

BALÁZS DANKA

The Pre-Islamic Oğuz-nāmā

A philological and linguistic analysis

scientific results

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Previous research

The only known manuscript of the *Oğuz-nāmā* in Uygur script – to which I referred as Pre-Islamic (PON) in my dissertation – is preserved in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris (MS). The text narrates the deeds and conquests of Oguz Kagan, the legendary hero of Turkic-speaking peoples. Although the text is a very important source from the perspective of Turkic cultural history, the time and date of writing down the text is difficult to define, since it does not contain a colophone. One can only deduce the information in question. The research history of the PON is longer than a century. Since its first accessible edition (Radloff 1890, 1891) several editions of the PON has been published (Nour 1928, Pelliot 1930 [1995], Bang-Arat 1932 [1936], Ščerbak 1959). Before the last edition, and in the last six decades since then several important articles have been published which are about, but not necessarily only about the PON (Sinor 1950, Sümer 1959, Clauson 1962, 1964, Ercilasun 1986, Tezcan 2006). Even so, the dating of the PON, or even the correct interpretation of the text at some places, has not yet been made. The language of the PON is also not elaborated from a systematic linguistic perspective, as well as the text has got no usable facsimile edition.

The goals of the dissertation

Thus the compilation of the present dissertation served a threefold goal: First of all it was necessary to make the critical edition of the text, which contains the facsimile of the manuscript, as well as the summary of the previous editions on the PON, the comparison of their interpretations, and – if necessary – to refine their readings. This critical edition served as a base for the dissertation to achieve its second goal: The linguistic analysis of the PON. The description of the PON's language opened the possibility to define the place of the text in the Turkic language history, and to set the framework in which it will be possible to execute a comparative research with other historical Turkic texts. The third goal of the dissertation was the philological comparison with the texts also called *Oğuz-nāmās* in the literature. Thus it was possible to define the core plot of the Oguz-tradition, and some historical layers could be separated in the the text(s). Through this examination, I attempted to appoint some new viewpoints which should be considered in the dating of the PON and its historical explanation.

The structure of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of the following chapters: The Introduction contains the accessible information on the manuscript of the PON as well as the concise summary of its research history.

The chapter on paleography sums up the research history on this field in Turkology, and describes the grapheme-set of the script variety of the PON. In the mirror of the results it examines again the reading possibilities of the words denoting the one-horned creature, which is rendered by a picture in the manuscript.

The third chapter of the dissertation is the critical edition of the text. This chapter contains the facsimile of the manuscript, the transliteration of the text based on the paleographical examination, the transcription, and the English translation of the text. The chapter compares the readings of the previous editions (Radloff 1891, Nour 1928, Bang 1936, Ščerbak 1959) which differ from the present one in footnotes.

The fourth chapter provides notes on the text, which summarize the arguments of the authors of the mentioned editions for their own readings, as well as my arguments for my readings – if there is a difference. These notes forward the reader to the correspondent chapters of the dissertation.

The fifth chapter is a slightly different and reviewed variety of two of my earlier publications (Danka 2014 and Danka 2015b). This chapter sums up the features of the script variety of the PON, and – based on those – deduces some phonological and phonetic features of the language of the PON.

Chapter six examines the strategies of word formation in the language of the text. The section on derivation compares the usage of the derivative elements found in the PON with those found in Old Turkic (Erdal 1991), and attempts to make some basic statements on the methodology and usable criteria of the research on compounds in Turkic historical texts, and the encountered problems on this field.

Chapter seven – the last one on linguistics – contains the description of the levels of the language not having been dealt with so far, such as declensional and conjugational paradigms, postpositions, tense and aspect-system, modality, and subordinated clauses.

The eighth chapter is a macrophilological examination, which contains the comparison of the motifs found in the PON and those of the known Muslim *Oğuz-nāmā* versions.

The ninth, last chapter summarizes the findings of the dissertation and tries to set new directions for the future research on the text or on its plot.

The dissertation is closed by the bibliography and an appendix which contains the lexical elements found in the PON, their spelling variations, assumed etymons, and their occurrences in the text cited with context.

