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The state of the art of Uralic studies: tradition vs innovation

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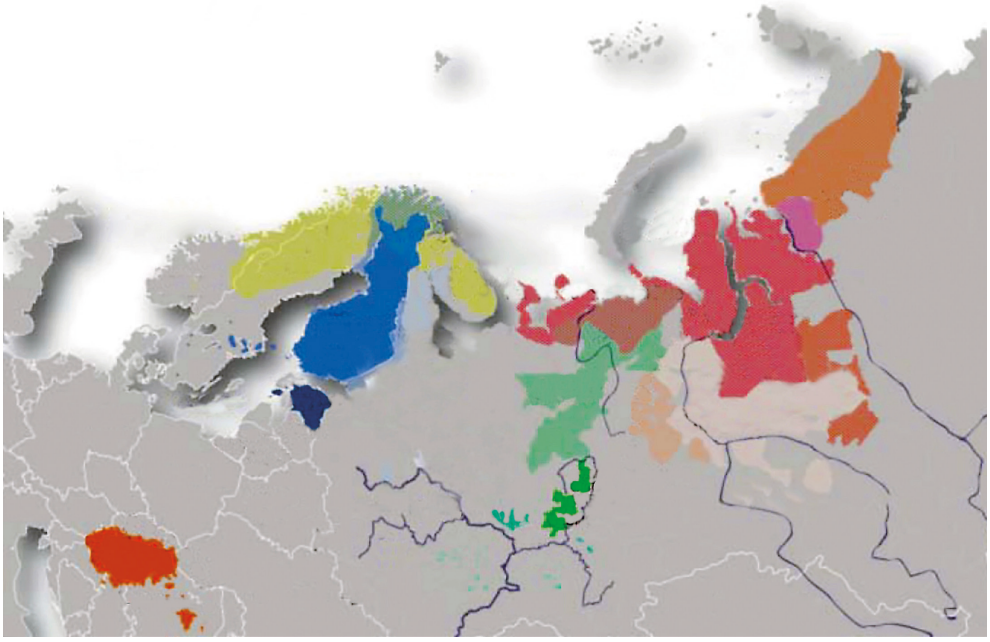
Angela Marcantonio



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The state of the art of Uralic studies: tradition vs innovation

Proceedings of the 'Padua Uralic seminar' University of Padua, November 11-12, 2016

edited by
Angela Marcantonio

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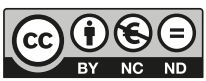

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In copertina: *The Uralic Languages Map*.

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Revisiting the theory of the Hungarian vs Chuvash lexical parallels

László Marácz

1. Introduction

In this article I shall discuss the lexical parallels occurring between Hungarian and Chuvash (a Turkic language) and, occasionally, Mongolian. These parallels have been studied for long time, since the work by József Budenz (1871). The *Hungarian Etymological Dictionary* (*A magyar nyelv történeti-etimológiai szótára (*TESz), for which see Benkő 1967, 1970 & 1976) identifies 33 undisputed Hungarian vs Chuvash lexical correspondences[1], that line up together, against 'Common Turkic', in displaying specific sound alternations. These alternations are generally referred to as 'rhotacism' and 'lambdacism', that is: Hungarian vs Chuvash (as well as Mongolian) on the one hand, and Common Turkic on the other hand display /r/ *vs* /z/ and /l/ *vs* /š/, respectively. The conventional explanation for these alternations, and related Hungarian vs Chuvash parallels, relies on the traditional classification that Hungarian is a Uralic language, whilst Chuvash is a Turkic language, more precisely, the only representative of the so-called 'West Old Turkic' branch (WOT; see below). It is argued that these Hungarian lexical items have been borrowed from either Chuvash, or one of its hypothesized predecessors, such as the Volga Bulgar languages. The possibility of a different direction of borrowing, that is, Chuvash adopting the Hungarian counterparts (or even a totally different explanation alto-

[1] I am indebted to Angela Marcantonio for sharing with me her insights on the issue of the Hungarian vs Turkic lexical correspondences, and for many useful remarks to improve the present text. The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Program (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement no. 613344.

gether; see footnote (12)), is simply not even taken into consideration within the framework of the conventional model. However, this model makes controversial claims; for example, it distinguishes two branches of Turkic, the so-called 'Lir' versus 'Shaz' branches, also referred to as WOT (as mentioned) and East Old Turkic (EOT) / Common Turkic, respectively. Here I shall put forward an alternative explanation for the rhotacism and lambdacism alternations in Chuvash, arguing that these alternations are the result of word transfer *from* Hungarian *into* Chuvash, and not from Chuvash into Hungarian – as widely claimed. As a consequence, the *lingua genesis* of Chuvash can be considered to be the outcome of intensive and layered processes of contact and substrate interference between different languages / language families co-existing in the linguistic area of the Volga Bends. If the rhotacism and lambdacism (and other) isoglosses in Chuvash are actually originating from Hungarian – rather than the other way round – it follows that WOT is a 'phantom-category'. This conclusion is also supported by the fact that all the reconstructed forms of WOT listed in the two volumes by Róna-Tas & Berta[2] (2011; hence RT&B) – the dictionary that lists all the Hungarian words classified as loan words (mainly) from Turkic – are very similar or identical to the listed, attested forms of EOT. This suggests that the alternations between Hungarian, Chuvash and Mongolian on the one hand *vs* Common Turkic on the other hand, should be explained in different terms. In the last section of this essay

[2] In this article I will heavily rely on the work by Ligeti (1986), instead of the more recent study on Turkic *vs* Hungarian lexical parallels put forward in the etymological dictionary by Róna-Tas & Berta (2011). Although Róna-Tas & Berta's (RT&B) corpus is up-to-date, more extended and richer with attested forms from the various Turkic languages with respect to Ligeti's corpus, the authors' analysis, classifications and conclusions do not differ from those put forward by Ligeti. Quite the contrary, RT&B accept Ligeti's basic, theoretical framework and solutions – this being in turn in line with conventional wisdom. Moreover, Ligeti's analysis has the advantage that the lexical items under investigation are less burdened with the assumed sound structure of the proto-Uralic and / or proto-Hungarian forms, as is the case in RT&B corpus – although Ligeti too accepts the Uralic origin of Hungarian and the conventional 'borrowing model'. Ligeti's theoretical analysis too is driven by the reconstruction of clear patterns, but the lexical parallels are not presented in the form of an etymological dictionary. Last, but not least, in this study I am not so much interested in the derivation of the individual lexical items (that is, the derivation of the Hungarian borrowed words from their Turkic parallel), but, rather, in the analysis and interpretation of the (reconstructed) sound patterns, much in the style of Ligeti – although, as it will turn out clear, I hold a fundamentally different view on these issues. Hence, I shall take the patterns discussed in Ligeti (1986) as the basis of my research.

I shall put forward an alternative line of research in order to account for these issues.

The presentation in this article runs as follows. In section **2.**, the standard classification of the Turkic languages will be discussed. In section **3.**, the lexical correlations between Hungarian and the Turkic languages will be spelled out. In section **4.**, the Hungarian vs Chuvash lexical parallels will be systematically illustrated and accounted for. In section **5.**, a research agenda will be proposed, according to which the phonological alternations / isoglosses under discussion are to be interpreted in terms of 'Central Asian Sprachbund isoglosses' – this in turn being in accordance with the conclusions (independently) attained by Marcantonio (2014).

