

THE ETRUSCAN WRITINGS BEGIN SPEAKING

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Abstract. Islamic peoples have had a great cultural heritage during all periods of their history. They also had grandious historical past in pre-Islamic period of their history, which has already become immemorial for modern generations. For instance, that is the case with the history of Asia Minor, that gave birth to different cultures both within (Hittites, Trojans, etc.) and beyond (Italy) its territory. One of these lost cultures is the Etruscan civilization known to have evident Turkic roots. The Etruscans who passed down a highly developed culture to Romans and later Italians are considered to be of unknown origin. Together with their cultural values, they gave Latin, and via it to other European languages, numerous words like senate, ceremony, person, belt, romance, satellite, serve, vernacular and many others.

By the beginning of the new era the Etruscans had already been assimilated by Romans and only left their mysterious writings on different objects in Italy. These writings evidence of their belonging to neither of the languages spoken at present by Europeans. The so-called Rhaetic writings found in North Europe were discovered to be closely related to the Etruscan writings. It indicates that relative peoples once inhabited the territories of North Europe.

The important cultural and linguistic heritage passed to Europeans from the Etruscans served as reason for appearance of Etruscology as a branche of science, although the texts belonging to the Etruscans have not been deciphered yet in Europe.

The goal of our research is to make our contribution to the experience of deciphering the Etruscan texts, that reveals the Old Turkic origins of the Etruscan writings. The result we obtain is consonant with the conclusion of some European researchers who discovered Turkic elements in the Etruscan language. However our research is not limited with lexical coincidences and reveals systematic lexico-grammatical identities between the Etruscan and Turkic languages.

Keywords: *Etruscan, Old Turkic, Caucasian, Central Asia, Chuvash, Asia Minor.*

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1. Introduction

Most European researchers tried to decipher the Etruscan texts on the materials of Indo-European or Caucasian languages, that could not bring to opening the mystery of Etruscan writings (Brandenstein, 1937; Ivanov, 1988; Mayyani, 1966; Mayyani, 1966). The reason is that, the Etruscans belonged to neither of these languages. At present the commonly accepted conclusion about the origin of the Etruscans is that they are of unknown origin.

As is seen, the “right” language that could have made the Etruscan language speak was not identified by European etruscologists, although they were very close to deciphering the Etruscan texts. They correctly identified the contents of some Etruscan texts not simply guessing that these texts were in an old Turkic language with an insignificant number of non-Turkic elements. Yet in previous centuries some European linguists found Turkic words in the Etruscan language declaring it to be of Turkic origin.

They later changed their opinion not finding a way into the grammatical structure of the Etruscan texts (Brandenstein, 1937). The solution of the question required drawing the grammatical structure of Old Turkic languages to comparison.

By so-called combinatorian method used by later Etruscologists the short Etruscan texts were interpreted according to the usual position of certain words in the texts, or their meaning were identified in the light of bilingual texts. Consequently the meaning of some Etruscan texts were identified correctly, although their belonging to any language family remained uncertain.

Ernout and Meillet, for instance, interpreted the Etruscan verb *macte*, used in religious texts, as a saying told when a gift was presented or a sacrifice was given in honour of gods. To their conclusion, *macte* denoted “to praise gods” (Ayda, 1992; p.256).

However, according to them *macte* has not a clear etymology (Ayda, 1992; p.257).

A.Ayda, a Turkish researcher, comparing *macte* with the Turkic *makta* with the identical meaning (“to praise”), proved the Turkic origin of this Etruscan word. By the way, *macto* (“to praise”) in Latin is one of numerous borrowings in Latin.

And the analysis of the verb proves its being Turkic by origin: only in Turkic languages *makta* can be divided into the root (*mak* “praise”) and verb building suffix *-ta* used in Turkic languages.

The Etruscan verb *thap*, interpreted by M.Pallottino as denoting “devotion to gods” is in fact the Old Turkic *tap* (“to worship”) (Ayda, 1992; p.290). The only difference is the initial *th-p* consonant shift usually observed between some languages.

This consonant shift is also found in final position between Etruscan *flerth* (“to signify”, “to indicate”) and the Turkish *belirt* with the identical meaning. Old Etruscan *b* was observed by linguists to have shifted into *f* in later Etruscan texts.

As is seen, the Etruscan words *macte*, *thap*, *flerth*, correctly identified by Western linguists as denoting “to praise”, “to worship”, “to signify”, were presented as being of unknown origin, while they are the same Turkic *makta*, *tap*, *belirt* with the identical meanings, that did not draw the attention of etruscologists. But the number of such “unknown” Etruscan words in the researches of European scientists are numerous.

