

## **“Silk” and “Wad” in Old Turkish Terminology. A Case of Exchange on the Silk Roads and Beyond**

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Textiles belonged to the major products of exchange along the famous Silk Roads through Central Asia. There is a wide range of narrative as well as archeological evidence. For more than 2000 years merchants and other people of East and West came together in the different oases between Asia Minor and China and exchanged their goods. Linguistic evidence is available since texts of different nature came to light through the expeditions from several European and Asian countries.

For the multiple languages or language groups of Xinjiang the textual evidence is not always the same. For the study of textiles an inspiring little book has been written by H. Lüders in 1936: “Textilien im alten Turkistan”.<sup>1</sup> Therein he gave a detailed survey on the related terms found in the Kharoṣṭhī documents of the 3rd and 4th centuries. H. W. Bailey gave a list of related terms of the Khotanese texts.<sup>2</sup> Special studies for terms in other Xinjiang languages are not known to me.

My concern here are some names of textiles found in the Old Turkish texts from Turfan and other sites of Central Asia. Such words are known from secular documents as well as from religious texts. An exhaustive study cannot be given here. Special attention has been given to some words like *qars* and *quanpo* in the works by J. Hamilton.<sup>3</sup> An exhaustive study on *böz*

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<sup>1</sup> H. Lüders, *Textilien im alten Turkistan*, APAW 1936, No. 3. Cf. the review of P. Pelliot, in: *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 42 (1938), 184-188.

<sup>2</sup> H.W. Bailey, “Vāsta”, in: *Acta Orientalia* (Kopenhagen) 30 (1966), 25-43.

<sup>3</sup> J. Hamilton, N. Beldiceanu, “Recherches autour de *qars*, nom d’une étoffe de poil”, in: *BSOAS* 31 (1968), 330-346; J. Hamilton, *Les manuscrits ouïgours du IX<sup>e</sup>-X<sup>e</sup> siècle de Touen-houang*, Paris 1986, 178 sqq.

“cotton” according to the Old Turkish texts by S. Raschmann has been published recently.<sup>4</sup> Cotton, as it was supposed and is now confirmed by this study, has become by far the most widespread kind of materials in the Turfan area. But, of course, other materials remained in use and/or were introduced, although the data on them are much more limited. Rather well attested are several names for “silk”. A general term for “silk” or “silk fabric” was probably *twrqw* which may have been pronounced either *torqo* or *torqu*. G. Clauson writes: “one of many words with this general meaning, perhaps a l[oa]n-w[ord]”.<sup>5</sup> Like Clauson also G. Doerfer classifies this word as a “Kulturwort”, and he, too, leaves the question of the origin open.<sup>6</sup> He is quite right in denying the conclusion drawn by Ramstedt and others, that the word *torqu* is related to Russian *torg* “commerce, market” and Finnic *turku* “market place”, and so on. One has even considered the possibility of a connection with the name of the *türk*, but this is out of question. H.-W. Haussig cites a word on coins of the Hephthalites which H.F. Junker read as *torko*,<sup>7</sup> but for which a reading like *tagino* is now widely accepted instead.<sup>8</sup> This, too, is a title used by the Turks: *tegin* “prince”. But the origin of this like of many other official titles might go back to some pre-Turkish layer.<sup>9</sup>

One of the numerous other words for “silk” in Old Turkish is *mīndatu* as it is recorded by Kāšyarī in his thesaurus. It appears in the Uigur texts in several variants:

1. as *bīntadu*, e.g. in the Xuanzang biography chap. VII 11a 4-6 (*bīntadu qurti* “silk worm”, translation of Chin. 蠶 *can* “id.”),

<sup>4</sup> S. Raschmann, *Baumwolle im türkischen Zentralasien. Philologische und wirtschaftshistorische Untersuchungen anhand der vorislamischen uigurischen Texte*, Wiesbaden 1995.

<sup>5</sup> G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, Oxford 1972, 539a.

<sup>6</sup> G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, Wiesbaden 1963-1975, Nr. 848.

<sup>7</sup> H.-W. Haussig, “Überlegungen zum Namen der Türken”, in: *Turcica et Orientalia*, Stockholm 1988, 45-50.

<sup>8</sup> G. Djelany Davary, *Baktrisch. Ein Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1982, 281 f.

<sup>9</sup> These short comments on Old Turkish *twrqw* “silk” were written before the conference where I learned that J. Hamilton in his contribution is giving support to the view that the word is connected with the words for “market” etc. While I leave aside this question, his idea on the origin of “drogue” is quite convincing.

