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**Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna (1844–1913)
and Władysław Kotwicz (1872–1944) on the Kalmyk Language**

Abstract

Being a philologist in the field of Mongolian studies and a participant of the conference organised in honour of Władysław Kotwicz, one of the world's best known researchers of Mongolian languages and their context in the Altaic hypothesis, in the present article I attempt to provide an overview of one of Kotwicz's major works on Kalmyk grammar, compared with the work of Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna, unfortunately a less known Hungarian student of Mongolian and many other Asian and European languages. Both scholars have great merits in the early fieldwork-based linguistic research among the Mongols. Below I am going to introduce Bálint's work on the grammar of spoken Kalmyk in line with Kotwicz's well-known work with the aim to compare their fieldwork methods, the international philological environment both grammars were composed in, and to demonstrate the afterlife of their heritage concerning the studies on the Kalmyk language.

Keywords: Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna, Władysław Kotwicz, Kalmyk language, fieldwork, grammatical gender

Brief remarks on the Kalmyks¹

The Kalmyks are the westernmost Mongols, the only Mongolian ethnic group living in Europe. The Kalmyks are descendants of the Oirats [or Oirad]² who migrated from Turkestan to their contemporary homeland along the Lower Volga. Placed in an environment of Turkic speaking people and later among a Russian majority, Kalmyk

¹ On the Kalmyk history and culture, cf. e.g. Schorkowitz 1992, Bakaeva-Zhukovskaya 2010, Birtalan 2011.

² Survey of the literature on the Oirats, cf. Birtalan 2003, Birtalan 2012. The author's research concerning the Oirats is supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (No. 100613).

culture and language³ changed considerably during the 17th–20th centuries and became very peculiar compared to other Mongolian ethnic groups. Owing to their relative closeness to the Centre of Tsarist Russia and the fact that their homeland chosen in the early 17th century west of the Caspian Sea was located at the crossroads towards Siberia and Inner and Central Asia, numerous travellers, researchers and missionaries visited the Kalmyks. Detailed travelogues including valuable data on their history, ethnography and religions were published contemporaneously in the 18th–19th centuries (e.g. Pallas,⁴ Bergmann,⁵ Potocki,⁶ Nebol'sin⁷ etc.) and later reissued (e.g. series of memoirs brought out by Krueger⁸ etc.).

Research on the Kalmyk language and grammar

The above mentioned accounts and travelogues include a good number of Kalmyk lexemes and also phrases and other sporadic data on the Kalmyk language, but they lack larger text corpuses or systematic grammatical references. The language of the Kalmyks, however, attracted scholarly attention earlier, too. Grammars or outlines of grammars of Written Oirat contain data on the spoken Kalmyk tongue, e.g. by Popov and Bobrovnikov.⁹ The synchrony of Kalmyk was discussed in detail by the Turkologist-Mongolist Uwe Bläsing, one of the co-authors of the most comprehensive reference book on Mongolian languages and dialects entitled *Mongolic languages* and edited by Juha Janhunen.¹⁰ Bläsing listed available studies in all fields of the Kalmyk language. According to his survey, Kotwicz can be considered the starting point of systematised grammatical studies of spoken Kalmyk, followed later by a series of scholars, thanks to whom Kalmyk became a fairly well documented language.¹¹ The process of composing a Kalmyk grammar was also motivated by comparative linguistics, since the so-called Altaic phenomenon became decisive in the studies of North-Eurasian languages. Separation of its speakers from the main body of Mongols and living surrounded by foreigners, i.e. Turkic and Russian majorities, resulted in relicts of an earlier stage of language development. Besides, Kalmyk became influenced considerably by the new language environment. It is not surprising that these peculiarities of the spoken idiom attracted attention of many scholars. The milestones of studying the Kalmyk spoken tongue based on the fieldwork of their authors are the systematised Kalmyk (and Khalkha) grammars

³ Recent survey on the Kalmyk language: Bläsing 2003.

⁴ Pallas 1772, 1801.

⁵ Bergmann 1804, 1805.

⁶ Potocki 1829.

⁷ Nebol'sin 1852.

⁸ E.g. Kaarsberg 1996, Schnitscher 1996 etc. edited by Krueger.

⁹ Popov 1847, Bobrovnikov 1849.

¹⁰ Bläsing 2003, pp. 229–247.

¹¹ Examining the grammars written after Kotwicz's work is beyond the scope of the present study; the list of the authors and their works is included in Benzing's (1985) survey and in Bläsing's (2003) article.

of Bálint (the 1870s) and Kotwicz (1915/1929), composed within a half century gap. In order to demonstrate their scientific value and surprising similarities (though Kotwicz did not have any information about Bálint's work), and also considerable differences, one needs to survey the academic backgrounds, careers and motivations of both scholars, and investigate the international scholarly milieu of their times.

Bálint and Kotwicz – their lives, careers and objectives

Kotwicz not only lived in – among others – Saint Petersburg, the centre of Mongolian and Altaic studies in Russia, but his pursuits formed in many respects the Russian academic life.¹² Later he became the founder of Mongolian studies in Poland as well. Bálint did not – because he could not – have similar education to Kotwicz, since there was no Mongolian scholarship in Hungary at that time, and he did not have the opportunity to be educated in Russia, in a major centre of Inner Asian studies. Nonetheless, he discussed certain scholarly matters with some scholars in Kazan and in Saint Petersburg.¹³ Bálint could have become the founder of Mongolian studies in his homeland, but because of scholarly and personal miscomprehension he failed to fulfil this endeavour.¹⁴ While motivations of the majority of European researchers were merely scholarly, Bálint – similarly to many other Hungarian researchers of the 19th century – was inspired by patriotic ambitions as well¹⁵, and the 19th century Hungarian movements in search of the nation's ethnic roots produced considerable scholarly achievements.¹⁶

Bálint worked in the second half of the 19th century, while Kotwicz at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and during the first half of the 20th century. Comparing the two scholarly careers, one finds that Kotwicz was a well-trained philologist in Mongolian studies, while Bálint was well-trained in classical philology, but a self-made linguist in many respects. Bálint showed exceptional talent in learning languages as is known from

¹² Lewicki 1950, Dashdavaa–Tsolmon 2011, Tulisow 2012, Tulisow 2012.b, Dziurzyńska 2012, Dziurzyńska 2012.b.

