

Dravidian and Altaic 'to wave / to tremble – arm / shoulder-(blade) / wing'

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Summary: The paper summarizes one complex Dravidian and Altaic etymological nest consisting of a verb meaning 'to wave / to tremble', and a body part 'arm / shoulder-(blade) / wing'. This dynamic etymological nest constitutes a significant addition to the general picture of the Dravidian and Altaic parallels – on the one hand it concerns the parallel verbal etyma, on the other the motivated designations, in this case of a body part (cf. Vacek 2007b for a similar case). The paper is to be read in the context of other discussions of the general linguistic aspects and interpretations of the Dravidian and Altaic relationship proposed by the author (ancient linguistic area/areas, high contact languages; Vacek 2002a, 2004b, and particularly recent papers in press, Vacek 2009, 2010a,b).

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The first part of the paper summarises the parallel verbal etyma meaning 'to wave / to tremble' in Dravidian and Altaic, the second part adds lists of what appear to be motivated designations of a body part, viz. 'arm / shoulder-(blade) / wing', in the individual languages. The parallels add interesting complementary data to the previous studies of verbal parallels (Vacek 2007c, 2008a) on the one hand, and of several body parts on the other (Vacek 2007a, 2008b, 2010a, for older references to both verbs and body parts, see Vacek 2006a and 2007d). A similar complex and dynamic relationship was found in the designation of another body part, or rather 'parts', viz. 'elbow / knee / ankle', which appears to be parallel with the verbal roots 'to bend / to bow' (Vacek 2007b).

On the formal side, the material listed below also displays some aspects of the continuum type of phonetic variation (a 'model') of front and back vowels as it was defined in relation to other etyma (cf. Vacek 2002a, pp. 8, 24, 153, 160, it is consistently found in the later discussed etyma). There is occasionally also a variation of initial dental stops, dental nasals and liquids (cf. e.g. Vacek 2002a, p. 61ff.; 2007b, p. 396). Similarly the cerebral liquids in Dravidian etyma often have parallels in Altaic, in which there is a variation of sibilants with liquids (cf. e.g. Vacek 2002a, p. 277ff). However, in this etymon the Altaic sibilants seem to appear only marginally. Among other things these 'variations' (or irregularities) are significant features/symptoms which corroborate the suggestion that the development of the ancestors of these languages took place in a contact in the remote past (cf. Vacek 2002a, 2004b [repr. 2006a] and recent papers in print). In general the individual cor-

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responding etyma should be viewed in the context of the broader implications as they are defined in those papers, namely that the symptoms disclosed in this comparative work do not point in the direction of a 'language family' in the narrow sense, but allow for an interpretation of the similarities as a result of an ancient contact, possibly already on the Indian soil (Vacek 2009, in print).¹ In this context the complex etymological model discussed here adds another piece to the colourful mosaic of Dravidian and Altaic lexical parallels, and hopefully throws another beam of light on the linguistic archaeology of South Asia (Southworth 2005), for which the Altaic (as a broad phylum?) is an important 'point of reference' (cf. Vacek 2009, 2010 in press).²

The semantic variation of the verbs is kept 'within limits', but there are several other almost homophonic verbs in all the languages, whose meaning differs, though in some cases the series may be looked upon as only a continuum of extended meanings, e.g. 'wave' – 'tremble' – 'flap' – 'clap' – 'bang' but also 'beat'. The meaning can occasionally be 'to be startled', which can be seen as a special case of 'trembling'. I have tried to include only the first two or three meanings (implying the 'movement') and their synonyms in the material listed in the verbal etymological nest given below (including the fluttering of 'wings'). For the time being the lexemes having the meaning of 'noise' or 'beating' should be kept as separate etyma (some of the 'beating' lexemes are mentioned below in Note 8; the 'noise' lexemes are mentioned in Notes 10, 14; there is also the meaning 'to burst', 'to break' – cf. Note 7). The semantic oscillation of the designations of the body part(s) represents a dispersal around one 'member' or central 'spot' of the body. Though the motivated designation is 'functional' (as was the case with the 'knee', 'ankle', etc., Vacek 2007b), it is also localised in one general area of the body (as against the 'knee', 'ankle', etc.), and thus the semantic dispersal around it appears to be acceptable ('arm' – 'shoulder' – 'shoulder-blade'). Note also the extension to the bird's 'waving body member', viz. the 'wing' (Mongolian, possibly also Dravidian, cf. below).

There is a relatively great number of synonyms of the present lexemes in the Dravidian languages (see the index of the DEDR), which will be important for further comparison. It will be useful to follow their distribution in the individual languages (geographical) and also in the various historical strata, as reflected by literary documents, particularly the old Tamil Sangam literature (around the beginning of the Christian era).³ For example, Ta. *tō!* 'arm' occurs very often in the Sangam texts.