Establishing the correct meaning of numerous Etruscan words by European researchers was in fact a serious step in etruscology and they were very close to deciphering Etruscan writings. But the reason why they could not see the transparent Old Turkic character of these Etruscan words can be explained with the following reasons:

- False theory about Eastern origins of the Turks;
- Absence of serious comparative studies between the Etruscan and Turkic languages.

Were the Turks of Central Asian Origin?

Turkic elements discovered in the Etruscan language by the European linguists of previous centuries did not bring to the solution of the Etruscan question mainly because of the false theory alleging the Turks to be of Central Asian origin. Some researchers alleged that the Turks might have borrowed the Etruscan elements from old inhabitants of Asia Minor, where ancestors of the Etruscans had settled (Nemirovskiy, 1975; p.13).

Could there have been any Etruscan-Turkic contact in the first millennium B.C. if the first arrival of the Turks in Asia Minor is allegedly referred to Middle Centuries? The truth is that the Etruscans themselves, in whose language Turkisms were discovered, could be Turkic by origin, of which the following facts evidence: the Trojans, the

ancestors of the Etruscans, were considered by European authors of VII-XII centuries to be Turkic by origin (Afyoncu, 2011).

The Trojans and old Turks shared the same personal names (Priam, Dardan, Alber, Askan, Eney, Paris, Aytilla, Atas, Kapaney, Dolon, Batiya and many others) which are etymologized on the basis Old Turkic appellatives (Qarasharly, 2011).

The Etruscans were called *Tursci* in Latin. It coincides with the ethnonym *Turusca*, used to denote the Old Turks in the Sanscrit language (Kochergina, 1973).

Secondly, Turks could not have been of Central Asian origin, as very old ties of kinship among Indo-European, Semitic, Uralic, Turkic, Caucasian and other language families have been discovered by famous linguists of previous centuries. Language facts evidently show that the Turkic languages are one of the Nostratic languages (Illich-Svitich, 1971). How could the Turks have taken their origin from Central Asia if they have a common lexical and grammatical layer with Indo-European, Semitic, Uralic and other Nostratic language families?

Which Turkic language can serve as key to the Etruscan phonetics?

In the identification of the Etruscan-Turkic kinship the phonetic features of the Chuvash language plays a significant role. This language was distinguished by N.Y.Marr, a well-known Soviet linguist of 1930s, as an old type of Turkic language with the ability to serve as a bridge to early languages of Europe (Samoylovich, 1935; p.115).

In Turkology the Chuvash language is known to belong to Turkic Bulgars, who in their turn is presented in genealogies as originating from legendary Cymmerians (Bayram, 1998). The same Cymmerians took an active part in the events of Mediterranean Basin and were present in Italy.

Participation of the Cymmerians in the ethnogeny of the Etruscans is informed by Gaetano de Sanktis, an Italian researcher. According to him, the Cimmerians had established an Etruscan state on the Appenine Peninsula (<http://artickz.com/article/7183>). There was a city by name **Cimmerium** in Campania, an Etruscan province (Dvoretzkiy, 1986; p.140).

It is not by chance that the phoneticapl structure of the Chuvash language serves as key to the Etruscan texts. It evidently shows itself in the initial *y~th* consonant shift differing the Chuvash language from the common Turkic:

Chuvash	Common Turkic
thur (<thavar)	yavru ("child")
thun	yan ("to burn")
thumar	yaghmur ("rain")
thuta	yaghti ("light")
thu	yagh ("butter")
themthe	yumshak ("soft")
thithen ("shining")	yashin ("lightning")

The Chuvash versions of the compared Turkic words turn out to be phonetically identical with some Etruscan words which were considered by etruscologists to be of unknown origin.

For instance, the Etruscan word *thur* ("child") considered to be of unknown origin is in fact the well-known Chuvash word – *thur*, the Chuvash version of common Turkic *yavru* ("child").

The Etruscan *thesan* (“radiance”, “the goddess of daybreak”) coincides *thithen* (“shining”, “beaming”), which is the Chuvash version of old Turkic *yashin* (“radiance”, “god of thunder”).

The Etruscan *thuta*, considered to be of unknown origin, is the same *thuta* (“light”, “light world”) in the Chuvash language, the phonetical version of Turkic *yaghti* (“light”).

The sentence *pul hermu thutuithi* in a religious Etruscan text reads in the Chuvash language: “get to Hermu’s light world”: Chuvash *pul* “get”, “reach”, “be”; *thuta* “light world”.