¹³ Cf. Bálint's consultation with V.V. Mirotvortsev at Kazan Spiritual Academy (Birtalan 2009, pp. XIII–XIV) and A.F. Schiefner at Saint Petersburg University (Birtalan 2011, pp. 10–11).

¹⁴ Bodor 1994, Birtalan 2009 passim.

¹⁵ Such as the founder of Tibetan studies Alexander Csoma de Kőrös [Kőrösi Csoma Sándor, 1784–1842]).

¹⁶ Birtalan 2009, p. XIX: "The second half of the 19th century is a highly intricate web of national movements, searches for a heroic past, efforts to trace and create a laudable prehistory. It is the time when the so called "Ugrian-Turkic war" was being waged. The two parties tried to verify the origin of the Hungarian nation and the Hungarian language seeking contacts either among the Finno-Ugric or among the Turkic ethnic groups and languages. It is an unquestionable fact that Bálint mastered a good number of languages including several Turkic and Finno-Ugric languages as well. But he seemed to seek the Hungarian contacts not or not only on linguistic bases, but sometimes merely emotionally. True, the spirit of the age (*Zeitgeist*) inspired people to hold extreme views and also lose control over their ideas." On the scholarly and political movements and ideas in the second half of the 19th century, cf. Puszta 1977, Erdődy 1984, pp. 151–152.

his diary,¹⁷ and from his accounts,¹⁸ as well as from the opinions of his contemporaries: he was able to master any spoken tongue within a few months. As for Kalmyk, he started learning it in Kazan – while studying the language of the Christianized Tatars,¹⁹ and acquired it completely – as everyone can ascertain on the basis of his manuscripts – during his half-year stay in Astrakhan.

Among the Kalmyks: Bálint's and Kotwicz's field research and their informants

Concerning Bálint's pursuit, there is some information on his fieldwork, on his stay among the Kalmyks in Astrakhan, i.e. accounts, letters,²⁰ and a fragmentary diary.²¹ These primary sources enclose information about how he selected his informants and what his working method was. As his achievements are less known to the international scholarly public, I present an outline of his research activities in more detail.²² Bálint's research journey among the Kalmyks started in September 1871 and ended on 12th May 1872. His fieldwork was supported by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and some patrons; he was instructed to record and analyse materials of the spoken idioms of Altaic (called Turanic by Bálint) and Finno-Ugric language groups. The effort of the Academy coincided with Bálint's personal aspiration to try to find probable “kinsfolk” of the Hungarians and the Hungarian language.²³ With persistent energy he attempted to master as many spoken tongues as possible during his field research in Kazan, Astrakhan, Urga, and during his stay in Saint Petersburg. He summarised the importance of studying Kalmyk as follows:

“... after finishing it [i.e. studying Kazan Tatar] I intend to go to Astrakhan in order to learn the tongue of the Mongols and Kalmyks living there and to record language material; as Mr. Mirotvortsov [sic!],²⁴ the teacher of the Mongolian-Kalmyk language at the Spiritual Academy²⁵ states in accordance with Bobrovnikov's grammar, the Mongolian and the Kalmyk spoken tongues

¹⁷ Zágoni 2005, pp. 19–57.

¹⁸ Bálint 1871, 1871b, 1875 etc. Re-edition of Bálint's accounts and letters: Kara 1973.

¹⁹ Re-edition: Berta 1988.

²⁰ Bálint 1875.

²¹ Zágoni 2005.

²² For an even more elaborated survey of the sources: cf. Birtalan 2009, Birtalan 2011.

²³ On Bálint's adventurous endeavours in finding language connections between Hungarian and other languages cf. Birtalan 2009, pp. XI, XIX–XX.

²⁴ Cf. above.

²⁵ On the activity of the Spiritual Academy in Kazan, cf. Uspensky 1994.

are the same.²⁶ But the Kalmyk writes as it speaks, the Mongol writes as it has done for [many] centuries past.”²⁷

Bálint recorded not only conversation types but also various folklore genres in order to study the vernacular – supposing it was the best way to achieve his aims in mastering a spoken language. He started this activity already in Kazan:

“After living two and a half months in Kazan I mastered the spoken Kalmyk tongue so that I spoke and wrote in it. After listening I collected words, folk tales, folk songs, riddles, materials representing the purest folk tongue for a little Chrestomathy.”²⁸

The fieldwork method tested among the Tatars in Kazan was used by him among the Kalmyks, i.e. he looked for a school where he was able to find teachers of the language and students from various Kalmyk tribes. The main residence for his research in Astrakhan was the “Kalmyk foster home and school”, and as he stated, he had the opportunity to talk to pupils in the elementary school and also to the students of surgery:²⁹

“Just as the Christian Tatar School in Kazan, the Kalmyk foster home and school – which is sponsored by the Kalmyk nation – was a lucky choice for me. To hear the seventy-five young Kalmyks from various tribes every day and to talk to them continuously was the best method to study the vernacular tongue.”³⁰

In his Preface to his *Grammar* (written in English) Bálint explains why he refused to conduct a “classical type” of residential field research, i.e. to live together with the Kalmyk nomads in their felt tents and share with them their everyday life. As a matter of fact, it was inconvenient for him, he was rather keen on living in a settlement (city) as is

²⁶ Certainly Bálint recognised the distinctive features characterising the Western and Eastern Mongolian languages and dialects; especially after his field research among the Kalmyks and later among the Khalkhas (1873).

²⁷ “... ezt végezve Astrachan vidékére menni az ottani mongolok s kalmikok nyelvét megtanulandó s nyelvtananyagot gyűjtendő, annyival is inkább, mert a lelkész akadémiai mongolkalmik nyelv tanára Mirotvorczof ur állítása s Bobrovníkof nyelvtana szerint is a mongol és kalmik beszélgetési nyelv egy és ugyanaz; a kalmik úgy ír amint beszél a mongol, ez pedig úgy ír mint századokkal ezelőtt;” [Bálint:] 1871b, p. 242. In the citations I follow Bálint’s orthography, which does not fit in certain respects to present day standards.