2. The classification of the Turkic languages

2.1. Following Johanson (1998: 81-126), the Turkic languages may be divided into six branches. This classification takes into account geographical and typological properties as well[3]:

Diagram 1. Six branches of Turkic according to geographical and typological criteria

1. Southwestern (SW) branch: Oghuz Turkic;
2. Northwestern (NW) branch: Kipchak Turkic;
3. Southeastern (SE) branch: Uyghur Turkic;
4. Northeastern (NE) branch: Siberian Turkic;
5. Chuvash: representing Oghur or Bulgar Turkic;
6. Khalaj: representing Arghu Turkic

In this classification, Oghur Turkic (also spelled *Ogur*, *Oguric*; *Bulgar*, *Bolgar*, and its variants) is also referred to as 'Lir Turkic', while the other branches are referred to as 'Common Turkic' or 'Shaz Turkic' – as anticipated above. At the present stage of research, it is unclear when these two major branches of Turkic are supposed to have diverged. Some

[3] In Tekin (1990: 5-18) an overview is presented of the different proposals for the classification of the Turkic languages, including proposals by Arat, Benzing, Menges, Poppe, Doerfer, as well as his own classification. Whatever classification is chosen, Chuvash (or its assumed predecessors: Bulgar, Volga Bulgar, or Proto-Bulgar) is always considered as a separate group of the Turkic language family.

scholars hypothesize that the Oghur branch broke off from Common Turkic perhaps as early as 500 BC. Note that all the Turkic languages that are spoken today are of 'Eastern Turkic' type, that is, of Common Turkic origin. There is however one exception: the Chuvash language, spoken on the western periphery of the Turkic language family. These two major groups of Turkic are spoken by completely different numbers of peoples: the eastern branch is spoken by more than hundred million speakers, while the western branch is spoken by hardly one million people. This asymmetry is not accounted for in the literature.

Let us now have a look at the hypothesized genealogical tree of Turkic in accordance with the classification of Johanson (1998: 81-126)

Diagram 2. Hypothetical genealogical tree of Turkic

1. Proto-Turkic: Proto-Bulgar; Common Turkic
2. Proto-Bulgar: *Danube Bulgar; Volga Bulgar
3. Volga Bulgar: Chuvash
4. Common Turkic: Oghuz, Arghu, Kipchak, Karluk, Siberian …
5. Oghuz: Turkish, Azeri, Turkmen …
6. Arghu: Khalaj ….
7. Kipchak: Cuman, Tatar, Kazakh, Kyrgyz… .
8. Karluk: Uzbek, Uyghur, Salar …
9. Siberian: Tuvan, Tofa, Khakas, Sarygh Yughur, …

If we compare the geographic-typological classification (diagram 1) with the hypothesized genealogical classification (diagram 2), we observe that the Oghur or Bulgar Turkic branch matches with the branch starting with Proto-Bulgar in the genealogical tree. This implies that all other branches of the genealogical tree cover the Shaz Turkic or Common Turkic languages. Thus, both approaches assume that the Oghur, or Bulgar languages (the Lir Turkic languages) are a separate branch of the Turkic family. Mainstream Turcology assumes also that Oghur Turkic or Proto-Bulgar was historically spoken in the Hunnic Empire, Old Great Bulgaria (*Magna Bulgaria* / *Onoguria*), and later on in Volga Bulgaria and the Danube Bulgar Khanate (Danube Bulgaria) – this group would have included the languages of the Huns, the Bulgars, the Khazars and the Eurasian Avars. Note that these languages are only very sparsely documented and, in fact, they are practically unknown. Nowadays its only extant member is the Chuvash language

(as mentioned), that cannot be understood by speakers of the Shaz Turkic languages, mutually intelligible. This being the case, it is uncertain whether Chuvash is directly descended from any of the members of the Oghur group, or a separate branch within this dialect group (see Johanson 1998).

2.2. The Oghur branch is characterized by some (relatively[4]) regular and systematic alternations, as against Common Turkic. Two of the most striking correspondences are the following:

Diagram 3. Oghur ~ Common Turkic sound correspondences

Oghur	/l/ ~ Common Turkic /š/
Oghur	/r/ ~ Common Turkic /z/

As mentioned above, the first alternation in diagram 3 has been referred to as lambdacism, and the second one as rhotacism (the sounds involved in these correspondences being at the origin of the labelling: *Lir* vs *Shaz* Turkic). This formulation implies that the source language is a reconstructed variant of Common Turkic and the recipient language is a reconstructed variant of Oghur. The final sound of the Oghur name is /r/, instead of /z/, which is itself an instance of the '*r* ~ *z* alternation', being cognate with the name of the Oghuz group within Common Turkic (see diagram 2.). Consider the *r* ~ *z* alternation in the following diagram, referring to the equivalents of the word 'nine' in different Turkic languages:

Diagram 4. r ~ z alternation in Turkic languages

languages	'nine'
Old Turkic	*toquz*
Turkish	*dokuz*
Azeri	*doqquz*
Uzbek	*toqqiz*

[4] Marcantonio (2014, footnote 34) points out that the rhotacism vs lambdacism isoglosses do not always materialize within the appropriate context – as is 'normal', given the fundamental variable nature of languages. Thus, the correlation is not perfect, although several options come to mind to account for these 'irregular' cases. However, for the sake of the argument, I will concentrate on the existing, traditional 'regular' pattern (as pursued by Budenz, Gombocz, Ligeti and others), setting the 'irregular' cases aside for the moment. See the last section for discussion of these cases.

Uyghur	*toqquz*
Kazakh	*toğız*
Kyrgyz	*toğuz*
Altay	*toğus*
Khakas	*toğis*
Tuvan	*tos*
Sakha/Yakut	*toğus*
Khalaj	*toqquz*
Chuvash	*tăχăr*

This diagram shows that only in the Chuvash cognates we find rhotacism for the final consonant of the word for 'nine', *tăχăr*, whereas in all the other instances of the Common Turkic branch we find zetacism, a final /z/, which has become voiceless in some younger branches of Turkic, including Altay, Khakas, and Sakha/Yakut. Hence, rhotacism *vs* zetacism is a (relatively) clear dividing criterium between Oghur and Common Turkic. The same is true for the '*l* ~ *š* alternation', as in Chuvash *xĕl* and Common Turkic *qïš* 'winter' (see Tekin 1990: 11). In the next section I shall illustrate that Hungarian lines up with the Oghur branch, when there are lexical correspondences among Common Turkic, Chuvash and Hungarian.

3. The lexical correlations between Hungarian and the Turkic languages

3.1. Hungarian vs Chuvash parallels

Ligeti (1986: 9) discusses the history of the 'Old Turkic loan words of Chuvash type in Hungarian' in depth[5]. According to the author, this concept was an idea of the German scholar József Budenz, and was first published in the academic journal *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* (1871: 67-135), in the heat of the 'Ugric-Turkish Battle'[6]. Budenz argued that

[5] This article will closely follow the classification and the illustration of Chuvash and Turkic material as presented and discussed in Ligeti (1986), unless indicated otherwise.