2. as *bīndatu*, e.g. in the Old Turkish translation of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*: Suv 489<sub>21</sub> *kök önglüg bindatu ton* “a blue silk garment” (= Chin. 437a11 青色野蠶衣 *qing se ye can yi* = Skt. *nīla-kaūṣeyasaṃvītā*),
3. as *bantatu*, e.g. in Maitrisimit Hami II, 1614-1615 or XI 7a10,
4. as *bntatu* or *bata tu* in KP II,4,<sup>10</sup> a fragment edited in Heilk. II 2<sub>2</sub>, and a hitherto unpublished piece: T II 895 (U 5502) recto (?) l. 5 (unfortunately without any clear context),
- and 5. as *bitatu* following L. Ligeti’s reconstruction of the Chinese transcription in the Ming dictionary.<sup>11</sup>

The forms of 1 and 2 appear in different manuscripts of the Old Turkish translation of the *Devatāsūtra*.<sup>12</sup>

In comparison to the form given by Kāṣṣyārī, one should regard the form *bīndatu* (under 2) as the original one. This is also in full correspondence to Mong. *mindasu(n)* “floss-silk” and kalm. *mindas<sup>v</sup>ṇ* “wad”.<sup>13</sup>

G. Clauson thought that the word *mīndatu* is of foreign origin. This might be correct, but his derivation from Sanskrit *maṇḍita* “ornamented, adorned” cannot be accepted, first of all because of the Inner Turkish variation *m- ~ b-*. No answer can be given of which origin the word might be. While it survived in the Mongolian languages, there is no trace of it in the modern Turkish languages.<sup>14</sup> It cannot be decided which language

<sup>10</sup> Thus S. Tezcan in his review of J. Hamilton, *Le Conte bouddhique du Bon et du Mauvais Prince*, Paris 1971, in: *TDAYB 1975-1976*, p. 241, where he raises some doubts: “Tü. *mindatu* ve Mo. *mindasu* sözcüklerini söz konusu olan *bata tu ~ bitatu* ile ilgili olup olmadıkları sorusunu şimdilik yanıtlayamıyoruz.”

<sup>11</sup> L. Ligeti, “Un vocabulaire sino-ouïgour des Ming”, in: *AOH* 19 (1966), 141: “*bitatu* (*pi-ta-tou*) «grain du coton» I 13a (24b). [*Bidadao* «gesponnene Baumwolle», Kl. 14.] ~ ouïg. *bata tu* «gesponnene Baumwolle» (Rachm., *Heilk.* II, 16:2; 38)”. Fn. 31: “La graphie *bitatau* des ms B et P, ainsi que de celle de Klaproth est une variante erronée qui ne doit pas être retenue. Le leçon *bitatu* est incertaine (*t : d*), malgré les recoupements ouïgours. Dans le *Wou-ti*, II 3192, on a: chin. *mien-tseu* «silk wadding or quilting» (Mathews); mong. *mindasu* («espèce de filoseille ou de coton», Kow. III, 2021); tib. *srin-bal-gyi skud-pa*; ma. *yoḡan* («Watte» [!], Hauer 1022).”

<sup>12</sup> Cf. P. Zieme, *Altürkische Fragmente aus dem Devatāsūtra* (in preparation).

<sup>13</sup> G. Ramstedt, *Kalmückisches Wörterbuch*, 263a.

<sup>14</sup> If not as an element in Modern Uighur *kalabutun*, *kalabatun*. G. Jarring, *Garments from Top to Toe*, Stockholm 1992, S. 15 fn. 50 argues for a derivation from Hindustani and cites Urdu *kalá battú* (oder *kalá batún*) “gold or silver thread”. Among

borrowed the word. One may compare it to Sanskrit *paṭa*, *paṭṭa* etc. “a kind of cloth”<sup>15</sup> or even to Dravidian languages like Kannaḍa where we find e.g. *tuppaṭa*, *tubaṭa* “wool” or *tuppaṛu* “wool, fine soft hair as of cats”.<sup>16</sup> I leave this question for further research.

Here I want to present a new hypothesis for the etymology of the European word “wad”. As a possible origin had been proposed Ar. *bāṭin*<sup>17</sup> or *biṭāna*<sup>18</sup>, but W. v. Wartburg has raised many obstacles against this etymology. In his long article on French *ouate* (since 1493) he gives the dialect forms in a great quantity, among them I want to mention only the modern dialect of the Provence, where the word is *vouato* “coton fin qu’on met entre deux étoffes” and the Calabresian dialect of Italian, where the word *ovatta* is pronounced *vattu*, *vatta*. In his dictionary Wartburg resumes: “eine lösung der frage nach dem ursprung von *ouate* ist also bis jetzt nicht geglückt.”

Further data provide Hungarian *vatta* which also preserves the double consonant as the German word, as well as Russian *vata* which became the origin for e.g. Yakut *bāta*. In many Turkish languages Russian *vata* is translated by words for cotton, like *pamuk*. The same is true for other languages, too.