²⁸ “I harmadfél hónapi Kazánba lételem alatt magamévá tettem a kalmik népnyelvet annyira, hogy rajta beszélek és írok; gyűjtöttem egy kis Chrestomathiára való anyagot, mely áll tulajdon hallomásom után följegyzett szók, népmesék, népdalok és talányokból, a lehető tiszta népnyelven.” Bálint 1871, pp. 244–245 (cf. Kara 1973).

²⁹ Birtalan 2009, p. XII.

³⁰ “Valamint Kázánban a keresztyén tatár iskola, úgy Asztrakhánban is a khalymik növelde és iskola, mely a khalymikság költségén tartatik fön, nagy szerencsémre szolgált, mert a különféle törzsből összegyűjtött 75 fiatal khalymikot naponkét hallani s velök folytonosan társalogni, a lehető legjobb mód volt tanulmányozhatnom a nép nyelvét.” In: Bálint 1875, p. 10 (cf. Kara 1973).

revealed during his research period among all of his target groups (Kazan – Christianised Tatars, Astrakhan – Kalmyks, Urga – Khalkhas).

“I am convinced that, had I lived under the tents of the Oirat (Öiräd)-Mongolians – so call they [sic!] Khalmyks themselves when speaking with confidence – for many long years, I could hardly have a better opportunity to pursue my purpose than I had in the mentioned Institute.”³¹

Nonetheless, he was quite successful in recording material of various kinds (conversation, folklore genres, and letter types) from teachers and schoolboys in a quite short period. In addition, he visited the *bazaar*, a huge market not far from Astrakhan and communicated with people who arrived there from various parts of the Kalmyk land.

“It was also easy to meet the Kalmyk folk, as many of the parents and relatives of the youngsters learning here arrived at the foster home to visit [them] on the one hand, and on the other hand I also had the opportunity to meet Kalmyks who came to purchase [goods] or to work in Astrakhan frequently. Furthermore, I went several times to a Kalmyk Bazaar located one mile from Astrakhan on the right side of [the] Volga, which the Kalmyks use to purchase their cattle and livestock under the supervision of the Government, and where the Kalmyk temple and priests are.”³²

Concerning Bálint’s informants, there is only scattered information on the schoolboys and teachers, and no data about other people Bálint worked with. From his Kazan period he mentioned only Mirotvortsev, from Astrakhan he referred to Shamba [Šamba Sadžirhaev]³³ and his name appears in his *Report* and in the Preface to *Grammar*:

“In Astrakhan I became acquainted first of all with Mr. Shamba, a learned Kalmyk, who was the teacher of language and literature [i.e. style] in the Kalmyk boys’ and also in the girls’ foster home. On his advice I asked general Kostenkov,³⁴ the governor-general of all Kalmyks and the president of the mentioned school

³¹ Preface to *Grammar*, p. III. cf. Birtalan 2009, p. 4.

³² “Magával a khálymik néppel való érintkezésem is elég könnyű volt, minthogy részint a tanuló ifjak szülői és rokonai közül említett növeldébe látogatásra többen eljártak, részint Asztrakhán városában minden pillanatban találkozhatám a vásárlás vagy munkára jött khálymikokkal, azután meg eljártam az Asztrakhántól egy mérföldnyire, a Volga folyó jobb partján eső khálymik bazarra, a hol a khálymikok barmaikat és jószágaikat szokták a kormánytól rendelt ellenőrizet mellett eladni, s a hol a khálymik templom és papság is van.” Bálint 1875, p. 13 (cf. also Kara 1973).

³³ In Bálint’s material only his given name can be traced. Cf. Tserenov’s article on his life and work; it is worth mentioning that he assisted other scholars as well, such as K.F. Golstunski and S.A. Kozin. Tserenov 1976, pp. 111–114.

³⁴ On K.I. Kostenkov cf. Alekseeva-Lancanova 2006, pp. 107–111; Bálint about him: cf. Birtalan 2011, pp. 14–15.

and foster home, for permission to visit every day the mentioned school and foster home.

Helped by this permission I visited every day the Kalmyk foster home which was located a few steps from my flat. There the mentioned teacher [i.e. Šamba] drew my attention to the fact that although Kalmyk writing fits fairly to the sounds of the language, the contemporary folk pronunciation differs from it – especially in respect to the diphthongs. He himself gave me a brief instruction [on it] in the school.”³⁵

Further he mentioned by name the surgeon of the school:

“For further instructions in Kalmyk language I asked another Kalmyk, Mandshin Sawgr, the surgeon of the foster home who had mastered Russian well, too.”³⁶

From among the students Bálint referred to Baldriin Muchka (in Bálint’s transcription Mucska Baldir), a boy with apparently good communicative skills (the majority of the ethnographic accounts on the Kalmyk folk life were delivered by him).³⁷

“The last section of my collection comprises articles demonstrating the main features of Kalmyk life, written for me by Muchka Baldir, the best student of the upper level at secondary school and my teacher– who was the surgeon – [in return for some] presents and [also for] the help which I offered the Kalmyk pupils at secondary school in learning Latin, Greek and French languages.”³⁸

Concerning Kotwicz’s field research and his Kalmyk informants, I based the following outline on the preface and afterword in the second edition of Kotwicz’s Kalmyk grammar³⁹ and on further data published about his life and scholarly activity.⁴⁰ During the Cracow

³⁵ “Asztrakhanban mindenek előtt Samba úr, egy mivel khalymikkal, a ki a khalymik fi és leánynöveldeben a khalymik nyelv és írály tanítója, ismerkedém meg. Ennek tanácsára kikértem Kosztyenkov tábornoknak, mint az összes khalymikság főkormányzójának s egyszersmind a mondott iskola és növelde elnökének engedélyét arra nézve, hogy naponként bejárassak a mondott iskolába és növeldebe. Ezen engedély kinyerése folytán, néhány lépésnyire volt lakásomról minden nap bejártam a khalymik növeldebe, a hol említett tanító [i. e. Šamba] figyelmeztetett, hogy noha a khalymik írás határozott s a nyelv hangjainak eléggé megfelelő is, mégis a mai népkiejtés különösen a kettős vagy ikerhangzók tekintetében az írástól eltérő, miért is ő maga adott a tanodában rövid utatsítást.” Bálint 1875, p. 10.