[6] The 'Ugric-Turkish Battle' was an academic debate revolving around the issue of the primacy of the 'Ugric' (read 'Finno-Ugric') as against the Turkic genetic relation of Hungarian. The debate between Budenz, who argued for a Hungarian-Ugric genetic relation, and Ármin Vámbéry, who considered Hungarian a 'mixed' language of Ugric and Turkic elements, started around 1870 (see Marcantonio *et al.* 2001; Marácz

the Hungarian loan words of Chuvash type (from Old Turkic) could be accounted for by postulating a 'dummy', that is, a predecessor language of Chuvash, like Proto-Chuvash or Old Chuvash, that would be the source of the sound matches in Hungarian – the common features being, mainly, rhotacism and lambdacism, as discussed,

Note that the starting point of rhotacism in Proto-Turkic could be, in principle, either /r/ or /z/. If we assume Proto-Turkic /r/ as the original sound, this sound would have then developed into Common Turkic /z/ (zetacism), but would have been preserved in Oghur /Chuvash as /r/. The second possibility is to assume an original Proto-Turkic /z/, that developed into Oghur / Chuvash /r/ (rhotacism), and was preserved in Common Turkic as /z/. The latter hypothesis is widely accepted in Turcology, whilst the inclusion of Mongolian lexical affinities into this picture has raised support for the former hypothesis, especially among the proponents of the Altaic theory, that is: Mongolian would be an Altaic language, related with Turkic, that patterns with Oghur / Chuvash within the domain of the isoglosses under discussion. If this were the case, one may well conclude that Chuvash must have been the oldest Turkic variant.

Consider the following examples where Hungarian, Chuvash and Mongolian phonological patterns line up together, as opposed to Common Turkic:

Diagram 5a. Hungarian vs Chuvash vs Mongolian as against Common Turkic (Ligeti 1986: 14)

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'write'	*ír*	*śĭr*	*yaz-*	*ĵiru-*

2012 for further details). Supporters of the Uralic theory consider the Finno-Ugric /Uralic origin of Hungarian as settled since this Ugric-Turkish Battle, although, in reality, the data reported in this regard from both camps are not decisive, as admitted by Budenz himself (see again Marcantonio *et al.* 2001 and Marcantonio 2002: 42). Although Hungarian is classified nowadays as an Uralic language, it contains a statistically significant number of lexical as well as morphological correspondences with Turkic, and, to a lesser extent, Mongolian and Tungusic. There is an impressive academic literature documenting this 'state of the art', including the quoted RT&B dictionary; see also Marcantonio (2016, 2017a & 2017c). The position generally defended in textbooks is that these correspondences between Hungarian and Turkic (/Altaic) cannot be taken as evidence in favour of a Hungarian *vs* Turkic (/Altaic), or 'Ural-Altaic' genetic relation, although no convincing explanation is provided for this – but see again Marcantonio (2014, 2016 & 2017a) for further discussion and a different point of view.

Diagram 5b. Hungarian vs Chuvash vs Mongolian as against Common Turkic (Ligeti 1986: 14)

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'calf'	*borjú*	*păru*	*buzāγu*	*biraγu*

Ligeti (1986: 48-52) argues that if the Altaic language family is rejected altogether, then the correspondences between Turkic and Mongolian must be explained otherwise, that is: the Mongolian borrowing should be assumed to derive from Common Turkic, having nothing to do with Chuvash. In any case, the Mongolian counterparts in the *r* ~ *z* correspondences are comparable to the Hungarian ones in the relevant correspondences. Although the issue of the Turkic borrowing into Mongolian is still unsettled, what seems to be important for Hungarian scholars, like Ligeti, is that the phenomenon of the Mongolian borrowing had nothing to do with that of the Hungarian borrowing: "The period of the Turkish-Mongolian borrowings are not even settled approximately, but they are so old that from the perspective of the Hungarian borrowings it does not matter" (Ligeti 1986: 52; my translation).

Budenz' ideas were taken up as the starting point for further research. Gombocz refined the list of Hungarian *vs* Chuvash phonological and lexical correspondences in his monograph: *Die bulgarisch-türkischen Lehnwörter in der ungarische Sprache* (published in 1912), where he first reported also instances of lambdacism. Once again, much of the research concentrated on the question of which Turkic people the Hungarians had borrowed their loan words from, particularly the 'cultural and environmental' loans words. Gombocz (1912) pointed at the Volga Bulgars, a position also defended by the Hungarian Turcologist Gyula Németh (1921: 205-207), who linked the *r* ~ *z* correspondence to the morphological structure of the names of the peoples themselves (*Oghur*, *Bulgar*, and so on). The time of borrowing would have been the period stretching from the 5th to the 9th century AD, according to both authors. These claims have since been adopted by mainstream linguists working in this field. Thus, basically, the Hungarian loan words from Turkic are assumed to be relatively 'young' within this paradigm. However, due to the existence of complicated phonological patterns and deviations, several older unknown variants of Chuvash must be postulated in order to account for all the relevant correlations.

In the following paragraph, I shall illustrate the phonological and lexical correspondences among Chuvash, Hungarian and Mongolian on the one hand, and Common Turkic on the other hand, in more detail.

3.2. Grouping together the Hungarian vs Chuvash parallels

The Hungarian etymological dictionary TESz identifies 33 safe Old Turkic loan words of the Chuvash type in Hungarian, together with other 9 borrowed elements considered to have, however, an uncertain status. Another 43 cases might also belong to this group, according to Ligeti (1986: 11). Ligeti distinguishes two groups with respect to the Chuvash type of borrowing in Hungarian: in the first group, Chuvash (and its assumed earlier stages) would have preserved older sounds, whereas the second group would reflect innovations on the Chuvash side. The first group of phenomena is presented under (A); and the second group of phenomena under (B), following Ligeti (1986: 14-52).

A. The phenomena illustrated in this group are rhotacism (A1), lambdacism (A2) and the isogloss: Hungarian *vs* Chuvash *vs* Mongolian word initial /š-/ *vs* Common Turkic /s-/, that is, 'sigmacism' (A3). In all these instances, the Chuvash, Hungarian and Mongolian correspondences pattern together, against Common Turkic:

A1. Rhotacism. Ligeti (1986: 14) lists 16 cases of rhotacism; five of these appear both in Chuvash and Mongolian: *borjú* 'calf', *iker* 'twin', *ír* 'write', *ökör* 'ox', and *sár* 'mud'[7]:

Diagram 6a. Hungarian /r/ ~ Chuvash /r/ ~ Common Turkic /z/ ~ Mongolian /r/

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'calf'	*borjú*	*pĕru*	*buzāγu*	*biraγu*
'twin'	*iker*	*yĕker*	*ekiz*	*ikire*
'ox'	*ökör*	*văkăr*	*öküz*	*üker*
'mud'	*sár*	*šur*	*sāz*	*siroi*
'filter'	*szűr*	*sĕr-*, *sör-*	*süz* 'clean'	X

[7] In all the diagrams 'X' indicates lexical gaps.