In some editions of Plano Carpini’s *Historia Mongalorum* the word *audato* has raised a discussion which has been summarized by P. Daffinà in this way: “Tanto Risch (p. 258) quanto Becquet-Hambis (p. 128) leggono *audato* in luogo di sindaco e danno al misterioso vocabolo il significato di ‘ovatta’. Ma altre letture sono parimenti possibili: *audaco*, *andaco*, *andato*. D’altra parte ‘ovatta’ (francese *ouate*, ted. *Watte*, ing. *wad*, sved. *wadd*, russo *vata*) è vocabolo di etimo oscuro (cfr. C. Battisti, G. Alessio, Dizionario etimologico italiano, IV, Firenze 1954, p. 2708! M. Cohen,

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S.E. Malov’s variants the following ones are of special interest: *kalavatu* and *kalavatun* “fine material”.

- 15 M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford 1899, 579; H. Lüders, *Textilien im alten Turkistan*, 24-30.
- 16 T. Burrow, *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*, Oxford 1961, 222b.
- 17 K. Lokotsch, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der europäischen (germanischen, romanischen und slavischen) Wörter orientalischen Ursprungs*, Heidelberg 1927, No. 273.
- 18 N. Osman, *Kleines Lexikon deutscher Wörter arabischer Herkunft*, München 1993, 126.

“Ouate”, *Journal Asiatique*, CCLV, 1967, pp. 163-168).”<sup>19</sup>

Although there is a great gap between the Old Turkish word *batatu* and the first record of *vattu*, *ouate* etc., I want to propose that it ultimately is derived from it. One may suppose the following chain of development: OT *batatu* > \**battu* (by loss of the vowel of the middle syllable) > \**vattu*.<sup>20</sup> The further development is obvious, and there is even one modern form (cf. Calabresian) which preserved the final -*u* (or is that a new Inner Italian development?).

M. Cohen treated the word “wad” in a great variety of languages all over the world and he gives very useful informations on its history and development. Extremely important is his statement that Japanese has *wata* “wad” already in a poem of the 7th century. But also there is no obvious etymology. At the end the author comes to the following conclusion: “En définitive, j’ai pensé que pour un sens bien établi dans l’ensemble, avec la probabilité de la propagation commerciale, la constance de la physionomie labiale +*a*+occlusive dentale autorisait à présenter comme vraisemblable, en dépit de la différence d’aspect, le rapprochement *ouate-pakhta*.”<sup>21</sup> But I think also his explanation is not satisfying in all respects.

What other possibilities are there? In the Pāli Dictionary one finds under the lemma *kappāsa*, the Pāli equivalent of Sanskrit *karpāsa* “cotton”, a great number of junctures, such as *kappās ‘atṭhi* “a cotton seed (or cotton boll?)” or *kappāsa-vatṭi* “a cotton wad”.<sup>22</sup> For Pāli *vatṭi* (= Skt. *varti* and *vṛtti*, derived from Skt. *vṛt*) the following meanings are given: “1. wick, 2. enclosure, lining, film, skin, 3. edge, rim, brim, circumference, 4. strip, fringe, 5. sheath, bag, pod, 6. lump, ball, 7. rolling forth or along, a gush (of water)”.<sup>23</sup> Some of these meanings point to “wad”, and phonetically, too, this equation seems to be valid, even more, if one considers India as one of the original regions with cotton cultivation.

19 P. Daffinà, “Note to Giovanni di Pian di Carpine”, *Storia dei Mongoli*, a cura di P. Daffinà, C. Leonardi, M.C. Lungarotti, E. Menestò, L. Petech, Spoleto 1989, 493.

20 Cf. G. Doerfer, “Die ‘vier Wörter’ mit b- > v-, Null”, in: *Hungaro-Turcica. Studies in Honour of Julius Németh*, Budapest 1976, 135-147. An excellent example is also *dulwend* “tülbent” in Dernschwam’s text, cf. Zs. Kakuk, “Türkisches aus Hans Dernschwams Tagebuch I.”, in: *AOH* 32 (1978), 144.

21 M. Cohen, “Ouate”, in: *Journal asiatique* 255 (1967), 163-168, esp. 168.

22 *A Critical Pāli Dictionary begun by V. Trenckner*, Vol. III, Kopenhagen 1994, 180.

23 *The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary*, ed. by T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, Oxford 1992, 594-595.

But on the whole, I regard the Turkish etymology for another good possibility.

