

Studies on Altaic and Uralic Plural Suffixes.

D. SINOR, On Some Ural-Altaic Plural Suffixes, *Asia Major, A British Journal of Far Eastern Studies, New Series, Vol. II, Part 2*, London, 1952, p. 203—230.

My article »Plural Suffixes in the Altaic Languages» (*Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher, Bd. XXIV, Heft 3—4*, 1952, p. 65—83) was in print when I received the interesting article of Dr. Sinor reviewed here. It was already too late to make reference to it and the only thing I could do was to express my satisfaction with the fact that Sinor's point of view was in general close to that represented in my article, though I disagree with him considerably in certain details. In this review I intend to return to some problems treated differently by Sinor and myself and to show why some statements of Sinor raise objections.

The Altaic plural suffixes have already been explored by many scholars — Kotwicz, Munkácsi, Pelliot, and Ramstedt, to mention only a few. Many problems have been solved by them. Therefore, it is obvious that my point of view must be close to that of Sinor when both of us base our research on the results achieved by our predecessors. On the other hand, many problems still remain unsolved and, therefore, one cannot expect to find full agreement in the works of different explorers.

One of the recently discovered Altaic plural suffixes is *-n*. It can be traced as a fossil suffix in Turkic and as a living one in Mongolian. In Turkic it occurred only in a few words in ancient times. The commonly known forms are *oylan* and *ürän*. In connection with these words a mistake or, perhaps, a misprint in Sinor's article should be corrected, namely where he makes the statement: »nowhere in the old Turkish texts can a plural **oylar* be found» (p. 208). The latter form cannot be found, because it never existed and is absolutely impossible. The »regular» plural of *oöl* can be only *oöullar* and another form *oölanlar* is also possible but not *oylar*.

I agree, however, with Sinor that Turkic *özän* »interior» is not a plural by origin (*ibid.*).

The suffix *-n* is taken in Mongolian only by stems ending in *i* and *ï*. Therefore, the plural of the so-called *nomen futuri* in *-qun* is not derived from the singular form in *-qu* but from the singular form in *-quï* (cf. Sinor, p. 209): sing. *yabuquï* »going» — plur. *yabuqun*. The suff. *-tan* (in *moritan* etc.) is not a plural of a noun in *-tu* (Sinor, l. c.) but a plural form of a noun in *-tai*.

The remarks made on the plural suffix *-n* in Tungus possessive endings of the 1st and 2nd person of the plural *-wun* and *-sun* respectively (in *džūwun* »our house« and *džūsun* »your house«) raise objections, because here the final consonant *n* is not a plural mark, but belongs to the stems of the personal pronouns: cf. *bu* »we« — gen. *munŋi*, dat. *mundu*, etc.; *su* »you« — gen. *sunŋi*, dat. *sundu*, etc. It is known that in the nominative case the personal pronouns did not have a final *n* in Common Altaic. This is still the case in Mongolian, Tungus, and Chuvash, cf. Mo. *bi* »I« — gen. *min-u* < **bin-u*; Tung. *bi* »I« — gen. *minŋi* < **bin-ŋi*; Chuv. *ε-bi* »I« — gen. *manǎn* < **bän-in*. It is also important to note that in some Altaic languages the possessive endings have originated from the genitive forms of the personal pronouns, e. g. Buryat *ažam* ~ *ažamni* »my elder brother« < **aqa-mini*, plur. *ažamnā* »our elder brother« < **aqa-manuŋaj*. By analogy new forms appear which resemble greatly the nominative forms of the personal pronouns, e. g. Bur. *ažas* »thy elder brother« which is an abbreviation of *ažasni* < **aqa-čini*.