In the following diagram the Chuvash counterparts are missing. According to Ligeti (1986:15) Chuvash *tüs* is a loan word from Common Turkic:

Diagram 6b. Hungarian /r/ ~ Common Turkic /z/ ~ Mongolian /r/

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'polecat'	*görény*	X	*küzän*	*kürene*
'bald (headed), bare'	*tar*	X	*taz*	*taraqai*
'have patience, endure'	*tűr*	X (*tüs*)	*töz*	*türe-*

In the following cases, the Mongolian counterparts are missing.

Diagram 6c. Hungarian /r/ ~ Chuvash /r/ ~ Common Turkic /z/

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'ring'	*gyűrű*	*śĕrĕ*	*yüzük*	X
'knee'	*térd*	*čĕr*	*tiz /tizik / tīz*	X

The Hungarian body part term *térd* 'knee' has no Uralic counterpart, but has equivalents in Turkic, including Old Turkic *tiz*, Kyrgyz *tizä*, Osman *diz* and Chuvash *čĕr* 'knee'. Despite this being a basic item of the Hungarian vocabulary, TESz (III, 1976: 895) assumes that Hungarian *térd* is a loan word from Old Turkic, more precisely from the Chuvash type of Old Turkic. TESz further assumes that the root *tér-* of *térd* originates from the Chuvash form **tīr* or **tēr*, root to which the Hungarian diminutive suffix *-d* or *-gy* /d'/ would have been attached, once borrowed, yielding *térd*. However, the problem with this analysis is that the assumption of the attachment of a diminutive suffix has no independent evidence, neither are the forms in question documented in older stages of Chuvash; the explanation is therefore *ad-hoc*.

The following diagram displays cases in which both the Chuvash and the Mongolian counterparts are missing. Ligeti (1986:15) claims that Chuvash *tinĕs* and Mongolian *tenggis* are borrowings from Common Turkic:

Diagram 6d. Hungarian /r/ ~ Common Turkic /z/

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'pole'	*karó*	X	*qazuk*	X
'dragon'	*sárkány*	X	*sazaγan*	X
'sea'	*tenger*	X	*täŋiz*	X
'buttermilk'	*író*	X	*yåz* (Tatar)	X

A2. Lambdacism. Lambdacism appears in four cases only, two of which have an uncertain status. There are no Chuvash counterparts for the two safe etymologies, that are based exclusively on Common Turkic; nevertheless, they are referred to as 'Old Turkic loan words of the Chuvash type' (Ligeti 1986: 17). Notice also that only one Mongolian counterpart is attested:

Diagram 7. Hungarian /l/ ~ Common Turkic /š/ ~ Mongolian /l/

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'noon, south'	*dél*	X	*tüš* (Kyrgyz)	*düli* 'middle', half'
'lay down'	*dől, dűl*	X	*tüš-* (Uyghur) 'fall'	X

A3. Sigmacism. Common Turkic initial /s-/ corresponds to Hungarian, Chuvash and Mongolian /š-/ (written *s* in Hungarian), as in *sár*, *sárga* 'white, pale, yellow', *seper*, *söpör* 'sweep, broom', and *sarló* 'sickle'. These words are again referred to as 'Old Turkic loan word of the Chuvash type' (Ligeti 1986: 18). Compare:

Diagram 8. Hungarian /š/ ~ Chuvash /š ~ ś/ ~ Common Turkic /s/ ~ Mongolian /š/

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'yellow, light'	*sárga, sár*	*šurĕ* 'white'	*sariγ* 'yellow, pale'	*šira* 'yellow'
'brush, sweep'	*seper, söpör*	*šăpăr* 'broom'	*sipir-*	*sigür-, ši'ür-*
'sickle'	*sarló*	*śurla*	X	X

Let us now present and discuss the phenomena pertaining to the B group, as anticipated above:

B. The Chuvash variants in the following correspondences are considered as innovation by Ligeti (1986: 13):

1. Proto-Turkic initial /č/ ~ Chuvash /š/ ~ Hungarian /š/ (written *s*), as in *saru* 'shoe /sandal';
2. Proto-Turkic final /k/: in multi-syllable Chuvash words final /-k/ is deleted, whilst in Hungarian it *may* spirantisize into /- γ/, as attested in Old Hungarian documents, such as *A tihanyi apátság alapitólevele* 'the foundation charter of the nunnery of Tihany' (TA; issued in 1055). In this document we find the sound development indicated above, as seen, for example, in the velar fricative of *mene*-h [mëne-γ] 'go-ing', from *men-ni 'to* go'. This velar fricative has subsequently disappeared, causing the lengthening of the preceding vowel, as we can see in the development from Old Hungarian *mene*-h > Modern Hungarian *men-ő 'going'* (ő = /ö:/), the long vowel being indeed the Modern Hungarian form of the present participle suffix (for more detail on these data see Marcantonio[8] (2017c)). The same phenomenon is to be found in many other, similar instances, such as *apró* 'small', *seprő* 'yeast of wine'.
3. Proto-Turkic initial /y-/ ~ Chuvash /ś/ ~ Hungarian three variants: /d'/ (written *gy*), /s/ (written *sz*), and /Ø/, as seen in: *gyertya* 'candle', *szél* 'wind', *ír* 'write', respectively;
4. Proto-Turkic initial /ya-/ ~ Chuvash /ĭ/ ~ Hungarian /i:/ (written í), as in *ír* 'write';
5. Proto-Turkic initial /y-/ ~ Chuvash /ś-/ ~ Hungarian /ń-/ (written as *n*y), as in *nyár* 'summer' and *nyak* 'neck';
6. Proto-Turkic medial and final /d/ ~ Chuvash /r/ ~ Hungarian /d/ and /z/, as in *búza* 'wheat';
7. Proto-Turkic final /-ŋ/ ~ Chuvash /-m/ ~ Hungarian /-m/, as in *gyom* 'weed'.
8. Proto-Turkic first syllable /a/ ~ Chuvash /ĭ/ ~ Hungarian /i/, as in *tinó* 'young bullock, ox'.

These eight types are represented in the following diagrams, respectively:

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[8] I am indebted to Angela Marcantonio for providing me with these data and related comments from her (2017c) article, before its publication.

B1.

Diagram 9. Proto-Turkic initial /č/ ~ Chuvash /š/ ~ Hungarian /š/ (written s)

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'shoe'	*saru*	X	*čaruq*	*čaruχ*

According to TESz (1976, III: 497), Hungarian *saru* is an Old Turkic loan word. The reconstructed Turkic form could be **čaruγ*, **čarïγ*, or could be of the Chuvash-type **šaruγ*, **šarïγ*. The borrowing could have taken place also when there was /-k/ in final position, instead of final /-γ/.

B2.

Diagram 10. Hungarian final /o:, ö:/ (written ó, ő respectively) ~ Common Turkic /k/_

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'small'	*apró*	X	*oprak*	X
'yeast of wine'	*seprő*	*śəpre*	*šeprek*	X

TESz (1967, I: 167) considers *apró* as deriving from Old Turkic, whereby the source could have been **opraγ*. The final spirant has been lost mostly in Hungarian, as mentioned above, yielding a diphthong that then developed into a long vowel. According to TESz (1976, III: 519), *seprő* originates from Old Turkic, for which consider the Kyrgyz cognate *söbrö*. Vámbéry, quoted in Gombocz (1912: 116), refers to the Common Turkic variant with final /-k/, variant that is not given in TESz.