³⁶ “A további útmutatásra a növelde sebész orvosát, Mandshin Szabghar nevű, oroszul is jól tudó khalymikot vevén tanítóul a khalymik nyelv tanulásánál.” Bálint 1875, p. 10, cf. also Zágonyi 2005, p. 37.

³⁷ Cf. *Ethnographica Kalmykica* in Birtalan 2011, pp. 137–167.

³⁸ “Gyűjteményem záradékát képezik a khalymik életet főbb vonásaiban ismertető cikkek, melyeket a felgymnasiumi tanulók legkitünőbbje Mucska Baldir és tanítóm a sebész irtak számomra ajándék, de azon segítség fejében is, melyet én a gymnasiumi khalymik tanulóknak a latin, görög és francia nyelv tanulásánál nyújték.” Bálint 1875, p. 12.

³⁹ Kotwicz 1929.

⁴⁰ As above, cf. Lewicki 1950, Tulisow 2012, Tulisow 2012b, Dziurzyńska 2012, Dziurzyńska 2012b.

conference I had the opportunity to visit Kotwicz's archive too, and go through the Kalmyk manuscripts and other documents.⁴¹ By scrutinising these materials, I hoped to obtain additional facts, more details on Kotwicz's fieldwork among the Kalmyks and complete the information at my disposal.

On the basis of Kotwicz's preface and afterword written to his *Grammar*, some aspects of his method of working with the Kalmyk language emerge. Bálint visited the Kalmyks only once,⁴² and according to his letters, his later diary and other utterances, he did not have the intention to return there again, whereas Kotwicz visited Kalmyk pastures and settlements four times (1894,⁴³ 1896, 1910 and 1917),⁴⁴ in order to record more elaborated material on various Kalmyk dialects.⁴⁵ In the meantime he also had contacts with Kalmyk informants and later he worked with Kalmyk emigrants in Czechoslovakia.⁴⁶ The Kalmyk language and writing system seemed to be his primary interest and subject of research; in addition he had learnt how to deal with academic disciplines – such as a language (including methodology).⁴⁷ As it will be explicated below, his continuous contacts with native speakers served his practical intention as well, i.e. to reform the Kalmyk script.⁴⁸ Besides, he was also continuously involved in teaching; between 1900 and 1922 he taught Mongolian and Kalmyk at Petersburg University,⁴⁹ so Kotwicz was able to maintain and also extend his primary knowledge of the Kalmyk language.

In the *Posleslovie*⁵⁰ to his grammar he mentioned some of his informants, emphasizing the importance of their dialects – this approach to the language is entirely missing from Bálint's work. Kotwicz worked with Kalmyk youths of Ik-Dörwd uls (Stavropol'skaya Guberniya) in 1914–1915,⁵¹ and also succeeded in collecting material from the Orenburg Kalmyks (speaking a rare dialect). He mentioned by name his main associate in learning the Kalmyk language, scholar N.O. Ochirov,⁵² and some refugees living in Czechoslovakia: B.N. Ulanov, Sh.N. Balynov, S.B. Bayanov and S.B. Balykov,⁵³ “who were thrown by the fate further West than me.”⁵⁴

⁴¹ Here I wish to express my gratitude to Ms. Ewa Dziurzyńska and Mr. Michał Németh for giving me the possibility to survey the Kalmyk material.

⁴² For a seven-month period (from the end of September 1871 until the beginning of May 1872).

⁴³ He carried out his first fieldwork in Astrakhan still as a student at Saint Petersburg University; cf. Dziurzyńska 2012, p. 270.

⁴⁴ Lewicki 1951, p. XX, Poppe 1954, p. 118, Dziurzyńska 2012, p. 270. Kotwicz referred to the period 1914–1915 when he dealt with the Kalmyk language material for his grammar most absorbedly (cf. below).

⁴⁵ Lewicki 1950, p. XX.

⁴⁶ Dziurzyńska 2012.b, p. 41.

⁴⁷ Cf. also Poppe 1954, p. 118.

⁴⁸ Pavlov 1975.

⁴⁹ Dziurzyńska 2012, p. 267.

⁵⁰ Kotvich 1929, pp. 415–418.

⁵¹ Kotvich 1929, p. 415.

⁵² Cf. also below.

⁵³ Kotvich 1929, pp. 416–418, also Poppe 1954, p. 119.

⁵⁴ In Russian: “которых судьба забросила еще дальше на запад чем меня”, Kotvich 1929, p. 416, Tulisow 2009, p. 106.

Preference to work with educated people is apparent in both scholars' intentions: both of them favoured teachers, schoolboys, members of intelligentsia; in addition, Kotwicz had the noted Kalmyk philologist N.O. Ochirov (1886–1960) to assist him,⁵⁵ whose accurate knowledge of his mother tongue and its cultural context was a great help to create one of the best known grammars of the Kalmyk idiom:

“Moreover, as always, the Kalmyk orientalist, N.O. Ochirov has provided substantial assistance for me in this case.”⁵⁶

Kotwicz's Kalmyk grammar and Bálint's comparative grammar of Eastern and Western Mongolian

While Kotwicz succeeded in publishing his grammar⁵⁷ which became a standard work in the field of Mongolian and Altaic studies, Bálint's Kalmyk and Khalkha comparative grammar⁵⁸ remained in the drawer until I published the manuscript in 2009.⁵⁹

Bálint reported that on the basis of his field research he prepared a grammar of spoken Kalmyk and he tested it with a group of schoolboys and teachers. This version has not survived, or at least it is not found yet, but on the basis of his Kalmyk material he composed a comparative grammar of Kalmyk and Khalkha.

