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***Hinc sunt leones* — two ancient Eurasian migratory terms in Chinese revisited¹(2)**

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4. Designations for ‘lion’ in neighbouring languages, loan proposals in the literature

Since — as we saw above — that the Asiatic lion was probably never native to China, let us now turn to possible loan sources of *suaní* and *shǒu* and briefly review some names for the ‘lion’ in the languages and language groups adjacent to the Old Chinese speaking territory.

4.1 Altaic

To the North and Northwest, in the ‘Altaic’ languages, we find a totally unrelated word in Turkic *arslan*, which was in turn borrowed by Mongolian², Manchu and most other Tungusic languages, Cheremis,

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² Monguor, however, borrowed *ᠰᠤᠯᠠᠭ* ‘lion’ from Tibetan, cf. Róna-Tas (1966: 84/#555).

Hungarian, and even Balkan languages such as Serbian, Macedonian and several Bulgarian dialects:³

- (1) Turkic *arslan* → Mongolic *arslan*, *arsalan*, *aslan*, *arsalaQ*; → Manchu *arsalan*; → Persian *arslān*, *ʾrslān*, → Kurdish *eslan*, *e'slan*, *ârslâḳ*, *arslâḳ*, *ârslâḳ*, *aslan* etc.; → Cheremis *arsalan*; → Hungarian *oroszlán* (*arszlán* ‘social lion, carpet knight’)

It is readily apparent, that this widespread word for the lion is neither related to the Indo-European nor to the Chinese designations, although Persian and Kurdish borrowings from Turkic eventually superseded earlier Iranian forms (on which see below) in several Middle Iranian languages and survived into some of their modern descendants.

4.2 Indo-European

4.2.1 Indic

One possible source for *shāś* which had been already mentioned in early Sinological studies of the nineteenth century, is Sanskrit *śāś* (attested since *ājō* Vedic *śāś*). The nasal infix root **śāś* (‘wild cat’) underlying Skt. *śāś* had permissible phonotactics for Indo-European according to Eichner⁴, but this is not undisputed. Petersson, for instance, who hesitatingly analyzed **śāś* as a heteroclitic root noun with secondary nasalization in analogy to the oblique cases, still considered the Indo-European word, as well as its Japanese counterpart *shishi*, to be borrowed from an unknown third language.⁵ Japanese *shishi* is, of course, usually considered a loanword from Chinese⁶, but Austerlitz speculates that it might rather be a re-semanticization of the homophonous *shishi* ‘wild boar; deer; meat’, in a word formation similar to Old Finnish *jalopeura* which is transparently derived from *jalo*

³ Cf. Doerfer (1963-75, TMEN 2: 39-49).

⁴ Eichner (1982: 20 n. 18).

⁵ Petersson (1923: 12).

⁶ Martin (1987: 527).

‘noble’ + *peura* ‘reindeer’.⁷ Sanskrit *vṛkṣ* *kṣ* on the other hand, has been compared to Armenian *inj/inc* ‘leopard, panther’ since Meillet.⁸ Recent authors would go so far as to link the posited Indo-Armenian root — freehandedly incorporating Tocharian A *𑖦𑖫𑖦𑖫*, *𑖦𑖫𑖦𑖫*-, B *𑖦𑖫𑖦𑖫* ‘lion’ (on which see below) as well — to Hamito-Semitic, Altaic and Dravidian forms to suggest a Proto-Nostratic root **Słz VQjE* ‘leopard’.⁹ The meanings of the reflexes of this all-encompassing proto-form would *einzelsprachlich* range from ‘leopard’ (Chadic, Cushitic, Dravidian) through ‘wolf’ and ‘mythical dog’, to ‘bear’ (Tungusic) or even ‘hyena’ (Dravidian), while it is not even clear if Armenian and Greek, let alone Tocharian, can be derived from *one* Indo-European root. Indeed, Paul Thieme saw Sanskrit *vṛkṣ* *kṣ* as new formation totally unrelated to Armenian, derived from tabooistic replacement of *kṛṣ* *ṛṣ* ‘noxious, dangerous, bloody, deadly etc.’.¹⁰ On the other hand, this explanation seems utterly *ad hoc*, so most authors, including Mayrhofer in his *Indo-Aryan etymological dictionary*, still prefer to view Sanskrit *vṛkṣ* *kṣ* as a loanword, albeit from an unspecified source.¹¹ As Polomé (1989) has conclusively shown, the often noted *Anklang* with Swahili *simba* ‘lion’ is purely fortuitous. In fact, *simba* belongs to a large set of mainly East African terms going back to (Guthrie’s) Proto-Bantu **-cimbà* ‘wild-cat,

⁷ Austerlitz (1989: 3).