1. To wave, to tremble

- Nk. *tirk-* to wave, flap
 Pa. (S.) *tiḍk-* (bird) flaps wings (DEDR 3218)
 Nk. (Ch.) *tirg-* to tremble
 Pa. *tir-*, (S.) *tirv-*, *tiri-* id.
tirk- to shudder, throb (pulse)
tirbir-, *tirbir er-* to tremble
 Ga. (Oll.) *tirg-* id.
tirg- (*tirig-*) (S.3) to shiver

¹ For the question of the role of language contact in the development of languages cf. also Thomason, Kaufman 1988 and Trudgill 1989 or Stadnik 2005. For the question of linguistic areas cf. Hook 1987.

² For a summary of the possible relations of Dravidian with other language families cf. Zvelebil 1990, 1991. This question is also briefly and critically discussed by Subrahmanyam (2008, pp. 314ff.).

³ I perfectly agree with the requirement voiced by Ts. Shagdarürüng (2005) that we have to know the history of the individual lexemes. However, it is understandable that this is not always possible in the more remote past.

- Konḍa *tirg-* to tremble
 Pe. *trīg-* (*trīkt-*) id.
tripka- (< *trik-pa-*) to be startled
- Mand. *trīg-* to tremble
 Kui *tirga* (*tirgi-*) to shiver, tremble; n. shivering, trembling
trikna in a startled manner
triki inba to be startled
- Kuwi (F.) *tṛīgali* to shiver
trīginai (S.) to tremble
trig- (*-it-*) (Isr.) to shiver (DEDR 3253)⁴
- Ka. *tera!* to move, stir, tremble, shake, quiver, move forward, go, set out, depart
teraḷike, teraḷke moving, etc.
teraḷicu, teraḷcu to cause to move or tremble, cause to go away, etc.
- Te. *teralu* to start, set out, boil
terlu to boil, bubble up as water
teral(u)cu (K.) to remove, stir, cause to go
- Konḍa *terli* (*-t-*) (water) to boil excessively (s.v. 3128 Ta. *taḷampu*, see below)
- Ta. *taḷampu* (*taḷampi-*) to stagger, totter
tallāṭu (*tallāṭi-*) id.
- Ka. *taḷar* to move, tremble, totter, move on or forward, start off, set out, depart; n. moving, trembling, tottering
taḷarcu to go away from a place, start, depart⁵
- Tu. *taḷabaḷa, taḷamaḷa* alarm, agitation
- Te. *taralu* to set out or start
taḷalu to move, shake
taḷaru id., (K. also) be agitated, disturbed
talāku to move, fear; n. motion, fear
- Mand. *dalka-* to tremble (DEDR 3128)⁶

There is one more etymon with a shifted or secondary meaning ('waving' as 'winnowing') and a variation of the medial dental consonant (liquid and stop), which may be a result of further development in Dravidian:

- Ta. *tārru* (*tārrī-*) to sift, winnow; n. winnowing
tāttu (*tātti-*) to winnow
taṛi (*-pp-*, *-tt-*) to sift by a winnowing fan
- ?Tu. *sāruni, sāriyuni* to sift
- Te. *tāl(u)cu* to sift or separate larger particles from flour in a winnowing basket
- Pe. *dalṅgi ki-* to winnow with a sideways motion
- ? Br. *dranzing, drāzing* to throw up in the air, winnow (DEDR 3195)

⁴ The DEDR refers to Ka. *tera!*, s.v. 3128 Ta. *taḷampu*.

⁵ The Ka., Te., and Konḍa forms with a medial *-e-* are listed above, though perhaps the Konḍa meaning is a little far from the basic meaning of the etymon.

⁶ The DEDR refers to DEDR 3253 Nk. (Ch.) *tirg-* / Cf. Skt. *tarala-*.

As for Skt. *tarala-* 'moving to and fro, trembling, unsteady'; n. 'wave', Mayrhofer (KEWA s.v.) does not seem to be satisfied with a possible IE etymology and considers the Dravidian assonance in Kannada and Telugu proposed by T. Burrow (TPS 1945, 106; 1946, 27) as noteworthy ('zu beachten').