“Having gathered a good number of folksongs, fables, proverbs and other materials for a dictionary and having made a draft of the Kalmyk-Mongolian grammar, I left Astrakhan for Saint Petersburg to study Finnish and other related tongues, ...”⁶⁰

A careful reading reveals that the essential material which became the core of Bálint's comparative grammar is his Kalmyk material, completed with the Khalkha data he collected in 1873 in Urga.⁶¹ By composing comparative grammar, Bálint wanted to create opus

⁵⁵ Benzing 1985, p. 101, Badmaev 2006, Tulisow 2012, p. 27.

⁵⁶ “Кроме того, как всегда, мне оказывал в этом деле существенную помощь калмык-ориенталист Н.О. Очиров.” Kotvich 1929, p. 416, cf. also Poppe 1954, p. 120.

⁵⁷ First edition: Kotvich, VI. L.: *Opyt grammatiki kalmyckogo razgovornogo yazyka*, Petrograd 1915; second edition: Kotvich, VI. L.: *Opyt grammatiki kalmyckogo razgovornogo yazyka*, Izd. Kalmyckoi komisii kul'turnykh rabotnikov v Cheskoslovatskoi Respublike, Rzhhevnicе u Pragi 1929.

⁵⁸ The full title of the manuscript is: *A Romanized Grammar of the East- and West-Mongolian Languages. with popular Chrestomaties [sic!] of both Dialects. Containing alliterative Folk-Songs, Anecdotes, Conversations, Fables, Proverbs, Prayers, Letters, Writs and the Description of the Characteristical Usages and Housekeeping of the Mongolians; every piece with faithful Translation, by Professor G. Bálint of Szentkatolna.*

⁵⁹ Birtalan, Ágnes, ed. and introd., *Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna, A Romanized Grammar of the East- and West-Mongolian Languages. With popular Chrestomathies of both Dialects* (Budapest Oriental Reprints: Series B 3), Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Csoma de Kőrös Society, Budapest 2009.

⁶⁰ *Preface to Grammar*. p. III, in Birtalan 2009, p. 4.

⁶¹ The author of the article is working on the manuscript: *Bálint Gábor: Keleti mongol (khalkha) szövegek*. (88 pages), Nr.: Ms1379/2; [Bálint, Gábor: Eastern Mongolian (Khalkha) Texts].

of the Mongolian vernacular (Kalmyk and Khalkha) for international public written in fairly good (19th century) English.

“I did my best to make easy the learning of this language for [readers] even not professional philologists and profitable this work to those who will have opportunity to speak to the open-hearted people of Tshingis Khān.”⁶²

He added a considerable amount of texts as examples in the *Chrestomathy* part of his *Grammar* and also explicated his ideas on the Turanian and Hungarian language affinity.⁶³ Because of his confused comparative linguistic ideas he was not accepted by the official circles of Hungarian Oriental studies and it caused a break between him and other researchers of Altaic and Mongolian studies.⁶⁴

Though Bálint’s grammar is a comparative grammar of Kalmyk and Khalkha (“Western and Eastern Mongolian” as he called them), the basic structure is similar to that of Kotwicz’s work. Both grammars are structured classically, demonstrating the phonetic, morphological and syntactic levels of the language(s). The categories Bálint and Kotwicz applied are more or less the same. *Nota bene* they were acquainted with Popov, Bobrovnikov and Zwick’s⁶⁵ grammars of the Written Oirad/Kalmyk language. Both grammars follow the patterns established on the basis of studies in the Indo-European languages, but in the instances of categories unknown to the Indo-European languages they attempted new classification.

Kotwicz visited the Kalmyks four times, but he claimed to have written his grammar basing principally on the material recorded during 1914–1915:

“The first edition of this grammar was based on materials provided for me in 1914–15 by a group of Kalmyk young men from the Great Dörwd ulus of the Stavropol province.”⁶⁶

Further he added that the majority of them were not alive any longer; in the second edition he mentioned by name Mukoven Khaglyshev.⁶⁷

⁶² Birtalan 2009, p. XVII.

⁶³ At this point he lost his reliability as a salient linguist, but became an icon of certain political groups, and continues to be one even today. He composed a list of related words in Hungarian and Mongolian with many acceptable etymologies, but also with a great number of mistakenly interpreted connections (Bálint 1877, Ligeti 1977, Jülg 1882, cf. also below).

⁶⁴ E.g. József Budenz (1836–1892), who prepared the first grammar of Written Mongolian in Hungarian, cf. Budenz 1887–1890.

⁶⁵ Zwick 1851.

⁶⁶ “Первое издание настоящего Опыта грамматики было основано на материалах полученных мною в 1914–15 гг. от группы калмыцких юношей из Больше-дербетовского улуса Ставропольской губернии...” Kotvich 1929, p. 415.

⁶⁷ Cf. also Poppe 1954, p. 119.

He had a double purpose with his grammar: firstly to systematise the spoken idiom and secondly to standardise orthography⁶⁸ of the Kalmyk script, used in a quite chaotic way at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

“In 1915, having started the composition of the draft grammar of the Kalmyk colloquial language, my objective was not only to allow to study the structure of this language, but also – as far as possible – I intended to introduce some uniformity into the modern Kalmyk orthography.”⁶⁹

As mentioned above, he paid much attention to the dialects and although he tried to exhibit features of all the major dialects, he standardised his grammar as follows:

“First of all, I had to take into consideration the existence of dialects in the Kalmyk language, and to try offering an orthography that would be acceptable to a certain extent for all of them: Dörböts, Torguts and Buzavas.”⁷⁰

“The schoolbook of 1915 was primarily made for the Bolshe-derbetskii ulus of the Stavropol province, where Kalmyk literacy was in full decline. My suggestions were received well there: measures were taken to put them into life and correspondingly a small group of teachers was prepared.”⁷¹

“The features of different Kalmyk dialects were taken into consideration to a greater extent, mainly that of the Torgut, Dörböt and Don Kalmyk. However in order to avoid further difficulties, it is mostly based on the Torgut dialect (especially in the examples).”⁷²

Kotwicz decided to republish his work – as he had mentioned – with significant modification of some paragraphs (e.g. in declination) for the sake of emigrants who

⁶⁸ Pavlov 1975.