Methods of the examination

Due to the structure of the dissertation, the examination of the PON has been made from multifold perspectives: each chapter needed a different approach possibly even within the one and the same chapter. During the paleographical examination, I compiled the grapheme-set and the grapheme archetypes of the script variety of the PON juxtaposing grapheme instances taken from the facsimile of the manuscript.

In the chapter containing the text edition, I placed the facsimile and the transliteration with transcription, and translation as well as the comparative footnotes on mirror pages, in order to be able to compare and check the readings of the previous editions immediately.

In the chapter on phonology and phonetics the corpus of the examination consisted of the word-instances which are tendentially 'misspelled' in Uygur-(Mongolian) script by the scribe. First it was necessary to describe which graphemes and grapheme-combinations were used by the Uygur script to render the phonemes of the (Old) Turkic language(s), then I compared these usages to those applied in the PON. The theoretical framework of the phonological interpretation was that used in English phonology by Harris (1994).

In the chapter concerning word formation I examined the derivational and compounding methods in the language of the PON. During the description of the derivation, I applied the method used by Erdal (1991) for Old Turkic: I set pairs of the derived words and their stems found in the text, and on the one hand, I examined the relation between the stems and their derivations, on the other hand, I investigated whether the derivations are transparent from the perspective of morphology and semantics. I compared my result with the Old Turkic stage, so the differences and changes of the PON's derivational system and that of Old Turkic became visible.

During the examination of compounding, the theoretical framework was the typology described by Bissetto&Scalise (2006), which I attempted to apply on the known and most commonly described compound-types from old and modern Turkic languages. These were compared to those language forms which are found in the PON, and I identified the latter as compounds, and to classify them.

In the chapter containing the inflectional grammar of the PON, I arranged the inflectional suffixes into paradigms, and I compared them to those found in Old Turkic (Erdal

2004). The aspect and tense system of the PON (Danka 2012 and 2015a) was an exception, since the aspect system of Modern Turkish is described according to an excellent theoretical framework (Johanson 1971, 2000), and because the aspect system of the PON is much more close to that of Modern Turkish than to that of Old Turkic.

The comparison of the plot of the PON with that of the Muslim *Oğuz-nāmās* was based on the latter's accessible editions¹ of scientific standard. I arranged the PON into contentional sections, and these into motifs. Since the PON is only a part of the whole *Oğuz-nāmā* cycle, I limited the examination to those motifs which are found in the PON. These motifs have been searched for in the corresponding chapters of the Muslim versions, and – if found – I compared them in details to those of the PON. After this I attempted to separate that core plot of the Oğuz-tradition, which was reconstructible based on the overlapping parts of the PON and the Muslim versions. I did not consider those motifs which are found in the Muslim versions – due to their greater extension – but not in the PON, because it does not belong to the critical edition of the PON in the narrow sense. Finally, I attempted to draw the map of the relationships between the different *Oğuz-nāmā* versions, based on the *differences* of the corresponding motifs found in them.

New scientific results on the field of the phonology and phonetics of the PON

The examination and comparison of the vowel marking techniques of the script variety of the PON and the Uygur script used for Old Turkic showed that the rendering of the Old Turkic /i/ phoneme is far more often marked with <'> than it was usual in Old Turkic. In the PON, not only /i/ but the front /i/, and in certain cases labial vowels are also marked with <'>. I assume that the reason for this phenomenon is that the script variety of the PON actually does not mark vowel phonemes themselves, but their dominant distinguishing elements. Since /i/ is marked most commonly not with <y>, but with <'>, I concluded that <'> does not mark /a/ or /ä/ like in Old Turkic, but it can mark if a vowel is of neutral shade. Based on the data at hand, I made the hypothesis that the vowel system of the PON went through a similarly comprehensive shift like we know from modern Volga Kipchak languages:

¹ The Muslim *Oğuz-nāmās* are the following: The one found in the Persian historiographer, Rašīd ad-Dīn's work *Ġāmī at-Tawārīḫ* from 1310-1311 (Jahn 1969) = RD; The Ottoman historiographer 'Alī Yazījizāde's work *Tevārīḫ-i Āl-i Selçuk* in Ottoman Turkic, from 1423 (Bakır 2008) = YZ. The so-called *Oğuz-nāmā of Uzunköprü* in Ottoman Turkic, the author and the time and place of writing down in unknown (Eraslan 1976) = UK, and finally, Abu'l Ġāzi Bahadur Khan's *Şejere-i Terākime* (1661) and *Şejere-i Türk* (1665), both are in Turkī (Chagatay Turkic). The former has been published by Kargı Ölmez (1996), the latter is accessible in Desmaison's (1970²) edition. The *Oğuz-nāmās* found in these latter two works differ slightly, only in some details (=AG)

The shift of the vowel system of the PON, and its marking with Uygur script.

/i/ {I} <(')y>, <y>	/ü/ {UI} <(')wy>, <w>	/i/ {@} <(')y>, <y>~<'>	/u/ {U} <(')w>, <w>
/e/ {AI} <(')y>/<'>, -	/ö/ {AUI} <(')wy>, -		/o/ {AU} <(')w>, -
/ä/ {AI} <'>, <'>		/a/ {A} <(')'>, <'>	

Moreover, there are hypercorrectly written words observable in the PON: In Turkic words, etymologically long vowels are rendered with a technique which is used for secondary long vowels, developed from etymological disyllables in Written Mongolian (<VqV> and <Vkv>). Based on this finding, I examined the whole text from the perspective that along with the Turkic primary long vowels, what types of sounds may be marked with the mentioned grapheme-sequences, and I concluded that these sounds may be diphthongs of various origins. I also concluded that the reason for these unusual sound-marking techniques is that the narrator and scribe of the PON were two different persons, and the scribe wrote down the text after dictation. This assumption has already occurred in the literature (Sümer 1959, and Clauson 1964), but I refined it with the following: The scribe was competent in Written Mongolian, and he knew a Turkic dialect which probably differed from the mother tongue of the narrator. The mother tongue of the scribe is not clarified, but among others, the marking of the derivative *-GU* as *-aw* points to, in accordance with the above statement, that the narrator spoke a kind of Kipchak variety, and not Turkmen belonging to the Oguz-branch of Turkic as Sümer (1959: 388-389) and Clauson (1964: 16-17) thought.

On the field of word formation

In the chapter about derivation, 37 derivatives could be attested in the PON from those known from Old Turkic. The distribution of these is the following: 10 denominal nomen derivative (NN), 13 deverbal nomen derivative (VN), 6 denominal verb derivative (NV) and 8 deverbal verb derivative (VV). For the examination of these, I found enough data for less than the half of the cases (17 derivatives). After the examination I classified the derivatives in the PON as the following a) *attested* 20 pcs. = 5 NN, 8 VN, 3 NV, 4 VV. b) *productive* 6 pcs. = 3 NN, 1 VN, 1 NV, 1 VV c) *productive, distribution changed* 4 pcs. 1 NN, 2 VN, 1VV. d) *productive, function changed* 1 pc. = 1 VV. e) *improductive*: 6 pcs. = 1 NN, 2 VN, 2 NV, 1 VV. A derivative has been claimed to be improductive if the relation between the attested stems and

their (etymologically) correspondent derivations could not be considered transparent from the phonological, morphological or semantic point of view. According to the above statements, a considerable difference can be attested between the language of the PON and Old Turkic. Furthermore, during the examination I managed to highlight some problems related to an amount of words which were interpreted wrongly in the previous editions, or – in other cases – to clarify their etymologies.

On the field of compounding, I drew attention to those typological and terminological problems, which are present in general linguistics as well as in the Turkological literature.