- Mo. *dele*- 2. to wave, flap (as wings); to fan
derbe- to flutter; struggle (as birds or fish)
derbelze- to flutter, flap in the wind
delbegene- to move, sway (of flat, protruding objects)⁷
dalai- a. to raise the hand in order to strike
 b. to brandish, swing, wield
dalal- to beckon, wave the hand⁸
darba-, *darbalza*- b. billow, flutter (of a flag, sail, or garment); [c. to move (of some thing wide-open or gaping)]⁹

- MT. *DERGI*- to give a start (MTD I,237)¹⁰
 Evenk. *dergi*- to give a start, give a lurch, to shake one's head
 deriŋ- to stagger (while walking)
 Sol. *derbel*- to rock, sway
 Olcha *derži*- to tremble, shake
 Nan. *dergi*-, *žergi*- to tremble, shake (about a sledge)

TERTEN TARTAN trembling (MTD II,239)
 Ma. *terten tartan* (iconopoetic) trembling (about body trembling from weakness after having been ill)

NERENDE- flutter, flap (MTD I,625)¹¹
 Evenk. *nerenŋe*- to flutter, flap (the wings)
 Even. *nerək*-, *nərək*- to wave, flap (the wings)
 nerərkin-, *nərərkin*- to fly up, take wing
 nerərkit-/č-, *nərərkit*-/č- to fly, flap (the wings)
TILIYIRE- to beat, throb (the heart) (MTD II,180)
 Evenk. *tiliyire*- id. (< Yak. – see below)

TİSAĞ- to jerk (MTD II,188)
 Even. *tisağ*-, *tihak*- to jerk, twitch (the legs, paws – about birds); to kick out (horse)
 tisağlā-, *tihaklā* to jerk, twitch (the legs, paws – about birds); to kick out (by the hoof)

LORUKĪ butterfly (MTD I,505)¹²
 Evenk. *lorukī*, *loruka*, *lorekī*, etc.; *n'uredō*, *lērindō* etc. butterfly
 lorutkān, *lorodōkān*, *lorukčān* etc. butterfly

⁷ Besides that there is the meaning 'to burst', 'break', etc. expressed by an almost homophonous root, cf. Mo. *delbe* 1. through and through, to pieces, asunder; *delbeci*- to crush, explode; to detonate, burst; *delbere*- a. to burst asunder, go to pieces, split, break; to explode; Cf. also MT. *ČELG'BL*- to break (the hand or the leg) (MTD II,420) This would have a Dravidian parallel in DEDR 3437: Ta. *teŋi* to burst asunder, snap in twain as a rope, split+ break (tr.), cut etc.

⁸ Cf. the formally close lexemes with the meaning 'to beat' etc.: Mo. *talki*- b. to beat someone very hard, beat to exhaustion; [a. to use a scraper or beating stick in tanning leather]. There is also a variant with a sibilant – Mo. *tasi*- to beat, hit with a flat object, clap, slap, slam. The Dravidian correspondence may be DEDR 3105: Ta. *tallu* to beat, crush etc., and (a variant with a cerebral!) in DEDR 3130: Ka. *taŋisu* to pound, beat, deprive rice of its bran by pounding; etc. Cf. also the MT and the Old Turkic (with a sibilant) variants: MT. *TOLAS*- to hit (from above) (Even.) (MTD II,194) OT. *TASGA*- to box s.o.'s ears, to clip s.b. around the ears (OTD s.v.).

⁹ Lessing gives as the first meaning [a.] 'to float'; for this meaning cf. DEDR 3464a, e.g. Ka. *tēlu* to be afloat, float, etc., which is formally very close.

¹⁰ Cf. MT. *TERGI*- I to crack, crackle (MTD II,238).

¹¹ The MTD refers to Korean *nal'ga*- (*nal*-/r-) to fly; *nal'ge* wing.

¹² The MTD refers to *nerenŋe*-.

DALBAT /-Ā- to brandish (MTD I,193)

Evenk. *dalbat* /-č- to brandish (a stick); to beat

DARGIAN to raise one's hand (MTD I,200)

Nan. *darg'an-*, *dargġan-*, *dargġin-* to raise one's hand (in order to strike)

Ma. *darg'a-* to raise one's hand, to threaten by raising the fist or a stick; to raise the sword

dargi- to threaten, shake, tremble

darg'a, *darg'an* waving the fist (when threatening)

TAR SE to give a start (MTD II,169)

Ma. *tar se-* to give a start (terror-stricken)

tar seme giving a start, timidly

OT. *talpi-* to flutter, palpitate, pulsate (Cl. 493)

talpm- id., reflexive (Cl. 493)

TALPĪN- to flutter, palpitate (a bird) (OTD s.v.)

talpir- id., inchoative form (Cl. 493)

TALPĪR- to flutter, palpitate (a bird) (OTD s.v.)

talpiṣ- id., hapax legomenon (Cl. 493)

TALPIŠ- 1. to flutter (the wings), palpitate; 2. to start fluttering in the wind (about textile) (OTD s.v.)

TELĠĀ- to give a start, to alarm (OTD s.v.)