⁶⁹ “Приступив в 1915 году к составлению очерка грамматики калмыцкого разговорного языка, я поставил себе целью не только дать пособие для изучения строя этого языка, но также, по возможности содействовать внесению некоторого однообразия в современную калмыцкую орфографию.” Kotvich 1929, p. VII.

⁷⁰ “Прежде всего приходилось считаться с существованием в калмыцком языке говоров и стараться поэтому предложить орфографию, которая была бы в известной мере приемлема для всех: Дербетов, Торгутов и Бузавов.” Kotvich 1929, p. VII.

⁷¹ “Учебник 1915 года предназначался главным образом для Больше-дербетского улуса Ставропольской губернии, где калмыцкая письменность находилась в полном упадке. Мои предложения были встречены там очень сочувственно: были приняты меры к введению их в жизнь и соответственным образом подготовлен небольшой кадр учителей” Kotvich 1929, p. VIII.

⁷² “В значительно большей степени приняты во внимание особенности отдельных калмыцких говоров, главным образом торгутского, дербетского и донского: однако во избежание чрезмерного осложнения дела в основу положен (особенно в примерах) торгутский говор.” Kotvich 1929, p. IX.

requested help with their cultural activity to preserve their heritage and needed such an “aid”, a manual of their mother tongue and native writing.

“With a deep sense of sympathy for their cultural work, I was willing to respond to their desire to see the grammar of their mother tongue ([the first edition of] which became completely inaccessible) in a new edition.”⁷³

Both authors found it necessary to elucidate their purposes of preparing grammars of the spoken Kalmyk tongue. When Bálint composed his comparative grammar in English, he had already been expelled from the academic studies in Hungary and he had a kind of inner urge to prove his academic qualities. First he blamed the representatives of the “official” Oriental studies, as he called them, “the advocates of the Finno-Ugrian theory” (which states that the Hungarian language and Hungarian ethnicity have the closest contacts with the Ugric peoples and not the Turks). Furthermore, he verified that no other scholar had made similar achievements in the field of spoken Mongolian idioms as he did in his firsthand fieldwork based studies. In this respect he was completely right. Secondly, he tried to prove the hypothetical contacts between the so-called Turanian languages: according to his understanding this phenomenon included numerous Eurasian languages, from Hungarian to Dravidian. Certainly he was mistaken in this respect, his ideas (cf. Mongolian lexemes compared with numerous languages throughout the grammar and especially in the Chrestomathy part) cannot be proven.⁷⁴

Kotwicz studied Kalmyk – certainly without knowing Bálint’s results which had not been published or even mentioned in any international academic journals⁷⁵ – following in the footsteps of his predecessors of the Kazan and Saint Petersburg schools: he visited the Kalmyks, collected large amounts of materials and created a philologically very correct grammar of the spoken idiom of the above mentioned “classical type”. He was

⁷³ “Проникнутый чувством глубокой симпатии их культурной работе, я охотно откликнулся на выраженное ими желание увидеть в новом издании грамматику родного языка, которая стала совершенно недоступной.” Kotvich 1929, p. IX.

⁷⁴ Birtalan 2009, *passim*.

⁷⁵ Introducing the achievements of Mongolian studies in Hungary Bernhard Jülg mentioned only Bálint’s comparative vocabulary (cf. also above): “As considerable may be noticed the essay of G. Bálint, written in Hungarian, *Párhuzam a magyar és mongol nyelv terén* (Parallelism between the Magyar and Mongolian Languages), crown 8 vo. pp. xxx and 62, Budapest, 1877. The national pride of the author scorns the idea that his people should be closely related to the poor hunters and fishermen of the Ugro-Finn race; but this has been proved long ago by the professors of a rational science of language. Accordingly Bálint, in his introduction, opposes Hunfalvy, who maintains this view; and himself tries to prove the Magyars to be as closely as possible connected with the world-storming Mongols. It can be easily conceived that such a thought would flatter the national pride of the Magyars; it is, however, quite impossible. Every rational etymologist knows that the Magyar language is much more closely allied, as far as dictionary and grammar are concerned, to the Finno-Ugrian than to the Mongolian; though it is quite conceivable that Magyar has many roots and words in common with the Mongol, inasmuch as both belong to the Ural-Altai branch. But always valuable is the small comparative vocabulary of the Magyar and Mongolic languages (pp. 1–62), though in this there are many forced and impossible etymologies.” Jülg 1882, pp. 55–56.

not infected either by ideological concepts, or by the urge to prove his worth, he merely wanted to create – as he explained in the foreword to the second edition – a complex grammatical outline of the spoken tongue reflecting the dialectal differences. Bálint did not pay much attention to the dialectal features of Kalmyk. Kotwicz was intrigued by the inconsistencies of the Kalmyk writing system. He flayed his contemporaries for not following the otherwise obsolete, but more precise orthography of the Oirat script. As he remarked, people did not follow the original rules, but tried to write according to the pronunciation. He endeavoured to create a grammar and a writing system suitable for educational purposes. Poppe praised Kotwicz's effort as follows:

“Kotwicz stellt einen seltenen Mongolistentyp dar, der viel Zeit und Mühe den praktischen Bedürfnissen einer der mongolischen Völkerschaften gewidmet hat, nämlich denen der Kalmücken. Für die letzteren bedeutet sein Name viel mehr als der nur eines Mongolisten.”⁷⁶

Samples from Bálint and Kotwicz's grammars

In order to demonstrate the value and importance of both grammars, I chose a sample from Kalmyk grammatical phenomena, namely the problem of expressing gender differences in the language. Both scholars were well-trained in many Indo-European languages (moreover Kotwicz's mother tongue belonged to this group) and were faced with the lack of an elaborated system of this category in Kalmyk.

On the basis of their proficiency in Indo-European languages and their grammars, both Bálint and Kotwicz included this category – in fact not relevant for Mongolian languages.