⁸ Meillet (1936: 142), Kammenhuber (1961: 57, n. 2). Polomé (1989: 24) remains sceptical about this connection, and instead follows Thieme (1953: 589) in proposing a connection with Skt. *piñjara-* ‘reddish yellow, golden’ (from IE **sh₂ṛ-* ‘paint’, which can not be separated from **sh₂ṛ-* ‘mark by engraving, dye’, cf. Pokorny 1959, IEW I: 794-5, Rix et al. 1998, LIV: 418-9 for discussion), while Olsen (1999: 110) classifies *inc* as a *loanword* into Armenian. Incidentally, the Armenian word for ‘lion’ is *arṣ̄w* < IE **reug-* ‘to roar’ (Hom. *ῥῆ/ῥῆι* < **r̥* ‘roar, growl; vomit’, Lat. *rugi* < ‘roar’, OCS *ŕŭiti* ‘neigh, roar’ etc.), cf. Gamkrelidze & Ivanov (1984, II: 511).

⁹ Dolgopolsky (1998: 21/#4).

¹⁰ Thieme (1953: 55-56, 1972, 1994: 327-328).

¹¹ Mayrhofer (1996, II: 727), Witzel (1995: 101). The word is also included in Kuiper’s list of “Foreign Elements in the Rigvedic Vocabulary” (1991: 93/#373).

feline’, which was semantically specified as ‘lion’ in the savannah region.¹²

4.2.2 Iranian

In Iranian, the group of Indo-European languages which was located most closely to the Old Chinese territory besides Tocharian, we find the following forms for the ‘lion’:¹³

- (2) Buddhist Sogdian *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌*, Manichean Sogdian *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌*, Parthian *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌*, Zoroastrian Pahlavi *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* Khwarezmian *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌*, Khotanese *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* (Bailey < **𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌*-*𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* ‘to pounce and creep’ with unexplained deletion of *-j-!), New Persian *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* (Bailey: from *sar-* < **haiz-* ‘to pounce’; but notice irregular correspondances between Khotanese and Sogdian)¹⁴; Old Persian name compounds with *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* since the seventh century B.C.¹⁵

Notice that no convincing Indo-European etymology for any of these forms has been advanced in the literature, although it has been argued quite forcefully by Henning that a Middle Iranian form like Khwarezmian *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* (reflecting **𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* > **𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* > **𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌*) could be the ultimate source of Chinese *suānǐ*, thus effectively making it “one of the first, perhaps even the first, of the Iranian words that found a home in China”.¹⁶ From the viewpoint of Old Chinese reconstruction, this proposal crucially hinges upon the possibility of positing a final *-u in

¹² *Contra* Autran (1946: 217), who speaks of “relations inévitables et immémoriales» between India and Africa in this context.

¹³ Bailey (1967: 358, 1979: 421).

¹⁴ The Burushaski forms Yasin *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* ‘lion’ and Werchikwar *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* ‘lion, tiger’ all derive from Modern Persian or Urdu, cf. Berger (1974: 177), Lorimer (1938: 326a, 1962: 219a). This is also the case of Nepali *ser*, which is the common designation for the ‘lion’, besides *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* in name compounds and popular *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* (← Hindī and *𐰽𐰺𐰆𐰌* (← W. Tibetan ?), cf. Turner (1931: 749.a).

¹⁵ Gershevitch (1970: 90).

¹⁶ Henning (1977: 614). See also Lǎ Gāo et al. (1984: 315, 329), Xú Wénkǎn (1993).

the subclass of the traditional *wén* 文-rhyme group to which *suən* belongs. This split, motivated by rhyming data, homophonophoric-patterns, and a root-structure constraint against the appearance of two rhotics within a mono- or sesquisyllabic Old Chinese root, was first proposed by Starostin¹⁷, and, as I have tried to show in detail elsewhere¹⁸, is very plausible despite the fact that it can not yet be corroborated by inscriptional evidence.