In Etruscan texts the soul of the deceased is wished to join the light world of the god Hermu.

The word *thu*, the Chuvash version of common Turkic *yagh* (“butter”) illucidates the origin of the word *th* in an Etruscan text dedicated to sacrificing, in which three sacrificial objects (*sth*, *th* and *ath*) are offered to the personages by name Velshu, Shuplu, Hasmun and *cleuste*. Turkic-Chuvash linguistic material permits to identify these objects as “milk”, “butter” and “meat”: *ath* – Turkic *et* “meat”; *th* (...) – *thu*, Chuvash version of common Turkic *yağ* “butter”; *sth* – Turkic *süt* “milk”

In the words *th* (...) and *sth* the omission of the vowel *u* (*th* < *thu*; *sth* < *suth*) is the well-known orphographic feature in ancient alphabets of the Etruscan, Old Turkic and Semitic languages.

These names of sacrificial food is usually accompanied by the verb *lth*, which we compared with *leth*, the Chuvash version of Turkic *ilet/elt* (“to take”, “to bring”, “to deliver”). The structural element *c* is cognate with the Turkic partical *ok* with the meaning “also”, “as well as”, “too”.

sth differs from the Turkic *süt* with post-positional *th-t* consonant shift.

Milk and butter is offered to Velshu as a sign of worship – *thapicun* (*thapic-un*) which is cognate with the Old Turkic *tapigh* “worship”. The element *-un* in this word is an old Turkic indicator of the instrumental case of the noun (“as a sign of worship”).

In each line of the text the same foodstuffs are offered to different personages and each line has a completely identical Turkic version:

Etruscan	Turkic-Chuvash
<i>sth... lth c th</i>	<i>süt... leth ok thu</i> – “milk, bring also butter”
<i>lth...ath...th</i>	<i>leth et thu</i> – “bring meat, butter”
<i>lth c ls... ath</i>	<i>leth ok las ... et</i> – “bring also pine branch ... meat”

Offering a pine branch (*ls* – Turkic Chuvash *las* “pine branch”), like some other trees, or the wreath made from them had a symbolic meaning.

As is seen, all the words of the text are evidently the Turkic names of sacrificial food and other logically related Turkic words – the verb *lth* (“to bring”), *thapicun* (“as a sign of worship”), structural element *c* (“also”), etc.

2. Turkic religious terms in Etruscan religious texts

In an Etruscan text we discover numerous Old Turkic religious terms which evidently show that it is a religious text. Even the morphology of the text is Turkic: *šanti arvuš ta aius nuntheri* (<http://geociteis.com/Athens/Crete/4060/Capua.html>).

Having a sufficient knowledge of the Old Turkic religious lexicon lets us translate the text as “tell an honourable conjuration to Nunt”:

Etruscan	Old Turkic
<i>šanti</i>	<i>sandi</i> , a variant of the Turkic <i>sanlı</i> “honourable”
<i>arvuš</i>	<i>arvish</i> “conjunction”, “spell”, derived from Old Turkic <i>arva</i> (“to conjure”, “to bewitch”, “to spell”)
<i>ta</i>	<i>ta/da</i> “also”
<i>aius</i>	<i>ay</i> “to tell”, <i>iz</i> - a suffix denoting request: <i>ayiz/ayınız</i> (“please tell”)

Thanks to the Old Turkic equivalents of the Etruscan words we can establish the identical Turkic version of the Etruscan text:

Etruscan	Old Turkic
<i>šanti arvuš ta aius Nuntheri</i>	<i>sandi arvish ta ayız [Nunth] eri</i>

The Old Turkic version vividly denotes “tell (pronounce) an honourable conjunction to Nunt: *Nunt* is known to be an Etruscan god.

Of the accuracy of our interpretation also evidences the fact that some of the words observed in the Etruscan texts were borrowed into Latin. The Etruscan *aius* (*ai-us* “tell”) is the same *aio* (“tell”) used in Latin. The Etruscan *arvuš* (“conjunction”) is cognate with *harus* (“conjunction”) in Latin, which is known to be an Etruscan borrowing. The latter is cognate with the Old Turkic *arva/harva* (“to bewitch”, “to spell”) from which Old Turkic *arvish* and the Etruscan *arvuš* (“conjunction”, “bewitching”) originate.