Returning to the Tungus forms *džūw* »my house« and *džūs* »thy house« I should remark that their possessive endings look like the nominative forms of the personal pronouns *bi* »I« and *si* »thou«, while in *-wun* and *-sun* the stems of the oblique cases are found. I explain this as a result of the obvious tendency to distinguish between the singular and plural forms which would have converged inevitably if the plural possessive suffixes had been nominative forms by origin. In the same manner as *bi* became *-w* the plural pronoun *bu* would have become *-w*, but the final *n* of the stem has prevented it from developing into *-w*. A similar phenomenon is found in Kalmuck: cf. *emgŋ* »my wife« < **emegen-mini* but *emgŋbidŋ* or *emgŋ-māni* »our wife« < **emegen-biden* or **emegen-man* where *biden* and *man* are stems of the pronouns *bid*³ and **ba*.

On the other hand, Sinor is right when he finds the Tungus plural suffix *-na* (which, according to my terminology, is a vocalized variety of the suffix *-n*) in Udehe, e. g. *əxi-nə-wə-ni* »his elder sisters«, an accusative (p. 210). I find it also in the compound suffix *-na-sal*, e. g. »the elder brothers« in Tungus (Poppe, p. 74). The suffix *-(a)na* alone is found in Nanai (Goldi).

Sinor is right when he believes that *-t* is the original, and Mo. *-d* a relatively new, form of this suffix (p. 212). In this connection it should be remarked that Turkic final **t* always corresponds to Mongolian *-d* (> *d* or *t* but never an aspirated

t), e. g. Turkic **ot* (> *ot* etc.) »fire» = Mo. *odqan* »the younger son» < *»fire king» (called so, because in ancient Mongolian society he had to take care of the family hearth); Turk. *yat* (> *džat* etc.) »strange, foreigner» > Mo. *jad* id., etc. In general I agree with Sinor's statements concerning Turkic *-t*, though this suffix occurs in Turkic more frequently than he believes (p. 212). Contrary to his remarks the suffix *-t* does occur in Tungus (cf. Sinor, p. 213). First of all, I find it as an ending in many Tungus clan names (Poppe, p. 69). Besides, its vocalized form *-ta* occurs in Manchu. It should be remarked in this connection that in Sinor's article too little attention is paid to Manchu suffixes.

The plural suffix *-l* occurs in Middle Mongolian. It is difficult to prove whether this suffix is also found in *mongol* as Sinor believes. It is, however, beyond doubt that the Manchu form *mongyoso* is a further development of **mongyolso*, because Manchu has dropped many final consonants.

The suffix *-l* can be found in the Mongolian plural suffix *-šül* (Buryat *-šül*), but the latter is not a combination of *-t* and *-l* as Sinor believes (p. 227) but *-*čü* and *-l*. The former is found in Mo. *qara-čü* »commoner, ordinary person» (from *qara* »black») and *-l* is a plural suffix. The suffix *-čü* is a variety of the suffix *-čī* (cf. *modu-čī* »carpenter», *üker-čī* »cowboy», etc.).

It should be pointed out in this connection that the compound plural suffixes must not necessarily consist always of two or more primary plural suffixes. It occurs that only one of the primary elements constituting a compound suffix is really an original plural suffix. Thus here in *-čül* the element *-čü* is a derivation suffix of professional names. Another suffix is *-tan* which contains only one primary plural suffix and this is *-n*, while the remaining portion of the suffix is the same as in the comitative suffix *-taġ*. Sometimes plural suffixes contain elements which are not original suffixes at all. Such a plural suffix is *-nüt* in many spoken Mongolian languages, in which *-n* belongs to the nominal stem, e. g. in *žaranüt* (the name of a West Buriat clan) derived from *žara* »black», where its presence is explained by analogy to *žün-üt* »people» from *žün* < **kümün*, and similar words.