In any case, a Middle or even Old Iranian language would then also underlie several Tibeto-Burman reflexes of the same root in Written Tibetan and dialects, as well as Stau, $\pm a\hat{u}-\pm u\hat{u}$, Lepcha, rGyarong, Ménba, Dèng, Pĭmŝ Zǎbà, Mùy¹, Guiqióng, Shǎǎng and other modern Tibeto-Burman languages¹⁹, which all show phonetically similar forms and geographically form a rather compact “Northern” Tibeto-Burman cluster. Cf. for instance —

- (3) Classical Tibetan *shu-jh*, *shu-jh*, Amdo *shu-jh*, Balti *shu-jh*, Mustang *shu*²⁰; Stau *shu*; $\pm a\hat{u}-\pm u\hat{u}$ *sang-go*²¹; Lepcha *sĭng-gi*; rGyarong *sĕng-ge*; Mùy¹ *si*⁵⁵-*qi*⁵³; Cuònà Ménba *se*⁵⁵*ke*⁵⁵; Jiĭlóng Pĭmŝ *si*⁵⁵*qi*⁵⁵, Gémàn Dèng *s* < *qi*⁵⁵ etc.

Yet this scenario is rather unlikely, since *all* of the languages quoted show a velar nasal in the offset of the first syllable, despite the fact that the phonotactics of *some* of them, including Written Tibetan, do certainly *not* preclude a final *-u. Since it cannot be assumed in this case that we are dealing with an instance of linguistic “drift” (in the sense of Sapir), and because it is also not to be expected, that *all* of the languages would have borrowed their word for ‘lion’ from Chinese during the rather small time-window *after* the shift from *-u > *-q, but *before* the lexical replacement of *suən* by *shǎǎ* the most reasonable explanation is that

¹⁷ Starostin (1989: 228-41).

¹⁸ Behr (1997: 504-515). For an earlier hint at the OC distinction between *-r : *-l : *-n cf. Unger (1986).

¹⁹ See the entries in Huáng Bǔfǎn et al. (1992: 102).

²⁰ Kretschmar (1995: 487).

²¹ Haarh (1968: 41).

the majority of the languages in question borrowed their word for ‘lion’ directly from Tibetan.

The possibility, considered by Laufer²², that Tibetan *ṣṭṣoṅ* itself was a loanword from a *Late* Middle Indian Prākṛit (i.e. Aphabrah̄ṣṭ, ranging, roughly, from the fourth to the twelfth century A.D.) form of Sanskrit *ṣṭṣoṅ* like *ṣṭṣoṅ*, *ṣṭṣoṅ* has to be seriously entertained as well, despite the apparent problems of the final vocalism. The nominative singular ending in *-u* in Sanskrit *a*-stems is a diagnostic feature of Aphabrah̄ṣṭ, while *-e*, which would be needed to account for the Tibetan form, is a typical *Middle* Indo-Aryan ‘Maghadism’, i.e. a form predominantly appearing in eastern Indian inscriptional Prākṛits between the second and fourth centuries A.D.²³ While Sanskrit *ṣṭṣoṅ* develops regularly into Middle Indo-Aryan with lengthening of the nasalized vowel before *-k*-, whence Skt. *ṣṭṣoṅ* > Pāli *ṣṭṣoṅ* Pkt., *ṣṭṣoṅ* *ṣṭṣoṅ* Pañjabī *ṣṭṣoṅ* etc., several Prākṛits produce *g*-forms with an *unconditioned* ‘Verschärfung’, which also survive as alternatives in Hindī *ṣṭṣoṅ*.²⁴ Magadhī however, does not belong to these Prakrits and would, if anything, undergo lenition and spirantization, rather than strengthening to *-g*.²⁵ In fact, *none* of the languages listed in Turner’s *Comparative Dictionary* displays a combination of *Verschärfung* and nominative *u*-vocalism²⁶, while typical Aphabrah̄ṣṭ-forms encountered in texts are *ṣṭṣoṅ* or *ṣṭṣoṅ*.²⁷ In any case, most of these developments would be much too late to explain a Tibetan word attested since the earliest texts in that language, let alone its Chinese parallels. Since we simply do not know, if Old Tibetan final *-u* ultimately derives from a dental nasal, which was assimilated to the velar initial of the second syllable, after evolving from **-u* under unknown conditions, Occam’s razor would certainly rather lead us to the provisional assumption, that Old Chinese and most of the Tibeto-Burman languages quoted, *as well*

²² Laufer (1916: 464/#63).

²³ Bubenik (1996: 19, 72-74).