The line where *šanti* (“honourable”) is repeated can be translated as “also an honourable repayment for the deceased”: *šanti ma vilu tule*

All the words in this line are Old Turkic:

Etruscan	Turkic-Chuvash
<i>šanti</i>	<i>sandi</i> “honourable”
<i>ma</i>	<i>ma</i> “also”
<i>vilu</i>	<i>vile</i> “dead” “deceased”
<i>tule</i>	<i>tule</i> “repayment”

The compared Turkic words let us establish the identical Turkic version of the Etruscan sentence:

Etruscan	Turkic
<i>šanti ma vilu tule</i>	<i>sandi ma vile tule</i> “also an honourable repayment for the deceased”

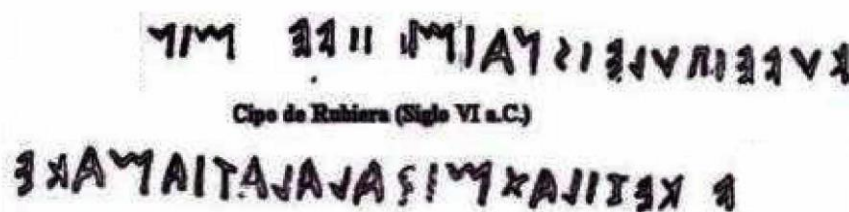
Turkic religious terms are also observed in another line. The expression *apire nuntheri avthleaium vacil*, for instance, reads as “love Nunth with song and speech:

Etruscan	Turkic
<i>apire</i>	<i>abira/abira</i> “to love”
<i>avth</i>	<i>avat</i> , the Chuvash version of the Turkic <i>öt</i> “to sing”
<i>le</i>	<i>le/ile</i> “with”, “together with”
<i>aium</i>	<i>ay, ayt</i> “to tell” with the Turkic noun forming suffix <i>im</i> observed in the word <i>aitim</i> (“saying”)

In a Kipchak (Old Turkic) text *abira*, like the Etruscan *apire*, is observed being used in relation to the God: *Biyge abrayalim* “let us love the god” (Garkavets, 2002; p.135).

Discovery of so many Turkic religious words and morphological elements can not be occasional at all, specially when they denote a complete thought, which is an essential feature of a grammatical sentence. This argument is important enough to refer the Etruscan language to the Old Turkic.

Such lexico-morphological, semantic competences is also observed in an Etruscan text in which *Eisna*, the name of a famous Etruscan goddess, is accompanied by evident Turkic words all dealing with the healing ability of her remedy:



kuvei pul eisna imi iive minve kezilas mi salal ati amake

The first part of the text – *kuvei pul eisna imi* sounds in Turkic as “be lucky Eisna’s remedy”:

Etruscan	Turkic
<i>kuvei</i>	<i>kuv</i> “luck”
<i>pul</i>	<i>pul</i> “be”
<i>imi</i>	<i>imi</i> “her remedy” (<i>im</i> “remedy” + <i>i</i> , the suffix denoting possession, belonging)

The expression *kuvei pul* can be compared with *kibligh bol* (“be lucky”), used in an old Turkic (Khazar) writing. *Kibligh* consists of *kib* (“luck”), a phonetical version of the Turkic *kuv* (“luck”) and the adjective forming suffix *-ligh*.

The clearly interpretable second line is the logical continuation of the former: *minv kezilas mi salal ati amake* “mother’s disease will be cut by me, I may break it”:

Etruscan	Turkic (Chuvash)
<i>amake</i>	<i>amake</i> “disease”, “pain” in the possessive case (“his/her pain”)

Accordingly, *ati amake* is interpreted as “mother’s pain”, where *amake* is the Chuvash version of the Turkic *emek/emgek* (“pain”, “disease”) used in the possessive case form (*-e*) (common Turkic *-i*, Chuvash *-e*).

The verbs *kezil* and *sal* are the same *kesil* (“to be cut”) and *sal* (“to break up”, “to drop”) in Turkic languages.

As the verb *kezil* is in passive, it is preceded by the instrumental case form of the personal pronoun (*me*): *minv* “by me”, which is cognate with the Chuvash instrumental case suffix *pe/pa* (*manpa* “by me”).

The verb *kezilas* (“to be cut”) is in a form similar to the Chuvash participle with the suffix *-as* common Turkic *asi/esi*, denoting an action that will be done in future: *minv kezilas* “will be cut by me”. Thus the line reads as “mother’s pain will be cut by me”.

The line both lexically (*amake* “her pain”) and morphologically (-*e* possessive case form) and *v/ve*, instrumental case form of the noun) is Turkic.