The most controversial plural suffix is *-*r*. It is wide spread in Tungus, but Sinor is right when he expresses his doubt about the ending *-r* of the Lamut future tense *hadžir* »they will know». The singular form is *hadžin* »he will know» (p. 216). The ending *-r* in *hadžir* is not a plural suffix but the suffix of the verbal noun and corresponds to Tungus *-ra*, e. g. *tegem* »I have sat down», *tege-re-n* »he has sat down», and *tege-re*

»they have sat down». In Tungus the third person of the plural is formed by the verbal noun in *-ra* with no personal suffix in the aorist and, likewise, in the present tense. Thus, *-r* in *hadžir* is not a plural suffix. As for Nanai (Goldi) *-l* in *bumčəl* »they would give», it does not support the remarks on *hadžir*, because it is added to the verbal noun in *-*čā*, while *-r* in *hadžir* has joined the verbal theme.

In Turkic the suffix *-*r* developed into *-*z* under the influence of a narrow vowel (**i* or **j*). The Proto-Turkic suffix **-z* corresponds to Mongolian *-r* and not *-s* as Sinor believes (p. 218). The Turkic word *omuz*, quoted by him and outwardly resembling Greek *ὄμος*, corresponds to Mongolian *omuriγun* »chest». I find the suffix *-*r* in the Mongolian plural suffix *-nar* thus agreeing with Sinor, though I find his criticism of Ramstedt's opinion — differing from Sinor's and my point of view — as »one of his over-hasty statements» (p. 223) undeserved.

The Mongolian plural suffix *-s* does not correspond to Turkic *-z* but represents the ancient suffix **-s* not acknowledged as such in Sinor's article. It seems that the suffix *-s* alternated with *-d* < *-*t* in Mongolian. The suffix *-d* joined stems ending in consonants whereby the final consonants *n*, *l*, and *r* were dropped and the remaining consonants required a connective vowel *-u-*, e. g. *morid* »horses» (but in Middle Mongolian *n* remained in some oblique cases, e. g. *morindi* accusative), *möd* »ways» (*mör*), *tuyud* »calves» (*tuyul*), but *ulus-ud* »peoples», *bičig-üd* »writings», etc. The suffix *-s* was added to stems ending in vowels. Thus, there was an alternation of *-d* and *-s*. This *-s* can be traced in Manchu where the suffix *-sa* is not a loan from Mongolian as Sinor states (p. 218). On the contrary, it is a common Tungus suffix and occurs in Tungus in collective nouns, e. g. *mōsa* »forest» from *mō* »tree». We find this suffix also in the Manchu inclusive personal pronoun *muse* »we» which according to Sinor cannot be explained easily (p. 219). I do not see any difficulty, because it consists of *mu* < **mün* which is the stem of the Tungus pronoun *bu* »we», and the plural suffix *-se* before which the final *n* of the stem has been dropped in the same manner as in Tungus *samāsal* »the shamans» from *samān* »shaman». This type of plural pronoun occurs also in Mongolian (Khalkha) *B'āDDDnr* »we» (including all the present persons) from *B'āDDD* »we»; cf. also the Turkic form *bizlär* »we» from *biz*, etc.

In continuing the discussion of the suffix *-s* not having anything in common with Turkic *-z*, I should remark that the Mongolian consonant *s* corresponds to Turkic *z* only in loan

words, e. g. Mo. *boγos* »pregnant» (mare or cow) < Turk. *boyaz* id.; Mo. *kibes* (Khalkha *χιῦῆs*) »carpet» < Turk. *kübâz* »cotton», etc. The examples given by Sinor are not correct. They are Turk. *toz* »dust» = Mo. *toγosun* id. and Turk. *tuz* »salt» = Mo. *dabusun* id. (p. 220). As for Mo. *toγosun* »dust» it is a further development of **toγasun* < **toβasun* < **toβar-sun* || **toβar-aγ* > *tobaray* »earth» = Turk. *topraq* »earth». Mo. *dabusun* »salt» has nothing in common with Turkic *tuz* »salt», though this erroneous etymology occurs in the well-known »Comparative Grammar» by Vladimirtsov (there on p. 258). As for Mo. *öber* »self» and *öbesüd* »selves» there is no alternation *r* ~ *s* as Sinor believes, but *r* has simply disappeared before *s*, i. e. the form in question is *öbersed* or *öbersüd*. The latter form occurs in Written Mongolian. It is known that the consonant *r* easily disappears in Mongolian before certain consonants and particularly before *s* (of the ending *-sun*), e. g. Mo. *čayasun* ~ *čayarsun* »paper» (Buryat *sārḥḥḥ*), Mo. *namusun* ~ *namursun* »tetter, ring-worm», Mo. *yesün* < **yer-sün* »nine» (cf. Mo. *yer-en* »ninety»), Mo. *alisun* »red bilberry» (cf. Bur. *aḥḥḥḥ* id.), etc.

