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PORSA — A SIBERIAN CULTURAL TERM

One of the characteristic types of food of many Siberian peoples is dried fish, sliced into strips, pressed into plates or ground into fishmeal to be mixed with water and fat. For this dish two standard international names exist: *yukola* (esp. the sliced or pressed variety) and *porsa* (esp. the ground variety), both terms deriving from the special lexicon of the Siberian Russian dialects. Obviously, neither of these words is ultimately of Russian origin, both illustrate the cultural and linguistic contacts between the Russian *prisheltsy* and the native Siberians.

Russian *юкола* "вяленая, провесная и немного квашеная в ямах рунная рыба" and its parallel form *юхала* "вяленая рыба или бочка рыби, снятые с костей (она свежее и лучше юколы)" were recorded by Dal' in the Kamchadal Russian dialects. The word itself is, however, as shown by Steinitz, of Western Siberian origin, being a borrowing from the Ob-Ugrian languages, cf. Vogul (Szilasi) *joxël* 'szárított hal', Ostyak (Steinitz) Ni. Š O *jõxəl*, Kaz. *jõxəl* "позём (вяленая провесная рыба, юкола)" (see Steinitz, *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* V:4, 518-519). Quite naturally, it was in Western Siberia that many local terms were originally adopted by the early Russian settlers, although many of these words subsequently spread with the colonists as far as the Pacific. From Russian, either directly or through intermediate idioms, the term *yukola* became known to several Siberian peoples, cf. Nganasan (Popov-Ristinen) *yukkala* 'sundried fish', (Mikola) *d'ugalj*- 'szárított hal, юкола', Yakut (Piekarski) джӯкала, цӯкәлә, цуохала "в дыму копченая рыба", Evenki (Сравнительный словарь тунгусо-маньчжурских языков) П-Т Аг Нак јукэлэ "юкола, вяленая рыба", Lamut (ibid.) Ол П н'ӯкӯла, Алл зӯкӯла, Арм јӯкала etc. id., Yukaghir (Angere) *iγač* 'Juchala; an der Sonne getrocknetes Fischskelett mit Fleischresten, das als Hundefutter dient'. On the other hand, the Ob-

Ugric word was borrowed without Russian intermediation by Nenets, (Lehtisalo) O $j\bar{d}x\bar{d}\bar{t}$ 'kleiner, mit den Gräten in der Luft getrockneter Fisch'. — The ultimate origin of the Ob-Ugrian term for *yukola* (Steinitz: Common Ostyak * $j\bar{d}k\bar{a}l$) is not known; however, attention might be directed (as suggested in Сравнительный словарь тунгусо-маньчжурских языков) to a fairly similar term in Tungus, cf. Evenki (ibid.) М Тт јак "юкола, вяленая рыба" etc. (? Common Tungus * $jaku \sim *j\bar{a}ku$), which word also occurs as a borrowing in Yakut, (PiekarSKI) $\bar{c}\bar{a}ky$ "сушеная на рожне и затем толченая рыба".

The question of the etymology of *porša* presents many unsolved problems. Again, Russian *пóрса* "рыбная мука; сушеная и толченая рыба", is cited by Dal' from the Eastern Siberian Russian dialects. The word has, however, a more rarely occurring monosyllabic variant *порс* (*порс̄ь*), recorded (by Karjalainen and Donner) in the Ob-Yenisey region, and it is indeed in Western Siberian languages that native terms, both mono- and bisyllabic, exist which seem to come nearest to the Russian word: Ostyak (Karjalainen) Trj. $p^c\bar{d}r^c\bar{s}\bar{a}$, $p^c\bar{o}^r^c\bar{s}q$ 'kalajauho (kalat survotaan ruotoineen), порс', Kaz. $p\bar{d}r^c\bar{s}\bar{a}^c$ id., Selkup (Donner) ТаU $p\bar{o}r\bar{s}\bar{s}\bar{a}$ 'jauhoksi jauhettu kuivattu kala', В *porš*, Ты Оо $pqr\bar{s}$, Тša $p\bar{o}r\bar{s}\bar{s}$ id., (Erdélyi) *porša* 'порса, Fischmehl', *poršil'* (adj.) 'с порсой', Nenets (Lehtisalo) O Sj. $p\bar{o}r(\bar{t}\bar{s}\bar{s})$ 'in Fischfett gekochter Fisch', T₁₂ $p\bar{o}r\bar{s}\bar{s}\bar{a}$, (Forest dialects:) Lj. $p\bar{u}r\bar{s}\bar{s}\bar{i}$, Nj. $p\bar{o}r\bar{s}\bar{s}\bar{i}$, P $p\bar{o}l\bar{s}\bar{s}\bar{a}\bar{e}i$ id. Some of these data could, of course, be regarded as relatively recent Russian loans, and in any case it is likely that the fairly common use of the term in local Russian has somehow affected the status of the word in the native languages. Nevertheless, as no acceptable original for the term seems to exist elsewhere in Siberia, it might well be worth while examining the possibilities of deriving this word, too, from the Western Siberian languages.

