

REMNANTS OF THEOPHORIC NAMES IN TURKIC NAME GIVING

by

Prof. Dr. L. RÁSONYI (Budapest)

In my study entitled "The Psychology and Categories of Name Giving Among the Turkish Peoples" (Hungaro - Turcica, Budapest 1976, pp. 207-223) I divided Turkic personal names into six major groups, and within these groups further 14 categories of men's names and a couple of women's names were distinguished.

A very important semantic category of Turkic names is that of the theophoric names. In my *Onomasticon Turcicum* in preparation, more than sixty data are collected from different ages and different Turkic peoples for the name *Tāngri - berdi* "God - given" (in their corresponding forms), partly they are names of historical persons. The name of "God" could be substituted by different words, thus e. g. *Ogan - berdi* (A. v. Le Coq, *Türkische Namen in Indien: Garbe-Festgabe*, 1927), in the Islamic cultural sphere *Allah - virđi* (Abramzon, *Roždenie kirgizskogo rebenka: Sbornik Muzeja Antropologii i Étnografii XII*, 1949, p. 107) and *Quday - berdi* (Abramzon, 1. c.). The latter two names served as basis for Russian patronymika such as *Allahberdiev* (ein Chivaer in 1793: A. f. w. K. v. R. XVIII, p. 352), *Quday - Berdiev* (Turkmen name in 1880: Grodekov, *Vojna IV. Priloženie*, p. 39). The name *Tāngri - berdi* itself has a variant *Tagrıbirdi* on Arabic soil, e. g. the great historian of the Mamelukes was called Abul Mahasin Ibn *Tagrıbirdi* (1411-1469). In the Arabic chronicle of this Ibn Tagrıbirdi, in the period between 1441 and 1469, sixteen such names are registered, and the same abundance of data is characteristic of another famous Mameluke historian Ibn Iyyās (1448-1528).

God can be also an indirect cause of conception: this view is reflected in names like *Džjan - berdi* "(the divine) Soul - given". E. g. 1496/7: *Džjan - berdi* (Ibn Iyyās II, pp. 322, 353; III, p. 212); another *Džjan - berdi* from 1517 is the governor of Syria (Ibn Iyyās II, pp. 354-395; III, pp. 3, 338); 1543: yürük *Baba Džjan - berdi* (T. Gök-

bilgin, Rumeli, p. 175). Probably two Old Uyghur names can be divided into this category of names: 762: *Kün birmiŝ t(a)rhan* "Sun-given governor" (F. W. K. Müller, *Zwei Pfahlschriften aus den Turfanfunden*, p. 23); *Kün birmiŝ sängün* "Sun-given general" (W. Radloff, *Uigurische Sprachdenkmäler*, p. 52).

The inclusion of the above two Old Uyghur names can be corroborated by the analogy a passage of the Secret History of the Mongols (§ 21): Alan - koa was made pregnant by a mythical man who descended to the yurt through the light-releasing hole in a beam of light. In the background of Turkic totemism a similar psychological phenomenon can be observed which will be treated further below in connection with the Turkic name *Almiŝ*.

The verbal form praeteritum definitum in the name *Tängri-berdi* can be substituted with the form praeteritum indefinitivum even in case of the same name, e. g. the name of a Mameluke occurs both as *Tängri-berdi* and *Tängri-bermiŝ*.

The theophoric names are represented in great abundance among the Turkic peoples, probably they are more usual than among the Indoeuropean peoples. In this connection let me refer to R. Kleinpaul (*Die deutschen Personennamen: Sammlung Göschen*, 1909, p. 13): "... die Kinder werden als Geschenke Gottes angesehen... Kinder sind eine Gabe des Herrn und Leibesfrucht ist ein Geschenk, heisst es in Psalmen, ... *Theodor* besagt dasselbe im Griechischen: Gottes Gabe oder Gottes Geschenk ($\delta\omega\phi\omicron\nu$)... Eine Übersetzung ins Lateinische ist *Deusdedit* und *Deodatus*, eine ins Italienische: *Diodati*, eine ins Französische: *Dieudonné*, eine ins Sanskrit: *Devadatta*...".