²⁴ Von Hinüber (1986: 74).

²⁵ Bubenik (1996: 54-58).

²⁶ Turner (1962-66, I: 772/#13884).

²⁷ Pischel (1902: 406, 418).

as Iranian received their forms from an unknown underlying “donor» language of Central or Southern Asia.

4.2.3 Tocharian

Coming back to *shčshčš* it is quite obvious that this term, if from an Iranian source, could only have been borrowed during a rather late period, allowing for a phonetic proximity with New Persian *šd*²⁸. Since this is not in accordance with the textual evidence given above, let us first reconsider the possibility of a Tocharian loan source.

Apart from Toch. B *vč kh* a loan from Sanskrit *vč kč* ‘lion’, and the possible Toch. A reflex *lu* ‘beast’ (gen. *lw-es*, nom.pl. *lw-č* instr.pl. *lw-čyo* etc.) of the most widespread Indo-European root for ‘lion’ **leu-* (cf. Latin *le-*, gen. *le-nis*, borrowed from Greek «*λ*, >, gen. «*λ*fi> ·fi●< **lewont-*, cf. already Mycenaean Instr. pl. *re-wo-pi*, Germanic **liuwaz* < PIE **leu-os*; Homeric «*λ* is unrelated²⁹), the indigenous word for ‘lion’ in Tocharian is A *ščk*, *ščk*= (in compounds), B *čcake*. This word, in its Toch. A shape, was first likened to Chinese *shō* by Paul Pelliot in his review of Sieg/Siegling’s *Tocharische Grammatik*³⁰. With typical philological prudence Pelliot wrote:

“Bien que je croie que le chinois 獅 *che* (ou 師子 *che-tseu*, où *tseu* est un affixe substantif chinois), „lion“, se rattache aux formes iraniennes qui ont abouti à pers. *šd*

²⁸ Indeed, Forrest (1948: 120), following Giles, saw *shčs* as a loanword from Persian.

²⁹ Cf. Gamkrelidze-Ivanov (1984, II: 507-08) with explanations and a list of modern reflexes. Both Greek roots have *Anklänge* in several “Afroasiatic» and Kartvelian languages, and have been rightfully described as Ancient Near Eastern *Wanderwörter* by Gamkrelidze-Ivanov (1984, II: 510). For a possible Hamito-Semitic parallel cf. Orel & Stolbova (1995: 355/#1636, s.v. **alel*/**aled*), for a careful and comprehensive treatment of the interconnections implied by this type of migratory term see Kammerzell (1994), while Heimpel (1987-1990) is an excellent sketch of the cultural and religious background. Cf. also Dolgopolsky (1998: 20/#3, s.v. **2[ü]āwv*’).

³⁰ Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1931.

le tokh. ~~𑖦𑖅𑖱𑖅~~ d'origine obscure, ne peut être encore écarté complètement.³¹

Shortly after Pelliot, the direction of the loan contact was reversed in Heinrich Lüders' discussion of the origins of zodiac systems in East Asia, who claimed that the name for the lion was borrowed by the Tocharians from Chinese.³² As it is well-known, E.G. Pulleyblank first rejected the interpretation of 𑖦𑖅𑖱𑖅 as a suffixed hybrid compound in 1962, arguing that the Tocharian word, especially in its B shape, should be interpreted as the source of Chinese 𑖦𑖅𑖱𑖅 (EMC *~~ʰwɛ~~ < WHC *~~ʰwɛ~~-c(2)), where 𑖦𑖅𑖱𑖅 was an *integral part* of the transcription.

In order to evaluate this hypothesis, which has figured largely in recent discussions about the antiquity of Chinese-Tocharian lexical and cultural contacts triggered by the discovery of the *Xājiāng mummies*, it would be desirable to know, whether the Tocharian word has a solid Indo-European pedigree, or whether it has to be analyzed as a loanword itself. Unfortunately, the etymology of Toch. A 𑖦𑖅𑖱𑖅, B ~~ʰwɛ~~ is far from clear, although there has been no lack of attempts to tackle the problem, which I will briefly review here:

- (a) Schwentner (1939) derives Toch. A 𑖦𑖅𑖱𑖅 from a non-attested Skt. *~~nhɛndʰ~~* 'having a mane', pointing to the lexicographically attested ~~nhɛndʰ~~. In this he is followed Pokorny³³ who relates the Tocharian words to the IE root *ndʰ- 'hair, mane', although he still views both words as *loans* from Sanskrit.³⁴
- (b) Pedersen (1941: 246-7) points out that the B-form must be older than A 𑖦𑖅𑖱𑖅, for which he proposes a derivation < *~~ʰwɛ~~ < *~~ʰwɛndʰ~~ by long-distance assimilation. He refutes

³¹ Pelliot (1931: 449).