B3.

Diagram 11a. Proto-Turkic initial /y-/ ~ Chuvash /ś-/ ~ Hungarian /d'-/ (written *gy*)

Meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'shredder, slicer; slice'	*gyalu* *gyalul*	X	*yiš-, yiši-* 'slice'	X

[9] Here the capital D refers to phenomenon of the voiced and voiceless alternation (according to context) of the dental plosive in Chuvash (and in Turkic in general).

'ring'	*gyűrű*	*śĕrĕ*	*yüzük* 'ring' (Turkish)	X
'knead'	*gyúr*	*śar*	*yuɣur-*	*ĵiɣura*
'candle'	*gyertya*	*śurDa*[9]	*yarta* 'candle'	X
'bulrush'	*gyékény*	X	*yikän, yekän*	*ĵigesün, ĵegesün*
'belly, stomach'	*gyomor*	X	*yumur* (Osman)	X

Diagram 11b. Proto-Turkic /y-/ ~ Chuvash /ś-/ ~ Hungarian /s-/ (written as *sz*), or Hungarian /š/ (written as *s*)

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'wind'	*szél*	*śil*	*yēl*	X
'sickle'	*sarló*	*śurla*	X	X

Notice that *sarló* 'sickle' has no counterpart in Common Turkic. Ligeti (1986: 24) has to assume that a Proto-Turkic /y-/ had been changed into Ancient or Old Chuvash /ś-/.

Diagram 11c. Proto-Turkic /y-/ ~ Chuvash /ś-/ ~ Hungarian /Ø-/

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'write'	*ír*	*śĭr*	*yaz-*	*ĵiru-*

This diagram equals the one in (5a) above; however, here the focus is on the initial sound correspondence, whilst (5a) demonstrates the Hungarian, Chuvash and Mongolian correspondence (rhotacism), as against Common Turkic.

B4.

Diagram 12. Proto-Turkic /ya/ ~ Chuvash /ĭ-/ ~ initial Hungarian /i:/ (written as í)

Semantic Meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'write'	*ír*	*śĭr*	*yaz-*	*ĵiru-*

B5.

Diagram 13. Proto-Turkic initial /y-/ ~ Chuvash /ś-/ ~ Hungarian /ń-/ (written as *ny*)

Meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'neck'	*nyak*	X	*yaqa* 'collar' (Old Turkic) *jaka* 'collar' (Osman)	X
'summer'	*nyár*	*śur* 'spring'	*jaz* 'spring' (Old Turkic) *jaz* 'summer' (Turkmen)	X

According to TESz (1970, II: 1031), *nyak* (that has no Chuvash counterpart) is of unknown origin. According to the etymological dictionary by Lakó & Rédei (1978, III: 476-477), the origin of Hungarian *nyár* is unclear, whilst, according to TESz (1970, II: 1036), *nyár* is probably of Old Turkic origin, having being borrowed into Hungarian in Uralic times.

B6.

Proto-Turkic medial and word final /-d/ often corresponds in Hungarian and Chuvash to /-d/ or /-t/, and sometimes in Hungarian to /-z/ – note that the stem of all the nouns in diagram (14a) co-occur with suffixes. In diagram (14b), Ligeti argues (1986: 30) that Proto-Turkic /d/ corresponds to Hungarian /z/ in the case of *búza*.

Diagram 14a. Proto-Turkic medial and final /-d/ ~ Chuvash /-t/ ~ Hungarian /-d/

Meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'navel'	*köld-ök*	*kănt-ăr*	*kind-ik*	X
'wise'	*ild-om*	*yăltt-am*	*ïld-am*	*ild-am*
Turkic 'smart'			*yïl-dam*	*jild-am*

Diagram 14b. Proto-Turkic /-d/ ~ Chuvash /-t/ ~ Hungarian /-z/

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'wheat'	*búza*	*pări* 'wheat'[10]	*buɣdai*	X

B7.

Diagram 15. Proto-Turkic final /-ŋ/ ~ Chuvash /-m/ ~ Hungarian /-m/

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'weed'	*gyom*	*śum*, *śăm*	*yoŋ*	X

Proto-Turkic final /-ŋ/ and /-n/ have only a few correspondences in Hungarian and Chuvash; moreover, they are not clear, since Hungarian *gyom* and Chuvash *śum*, *śăm* have no convincing equivalent in Common Turkic. Nevertheless Ligeti (1986: 35) maintains that the Hungarian root word is a borrowing from Old Turkic of the Chuvash type.

B8.

Diagram 16. Proto-Turkic first syllable /a/ ~ Chuvash /i/ ~ Hungarian /i/

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'young bullock, ox'	*tinó*	*tĭna*	*tāna*	X

According to Ligeti (1986: 36-39), Chuvash has no long vowels, in general. Hence, if there is a correspondence with a long vowel in Hungarian, like in *sár* 'mud', the Chuvash counterpart typically displays a short vowel, as in *šur*. This being the case, the question arises: where does the long vowel of the Hungarian counterparts originate from? In order to answer to this question, Ligeti proposes a highly speculative derivation: in earlier stages of Chuvash (including Proto-Turkic) there must have been a long vowel that has been diphthongized in Old Chuvash; these diphthongs would have then been borrowed into Hungarian either as a diphthong or as a long vowel (Ligeti 1986: 37-38). This path of development would be illustrated by the Chuvash and

[10] According to Ligeti (1986: 30) Proto-Turkic /-d/ only remains as /-d/ after /l/, /n/, /r/; otherwise neologisms pop up in Chuvash, such as /r/.

Common Turkic equivalents of Hungarian *kék*: medial /v/ in Chuvash *kăvak* must have been changed first into a glider /y/, and then into a diphthong (Ligeti 1986: 38), before appearing as a long vowel in Hungarian, as shown below:

Diagram 17. 'blue' in Hungarian vs Chuvash vs Common Turkic vs Mongolian

meaning	Hungarian	Chuvash	Common Turkic	Mongolian
'blue'	*kék*	*kăvak*	*kōk*	*küke* 'blue, green'

4. Accounting for the Hungarian vs Chuvash parallels

4.1. Analysing the data

Let us now analyse the set of data presented in the previous section. The first relevant observation to be made is that in the above reported diagrams the Hungarian counterparts are always present, whereas the Turkic (/Altaic) parallels can be missing. The Common Turkic counterparts are only missing in two cases (in A3/8 and in B3/11b), whilst the Chuvash and Mongolian parallels are missing more frequently. In Chuvash the parallels are absent in ten of the cases presented; compare below the number (included within parenthesis) of the missing counterparts, including: in A1/6b (3); in A2 (2); in B1 (1); in B3/11a (3); and in B5 (1). The Mongolian parallel is even more frequently missing, that is, in 23 of the cases presented; compare: A1/6a (1); A1/6c (2); A1/6d (4); A2 (1); A3 (1); B2 (2); B3/11a (4); B3/11b (2); B5 (2); B6 (2); B7 (1); and B8 (1).