According to the criteria I chose, I identified and classified the compounds found in the PON. In the case of the coordinate compounds, I attested the main stages of the process of lexicalization, and I drew attention to the fact that a part of the PON's lexicon can be attested only in compounds. This necessarily means also that at least some of these words was becoming obsolete in the dialect of the PON, thus we had a limited insight to the historical development of the lexicon of this variety. In the PON's dialect, compounding (compared to derivation) proved to be very productive as a strategy to form new lexical items. In the case of the complex compounds, some extremely complex structures could be attested, on the other hand, the components of these structures has generally the simplest inner structure.

On the field of grammar of the PON

During the description of the grammar of the PON as a dialect, I managed not only to attest the differences between that and Old Turkic, but I also recovered several features which have not been discussed concerning this text. Such were the functional overlaps of several case markers, and the unusual behavior of the suffix-marked plural at the subject-predicate agreement.

At the description of the tense and aspect system, I recovered that the attestable system of the PON is almost perfectly symmetric, but several forms may compete for a given function. The table below sums up the viewpoint operators found in the PON's dialect:

Viewpoint operators of the PON.

	+PRO	+INTRA ^F	+INTRA ^{NF}	−INTRA −POST	+POST
+PAST	-	-guda erdi -makta erdi	-Vr erdi	-di	-Vp erdi/turdi -gan erdi/turdi -mVš erdi
−PAST	-Vr (turur)/pm.	-guda turur -makta turur	-(y)A turur/pm.		-Vp turur/pm.
Focusing elements: -mVš bol-: +POST > +POST ^F -Vr bol- : +PRO > +PRO ^F					

As a strange development, the near future is expressed exclusively by the 'aorist', which served to express simple present in Old Turkic. This latter function is expressed by a construction based on a converb, finitized by a copula. The past continuous however, is still expressed by the aorist and the past-tense copula.

Describing the construction expressing modal meanings, I managed to embed the *-sunğil* morpheme into a morphological and semantic opposition, which has been known from the earlier literature concerning the PON, but so far its function was not precisely described. According to my opinion, *-sunğil* is a complex morpheme, which is related to the third person imperative *-sun* morpheme (*-sun* : *-sunğil*) in the same way as *-Gıl* does to the zero morpheme in second person: ($-\emptyset$: *-Gıl*). The meaning of *-sunğil* is a strong wish or command.

In this chapter I also described and classified the types of subordinate clause occurring in the PON.

New perspectives for the dating of the PON and its historical interpretation

I compared the PON and Muslim *Oğuz-nāmās*, and attempted to separate the core plot, which is contained by all known Oğuz-legends. Among these motifs, there are ones, which are present in all variants, but their (semiotic) meaning is blurred or sank into oblivion, because they probably belong to a very archaic layer of the tradition.

The earlier literature on the *Oğuz-nāmās* concentrated on similarities between them. In my opinion, it is much more subservient to emphasize the differences between the variants. Examining the PON and the Muslim version from this point of view, I recovered that the interpretation of the tribal names which constitute the backbone of all *Oğuz-nāmās*, are narrated in a different way, and are connected to different plot-elements in the PON than in