The personal pronoun *me* (“I”) in the expression *mi salal* can be interpreted as “I shall break” (Turkic *sal* “to break up”, “to drop”). Thus the whole line – *mi salal ati amake* denotes a complete idea: “I shall break up mother’s pain”. This complete and logical idea in the sentence is just achieved in Turkic:

Etruscan	Turkic
<i>mi salal ati amake</i>	<i>Min salali [ana] amake</i> “I shall break up mother’s pain”

The kinship of the two languages lets us establish the analogical Turkic version of the Etruscan text:

Etruscan	Turkic
<i>kuvei pul Eisna imi</i>	<i>kuv pul [Eisna] imi</i>
<i>mi salal minv kezilas ati amake</i>	<i>min salali minpe kesilas [ana] amake</i>

An Etruscan mythological text sounds Turkic

An Etruscan writing on a tomb stone, which sounds as *hermial kapzna slman, sexis kapzna* is a transparent old Turkic sentence denoting “do not damage Hermes’s door, the door of the other world” (29/1).



The sentence begins with the name *Herme* (*Hermes*) in the genitive case form used in some Caucasian languages (-*al*). But all other words both lexically and morphologically are Turkic:

Etruscan	Turkic
<i>kapzna</i>	<i>kapisina</i> “to his/her door” (<i>kapi</i> “door” - <i>si</i> , possessive case suffix denoting possession of something to a third person; - <i>na</i> dative case suffix)
<i>slman</i>	<i>salman</i> “don’t damage” (<i>sal</i> “to damage”, + <i>man</i> , Old Turkic negative suffix)

It is requested not to damage the tomb stone - Hermes’s door. In the mythology of the Mediterranean basin the god Hermes was considered to be the door - keeper of the other world, and damaging this door (the pillar) erected on burial places was admitted as (Myths of the World Peoples, V.I., Moscow, 1980; p.292).

The following part of the text which reads as *sekhis kapzna* denotes “[to] the door of the other world” (Turkic *kapisina* (“to his/her door”, “to the door of...”) and *saghis* “the other world”). This is the logical continuation of the previous part of the text denoting “don’t damage Hermes’s door”.

This text is both lexically and morphologically Old Turkic except the genitive case form with the suffix -*al* in the word *Hermial* (“Hermes’s”):

Etruscan	Turkic
<i>hermial kapzna slman</i>	<i>[hermesin] kapisina salman</i>
<i>sekhis kapzna</i>	<i>saghis kapisina</i>



A text describing two persons parting.

The descriptions which accompany some Etruscan texts vividly evidence of the accuracy of our interpretation. For instance, in an Etruscan description we see a soldier, holding the hand of a young woman, who is evidently seeing him off to his motherland. The horse standing behind the soldier and the sad appearance of the woman signify the parting.

This situation completely coincides with the words told by the woman:

O A M I A M I J I O A J V I I

The sentence written from right to left sounds as follows: *ii ulath ilina inath*

In pure Turkic language she wishes the soldier a happy journey. *ii ulath ilina* is the same *iyi ulash iline* (“reach your country well”): *iyi* “well”, *ulash* “reach”, “join”, *ilina* (il-in-a) “to your country”.

inath, the last word in the sentence, is cognate with old Turkic *yinath*, denoting “get well”.

Thus, the whole Etruscan sentence both lexically and morphologically is Turkic and the meanings of all the words are semantically tied, expressing a logically complete idea – “wishing a soldier to reach his country well”. So, the translation is fully corresponding to the description – the parting of the girl and the soldier.

3. Conclusion

The following results of our research clearly evidence of Old Turkic character of the Etruscan texts:

1. The Etruscan words correctly interpreted by European etruscologists, and considered to be of unknown origin, appear to be Old Turkic. So great number of Etruscan-Turkic lexical and morphological parallels are excluded to be occasional coincidences, as they form sentences all semantically tied denoting a complete idea. This is just the feature of a sentence defined as having a complete thought. The sentences we have analysed are not simply the combinations of semantically isolated words, but they are all semantically tied. This semantical completeness is obtained only when the Etruscan texts are read on the basis of Old Turkic languages. That is enough to consider the Etruscan texts to be basically Turkic by origin;

2. Phonetical level of the Etruscan language is mostly close to that of the Chuvash language, known to have kept the oldest phonetical level of prototurkic language. For this feature the Chuvash language serves as key to the etymology of many Etruscan words;

3. There are also some onomastic evidences to show Etruscan-Turkic relationship. A bare example is the identity of the national name of the Etruscans-*Tursci* used in Latin with the ethonym *Turuska* that denoted the Old Turks in Sanscrit;

4. The Trojans known to have been ethnically related to the Etruscans, were presented in VII-XIII century European sources as Turks. This evidences that by that time European authors had still kept the traditions about the ethnical past of the Mediterranean basin.

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