Considering the dialectal distribution of the term as well as the general ethnolinguistic situation in the area, nothing contradicts the assumption already proposed by Donner (manuscripts, for Selkup only) that the word is indigenous in Samoyed. The Nenets and Selkup data might well derive from a common Samoyed stem **porsā*. The bare stem is found today in Tundra Nenets /*porcā*/ and Selkup /*pors*, *pors̄i*/; in Forest Nenets /*pūrqsī*, *pōrqsī*, *pōLsāj*/ and Selkup /*porša*/ (if this has not come about through Russian influence) a derivative suffix is present: **porsājā*. The semantic and

phonological correspondences are regular. If the assumption of a Samoyed origin holds true, Russian порс must derive from Selkup (as has been proposed by Donner, manuscripts). As for the other data, the exact routes of borrowing are difficult to unravel. Ostyak /porsa/ has obviously come either from Selkup (esp. to the Eastern Ostyak dialects) or from Tundra Nenets (esp. to the Northern dialects). Russian порса, in its turn, could derive from any of the three possible sources: Nenets, Selkup, or Ostyak.

It is only the somewhat sparse distribution of the term *porsa* in Samoyed that might make the Common Samoyed origin doubtful: no data have been recorded from Enets, Nganasan and Sayan Samoyed, and, as a matter of fact, no phonological detail would contradict an assumption of a parallel borrowing by Nenets and Selkup from Russian or some other source, either. Nevertheless, although the noun *porsã has not been attested in the other Samoyed languages, an interesting verbal stem recorded in the now extinct Sayan Samoyed idioms seems to belong here: (Klaproth) Koibal *hornam* (aor. sg.1), Karagass ("Karassen") *chorwim*, Taigi *horsu*, Motor *orwotam* (probably habitative sg.1) 'essen'. Indeed, the spirant *h-* (*ch*), often lost or left undenoted in the sources, regularly represents an earlier *p- in Karagass, Taigi and Motor, the stem thus being reconstructable as *por- 'to eat' (the Koibal form with *h-* is not regular but must be a Motorism). Now, it is most natural to regard the noun *porsã as a derivative from the verbal stem. The original meaning could thus have been 'something to be eaten, food'. The verb *por- does not have verbal cognates in the other Samoyed languages, but it seems to be an ancient indigenous word, almost totally displaced by its synonyms. The standard verb for 'to eat' is *ãm-, attested in all Samoyed languages except in Karagass, Taigi and Motor (even in Koibal a parallel *amlam* pres.sg.1 was present). Interestingly enough, from this synonym an analogous derivative exists, likewise in a specialized meaning: *ãmsã 'food' → 'meat', recorded almost everywhere in Samoyed (also in Taigi and Motor *apsa*). The suffix *-sã (~*-sä) is an element, earlier obviously productively used for forming verbal nouns, but now only rudimentarily attested in this function (another use of the suffix which is productive today is to form the preterite stem in the finite conjugation of verbs). — As for the wider connections of the verbal stem *por-, attention should be paid to a verb in Finno-Ugric with very similar form and meaning: Finnish *purra* 'to bite', Lapp *borrât* 'to

eat' etc. (see Suomen kielen etymologinen sanakirja III). The vowel correspondence is, however, not quite regular (normally Finnish *u* ~ Samoyed **ǝ*); furthermore, an alternative Uralic etymology, though with a less evident Samoyed cognate (**p̄rã-* 'to burn') survives in handbooks.