³² Lüders (1933: 1018, n. 1).

³³ Pokorny (1959, IEW II: 520).

³⁴ Cf. Latin *caesaries* 'hair on the head'. Notice that Toch. A also sometimes metaphorically uses ~~nhɛndʰ~~ (← Skt. ~~nhɛndʰ~~) 'the maned one' for 'lion', as in the Tocharian version of the list of the '32 physiognomical characteristics of a Great Man' (~~gyɛndʰ 𑖦𑖅𑖱𑖅 dɛsɛxɛndʰndʰ~~) discussed by Ji Xiānlín (1982: 16).

Schwentner's etymology ("dafür spricht nichts») but does not deny the loan status of the word in Tocharian.

- (c) Van Windekens (1941: 120-121), sees both forms A and B as related to IE $*\text{nh}_2\text{-h-}$ 'to attach to' (i.e. Ved. अन्धि- अन्धि अन्धि etc., Old Persian $ha_{(n)}j\text{-}$; Lith. $segù$, $sègti$ 'to attach to, clip, baste'; also Old Church Slavonic $pri\text{-}s\text{g}o\text{-}$ $-s\text{g}i$ 'to touch, grab', i.e. IE $*\text{v-nh}_2\text{-j-nh-}$)³⁵ thus deriving them from an original meaning "animal à crinière», without further elaboration of the sound changes involved.³⁶
- (d) Van Windekens (1964: 227-229), claims that both A and B, as well as Sanskrit vṛkṣ 'lion' and Armenian inc 'leopard' "trouvent leur origine dans quelque langue asiatique».
- (e) Twelve years later (1976: 480-1), he reconsiders his own etymology, deriving Toch. A ššik < PIE $*\text{vsh-tr-}$ (and the variant A ššik = < $*\text{vsh-tr-}$), Toch. B ššake < $*\text{vsh-tr-}$ (cf. Lat. $saeta$ 'soies, crins, poil (rude) d'un animal, piquants crinière'), i.e. ultimately from PIE $*\text{vsh-}$ / $*\text{vel-si-}$ 'to bind',³⁷ with a proposed semantic extension $\Rightarrow$ 'bound' $\Rightarrow$ 'band' $\Rightarrow$ 'bristle of an animal'.³⁸
- (f) Adams (1984) proposes a derivation of Toch. A ššik by 'contamination' with šširi 'mane' and through long-distance assimilation < $*\text{vsh}$ < $*\text{vsh}$ < $*\text{vsh}$ < $*\text{vsh}$.

³⁵ See the discussion of this root in Rix, Kümmel et al. (1998: 468) and Werba (1997: 249-50, s.v. vsh).

³⁶ The derivation from an etymon meaning 'mane' was also envisaged by Poucha (1955: 324), who compared Cymr. $hoenyn$ ($*\text{vrjqr-}$), $hwynyn$ 'hair; hunting net', but did not refer to van Windekens' proposal.

³⁷ I.e. laryngealist $*\text{vsh}_2(1)\text{-}$, cf. Ved. vṛkṣ (< $*\text{vsh}_2\text{-k}_2\text{-}$) 'ties up, binds', Lith $sienu$, $siet$ 'to bind'. For other derivations of this root see Rix, Kümmel et al. (1998: 471).

³⁸ This idea is hesitatingly accepted by Miliut-Chomiŭnien | (1990: 141-2).

< *v_lqj_hmr- vs. B *cake*, through loss of nasal < *v_hqf_hdnh < (Proto-Toch. Ablaut variant:) *v_hq_hdnh.³⁹

- (g) Kitson (1996: 215 n. 3), reviewing Adams' ingenious derivation, relates that "... professor [Werner] Winter insists that the Tocharian alleged cognate (of Skt. *vāka*, Arm. *inj/inc*) will not sustain Adams reconstruction beyond the initial letter, so it must be definitely discarded."⁴⁰
- (h) Donald Ringe (p.c.) considers all etymologies, including Adams', unbelievable, and I will try to summarize some of his arguments in the following section.