Thus, a substantial percentage of the assumed Chuvash parallels are missing. This leads to the anomaly that the forms of Chuvash (or its earlier variants), from which the Hungarian items would have been borrowed, are, in fact, unknown – or, perhaps, they never existed. Hence, an earlier, hypothetical starred form of Chuvash has to be postulated, a form that, in turn, is reconstructed on the basis of the Common Turkic equivalent as well as the Hungarian counterpart – in a clear circular way. This reconstruction is even more problematic when both the Chuvash and Mongolian parallels are missing, like in A1/6d, A2, B2, B3/11a, and B5. Thus, the reconstructed Chuvash forms from which the Hungarian words are supposed to have been borrowed, are highly speculative, as in the following examples: *karó* and *író* (compare A1/6d), *dől*,

dűl (compare A2); *apró* (compare B2); *gyalu*, *gyékény*, *gyomor* (compare B3/11a) and *nyak* and *nyár* (compare B5). The same applies to instances of lambdacism, as presented in A2. When the Chuvash and Mongolian counterparts are missing, obviously, we are left with the Hungarian and Common Turkic correspondences only, so that it cannot be excluded that lambdacism could be accounted for as originating from an old borrowing from Proto-Turkic into Hungarian, or vice versa (still assuming, for the sake of the argument, that 'borrowing' is the correct process here).

Another instance where the (assumed) direction of borrowing from Chuvash runs into problems is B8, that is, Proto-Turkic first syllable /a/ *vs* Chuvash /ĭ/ *vs* Hungarian /i/. In this case it is assumed that the (Old) Chuvash (velar) vowel /ĭ/ originates from Proto-Turkic /*ā ~ a/, another velar vowel, whilst the Hungarian front counterpart /i/ would be derived from (Old) Chuvash velar /ĭ/. However, the Hungarian front vowel /e/ or /i/ also appear in those cases when there is no velar /ĭ/ in (Old) Chuvash, as shown in Hungarian *gyertya ~ gyirtya ~ gyortya vs* Common Turkic *yarta,* but Chuvash *śurDa* ('candle'). Thus, the Hungarian front vowel /e/ or /i/ might derive from more than one source – as is often the case in the process of borrowing.

The hypothesized loan words *karó* and *író* (compare A1/6d), that are missing from Chuvash and Mongolian, support the thesis that rhotacism developed independently in these languages.

It is also interesting to observe that the Hungarian items sometimes have a counterpart only in Chuvash, without any equivalent in Common Turkic, such as Hungarian *sarló* (B3/11b). Variants of this word also appear in some Uralic languages: Votyak (/Udmurt) *śurlo*, Komi-Zyrian *t'śarla* and Cheremis (/Mari) *sarla*, but according to TESz (III: 495), these are loan words originating from Chuvash *śurla*.

Another set of parallels where there is only a Hungarian *vs* Chuvash lexical correspondence is Hungarian *disznó* 'pig, swine', and its Chuvash equivalent *sĭsna*. In all these cases it is completely unclear what the 'Chuvash type of Old Turkic loan word' in Hungarian might mean, since there is no 'type' available other than the Chuvash one. The Chuvash counterparts of *sarló* and *disznó* could be very well loan words from (Old) Hungarian into (Old) Chuvash.

In addition to the anomalies and asymmetries that show up if we assume a borrowing model in which Hungarian is always the recipient and Chuvash (or one of its earlier variants) always the donor language, there is another pressing reason why this conventional model is highly

questionable. There is no solid explanation able to account for the quick transformations of Chuvash in the light of the slow pace of the dissolution and development of the other Turkic languages. It has to be assumed that, for some reason, the earlier stages of Chuvash (Ancient, Old, Volga Bulgar and Proto-Bulgar) have been changing very quickly between the 5th and the 9th century AD. The dissolution of the Turkic languages is however a relatively recent phenomenon, because these languages, apart from Chuvash, are mutually intelligible. This clearly shows that the whole 'Chuvash-complex' model embraced in mainstream linguistics is conceptually misguided.

4.2. Mainstream vs alternative interpretations

4.2.1. According to traditional, mainstream interpretation, the Hungarian *vs* Turkic (/Altaic) phonological / lexical correspondences, and related isoglosses, as discussed above (rhotacism in Chuvash, Hungarian and Mongolian, *contra* zetacism in Common Turkic, etc.), are *always* the result of borrowing, whereby Hungarian is *always* the recipient language and Old Turkic the donor language, rather than vice versa (this interpretation being re-proposed recently, for example, in Bence (2014)). However, on the basis of the data and arguments presented above, this explanation does not appear to stand up to scrutiny. As a matter of fact, the most pressing argument in support of the conventional interpretation is that Hungarian has been classified as a Uralic language, whose core, ancient vocabulary 'must' be, therefore, of Uralic origin. Consequently, any other non-Uralic correspondence within the basic lexicon 'must' necessarily be an instance of borrowing into Hungarian. The other option, namely that it is Hungarian – or its earlier variants – that is functioning as the donor language in these cases, is not even taken into consideration. However, there is strong, empirical evidence that rhotacism in Hungarian cannot originate from Chuvash (or its older variants), because rhotacism in Chuvash is a late development, going back only to the 11th century AD. This has been convincingly argued for by the German Turcologist Johannes Benzing in his article: *Die angeblichen bolgartürkischen Lehnwörter im Ungarischen (1942)*, as discussed below.

4.2.2. The first established records of the Turkic languages are the Orkhon inscriptions, by the Kök Türks, dating from the 8th century. These runic inscriptions were discovered in 1889 in the Orkhon Valley,

in Mongolia. Another important source of the Turkic languages is *The Compendium of the Turkic Dialects,* originally written in Arabic *(Divânü Lügati't-Türk*), in the second half of the 11th century (c.1072-74 AD), by the Uyghur scholar Mahmud al-Kashgari. *The Compendium* is the first, early account of the Turkic language family in the form of a comprehensive dictionary, pertaining mainly to the south western branches of Turkic. *The Compendium* was indeed meant for use by the Caliphs of Bagdad, the new Arabic allies of the Turks. The Al-Kashgari's dictionary also includes the first known map of the areas inhabited by Turkic speaking peoples. Benzing (1942: 25) considers Mahmud al-Kashgari's dictionary as the 'witness' of the fact that rhotacism in Chuvash cannot have occurred before the 11th century. His argument goes as follows. First, Chuvash /z/ and its Turkic correspondent /z/ have both been derived simultaneously from Proto-Turkic /δ/. Mahmud al-Kashgari demonstrates that Bulgar, the hypothesized ancient form of Chuvash, still possesses the /z/ sound. There is no record or report about any sound change from /z/ to /r/, this being documented only since 1230, in the Russian chronicle *Trunowe*. Next to the Hungarian loan words supposedly demonstrating the sound change /z/ > /r/, like in Hungarian *ökör* 'ox', we also find the hypothesized sound change Proto-Turkic */đ/ > /z/, like in Hungarian *búza* 'wheat'. Benzing (1942: 26) proposes the following derivation: Proto-Turkic **būđaj* or **buđ*[*q*]*aj* > Early Bulgar **buzaj* > Late Bulgar **buraj* > Chuvash *pări* 'dinkel wheat'. If this is the derivation, then Hungarian /z/ could only originate from Early Bulgar, whilst a borrowing from Chuvash itself must be excluded, because this would yield the wrong result. Second, another important item of evidence for the dating of the assumed borrowing is the following sound change: Common Turkic /(y)a/ > Chuvash /ĭ ~ i/, as in Common Turkic *yaz-* 'write', corresponding to Chuvash *śĭr*, in turn derived from reconstructed proto-Bulgar **jĭr*. This lexical item could have been the form borrowed by Hungarian, resulting in *ír* 'write'. Certain Arabic loan words in Chuvash also participate in the same sound change /(y)a/ > Chuvash /ĭ ~ i/. On the basis of this, Benzing claims that the sound change in question cannot have taken place before the 10th century, the period of Islamization of the Volga Bulgar area. Moreover Mahmud al-Kashgari's examples relating to this change still contain the /a/. This is the case in Suvar, one of the Oghur languages closely related to Chuvash, where we find *bal* 'honey', and not its nowadays Chuvash variant *pyl* 'honey'. Benzing (1942: 27) concludes his argumentation as follows:

Da wir nach den obigen Darlegungen allen Grund zur Annahme haben, daβ der Wandel z > r und a > y(i) im Bolgarischen nicht vor dem XI. Jahrhundert erfolgt ist, können die Ungarn die bisher für bolgarischen gehaltenen Lehnwörter keinesfalls von den Bolgaren übernommen haben, denn um diese Zeit hatten sie keine Berührung mehr mit den Bolgaren. Von *búza* 'Weizent' wird man annehmen können, daβ es ein altes Lehnwort ist; die Wörter mit dem Lautwandel z > r müssen jünger sein und sind wohl erst nach der Landnahme zu den Ungarn gekommen

Thus, Benzing' research (*ibidem*), together with the work by Mahmud al-Kashgari, convincingly demonstrates that the Hungarian vs Chuvash lexical affinities cannot be the result of Bulgar Turkic loan words into Hungarian, borrowed before 1073 AD. A similar conclusion has been reached also by Ramstedt (1957), who argues that the initial Proto-Turkic /*y-/ corresponds to Common Turkic /y-/ and Chuvash /ś- ~ s-/. However, Ramstedt (*ibidem*) concludes that the sound change /y-/ > /ś-/ is not older than the 13th century. This in turn calls into question the claim put forward by Gombocz (1912: 121) that cases such as Hungarian *szél* (see B3/11b) are derived from Chuvash, or its earlier variants. If Hungarian had borrowed directly from Proto-Turkic words with /*y-/, we would run into a problem of predictability, because initial Proto-Turkic /*y-/ may correspond to various sounds in Hungarian: /d'/ (compare B3/11a), /s/ ~ /š/ (compare B3/11b), /Ø-/ (compare B3/11c) and /ń-/ (see B5/13). In sum, apart from the fact that the data, as documented in (Old) Chuvash, are not able to yield the expected form in Hungarian (according to the conventional model), the conventional system of sound correspondences runs into a number of serious anomalies and asymmetries. This shows that the whole chain of hypotheses associated with the concept of the presence of Old Turkic loan words of the Chuvash type in Hungarian is wanting.

Hungarian could have not borrowed the words of the Chuvash type after 1073 AD either, because at that time they would have left the Volga Region since about two centuries. It is also extremely unlikely that the Pechenegs or the Cumans would have brought the Old Turkic loan words of Chuvash type after 1073 AD to the Carpathian Basin – where the Hungarians had settled in the 9th century – as suggested by Benzing. This is because both the Pecheneg and Cuman are Shaz Turkic languages, and by no means Lir Turkic, Oghur languages. This being the case, the only solid, alternative explanation for the Hungarian *vs*

Chuvash phonological and lexical affinities is that it is the Hungarian substrate which is responsible for the (A) group of correspondences between Hungarian and Chuvash, at least for the cases in A1 and A3 (A2 is unclear, because the Chuvash equivalents are unknown). Menges (1968: 99) draws a similar conclusion, with the difference that, in his opinion, the Hunnic language is the major player in this context:

> …we may well say that Chuvash with its *r* and *l* in place of Turkic *z* and *š* – the only consistent and truly regular feature in the phonology of Chuvash – stands completely apart from the Turkic group and in line with Mongolian and Tungus. Thus, this particular feature is best to be supposed as one of the more significant criteria for a strong, basically non-Turkic stratum in Chuvash and Proto-Bulgarian, which is to be identified with the Hunnic ethnic and linguistic element in the Proto-Bulgarian complex. The conclusion might be drawn that Hunnic was not Turkic, but another Altajic language which was, in this respect at least, most closely related with Mongolian and Tungus

5. An agenda for further research

5.1. In the previous paragraphs I have presented (relatively) systematic and regular lexical parallels between Turkic and Hungarian – parallels mainly of the Lir Turkic, and not of the Shaz Turkic type. As discussed, these parallels are conventionally accounted for by claiming that they are (all) the effect of borrowing into Hungarian, and from Lir Turkic only. In turn, this claim relies on the postulation of the existence of a WOT branch within the Turkic family. It is sometimes also assumed that West Turkic represents the oldest Turkic variant, due to its correspondences with Mongolian[11], if the latter is considered to be related to Turkic within the framework of the Altaic language family.

However, I have argued that these claims are untenable. There are, in fact, clear cut data on the basis of which it can be argued that it is Hungarian the donor language (assuming, for the sake of the argument, that

[11] As shown in the text, Mongolian patterns with the Lir-variant too. Ligeti does not offer a convincing explanation for this, but rules out the possibility that these variants had anything to do with Hungarian (Ligeti 1986: 52). Hungarian is sometimes missing within this pattern, as in Old Turkic *toquz* vs Chuvash *tăχăr 'nine'*. It is reasonable to assume that these cases are instances of borrowings between Common Turkic and Chuvash, probably due to the 'Kipchakization' of Chuvash.

we are indeed dealing with borrowing[12]), triggering the Lir-isogloss in Chuvash. First, the time frame of the borrowing of the Lir-variant suggests that Chuvash cannot be the donor, as clearly argued for in Benzing (1942). Second, if we look at the Lir correspondences among Chuvash, Mongolian and Hungarian, we observe that the Hungarian counterparts are always available, whilst the Chuvash and Mongolian patterns are often incomplete. As a matter of fact, the conventional model has to rely on the establishment of 'reconstructed' forms for the missing parallels, and not on 'attested' forms, of course. In contrast, the thesis that it is Hungarian the language that functions as a substrate and donor language, does not encounter these difficulties. This being the case, there is no evidence for assuming that the direction of borrowing is from a Chuvash type of source into Hungarian.

At this point it is worth observing that the alternative explanation put forward here appears to be supported also by a socio-linguistic considerations. Németh (1991) argues for the existence of a *Sprachbund* in the area of the Volga Bends, pointing out that the exceptional position of Chuvash within the Turkic family is due to the mixing of Hungarian, Cheremis (/Mari), a Uralic language, and Kipchak Turkic, whereby the Hungarian substrate would have been particularly prominent. This being quite a plausible scenario, there is no need either for a WOT branch (as postulated by RT&B), or 'a dummy Bulgar Turkic category', that would be responsible for the Lir-effect in Hungarian. This conclusion ties in with the conclusion reached by Menges (1968: 99), although Menges assumes that the substrate in question is mainly of Hunnic origin, as discussed above.