The situation appears more complicated when other Siberian linguistic areas are considered. Russian *порса* has been directly borrowed by Yakut, (Piekariski) *пуорса* "порса, сваренная в воде, просушенная над очагом и толченая рыба, рыбная мука (главным образом из костей)", (Afanas'ev & Voronkin & Alekseev) Бүл. etc. *буорса*. Another term for *porša*, however, also exists in Yakut: (Piekariski) *барча* "разная мелкая рыба, сперва сваренная, а потом прокопченная в течение 10 дней над трубой камина", *бачча* "сваренная и затем высушенная в дыму мелкая озерная рыба". Immediate cognates are found in Evenki, (Vasilevič) Олкм Алд Учр Урм Чмк *барча* "вяленая рыба; мука из сушеной рыбы", also as a verb: Алд Учр Урм Чмк *барча-мй* "вялить рыбу". In Tungus, some irregular phonological variants have also been attested: Evenki (Romanova & Myreeva) Тк парча, Вл Е И П-Т С пурча; also in Nanai (Сравнительный словарь тунгусо-маньчжурских языков) Нх борти "кушанье из рыбы, филе (рыбное)". Although not far in form and meaning from Russian *порса*, Yakut-Tungus *барча* is most likely of different origin. It seems natural to relate the term to another Yakut word, (Piekariski) *барча* "ломка чего-либо целого в мелкие куски, превращение чего-либо в мельчайшие частички". Both Piekariski and Räsänen have considered the latter identical with Turkic *parča* 'piece', ultimately deriving from Persian *pārča*. Thus, the Tungus data must be regarded as borrowings from Yakut. Some of the variants of the word in Tungus may, however, be due to secondary influence by Russian *порса* — it is indeed extremely difficult to distinguish between primary connection and secondary contaminative influence. As an example of how easily even totally accidental similarity can arise, a word may be cited from Ostyak, which comes very near to the Yakut *бачча* but is obviously quite unrelated to it: Ostyak (Karjalainen) V *pp(ṭṣ̄)* etc. 'kuivattu kala, позем'.

As is exemplified by Yakut-Tungus *барча*, native terms have often intermingled with Russian *порса* to form a scale of phonological variation. To the Western Siberian *porša* type and the Yakut-Tungus *barča* type yet a third family of words should be added, further complicating the analysis.

The Mongols do not eat fish, but in their languages a word exists for dried meat which is cut up in strips: Literary (Lessing) *borca* 'meat cut in strips and dried', Khalkha (Luvsandéndév) борц "вяленое мясо, нарезанное тонкими кусками", Buriat (Čeremisov) борсо id., Kalmuk (Ramstedt) *bortsv* 'in der sonne getrocknetes (oder gesalzenes), in lange streifen geschnittenes fleisch (wird in die suppe gelegt)'; cf. also (Lessing) *borcala-* 'to cut meat in strips for drying'. The Mongol word has been borrowed into Turkic (as suggested by Ramstedt and Räsänen), cf. Kazakh (Shnitnikov) борша 'jerked meat', боршала- 'to cut meat into pieces for jerking', but the parallel influence of *parča*, *barča* 'piece' is again present, cf. e.g. Kirghiz (Judaxin) борчо "крупный кусок", борчоло- "разрезать на крупные куски (гл. обр. мясо без костей)". Whether the Mongol data, too, could ultimately be connected with Persian-Turkic *parča*, remains unclear. However, in view of the distribution of the word, an indigenous origin of the word in Mongol would seem likely (according to Ramstedt: ← *bor 'hart, steif'). On the other hand, even mutual influence of Mongol *borča*, Yakut *barča* and Russian *porca* would not be quite out of the question in some regions of Siberia.

Complicated though the routes and origins of the migrating terms for fishmeal and related dishes are, Russian порца (or порс) with its international pendants is ultimately of Samoyed origin (< *por-sã). Together with the well-known *parka* 'fur-coat', *porca* is thus another Samoyed contribution to the common Arctic and Siberian jargon.