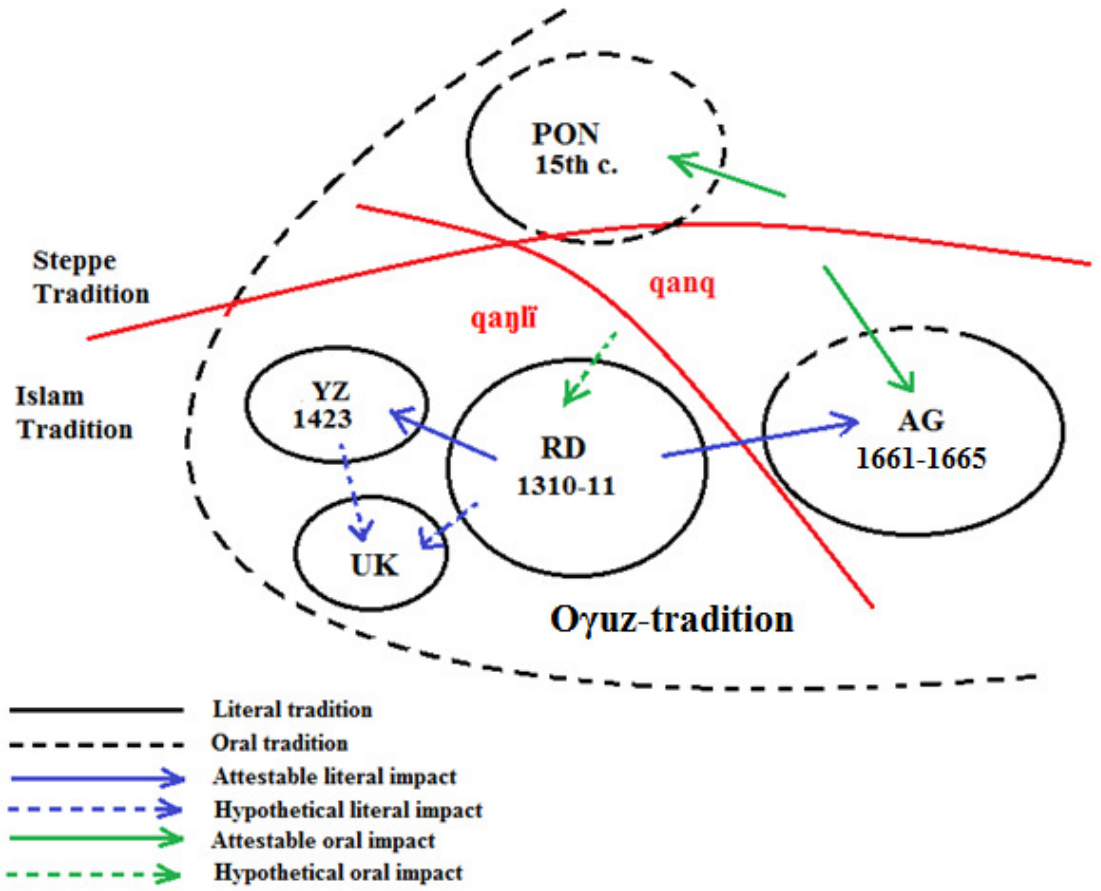
the Muslim versions. This is an argument in favour that the PON is a completely independent version of the *Oğuz-nāmäs*.

I managed to separate those motifs, which are not present in the Muslim *Oğuz-nāmäs*. Along with the ideological background, the narration of those events belong here, which took place in the region (of the lower flow) of the Volga. Actually we should think that the PON had been narrated with the exact purpose to integrate these events to the tradition, to legitimize the claim of supremacy over this region. Based on this, one may assume that the story not only narrate the events of the lower Volga-region, but it had been also written down there. This assumption is supported by the linguistic features known from Kipchak languages. The Volga-region had belonged to the Golden Horde since the 13th century.

The story of the Kipchak tribe also belong to this central part of the PON: Oguz Kagan arrives to the *Etil* (Volga) with his army, which they cannot cross. There is a *beg* called *Uluğ Ordu* (Great Horde) in the army, who makes rafts from the branches and shoots found on the bank, with which the army can cross the river. For this deed Oguz Kagan grants the name *Qıpçaq* (Kipchak) for the *beg*. The name is based on folk etymology. According to the interpretation of the text, the Turkic name has the meaning 'one who puts (branches) together'. I find it probable, that the original name of the *beg*, *Uluğ Ordu* means the Great Horde, i.e. the central territories of the dissolving Golden Horde of the 15th century. This data may help to date the text: The PON could have only been written down after the name *Uluğ Ordu* had been started to be used. If this assumption is true, the PON should be considered as a late product of the literature in Uyğur(-Mongolian) script in the territory of the former Golden Horde.

