in large numbers, much
nelijed very significant, considerable, considerably

milcai- to become soft; to become wet

nilcai- to become sticky, clammy; to give way (as mud or slush)

⁹ Further cf. Mo. *nilyu* 'milt' (= male generative organ of a fish, its secretion), which may be the initial nasal variant of the above etymon, disregarding the fact that it refers to a different internal organ. Cf. Note 10 below relating to the MT. form with initial nasal.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Evenk. <i>niru, n'irū</i> | spleen ¹⁰ |
| N'ERUN | gland (MTD I,654) |
| Evenk. <i>n'erun</i> | gland; swollen gland; swelling; ¹¹ spleen; suprarenal gland ¹² |
| OT. <i>tala:k (d-)</i> | the spleen (Cl. 495) |
| | (var. <i>talak, dalak, da:lak</i>) |
| Yak. <i>tāl</i> | spleen (Räsänen, p. 457; referring to other Turkic languages and also to Mo. <i>deligüü</i>) |
| Dolg. <i>tāl</i> Milz | (= spleen) (Stachowski, p. 233) |

There is a range of individual reconstructions offered by Starostin (2003), which reflects the narrower confines of the application of immediate phonetic correspondences. These examples, however, can serve as a basis for further reflections on the nature of the phonetic variation within this broad linguistic space.

**tjōle* spleen (Starostin, p. 1373)

MT. **žō(l)* gall (cf. MTD I,260); PMo. **deliγün* spleen; PTurk. **d(i)ālak* spleen; PJap. **(d)ĭ (d) ǣ* liver; PKor. **tira* (← *č-*) spleen

**ñVjVrV* (← *-g-*, *-ř-*) gland (Starostin, p. 1023)

MT. **ñeru / *ñiru* gland; spleen (cf. MTD I,654); PMo. **nojir* pancreas; PJap. **múrá-túa* kidney

**liap'V* Starostin (p. 875)

MT. **lip-če* spleen (Orok. *lipče*, cf. MTD I,499); WMo. **niyalta* (Kh. *nālt* 2 spleen of an animal; Hangin, s.v.); PTurk. **japal* spleen (Tuv. *čavana*, etc.)

3. Only 'spleen' and a 'gland'

There is one more etymon, which has a possible, though not very clear parallel in Manchu-Tungus. The possible formal parallel in Mongolian is semantically more general. However, it refers to an internal organ.

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tu. <i>pallè</i> | spleen |
| Te. <i>balla</i> | enlargement of the spleen |
| Pa. <i>bella</i> | spleen |
| Kuwi <i>balla, bella, bela</i> id. | (DEDR 3995) |

Mo. ? *bulčirxai* gland; ganglion; swollen gland

¹⁰ Cf. the Mongolian *nilyu* 'milt' (Note 9 above), which may be a reflection of the semantic variation observed with some parts of the body mentioned above.

¹¹ For the meanings 'swollen gland, swelling' cf. further MT. *DARGĀ* swelling (of neck glands) (Evenk.); Even. *dargǝ* larynx; aorta (MTD I,199).

¹² MTD further refers to Mo. *nojir*, Kh. *noir* II, pancreas – (cf. G. Hangin, A Modern Mongolian-English Dictionary. Indiana University 1986, s.v.); see also Lessing: *noir* 2. fat adhering to the intestines; soap.

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| MT. <i>BOROKTO</i> | spleen (Nan.) (MTD I,96) |
| ? <i>BICĚKĚ</i> | spleen (Evenk.) (MTD I,86) |

These parallels may appear to be quite transparent in the light of what was said earlier (Vacek 2002a, and particularly Vacek 2004b/2006a), but at the same time there is a considerable amount of fuzziness, which may have to be explained by the general context of the bodily organs as mentioned above. On the one hand there is the obvious fact that in various languages one organ is designated by more terms, though these terms are somehow linked. On the other hand the individual etyma display a variation of meanings within the defined range. This may be another reflection of the contact situation within the possible prehistoric linguistic area/areas, as was suggested in my earlier publications (Vacek *ibid.*). This is a hypothesis which will have to be tested against other data, possibly archaeology and early history.

It is obvious that the process of putting the little pieces together to create a comprehensible mosaic of ancient development and its modern results is rather slow and tedious and we have to wait for more pieces of evidence to appear in order to be able to form a more definite picture.

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