?*telge:-* to infuriate (Cl. 499)

JELGÜR- fly and soar (OTD s.v.)¹³

Yak. *tiligirää-*, *tülügrää-* 3. to flutter, flap (the wings) (MTD II,180)¹⁴

2. Arm, shoulder-blade

Ta. *tōl* shoulder, arm

Ma. *tōl* shoulder

Ko. *to:l* upper arm, elbow to shoulder

To. *twi:lfoḍy* bangle worn on upper arm by women

Ka. *tōl(u)* the arm

Tu. *tōlu* id.

tōlaṅgu shaking of the arm (DEDR 3564)¹⁵

Kurub. *tarkili* (LSB I.12) wing

¹³ This lexeme is also referred to as *jelgūl-* in MTD (I,625). Clauson has *yélgūr-* (hapax legomenon).

¹⁴ The verb has more meanings comparable with the semantic variation of the similar homophones mentioned above: 1. to produce sound typical for wooden objects; 2. to creak, squeak.

¹⁵ We should also consider the significance of the fact that these lexemes (both verbs and nouns) occur consistently only in South and Central Dravidian. There is another etymon covering South and Central Dravidian, which has the same meaning and which is distantly phonetically similar (for the cerebral liquids, nasals and nasal-stops cf. e.g. Vacek 2007a and elsewhere): Ma. *taṅṅa* 'arm, generally forearm, the upper arm' (DEDR 3048, from Malayalam up to Kuwi). Such a variation appears in Dravidian etyma which have Altaic parallels with the sibilant/liquid variation. In the analysis below this variation could not be exactly found for the 'arm', but note the verbal forms in MT. And there is also the question of the relation of Skt. *dos-* (the fore-arm, the arm; Acc. *doṣam*, Ins. *doṣā*; Dual *doṣī*, *dorbhyām*) mentioned in DEFR 3048. Mayrhofer (KEWA s.v. *doḥ*, EWA s.v. *doṣ-* n. arm, fore-arm) quotes Iranian, Old Irish, Slavonic and Baltic parallels, so there is no doubt about the IE origin of the word. Further cf. the variant 'pair words' (Mongolian *horṣoo*): Skt. *dor-daṅṅa-*, *bāhu-daṅṅa-* a long arm (DEDR 3048) and *dor-bāhuvāni* (in *Śatupathabrāhmaṇa* quoted in EWA). Could this be an example of an approximation of forms and meanings and also typological features (pair words) in the ancient linguistic area of India?

To. *tergy* wing
 Koč. *terake* id. (DEDR 3424)¹⁶

Mo. *dalū* shoulder blade, scapula; scapula of a sheep used in scapulimancy
 ?*dalang* l. nape of the neck (of animals); withers (of a horse)
dalabci(n) wing(s); anything resembling or suggestive of wings

MT. (*J*)*ĒRŪN* bone of the forearm (MTD 1.291)
 Evenk. (*j*)*ērūn* bone of the forearm; ell (the measure of length equivalent to the distance from elbow to fist)
 Even. *jerūn* ridge of the shoulder blade of the deer
DALŪ shoulder-blade (MTD 1.195)
 Evenk. *dalū* shoulder-blade (of the deer, elk)
dalū- to tell fortunes (from the shoulder-blade of deer, elk)
dalapči (< Mo.) a wing

OT. *yarm* shoulder-blade (Cl. 970)¹⁷
JARĪN l. shoulder-blade, shoulder (OTD s.v.)

Conclusion

The above etymon with two distinct but related meanings is another example of a complex etymology of a verb and a motivated designation of a body part, dynamically interconnected. It could be noticed that the meaning of the lexeme designating the body part may also vary/oscillate 'around' the one pinpointed body part ('arm' in this case). This is something we have already observed with other body parts (Vacek 2005c etc.) and it may have to be understood and accepted as a process of development of various extended meanings around the particular body 'spot' or 'member'.

¹⁶ The DEDR further refers to DEDR 2591: Ta. *ciṛai, ciṛaku, ciṛakar* wing.

¹⁷ As for the Altaic etymology provided by Starostin et alia, the respective lexemes from the individual branches seem to be dispersed in the dictionary under various headings, e.g.

PMong. **dalū, dali* shoulderblade, wing (Vol. II, p. 1351) is compared with PJpn. **tā-i* hand, arm and PKor. **tār'ūi* wing (of a saddle).

PTur. **jarin* shoulder, shoulder blade (Vol. I, p. 465) is put into one etymon with PMong. **dere(me)* pillow, cushion, and PMT **darama* waist, back.

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¹⁸ The abbreviations of languages used in this paper are those used in the relevant comparative dictionaries. Some other abbreviations are used for references to the works listed below:

Cl. – Clauson 1972; DEDR – Burrow, Emeneau 1984; EWA – Mayrhofer, M., 1986f.; KEWA – Mayrhofer, M., 1956–1980; MTD – SRAVNITEL'NYJ SLOVAR' TUNGUSO-MAN'ČŽURSKIH JAZYKOV 1975–1977; OTD – DREVNĚTJURKSKIJ SLOVAR' 1969

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