

1 ON SOME ORIENTAL ELEMENTS IN OLD NOVGORODIAN
2 AND OTHER OLD RUSSIAN DIALECTS

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7 The author is aiming to interpret the historical connection between Old Russian *kamka* and Old
8 Novgorodian *халма* ‘textile of silk damask’. She comes to the conclusion that the former is a borrow-
9 ing from East Old Turkic *qamqı*, while the latter is a loan from West Old Turkic *χami*. Both Old
10 Turkic words are of Chinese origin.

11 *Key words*: Turkic–Russian language contact, Volga Bulgarian, West Old Turkic loanwords in Rus-
12 sian, Wanderwords of Oriental origin.

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14 The focus of the present paper is on the word meaning ‘silky Chinese textile; variegated
15 woven linen; damask’, which has been known in a variety of forms in East Old
16 Turkic and Old Russian sources since the 12th century onward, as well as in modern
17 Turkish and its regional dialects, while its derived forms can be traced in regional dia-
18 lects of Russian. This word is found in Russian, designating an expensive trade item
19 brought from far away, having been borrowed into Old Russian from Old Turkic,
20 where, however, it was an earlier borrowing from the Orient. It is enough to call back
21 the history of the Russian words *žemčug* ‘mother-of-pearl’ (cf. Dobrodomov 1966,
22 pp. 57–64; Menges 1970, pp. 94–100; Róna-Tas–Berta 2011, pp. 402–404) or *kniga*
23 ‘book’ (cf. Kniezsa 1955, p. 872; Dobrodomov 1971; Komoróczy 1976, pp. 28–29;
24 Trubačev 1987, pp. 203–204; Agyagási 1994; Róna-Tas–Berta 2011, pp. 590–593).¹
25 However, while in these examples the source dialect of Old Turkic can be identified
26 with reasonable certainty only as Bulgar Turkic (or, using a more modern designation,

¹ For the history of research regarding Oriental elements of the Russian lexicon until 1970, see Dobrodomov–Romanova (1970), for the words of Turkic origin from later on, see Dobrodomov (1976; 1985); Šipova (1976); Vásáry (2013; 2016); Agyagási (2015).

1 the Ogur dialect of West Old Turkic), in the case of the word under investigation I want
2 to argue for multiple sources of the Russian variants of the word.

3 The history of the Russian word *kamka* was first mentioned by Ogienko
4 (1915/2015, p. 29) in the Russian literature on lexicology, who lists it together with
5 words that, according to him, were borrowed into Russian from Persian at various
6 times, but he does so without providing the Persian form in question. Šipova (1976,
7 pp. 156–156) discusses the historic occurrences of the Russian word *kamka*, specifi-
8 cally detailing those from the 18th century, quoting Ogienko's opinion about the Per-
9 sian origin of the word, but without expressing her individual stance regarding the
10 details of the borrowing process. The second, Russian language edition of Vasmer's
11 dictionary (Fasmer 1986/2, pp. 174–175) states that the source of the Russian word
12 could be any of the known Turkic languages, where the word can be regarded to be
13 of Chinese origin. But he does not provide the original Chinese source of the word.

14 The geographical distribution of the forms meaning 'damask' and the etymol-
15 ogically likely related variant forms were analysed in earlier Orientalist research.²
16 The earliest occurrence of the word is in Arabic language sources: Ḥurdādbih (8th cen-
17 tury) *kimhā* 'soie damassée'; Balāḍurī (892) *kimhāw* 'soie damassée'; Ṭabarī (10th
18 century) *kamhāna* 'pannus sericus' (cf. Doerfer 1967, p. 603). After a hiatus of a few
19 centuries, it occurs in Persian: *kimhā* (1401) 'Brokat der Arten Nasīg' (Doerfer 1967,
20 p. 603). In the correspondence of the emperors of the Ming dynasty and Timurid Šāh-
21 ruḥ it is found in two variant Persian forms with two different meanings: *kamhā* or
22 *kamhāb* 'pannus pictus unius coloris', and *kimhā* or *kimhāb* 'pannus pictus versi-
23 color; silk worked with gold or silver flowers, brocaded silk, brocade, velours' (Doer-
24 fer 1967, p. 604).

25 Beginning with the early 14th century (following Marco Polo's journey to
26 China), it appears in several languages of mediaeval Europe (French *camocas* and its
27 variants, Italian *camucca*, English *camaca*, mediaeval Latin *camoca*, Spanish *camo-*
28 *can*, *camucan* 'textile of silk damask woven in all colours, sometimes with stripes of
29 gold and silver, the designs mainly birds' (Pelliot 1959, pp. 145–146). It is known in
30 Greek (καμουχάς), in the Balkan languages, in Georgian (ჯანჯა 'Gewebe'; *k'amxa*
31 'Art Seidengewebe'), and from the 18th century onward variants of the word also
32 appeared in India (Hindi *kamkhvāb*, Bengali *kimkhvāb* 'gold brocade': Pelliot 1959,
33 pp. 145–147), from where it was borrowed into Tibetan and Malay (Doerfer 1967,
34 pp. 604–605).