The main problem with *the* etymology of the Tocharian words is that the forms in A and B cannot be reasonably reconciled. In fact, assuming that the final syllable was accented in B, as is very likely, the only parts showing regular correspondances between the two "dialects" are the suffixes A *-āk* : B *-ake*. Toch. A *ɤ* reflects a palatal dorsal which could go back to pre-Proto-Tocharian (PPT) *k_Y-, *g_Y-, *k_{WY}-, or *j_{WY}-, since palatalized velars and labiovelars merged before undergoing affrication, delabialization and devoicing in an unclear chronological order.⁴¹ Alternatively, Toch. A *ɤ* might also have developed from affricated PPT *g- > *g_ɬ- — if it could be traced that far at all —, with subsequent devoicing to PT *t_ɬ-.⁴² Toch. B *ɛ* on the other hand, can only reflect palatalized *s_Y-,⁴³ B *-c-*, of the second syllable, a palatalized voiceless PT dental *-t- < *-t-⁴⁴ or *-t_h- < *-d_h-⁴⁵ (but not < *-g-, which would have yielded PT *-t_ɬ- or *-ɤ_ɬ-).⁴⁶ As far as the vowels are

³⁹ Adams (1999: 660) sticks to the idea of a contamination with *ɤ*ri. Notice however, that he apparently does not consider the derivation from IE *v_lqj_hmr- valid any longer.

⁴⁰ This verdict was confirmed by Professor Winter in a letter to the author (October 6, 1998).

⁴¹ Ringe (1996: 148-150, § 59).

⁴² Ringe (1996: 146-48, § 57).

⁴³ Ringe (1996: 145-46, § 56).

⁴⁴ Ringe (1996: 102-103, § 46).

⁴⁵ Ringe (1996: 106, § 46).

⁴⁶ Ringe (1996: 104, § 46). Cf. for all of these developments also Winter (1962).

concerned, Toch. A *-i-* may reflect PPT long **-5-* going to Proto-Tocharian (PT) **-i-*, PT **-æy-* < PPT **-ey-*, or, eventually, a short PPT **-i-*, **-e-* or **-u-* followed by a nasal, which went to **-y* before the following palatal (i.e. PPT **CiN-*, **CeN-* > PT **CYæN-* > Toch. A **CYin-* > *CYi-*, **CuN-* > **CæN-* > **Cæy-* > *Ci-*). Yet Toch. B *-e-* must go back to a non-high vowel, i.e. either PT **-ɛ-* > *-e-* or PPT **-o-* > PT **-ɛ-* > *-e-*.⁴⁷ Adding to these phonological mismatches is the morphological fact that the *only* other Tocharian noun showing a similar pattern of inflection, i.e. a Toch. A word which behaves as though the stem vowel, lost in the singular, had originally been PT *schwa*, whereas the stem vowel of the presumed Toch. B counterpart is *-e*, is A *ræke* : B *riæk* ‘seer’⁴⁸, an obvious Iranian loanword. Notice also, that the ablaut variants, posited to account for the diverging vocalism in the first syllable, would be highly unusual for an *unanalyzable* noun. It is thus clear that Adams’ etymology can not be upheld without acceptance of considerable irregularities.

Indeed, the whole situation looks strongly as if the words for lion were borrowed *into* Tocharian only considerably *after* A and B had begun to diverge.⁴⁹ Judging from the chronology of Iranian loanwords in Tocharian and glottochronological considerations, a conservative estimate for the time of the split of the two dialects would be the first century A.D.⁵⁰, i.e. roughly the time when the first attestations of Chinese *shǎo* start to appear. Shortly after this period, East Tocharian was already moribund, a kind of church or book language of the Tocharian Buddhists, which was also used as a prestigious medium of mission among the

⁴⁷ See Ringe (1996, chap. 6 & 8 on the development of vowels, chap. 7 on palatalization). Cf. also Penney (1976-77: 80-85).

⁴⁸ Krause & Thomas (1960 129, § 180.1c), Ringe (1996: 85 n.1).

⁴⁹ The idea of Blažek (1984: 392) that both Tocharian forms might be borrowed from a compound derived from a combination of an (unattested!) Sino-Tibetan **si* ‘lion’ + a reflex of the Tibeto-Burman root for ‘leopard’ **zik* (Benedict & Matisoff 1972: 27/# 61 with reflexes), cannot be verified.