Now let us turn to the subject proper of the present article. In 1976 I failed to define a category of names in precise terms, though this group is represented by numerous names. There are Turkic names containing only the verbal part of the theophoric names. Especially three verbs occur in this case: 1. "to give": *Berdi* ~ *Verdi* ~ *Virdi*; *Bermiŝ* ~ *Vermiŝ*, 2. "to get, take": *Aldi* ~ *Almiŝ*, 3. "to be, become": *Bolmuŝ*. The latter two verbs evidently refer to the lacking ablative form of God's name: "taken from God", "become from God". All these Turkic names can rightly be regarded as remnants of theophoric names. There are analogous names in Slavic name

giving: *Bog(u)dan*, *Bogdan* "God - given" and *Dan* "gift, present" (F. Miklosich, *Die Bildung der slawischen Personen - und Ortsnamen*, Heidelberg 1927, pp. 33, 54).

The most common name of the above type in Turkic is *Berdi*. In my *Onomasticon Turcicum* approximately 240 *Berdi* names are registered from different ages and peoples. Because of lack of space it is impossible to enumerate all these names, I shall mention only the Hungarian family name *Berde* living among the Székelys in Transylvania. It was borrowed from a 11th - century Kipchak Turkic dialect, probably that of the Pechenegs into the Hungarian. As for the Hungarian *Berdi* > *Berde* development, see *Etil* (in Greek Ἐτίλας) > Hung. *Etel*; *Sebin* (in Greek Σαβίνος) "an early frontier town of Transsylvania having Onogur origin" > Hung. *Szeben* (now Sibiu in Rumania).

For the name *Bermiş*, in contrast with *Tängri - bermiş* and other composite forms, there are only a few names attested. E. g. the name of a Mameluke in 1366/67 *Bermiş* (Ibn Iyyâs I, p. 220). There is a Turkish village in Anatolia in Amasya ili called *Vermiş* (Türkiye Mülki İdare Bölümleri ve Belediyeler, Ankara 1970, p. 61). This is evidently a place name having its origin in a personal name *Vermiş* displaying a clear Oguz character.

The verbal form *Bolmuş* "(he who) became" can be found in the Orkhon inscriptions, as part of the attribute of Bilgä qagan's name: *Tängritäg Tängridä Bolmuş Türk Bilgä qagan* "the Heaven-like and Heaven - born Turkish Bilgä qagan" (I S 1: W. Thomsen, *Inscriptions de l'Orkhon déchiffrées*, Helsingfors 1896, p. 114). In Old Uyghur from 762: *Tängridä Bulmiş inal* "prince descended from God" (F. W. K. Müller, *Zwei Pfahlschriften*, p. 23). There are some further data in Old Turkic. In Radloff's *Uigurische Sprachdenkmäler* (p. 270) the name *Bumliš* occurs several times. Here we have to do with the participle of the verb *bul-* "to get". The meaning of this verb *bul-* may lead us to names formed of the verb *al-* "to get, to take". The most common form is that of the praeteritum definitum, e. g.: *Aldi* (Radloff, *Proben I/1*, p. 93), Tat. *Aldi*, *Aldi - bay* (Magnickij, p. 26); Kazak *Aldi - bay* (name of four persons in Rumjancev, *Materialy po obsledovaniju tuzemnogo i russkogo starozil'českogo chozjajstva i zemlepol'zovanija v Semirečenskoj oblasti*, Džarkentskij

uezd, pp. 88, 150; Kopalskij uezd, p. 204), *Aldim - bay* (form in 1st P. Sg.: Džark. uezd, p. 52), *Aldi* (Akmolinsk. obl., Atbasarsk. uezd), *Aldike* (Džark. uezd, p. 12, Akmolinsk. obl., Petropavl. uezd, p. 90), *Aldikey* (AOP 2, Vernensk. uezd, p. 114), *Aldi Girey* in Caucasus (Dopolnenija k Aktam istoričeskim XII, p. 273), 1708: *Aldi Girey* (Materialy po Ist. Kazak, p. 157), 1693: *Aldi Girey* (Akty ist. V, p. 403), 1594/95: knjaz' *Aldikova* Asanova (Lit. Tat. III, p. 210), *Aldik* (1st P. Pl.: Akmolinsk. obl., Atbasarsk. uezd, p. 30), *Aldi Er* Kirgiz tribal chief (A. Temir, Mong. Gizli Tarihi, p. 239).