35 As can be seen, the various variants of the word are found all over Eurasia, in
36 a web of borrowing processes acting in various directions. All variants of the word
37 can be traced back to two forms: *kimhā* and *kamhā*, and the word may or may not
38 have a syllable-final *b* at the end. Both Pelliot (1959, p. 147) and Doerfer (1967, pp.
39 604–605) concluded that the ultimate source of these forms is Chinese. After a lengthy
40 discussion, criticising and finally rejecting the results of earlier Sinologist research
41 regarding Chinese words meaning 'damask, brocade, silk', Pelliot opts for Y. Yule's

² I am grateful to Imre Hamar and Gábor Kósa for making the Orientalist literature cited be-
low available to me.

1 explanation as the most plausible. Accordingly, the forms borrowed into the various
 2 languages of the Eurasian region are closest to the Chinese expression *chin-hua*
 3 (**kiəm-χ^{wa}*) ‘gold flower’, which had gone through a series of semantic changes
 4 since the 9th century. The word became the designation of valance in Southern China,
 5 where Arabic and Persian merchants became familiar with it. Following its Chinese
 6 pronounced form, they probably wrote it down as *kīmḥāw* (Pelliot 1959, pp. 149–
 7 150). However, the Cantonese pronunciation of the first part of the compound was
 8 *kam* (Pelliot 1959, p. 148), which form must have found its way to the west through
 9 other merchants. This would explain the two parallel phonetic variants of the word in
 10 the languages of Eurasia.

11 Both researchers attempted to provide a detailed explanation for the historical
 12 relationship of the forms occurring in many languages of the enormous Eurasian
 13 region. They agreed that the main mediatory language was Persian, which could have
 14 transmitted both phonetic variants. They also agreed that the word was borrowed into
 15 Turkic and Slavic languages via Persian, but Pelliot also provides a detailed train of
 16 thought as an explanation: in his opinion, borrowing via Persian had to be posited
 17 because there was not a single Old Turkic source, beginning with Kāšyari through
 18 Uygur to the Mongol Period, which historically documented the result of the direct
 19 borrowing from Chinese into Turkic and from Turkic into Slavic.

20 At this juncture, I would like to return to the original train of thought of Pel-
 21 liot’s paper to specify Pelliot’s stance, since after his work had been published, an
 22 East Old Turkic written source using Uygur writing (from the 12th–14th centuries)
 23 was found in which the word in question occurred. It was first published in the *Drev-*
 24 *netjurkskij slovar*, ten years after Pelliot’s work. Also, the Old Novgorodian birch
 25 bark charter has become widely known only recently, which contains the investigated
 26 word dating from the 14th century and can be directly connected with the Old Turkic
 27 variant. The data are as follows:

28 Turkic data:

29 East Old Turkic (12th–14th centuries) *qamqī* ‘kamka, šelkovaja materija’ (DTS p.
 30 416); *Sayay kamgī* ‘kamka, kitajskaja šelkovaja materija’ (Radlov 1893–1911, II, p.
 31 490); Alt., Tel., Kir. *kamka* ‘id.’ (Radlov ibid.); Kirg. *kamka* ‘kitajskij šelk’ (**Yudahin**
 32 **1966**); Crimean Tatar *kimxa* ‘damast, šelkovaja materija’ (Radlov II, p. 1405); Kazan
 33 Tat. *kamka* (ust.) ‘kamka’ (TRS 1966, p. 219); Bashk. *qamqa* ‘raznovidnost’ kitaj-
 34 skogo šelka’ (Uraksin 1996, p. 344); Turkish *kemha* ‘rod šelkovoju tkani’ (TRS 1977,
 35 p. 531).

36 Slavic data:

37 Old Novgorodian (cca. 1310–1330) *хамъ* ‘polotno’ (Zaliznjak 2004, p. 541); Old
 38 Russian (1486) *РАМКА* ‘šelkovaja cvetnaja tkan’ s uzorami’ (Sreznevskij 1989, I, pp.
 39 1186–1187); (15th–16th century ~ 1472) *РАМКА* ‘šelkovaja cvetnaja uzorčataja tkan’
 40 (Filin 1980, p. 48); Russian dial. *хамовник* (star.) ‘tkač, polotnjanščik, skatertnik’;
 41 *хамовное (дело)* ‘tkackoe, polotnjanoe i branoe’ (Daľ 1881/1989 Vol. IV, p. 542)

Missing from the
References.

1 Polish (15th–17th centuries) *kamcha* ‘nazwa drogiej materji, adamaszku’
 2 (Brückner 1957, p. 215); bolg. *kámúha* ‘edinstroj koprinjana tkan’ (Gerov 1976, p.
 3 344).