⁵⁰ Cf. K.T. Schmidt (1985: 765).

reconstructed for the Proto-Loloish level as *k-rong¹ ‘leopard cat’ (> Written Burmese *khrang-se*, where *-se* is possibly a suffix used in animal names⁵³, Modern Burmese *ၵၵၵၵ-ၵၵၵၵ*⁵³) by Bradley⁵⁴. Despite the apparent semantic problems, this root had been compared to Chinese *shǒu* 獅 by Robert Shafer⁵⁵, which was rightfully rejected by Benedict in the *Conspectus*.⁵⁶ The root has a marked southern (i.e. Loloish) distribution⁵⁷, although Tangut *nd-wǝŋ⁷ (in Lǎfǎn wén’s reconstruction), transcribed as *gézhen* 葛征 (EMC *nd-wǝŋ⁷ > LMC *nd-wǝŋ⁷) in the *Tóngyǎ* 同音 (or ***ih-ŋex*) of 1132⁵⁸, could be a northern outpost of the same word.

5. Envoi

One does not have to have obstinately to turn to Sumer for a possible origin, as did Gu 郭沫若 under the influence of the pan-diffusionist movement in Chinese historiography during the first quarter of this century.⁵⁹ In his discussion of the Babylonian origins of the 'heavenly

⁵³ Rather than a reflex of a fictive Sino-Tibetan *si ‘lion’, which would have formed a compound with ‘cat’ (*khlang*) in Burmese according to Blažek (1984: 392).

⁵⁴ Bradley (1978: 294/#16&17).

⁵⁵ R. Shafer (1941-42, I: 324). See also Luce (1981:16/#106), who compared the Written Burmese form to *suṇnī* and Tibetan *ལྷ་ཤེ*

⁵⁶ Benedict & Matisoff (1972: 162, n. 439). This rejection apparently escaped Zh-u F-gu (1972: 214), who includes the comparison in his GSR-index to the *Conspectus*' Chinese equations.

⁵⁷ For the Jǎŋpɔ̃, /chɔŋ, Zàiwɔ̃, Lèqǎ and Bɔ̃ reflexes cf. Huáng Bùfān (1992: 102). The Qíŋg, Hǎní, Nù and Bái forms are all obviously late loans from Middle or Modern Chinese.

⁵⁸ *Tóngyǎo* (20B5.7/36A1.3), LǚFānwén ed. (1986: 297, 376). Laufer (1916.a: 81/#198) considers the first syllable to be a prefix of unknown function and the second one (hypothesized to derive from < pre-Tangut *ʁḏ) to be either borrowed from the same Iranian source as *shǒ* or “somehow» connected with the Tibetan and Sanskrit forms.

⁵⁹ Cf. Lynn Porter (1996: 13, 174, n.51).

stems and earthly branches' (*tiāngān dìzhì* 天干地支), as used in oracle bone inscriptions and early Chinese astronomy⁶⁰, Gu+ claimed that *qiúér* 酋耳 (OC $*a_g\}x=b_{q\mathfrak{E}-2}$) was a disyllabic ('lento') rendering of Sumerian UR 'dog' (glossed by him as 'lion/sphinx'), i.e. the Sumerogram UR.MAH1 'mighty carnivorous beast, lion', which was predominantly used in official and judicial documents.⁶¹ In a rather convoluted argumentation he tried to show, that *qiú* had been secondarily replaced by *zūn*- 尊 (OC $*a_{wxq=}$) in order to match it phonetically with *suān*- 獾 (OC $*a_{vr}[q,u]=$), which he explained in turn as a graphical corruption for *náo* 獠~猯~獾 (OC $*a_{nu}$). As it is commonly, albeit not unanimously, assumed since Wáng Guówéi's famous study of ancestor names in scapulimantic texts and their counterparts in the edited literature⁶², this 'monkey-shaped' character, sometimes also transcribed as *kuí* 夔 (OC $*b_jz\mathfrak{h}$), was the personal name of thearch Kù 嚳 (OC $*a_{wn-s}^ak\mathfrak{x}n$), the legendary progenitor of the Shāng 商 dynasty and highest ancestor mentioned in oracle bone inscriptions.⁶³ Finally, the nasal initials of *-ní* 麤~猯 (OC $*=a_{qh}$) and *ér* 耳 (OC $*b_{q\mathfrak{E}-2}$) are claimed to be homorganic resonants, chosen to represent foreign *-r*. A quick glance at the resulting chain of phonological equations in their modern Old Chinese reconstructions ($*a_g\}x=b_{q\mathfrak{E}-2} \approx a_{nu}=a_{qh} \approx b_jz\mathfrak{h}=a_{qh}$) shows that Gu+'s fanciful ramblings are well-nigh impossible, and do certainly not constitute "evidence of Sino-Babylonian linguistic contacts during the Yān and Zh+u periods".⁶⁴ While far from conclusive, his observations on early iconographical parallels of felidae-depictions are more to the point.⁶⁵