Ma. *žergi-* and Nanai *harkə-* »to turn» do not correspond to Mo. *kerü-* »to stroll» and Turk. *küz-* id. (Sinor, p. 221) but they correspond to Mo. *ergi-* < *hergi-* < **qergi-* »to turn». Thus no valid examples of the supposed correspondence Mo. *s* = Turk. *z* remain except for a few obvious loanwords.

There are several compound plural suffixes in the Altaic languages. One of them is, in Sinor's opinion, the Mongolian suffix *-nūs* consisting of *-n* and *-s*, e. g. in Urduš *bidanūs* »we» (p. 224), but this observation is not correct, because the suffix is *-ūs* here (i. e. *-s* with the connective vowel *-u-*) and the consonant *n* belongs to the stem (*bidan*): cf. *bida* »we», *bidani* gen. Another suffix, however, is *-nad* which is explained correctly (p. 225).

There are a few minor questions treated differently by Sinor and me, but it would lead us too far to discuss all of them here.

To conclude I should remark that there are phenomena in the Altaic languages which can be misunderstood easily. There are compound suffixes of the plural and there are also suffixes consisting of several sounds, which are not compound at all as in the case of *-nūs*. Sometimes a compound plural suffix may contain only one primary plural suffix and the remaining portions of the suffix are derivation elements as in the case of *-čud* or *-čul*.

The plural suffixes are still little used in some Altaic languages. On the other hand, the plural forms have sometimes

the singular meaning, e. g. in Mongolian. It is probable that such forms were originally collective nouns and as such they were also used to indicate one individual belonging to the group concerned, e. g. Khalkha *ežžənar* »woman», originally »mothers; a person belonging to the category of the mothers» from *ežžə* »mother». At the present time certain plural forms of proper names indicate the person concerned and all those accompanying that person, e. g. Khalkha *nöžör Džadambanar* »comrade Džadamba and all those accompanying him». In other cases numerous *pluralia majestatis* were used in the language of the Mongolian offices since the XVIII century. These phenomena have had a great influence upon the development of the category of the plural.

It is known that plural forms were not used much in Ancient Turkic. But does this mean that the plural is a new category in Turkic or in Altaic in general? As far as I know, in pre-classical Mongolian plural forms were used much more than in recent times. And there was also agreement in number of the attribute and the word defined by it, which is a widespread phenomenon in Tungus. Thus the next step in the study of the plural should be a comparative syntactical research, because it might disclose the original nature of some suffixes.

As for future morphologic studies in the field of the Altaic plural forms, an important problem is the order of the primary suffixes in compound suffixes, a problem neglected in all the previous works. It is known that in Khalkha there are such compound suffixes as *-süt*, e. g. *erəsüt* »men» < *ere-s-ü-d*. But there is no suffix **-dūs*. The reason why there is no such suffix is more or less obvious in this case. It is because the primary suffix *-s* joins only stems ending in vowels, and therefore, it could not be added to **ered*. On the other hand, *-d* normally does not join stems ending in vowels and, therefore, it could not join *ere*. This case is clear but others are not. Further research will bring us a step closer to the solution.

Sinor's article has raised many questions. Some problems have not become clearer after the appearance of his article, but nevertheless this circumstance does not make it less interesting. There is still much work ahead and it will require much time to separate convincing results from erroneous conclusions.

Nicholas Poppe.