Nonetheless, grammatical resources of this phenomenon in Mongolian languages are quite limited.⁷⁷ Grammarians studying Written Mongolian or Written Oirat/Kalmyk have also touched upon this concept; Popov and Bobrovnikov interpreted the gender category in a fairly similar way.⁷⁸ Mongolian languages express the natural gender of animate beings similarly, i.e. either morphologically using additional lexemes meaning male or female (Mong. *er-e*, *em-e* and related words) or with the help of suffixation expressing the colour or age of the male or female livestock.⁷⁹

Bálint (cf. Appendix 1.) started the chapter devoted to the *Noun* with the discussion of Gender (§ 15 on pp. 94–95). First he compiled the vocabulary concerning male and

⁷⁶ Poppe 1954, p. 118.

⁷⁷ A detailed recent overview of the phenomenon and research in it: Kalchofner 2007.

⁷⁸ As can be expected, Popov and Bobrovnikov discussed the expression of natural human and animal gender (Russ. *rod*) and the suffixation used for expressing the age and colour of animals (Popov 1847, pp. 41–43, Bobrovnikov 1849, pp. 66–67).

⁷⁹ The suffixation expressing natural gender is mentioned in other grammars as well (only to mention some related issues), e.g. Sanzheev 1940. pp. 57–59, Szabó 1943. pp. 59–60 and many others.

female aspects of human beings, e.g. *akha* (Khal. *ax*)⁸⁰ “elder brother”, *egeči* (Khal. *egč*) “elder sister”, and zoological phenomena, with numerous examples from the animal world, e.g. *bukha* (Oir./Kalm. and Khal. *bux*) “bull”, *ünnee* (Khal. *ünee*), *ükür* (Oir./Kalm. *ükr.*) “cow”. A considerable amount of examples are listed on the compound expression denoting male and female animals by adding the lexeme *ere* (Khal./Kalm. *er*) “male” and *eme* (Khal./Kalm. *em*) “female” e.g. *ere müi* (Oir./Kalm. *er müi*), *ere mis* (Khal. *er müis*, *muur*) “cat” *eme müi* (Oir./Kalm. *em müi*), *eme mis* (Khal. *em müi*, *muur*) “she-cat”. A separate passage is assigned to the lexeme *ölökčün* (Khal. *ölögčün*, Oir./Kalm. *ölökčün*) as Bálint settled: “(female prop. nutrix) mostly for the larger kind of wild beasts, the extant names meaning the males of them, thus: *arslaang* (a lion), Hu.⁸¹ *oroszlán*, *ölöktshin arsalan* (a lioness).”⁸² Under this passage he also mentioned the suffixation added to the colours with an allusion to its origin:

“If the color of the beast is expressed, thus: *khara ölöčün nokhai*, Oir. *nokhai*,⁸³ it is more elegant to say *kharaktshin nokhai* (black female dog) where *kharaktshin* seems to be a combination of *khara* (black and *ölöktshin*). All adjectives denoting color may be used in this way.”

Bálint also discussed another phenomenon of expressing natural gender, i.e. composing a compound expression by adding lexemes with the meaning “daughter” *okin* (Khal.), *küükün* (Oir./Kalm.)⁸⁴ lit. “girl, daughter”, to nouns denoting livestock, such as *okin tughal* “she-calf”, or wild animal *küükün ayuu* “she-bear”.⁸⁵

Kotwicz (Cf. Appendix 2.) discusses the grammatical expression of gender differences in several chapters. First he offers a very detailed list of various lexemes expressing the colour of the female livestock by adding the suffix *-kčə* (spoken form) *-qči* (written form) under the chapter *Imena*, in subchapter “Word formation” (§ 88 on pp. 97–98), e.g. *xongyr*, *xongyəkčə* “savrasyi, savrasaya kob[y]la”.⁸⁶ Further he discusses the suffixation expressing the age of (three-year old and four-year old) female livestock in the subchapter *Chislitel’nye* (§ 109 on pp. 121–122): e.g. *γunn*, *γunjn* “3 letnii”.⁸⁷ While dealing with Kalmyk syntax, Kotwicz returns again to the gender problem in the chapter *Stroenniye otdel’nykh predlozhenii* under the subtitle: *Rod* (§ 334 on pp. 354–355). From the possible ways of marking natural gender Kotwicz demonstrates here again the suffixation expressing colour *-kčə* and *-kči* and age of the livestock; he refers to paragraphs § 88 and § 109 again.⁸⁸

⁸⁰ I follow Bálint’s transcription, referring to the presently used spelling in brackets.

⁸¹ I.e. Hungarian.

⁸² Birtalan 2009, pp. 49–50.

⁸³ Khal. *xar ölögčün noxoi*, Oir./Kalm. *xar ölgčün noxaa*.

⁸⁴ Khal. *oxin*, Oir./Kalm. *küükün*.

⁸⁵ Khal. *oxin tughal*, Oir./Kalm. *küükün ayuu*.

⁸⁶ Kotvich 1929, p. 98.

⁸⁷ Kotvich 1929, p. 122.

⁸⁸ Kotvich 1929, pp. 354–355.

Concluding remarks

Both scholars worked in different philological milieus: not only were their original intentions different, but the international research became much more developed during the half century that separated their works. Methodically developed linguistic field research opened new possibilities for the scholars who were trained systematically in important centres of philology of Asian languages and cultures.

As I mentioned above, Bálint's epoch marking comparative grammar remained in the depths of the archives and became known through scattered information when the doyen of the Hungarian Oriental studies Lajos Ligeti⁸⁹ and his pupils (Gyula Lajos Nagy⁹⁰ and György Kara⁹¹) published some essays on it.

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⁸⁹ Ligeti 1978.

⁹⁰ Nagy 1959.

⁹¹ Kara 1962.

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Appendix 1.

Pages from Gábor Bálint's *A Romanized Grammar of the East- and West-Mongolian Languages*

341

Nouns.§ 15. Gender

Nouns in themselves are in the Mongolian language genderless.