4
 5 The East Old Turkic word *qamqī* can be the directly borrowed variant of the
 6 Chinese *chin* (**kjəm-χ^wa*) (pronounced in the Cantonese way) plus *ch’i* (**k’jie*)³ com-
 7 bined as a compound, with the meaning ‘brocade’. This word, however, was borrowed
 8 directly not only into East Old Turkic but also into West Old Turkic. Although the lat-
 9 ter is not documented in early written sources, the speakers of this variety of Old
 10 Turkic got into direct contact with several communities speaking a wide range of
 11 other languages between the 5th century and the Mongol invasion of Europe. The
 12 lexical items borrowed from these languages were mostly retained in the languages
 13 of the communities they were in contact with. The most detailed source of early West
 14 Old Turkic is the group of Old Turkic loanwords in the Hungarian language, recently
 15 treated by Róna-Tas and Berta (2011) in detail. Volga Bulgars achieved a prominent
 16 role among the speakers of West Old Turkic varieties. From the 10th century onward
 17 they controlled the east–west river trade, soon founded their empire, and traded with
 18 various peoples themselves, among them the merchants of the Old Novgorodian city
 19 state.⁴ However, since in Chuvash, the language of the only direct descendants of the
 20 Volga Bulgars still living today, this word has not been preserved, the West Old Turkic
 21 equivalent of East Old Turkic *qamqī* should be sought in the lexicon of the Old Nov-
 22 gorodian dialect.

23 In the West Old Turkic equivalent of the 12th–13th-century East Old Turkic
 24 form *qamqī* a *q*- > *χ*- change must have taken place, since this change started already
 25 in the 7th century (for details, see Róna-Tas–Berta 2011, pp. 1100–1101). The *q* of
 26 the second syllable, however, became voiced and soon underwent spirantisation (*q* >
 27 *ġ* > *γ*), and finally it was dropped (*γ* > *Ø*). The first part of the process (i.e. the secon-
 28 dary voicing of the non-first syllable -*q*) is traceable in one Volga Bulgarian loan-
 29 word in Old Russian: Volga Bulgarian *buraq* ‘beer’ > **buraġ* > *buraγ* → Old Russian
 30 *bърага* ‘id.’, cf. East Old Turkic *boza* ‘a kind of beer’ (Agyagási 2010). The deletion
 31 of the voiced spirant is exemplified by an early West Old Turkic loanword in Hungar-
 32 ian: West Old Turkic **bergü* > **berγü* > **berü* → Ancient Hungarian *bērü* (> Hung.
 33 *bér* ‘wage, rent’), cf. East Old Turkic *bergü* ‘something which ought to be given, gift,
 34 tax’ (Róna-Tas–Berta 2011, pp. 115–118).

35 The word-final -*i* of the form *qamqī* could not be preserved when borrowed
 36 into Russian for morphological reasons: after having been borrowed, the Turkic word
 37 had to fit one of the Old Russian noun classes. However, the Old Russian noun de-
 38 clension system did not have a class for hard *i*-stems. The word occurring on the cited
 39 birch bark charter has a -*u* final genitive partitive case marker, which means that the
 40 West Old Turkic/Volga Bulgarian variant was adopted by the speakers of the Old

³ In earlier literature, Philips mentioned the existence of such a lexical structure in Chinese (cf. Pelliot 1959, p. 148).

⁴ Contacts between Volga Bulgarians and Old Novgorodians were also mentioned often-
 times in the 1st Novgorodian Annals.

1 Novgorodian dialect as a masculine *-ŭ stem, monosyllabic, Class IV noun. Consid-
 2 ering all this, the history of the borrowing of the West Old Turkic (Volga Bulgarian)
 3 word can be reconstructed as follows:

4 West Old Turkic **qamqī* ‘silk damask’ > **χamġī* > **χamyī* > **χamī* → Old
 5 Novgorodian *χamъ* ‘damask’.

6 The Old Novgorodian noun, however, did not remain isolated: this Russified
 7 stem served as a base for the word *xamovnik* ‘weaver’, a *nomen agentis* derived with
 8 the Russian *ov+nik* denominal complex suffix, and the adjectival equivalent of the
 9 word was also created by attaching the *-ov* possessive adjectival derivational suffix to
 10 the stem.

11 The variants with the phonological form *kamka*, attested in other Old Russian
 12 dialects from the 15th century onward, were borrowed into Russian either from East
 13 Old Turkic or from Persian. If the word is regarded as a later borrowing from the East
 14 Old Turkic *qamqī*, the word-final *-ī* was replaced by the feminine *-a* ending, again
 15 for morphological reasons. However, if the Persian form *kamḥā* was the source of the
 16 Russian word, a replacement of *-ḥ* with *-k* in the second syllable has to be posited.

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