Last but not least let us turn to the name *Almiš*. Two significant historical persons bore this name. The one is *Álmos* (read: *Ālmoš*), father of *Árpád* who conquered the Carpathian Basin in 895/96 A. D., the first prince known by name in the line of the Hungarian kings. It was L. Ligeti who made the theophoric origin of this name probable (Magyar Nyelv 1978, pp. 258-274). He proved that the Hungarian name *Álmos* (*Almuš* in the 12th-century Hungarian *Gesta Ungarorum*) cannot be derived from Hungarian *álm* (read: *ālm*) "dream" as proposed by Anonymus' folk-etymology, but it must come from a Turkic *Almiš*. Old Hungarian *Almuš* is a regular equivalent of Turkic *Almiš*. It must be borne in mind that the figure of *Álmos* is an organic part of the Turul legend in Anonymus' *Gesta*: "... Vgek ... qui duxit sibi uxorem in Dentumoger filiam Eunedubeliani ducis, nomine Emesu, de qua genuit filium, qui agnominatus est Almus. Sed ab eventu divino est nominatus Almus, quia matri eius pregnantanti per sompnum apparuit divina visio in forma asturis, que quasi veniens eam gravidavit et innotuit ei,..." (Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum I, Budapestini 1937, p. 38). In translation: "Ügyek ... who married the daughter of prince Eunedbelia, called Emesü, in Dentümogyer. From her he begot his son who was called Álmos. But he was called Álmos owing to a divine event, as a divine vision in the form of a falcon appeared to his pregnant mother in her dream, and as if descending upon her it made her pregnant".

The legendary falcon whose old Hungarian name was *turul* (< Turkic *togrul*) must be regarded as a totem or ongun. In the above passage of the chronicle it is the means of the divine conception. Consequently the Turkic name *Almiš* (> Hung. *Álmos*) must

be interpreted as remnant of a theophoric name meaning "taken /received from God". Sometimes the onguns took over the function of a *tamga/damga*, i. e. tribal badge. The word *damga* has a more general meaning "stamp", consequently not every ongun became *damga*. *Damgas* were stamped on the animals of the nomadic Turkic tribes to make distinction possible between the livestock of different tribes. Sometimes the tribal *damgas* were minted on coins, as e. g. the *damga* of the Qayī tribe or that of the Salgurides (two vertical lines, with an arrow-head on the second one). The *damga* of the Aq - qoyunlu tribe was represented on coins, stamps of documents and on flags (Faruk Sümer, *Oğuzlar*, Ankara 1972, pp. 206-207). In Rašideddīn, the 24 Oghuz tribes have different onguns and different *damgas*. Kāšgari enumerated 22 *damgas* of the Oghuz tribes (ed. Besim Atalay, I, pp. 55-58).

In Mameluke Egypt, where the Mameluke layer was preponderantly of Tatar - Cuman origin, the ongun animals became a constant element of coats - of - arms, as e. g. the *sonkur* "falcon", the *Aq - quš* "white bird": in the Near East "a sort of falcon", in Inner Asia "swan", the *Aq - buga* "white bull", etc. (see E. G. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, London 1932).

The old Hungarian ongun *turul* "falcon" also became a coat-of - arms, first that of the kings of the Árpád house, then that of the Hungarians in general.

More than a generation later than Árpád's father Álmos lived, the prince of the Volga Bulgars was called *Almīš*. His name is mentioned by the Arabic traveller Ibn Faḍlān in 922 A. D. Ibn Faḍlān's report was taken over by Ibn Rusta, then by the Persian Gardīzī in a distorted form (see Barthold: *Enzyklopädie des Islam* I, p. 820). Although it is a Bulghar name in question, the *š* sound is not represented by *l* typical for Bulghar, because lambdacism was not prevalent in the Bulghar (here Onogur) language at that time.

There are several later data for *Almīš* in the Turkic languages, let me quote some of them:

Tatar *Almīšev* from 1724 (with the Russian *-ev* suffix forming patronymika *Materialy po istorii Baškirii* III, p. 277), Tatar *Almīš* (Magnickij); Kazak *Almes - Batır*, a leader of the Botbay sub - group (Tynyšpaev, *Materialy*, p. 65), *Almīš* (Rumjancev, *Materialy*, Džar-

kendskij uezd, p. 50), *Almes* (Rumjancev, Materialy, Kopalskij uezd, p. 218; Vernenskij uezd, p. 114); Telengit *Almiš* čudovišče (Kalačev: Živaja Starina VI, p. 499); Alt. *Almiš-han* (Nikiforov, pp. 36, 212); Turkmen *Almiš* (Materialy po istorii Turkmenii I, p. 163).

What I wrote in my article, mentioned at the beginning of this paper, concerning the personal names of the Mamelukes can well be applied to some theophoric names and their remnants respectively. In giving the latter names to persons the impact of fashionable Mameluke names must have been significant. This holds true especially for names such as *Tängri - berdi* and *Berdi*.