5.2. The model of explanation proposed here, despite accounting for the relevant data in a more coherent and systematic way with respect to the conventional model, runs nevertheless into some anomalies that have to be accounted for through further research. First, consider the following two quotes by Marcantonio (2014:16 & foot note (34), respectively) on the topic of the Hungarian *vs* Turkic correspondences:

[12] The possibility that we are not dealing here with the process of borrowing, or, perhaps, not with 'borrowing only', but, rather, with a mixture of processes – borrowing, inheritance, share drifts, etc., as is typically the case in languages sharing many correlations – cannot be excluded a priori. However, this line of research cannot be pursued in this short essay.

It is certainly true that several of them [Hungarian vs Chuvash parallels] do indeed present phonological features that are characteristic of the West Turkic, Bulgharic languages, the so-called 'rhotacism' and 'lambdacism' isogloss, that is, the occurrence in Hungarian and (essentially) Chuvash (as well as, at times, Mongolian) of *r* and *l* as against the occurrence of *z* and *š* in all the other Turkic ('Common Turkic') languages, respectively […]. However, there are plenty of relevant words or suffixes that, obviously, do not contain these sounds, or any other 'Chuvash criteria', so to say, and therefore it is not always possible to apply them for assessing the presumed Bulgharic nature of the loan word in question. This is also at times recognized in the specialistic literature; see for example Zimonyi (2012: 84 ff.) and Ligeti (1986: 36-48). Even Róna-Tas & Berta (2011) – who, as we have seen, 'always' reconstruct a West Old Turkic /Bulgharic form for the listed Turkic loan words of their dictionary – report 268 loan words that display no relevant criteria, as against 199 loan words that display Chuvash criteria. Not to count that the rhotacism and lambdacism isogloss, like any other phonetic /phonological (or any other type of) process in languages, are not always implemented regularly.

Rhotacism and lambdacism, however, do not always materialize (as one would expect). For example, Chuvash *r* may also correspond to Common Turkic *r*, as in *yur* vs *qār* 'snow' respectively; Chuvash *l* may also correspond to Common Turkic *l*, as in *śul* vs *yōl* 'way', respectively[13].

Thus, the Hungarian *vs* Common Turkic correspondences that do not display the rhotacism or lambdacism isoglosses need to be accounted for in any case, independently of the postulation of the WOT branch. As a matter of fact (as the careful reader will easily realize) RT&B, despite arguing strongly in favour of the existence of the WOT *vs* EOT branch division (in line with conventional interpretation), list data that are clearly in contradiction with their own classification, as it emerges from what follows:

- for each single Hungarian word of Turkic origin listed in their dictionary, RT&B propose a 'WOT reconstruction', from which the Hungarian term would have been borrowed; however, scrupulously, the authors also report (plenty of) the actual, attested parallel forms from EOT languages;

[13] Note however that these cases are few in number, so that fairly recent borrowings is the first hypothesis that comes to mind. 'Kipchakization' of Chuvash in these cases is a reasonable starting point for further research.

- from these attested EOT forms it comes up evident that almost all (if not all) of the reconstructed WOT forms are (very) similar or identical to the attested EOT ones (as already pointed out in the first quote by Marcantonio reported above) – this being the case also when the Lir *vs* Shaz alternations do actually materialize (as in *gyűrű* vs *yüzük*, *ökör* vs *öküz*, etc.).

This being the state of the art, the postulation of the WOT branch – the branch that would have been the 'only source' of the borrowing – however much drawing from a well established, high-level tradition of Hungaro-Turkic research, is, actually, superfluous (as already pointed out by Marcantonio (2014)). Even if the conventional empirical model did account for the data satisfactorily, one must bear in mind that the model itself is fraught with a major shortcoming at the theoretical level: the process of borrowing is, typically, the end result of an often long and messy process of contact and interference among real peoples, speaking real languages, and not the result of contact and interference among theoretical, abstract forms created by linguists – forms that are then supposed to have been borrowed in an orderly and systematic manner (see Marcantonio 2017b).

6. Conclusion

The data and arguments presented in this article strongly suggest the postulation of a Central Asian *Sprachbund*, that includes Old Hungarian, Old Turkic, Mongolian, etc. (in Marcantonio (2014) and Marácz (2015) plausible variants of this basic scenario have been put forward; see also Marácz 2017). This model[14] appears to offer adequate explanation for the following phenomena, as observed above: a) the existence of minimal, Hungarian *vs* Common Turkic pairs only, the Chuvash and /or Mongolian counterparts being often missing; b) the close similarity of the Hungarian words of Turkic origin to their Common Turkic parallel – even when a Chuvash corresponding form is actually attested;

[14] Notice that the claim made here regarding the existence of a Central Asian *Sprachbund* that would include also the early Magyars are at odds with the conclusion reached by B. Obrusánszky in this volume, according to whom "there are no ancient historical sources, archaeological findings or ethnographic traces that prove, or even just refer to, the existence of (part of) the Hungarians in Western Siberia, or the Middle Volga regions".

c) the fact that Hungarian lines up with Mongolian when the rhotacism and lambdacism alternations occur. Last, but not least, *the claim put forward here that the r ~ z isogloss is a wide spread, Central Asian Sprachbund* isogloss, can also account for the final /-r/ in the root of the numeral 'hundred', as attested in Tundra Nenets, a Samoyedic language. The reconstructed proto-Samoyedic form is **yür* (see Róna-Tas & Berta 2011, II: 1113). Within the framework proposed here, there is no need to assume that the Samoyedic form with final /-r/ has been borrowed from Old Chuvash, assumption that, in turn, presupposes an undocumented migration of the ancestors of the Chuvash people westwards, as Erdal (1993: 162) claims:

> Es scheint alles für die Hypothese zu sprechen, daß Sprecher des Urwolgabolgarischen in Südsiberien weilten, bevor sie in das Kaukasusgebiet gelangten. Dort dürften sie sowohl die Samojeden getroffen als auch den Mongolen zahlreiche lexikalische und grammatikalische Elemente übermittelte haben

Whatever the case, I shall leave an in-depth elaboration of this 'Central Asian *Sprachbund* puzzle' for future research.

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This volume contains the Proceedings of the 'Uralic Studies' Seminar: *The State of the Art of Uralic Studies: Tradition vs Innovation*, held in Padua (Italy), November 12-13, 2016. The seminar was organized by the Department of 'Studi Linguistici e Letterari' of Padua University and the 'Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia' of Sapienza University of Rome. The aim of the seminar, and of this volume, was/is to bring together linguists working on the Uralic languages from different perspectives, with the purpose of increasing the exchange of ideas and fostering mutual influences on each other field and methods of analysis. In addition to presenting the current 'state of the art of Uralic studies' – for specialists, general linguists and general public – the volume also addresses some issues related to the so-called 'Ural-Altaic theory', nowadays often referred to as the 'Ural-Altaic linguistic belt, unique typological belt'. The contributors to the volume are renown scholars of Uralic, and also Altaic languages, from various European universities, such as Moscow, Helsinki, Paris, Budapest etc.

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