One should also consider the story interpreting the tribal name *Qañlı*. This story is more or less same in all main *Oğuz-nāmä* versions: After a victorious battle, Oguz Kagan and his army acquires such a great amount of goods, that they cannot carry it away. A *beg* constructs a (wheeled) cart, thus he can move his share. The whole army follows the example, and they solve the problem. The *beg* is granted the name *Qañlı*. At this point there is a small but important difference between the given versions: in RD's and YZ's versions the name of both the carts and the *beg* will be *Qañlı*, while in the PON and at AG, the name of the cart is *qanqa/qañ* based on an onomatopoeic word, while the *beg* will be granted the name *Qanqalug/Qañlı* 'one who has carts'. This detail connects the PON and AG's work together, and separates them from the others. I showed in my dissertation that there are further details where the AG agrees with the PON, but AG narrates them more informatively. Thus AG knew not the PON as a written text, but the oral tradition on which both texts are based. The

following figure illustrates how the relation between each versions can be reconstructed. The arrangement of the figure corresponds to the versions' relative geographical distribution.



The interrelatedness of the different *Oğuz-nāmā* versions.

The author's earlier publications on the topic:

- DANKA, B. 2012: Aspect-Temporal and narrative devices in the so-called 'pagan' Oğuz-nāmā'. In: Kincses-Nagy, É. & Biacsi, M. (eds.) *The Szeged Conference. Proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Turkish Linguistics held on August 20-22, 2010 in Szeged*. Szeged. 221-229.
- DANKA, B. 2014a: Az ősi hitvilág nyomai. In: Biacsi M – Ivanics M. (eds.) *A török népek vallásai – Filológiai tanulmányok a török vallásos szövegek köréből*. Szeged. 49-68.
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URL: http://nydi.szte.hu/LingDok_kotetekregi_files/lingdok13.pdf (last access: 2016. 06. 11)
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URL: http://nydi.bibl.u-szeged.hu/SZTE_NYDI/LingDok_konfktetek_files/lingdok14.pdf (last access: 2016. 06. 11)
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A author's earlier conference speeches on the topic:

On the historical and religious context of the 'Pagan' Oğuz-nāmā.

The Role of Religion in the Turkic Culture.

Péter Pázmány Catholic University, Budapest, 9th-11th September 2015.

A pogány Oğuz-nāmā igeidő- és aspektusrendszere.

Nyelvészdoktoranduszok 17. Országos Konferenciája.

University of Szeged, Szeged, 28th-29th November 2013.

Az etimologikus illabiális zárt vokálisok jelölésének problémája a 'Pogány' Oğuz nāmā-ban.

Nyelvészdoktoranduszok 16. Országos Konferenciája

University of Szeged, Szeged, 29th-30th November. 2012.

The problem of hypercorrect forms in the Pagan Oğuz-nāmā.

16th International Conference on Turkish Linguistics

Middle-East Technical University, Ankara, 18th-21st September 2012.

Interrelativity of the versions of Oğuz-nāmā.

55th Annual Meeting of Permanent International Altaistic Conference

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj, 22nd-27th July 2012.

A pogány Oğuz-name mint elsődlegesen szóbeli szöveg.

Nyelvészdoktoranduszok 15. Országos Konferenciája

University of Szeged, Szeged, 17th-18th November 2011.

Pagan Oğuznama'daki fiil bakışı araçları.

Plot of Oguznama as a historical and cultural source

Turkmen National University, Ashgabat, 14th-15th October 2010.

A 'Pogány' Oğuz-nāme paleográfiájáról.

Ünnepi Konferencia Ivanics Mária 60. születésnapja alkalmából

University of Szeged, Szeged, 27th September 2010.

Aspect-temporal and narrative devices in the so-called 'Pagan' Oğuz-nāmā.

15th International Conference on Turkish Linguistics

University of Szeged, Szeged, 20th-22nd August 2010.

Az ujjur írásbeliség a török népeknél.

Kari Tudományos Nap

University of Szeged, Szeged, 29th April 2009.

A magánhangzók jelölésének problémái az ujugur-írásos Oguz-náméban

Orientalista Nap

Lóránd Eötvös University, Budapest, 3rd April 2009.

Furthmore, I gave an 8 hour course in English with the title *Oghuz-name in Uygur script, as a Middle-Turkic monument* between 23rd-30th April, 2010, in the Linguistic and Philological Institute of Uppsala University.

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