- A. Nouns denoting living beings are either *schlechtlich* (sexually) distinct for the male and female or is the distinction made by proposed words denoting male or female. From the distinct words for the masculine and the feminine we may mention these:

	<u>kümön</u> , <u>öi. kümien</u>	} man &
	<u>kün</u> , ... <u>kün</u>	
	<u>ere</u> (man, husband, male)	<u>eme</u> (wife, female).
	<u>kükel</u> , <u>öi. kükel</u> (children = child)	
} <u>kükhen</u> (khukhan)	<u>k'ü</u> (<u>kübin</u>)	} the son & the daughter
	<u>öi. k'übin</u>	
	<u>akha</u> (elder brother)	<u>egētsh</u> (elder sister)
	<u>dü</u> (younger brother)	<u>shin-dü</u> } younger sister
		<u>öi. kükendü</u>
	<u>morin</u> , <u>öi. morin</u> (a horse)	
	<u>adshirgha</u> } (male horse)	<u>gün</u> (begin) } (a mare)
	<u>öi. adshirgha</u>	<u>gün</u>
	<u>temē</u> , <u>öi. temē</u> (a camel)	
	<u>bürge</u> (a male camel)	<u>yünge</u> (a) } (a she-camel)
		<u>öi. ünge</u>
	<u>ükür</u> , <u>öi. üklär mal</u> (fox)	
	<u>bukha</u> } (a bull)	<u>ünē</u> } (a cow)
	<u>öi. bukhū</u>	<u>ükür</u>
	<u>khutsa</u> } (a ram)	<u>khoni</u> } (the female sheep)
	<u>öi. khutsū</u>	<u>khön</u> } (ewe)
		etc.

85

B. the words proposed to nouns denoting living beings in order to indicate their sexual distinction are:

A) ere (male, cf. ku, here tschiké), eme (female, flu. eme idem) used for rational beings, domestic animals and their kindreds, thus:

E.M. ere kün (a man, vir), eme kün or ekéner kün (woman wife).

... ere kükid (plus. for kükéd: a male child), bis-ge kükid (a female child, prop. helpless children)

... ere nokhgi } a dog. eme nokhgi } bitch
 Di.M. ere nokhgi } ekéner nokhgi }

ere takonó } a wolf (lypus) eme takonó } a she-wolf (lypus)

ere takya } a cock. eme takya } a hen.

Di.M. ere taká } eme taká } etc.

ere mi } a cat

eme mi } a she-cat.

B) ölöktsin (female, prop. nutrix) mostly for the larger kind of wild beasts, thus the extant names meaning the male of them, thus:

arsálan (a lion) ^{ku. or osólan} ölöktsin arsálan (a lioness).

bara vi. bars (a tiger) ... ölöktsin bara, bars (a tigress)

If the color of a beast is expressed, thus: khara ölöktsin

nokhgi or bi. nokhgi, it is more elegant to say khara-öktsin

nokhgi (a black female dog), where khara-öktsin seems

to be a combination of khara (black) and ölöktsin. All

adjectives denoting color may be used in this way.

Y. okin Öngi. küken (a daughter a maid) thus to denote the female ^{of some beasts} of them (thus:

Öngi. küken kyü (a she-calf), Öngi. küken kyü (a she-bear).

E.M. okin tughol (a she-calf); Di.M. küken ayu (a she-bear).

Mog. eme babághai (a she-bear).

X) Note. To the E.M. ere kükid (a male child) and bis-ge kükid (a female child) the corresponding nouns are in Old Prussian: bitchikün (prop. a little boy), bitchikün küken (prop. a little girl).

Appendix 2.

Pages from Władysław Kotwicz's *Oпыт grammatiki kalmytskogo razgovornogo yazyka*

97.

превращение слова шнзэ в шнзаву:

шнзэ, шнзэ, шнз

87. Для сцепления значения имен прилагательных применяются следующие слова:

перед именем ставится особая частица, состоящая из начала этого имени (до первого согласного) и согласного б:

олн - многой, об олн оолн очень (довольно)

оён - хороший, оёб оёён оёён очень (довольно)

кёжкёжн - красивый, кёб- кёжкёжн очень (довольно)

зёб - подходящ, лагно - зёб зёвёб зёвёб как следует

88. Прилагательные обозначают цвет.

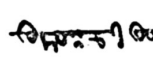
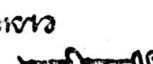
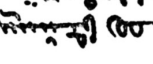
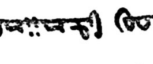
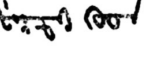
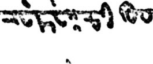
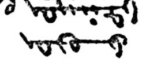
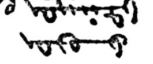
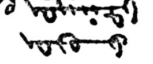
(маонё), появляясь перед названиями животных - самок, принимают приставку

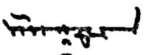
кэ - кэ, при чем последний согласный

опускается:

каре - черной, карэкаре кэре черная кобыла.

98.

кѣрѣ - дѣлѣнѣ, кѣрѣжѣ  кѣрѣжѣ ко
 хонѣрѣ - саврастѣ, хонѣрѣ  савра-
 алак - пестрѣнѣ, алакѣ  алакѣ коб.
 уѣрѣ - пестрѣнѣ уѣрѣ  пестрѣнѣ коб.
 кѣрѣ - енедѣнѣ, кѣрѣ  енедѣнѣ к.
 зѣрѣдѣ - пѣрѣстѣнѣ, зѣрѣдѣ  пѣрѣстѣнѣ коб.
 флѣнѣ - краснѣнѣ, флѣнѣ  краснѣнѣ коб.
 флѣнѣ  коб.  коб.

Есть подобное имя получает знание
 не осуществительного (т.е. употребле-
 но самостоятельно), то приставка кѣ
 ѣ изменяется в кѣ, ѣ, напр. алакѣнѣ.
 употребл.

89. Для образования прилагательных со
 значением „находящийся“ где-нибудь,
 „принадлежащий, относящийся“ к ко-
 мѣ-нибудь, употребляются разные
 формы этой приставки - кѣ, кѣрѣ-