Kāšyarī translated *mīndatu* by Ar. *al-qazzīna*, a word derived from Ar. قز *qazz* “silk”. But this goes back to Persian *qaz*, *kaz* “raw silk”,<sup>24</sup> *kaž* “coarse silk of little value”.<sup>25</sup> This word is a loan in Old Turkish, as also G. Clauson comments on the entry of Kāšyarī’s dictionary: *kāz* “the name of a kind of Chinese brocade”.<sup>26</sup> Further on A. Tietze, when he treats Persian loans in Anatolian dialects, refers to MP (Pahl) *kač* “coarse silk”, Kurdish *kāž*<sup>27</sup>, which survives also in New Persian as *kaž*<sup>28</sup> and Kurdish *kāž* with a similar meaning.<sup>29</sup>

Beside it there is the word گزی *gazī* “coarse kind of (cotton) cloth”.<sup>30</sup> New Persian again has *kaž* “raw silk from the cones”<sup>31</sup> and Kurdish has *kāži* “band, ribbon”.<sup>32</sup> This word was borrowed into Ottoman Turkish, where it is known as *gezi*: “Çözüğü ipek, atkısı ipek ve iplik karışığı sık dokunmuş hâreli kumaş. Çözüğüye nazaran atkı birkaç kat ipek ve iplikle karışık ve bir arada dokunduğundan atkılar, ince çözüğüler arasında kalın olarak fark edilmektedir. Hâresi dokunduktan sonra, iki kızgın mengene arasında ezmek ve sürtmek suretiyle yapılmaktadır.”<sup>33</sup>

S. Tezcan reminds me of some more Anatolian terms like *keci*<sup>34</sup> etc., Türkmen *keji* “otchod kokonov”<sup>35</sup> and Khwarezmian *kcynyk* “Seiden-

24 F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, New Delhi 1973, 968a, 1027a.

25 F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, New Delhi 1973, 1027b.

26 G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, Oxford 1972, 756a

27 A. Tietze, “Persian Loanwords in Anatolian Turkish”, in: *Oriens* 20 (1967), 147.

28 F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, New Delhi 1973, 1017b.

29 A. Tietze, “Persian Loanwords in Anatolian Turkish”, in: *Oriens* 20 (1967), 147.

30 F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, New Delhi 1973, 1088b.

31 F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, New Delhi 1973, 1017b.

32 A. Tietze, “Persian Loanwords in Anatolian Turkish”, in: *Oriens* 20 (1967), 147.

33 M.S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlılarda narh müessesesi ve 1640 tarihli narh defteri*, İstanbul 1983, 348.

34 *Derleme Sözlüğü* 2714.

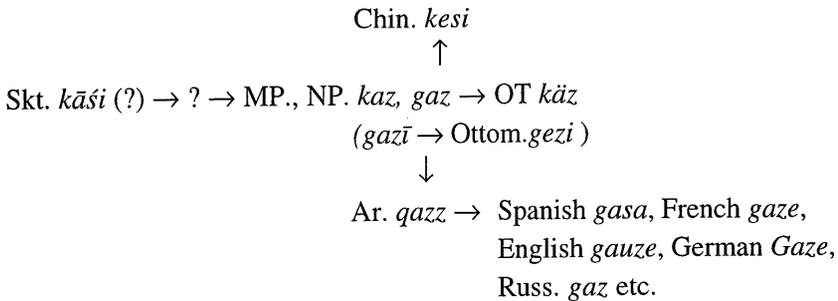
35 *Turkmenskij-russkij slovar*, Moskau 1968, 387a.

stoff’.<sup>36</sup>

The etymology of the Persian words, there is a great variety of similar forms, is not clear. If a foreign origin is possible, one might refer to Sanskrit *kāśi*, a word for a kind of textile which is also known in Old Turkish texts as *kaš*. It is often the case that the names of textiles vary from one to the other.

The word in question became a real *Kulturwort* and entered via Arabic into many European languages as Spanish *gasa*, French *gaze*, English *gauze* und German *Gaze*. K. Lokotsch preferred this etymology, while he rejected the previous etymology from the name of Ġazza in Palestine (Hebrew ‘Azzāh, Greek Γάζα). His main reason is that there is no information on a textile industry in this city. Otherwise many terms are going back to city names like the well-known example of *damas*.

Persian *gezī* was borrowed also into Chinese: 縹絲 *kesi*, a term which denotes a kind of tapestry: “The fact remains that the first appearance of the word *k’o-ssū* in China dates from the twelfth century, during the Sung Dynasty, when we find it used to describe the Uighur name for their silk tapestry robes.”<sup>37</sup>



<sup>36</sup> J. Benzing, *Chwaresmischer Wortindex*, Wiesbaden 1983, 351.

<sup>37</sup> Schuyler Cammann, “Notes on the Origin of Chinese K’o-ssu Tapestry”, in: *Artibus Asiae* 11 (1948), 98.