Notice also, that there are several imponderabilia on the Near Eastern side of the comparison. As Steinherr and Otten have shown,

⁶⁰ For an equally speculative recent treatment of the topic see Cook (1995).

⁶¹ In literary texts, the lion was also referred to as *pirig* or *ug*, cf. Heimpel (1987-90).

⁶² Wáng Guówéi (1916, repr. 1959).

⁶³ Gu+ Mòruò (1931, B: 51r-v = 1962: 251-252). For an interesting discussion of these identifications see Allen (1991: 33-35, 51-53, 58-62 and *passim*).

⁶⁴ Gu+ Mòruò (1931, B: 51v = 1962: 252).

⁶⁵ Cf. the plates in Gu+ Mòruò (1931, B: 53v = 1962: 255).

UR.MAH₁ was read *walwa-* in Hittite, *walwi-* in Luwian⁶⁶, and the same root *walw-* also survives in Lydian coin-legends of the sixth century B.C.⁶⁷ UR ‘dog, beast’, on the other hand, read *ta* ³ in Akkadian and probably *tí* ³ in Hurritic⁶⁸, is conventionally read *ur* by Sumerologists, and this was the form used as the target of Guð’s comparison. There is some evidence, however, in lexicographical works and alternative spellings, that it might have had a reading *sur* _x, at least in theophoric personal names of the third millennium B.C.⁶⁹ This reading *sur* was proposed early during this century by Theophilus Goldridge Pinches (1856-1934)⁷⁰ and later defended by Arno Poebel and Edmond Sollberger⁷¹, but did not find many followers. During the eighties there was a lively exchange on the matter, based on some new evidence for the reading *sur* _x, between Steinkellner (1980) and Sollberger (1985) on the pro- and Lambert (1981, 1982) on the contra-side; however, recent text editions show that *ur* is clearly still the preferred reading among mainstream Sumerologists. Still, even if one accepted the phonetic possibility of a remote connection between the contentious reading *sur* _x for UR and the first syllable of Old Chinese *a_{vr}[q_u]=a_{Qh}, it is unclear why a word for ‘dog’ without its attribute ‘mighty’ would have borrowed for the lion. Moreover, it has recently been claimed that *ur* itself could

⁶⁶ Steinherr (1968) and Otten (1969, 1981: 143). For the cultural significance of the lion in the Hittite world see also Ünal (1987-90).

⁶⁷ Wallace (1986).

⁶⁸ Rüster & Neu (1989: 116-7/#51). Eblaitic possibly had a word *na(-)i* ³ ‘lion’ which occurs in *na-i* ³ *qar₃-ga-ri₂-im* ‘earth-lion’ ⇒ ‘chamaeleon’ according to Sjöberg (1996: 20-21).

⁶⁹ The reading *sur* was proposed early on by T.G. Pinches in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* (1903: 200), defended by A. Poebel (1937: 55, n. 2) and E. Sollberger (1956: 11 n. 4, 24, additional note), but did not find many followers. During the 80ies there was a lively exchange on the matter, based on some new evidence for the reading *sur* _x, between Steinkellner (1980) and Sollberger (1985) on the pro- and W.G. Lambert (1981, 1982) on the contra-side; however, recent text editions show that *ur* is clearly still the preferred reading among mainstream Sumerologists.

⁷⁰ *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* (1903: 200).

⁷¹ Poebel (1937: 55, n. 2), E. Sollberger (1956: 11 n. 4, 24, additional note).

be a loanword from an ‘Afro-Asiatic’ root *wahar(-ab) ‘dog, fox, hyena’⁷², in which case the Pinches reading would be untenable.

Wherever the *urheimat* of the lion in Africa might have been, we will have to look to Iran and probably well beyond for the Chinese lion’s den.

6. Bibliography (Part B)

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⁷² See Militarev (1996: 20/#6) with alleged Egyptian, Demotic, Berber and Cushitic reflexes.

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