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## ON THE ORIGINS OF THE TURKIC DIRECTIVE SUFFIXES *-jar(y)* AND *-sar(y)*

**Abstract.** This study is devoted to the problem of the interrelationship between Turkic *syñar* ‘direction’ and *jak* ~ *jan* ‘side’ on the one hand, and the Khakas, Shor and Oyrot directive suffixes *-jar(y)* ~ *-sar(y)* ~ *-sāra*, and so on, on the other.

The paper seeks to answer four questions: (1) Are *jak* ‘side’ and *jan* id. two derivatives ultimately of the same root *\*√ja?*; (2) How do *jak* ‘side’ and *sak* id. compare?; (3) If it is true that *jar*, *sar* < *\*jagar*, *\*sagar*, how, then, should the final vowel in *jary*, *sara*, etc. be explained?; (4) How do Old Tk. *syñar* ‘direction’ (also used as a directive postposition) and *sar* ~ *jar* compare?

### 1.

The Turkic directive suffixes *-jar(y)*, *-sar(y)*, etc. are usually only mentioned when talking about Khakas or Shor – two languages in which they turn up in some diverse phonetic variants like *-sāra*, *-sara*, *-sāry*, *-sary*, *-sar*, *-zāra*, *-sēri*, *-zeri*, *-zere*, *-zēr*.<sup>1</sup> Three generalizations can be made about them:

**[1a]** Velar variants are more frequent than palatal ones.<sup>2</sup>

**[1b]** Some of the variants have two syllables, some have only one.

**[1c]** The vowel of the first syllable is sometimes long.

The situation becomes even more complicated if one adds Oyrot equivalents of the suffix: *-jar* and *-jary* (Borgojakov 1976: 92). This leads to another observation:

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<sup>1</sup> Old Turkic had its own directive suffixes: *-(a)r*, *-ra*, *-ru*, which are also involved in the evolution of *-jar(y)* and *-sar(y)*.

<sup>2</sup> That is why these elements are sometimes rightly considered postpositions, rather than suffixes – they retain their velar vowels also after palatal stems, as in Khak.dial. *köl sary* ‘towards a lake’ (in Borgojakov 1976: 92 written both «көл сары» and «көлсары»); on the other hand, there also exists *tigērzerē* «тигирзери» (< *\*tigēr sara*) ‘towards sky’ (op.cit.) with palatal (*\*-gēr za-* > *-gēr ze-*) and voicedness assimilation (*\*-r s-* > *-r z-*) which contradicts the postpositional character of *-sary* – a clear case of “suffixes in progress”.

[1d] Khak., Sh. *s-* = Oyr. *j-* (only in these suffixes).<sup>3</sup>

This phonetic fact is curious indeed because the correspondence is otherwise only known from Yakut, i.e. Yak. *s-* = General Tk. *j-* (~ *ǰ-* ~ *ǰ̃-*).

## 2.

The discussion on the morphological structure and the origins of the new directive suffixes which certainly evolved from postpositions *jar*, *sar*, etc. has never been especially lively. It was W. Bang who first tried to solve the problem, or rather: all the problems connected with the Turkic directive. His suggestions were as follows:

[2a] The postposition *jar* ~ *jār* 'towards' goes back to an old directive form in *-ar* from Tk. *jak* 'side', i.e. *jar* ~ and < *jār* < \**jagar* < \**jakar* < *jak* 'side' (Bang 1917: 28, § 30.7a).

[2b] The word *jak* (attested e.g. as Trkm.dial. *jāk* 'side', Tat., Nog. *jak* '1. id.; 2. edge, fringe', see ÈSTJa IV 82) is etymologized in the following way: «? < \**ja-k*; vgl. *jan* < *ja-n* ?; *jan* in SV < *ja-ŋ* ?» (Bang l.c.).<sup>4</sup>

[2c] The postposition *sar* ~ *sār* 'towards' goes back to \**sagar* which is quite parallel to \**jagar* in [2a], i.e. *sar* ~ and < *sār* < \**sagar* < \**sakar* < *sak* 'side' (Bang l.c.; however, with a reference to p. 29, § 30.7c, where he suggests that Khak. *sar* should be identical with Uyg. *sary*, without an explanation of *-y*).

[2d] Even if *sar* is etymologized here in a way perfectly parallel to *jar*, Bang (op.cit. § 30.7a) reckons with a possibility that the correspondence *jar* = *sar* is of semantic character only. Should this fact be interpreted as a suggestion of their possibly differing morphological structures (even if the rest of Bang's formulations argue in favour of their parallelism)?

Bang's explanation compels us to pose the following questions:

[2e] Are *jak* 'side' and *jan* id. two derivatives ultimately of the same root \* $\sqrt{ja}$ ?

[2f] How do *jak* 'side' and *sak* id. compare?

[2g] If it is true that *jar*, *sar* < \**jagar*, \**sagar*, how, then, should the final vowel in *jary*, *sara*, etc. be explained?

It was only somewhat later on in the history of Turkological research that Old Turkic *synar* 'direction' also became involved in the considerations on the history of the Turkic directives but we may pose a still other question right now:

<sup>3</sup> The suffix-initial *z-* is clearly a secondary development of an earlier *s-*.

<sup>4</sup> The abbreviation "SV" is not explained by Bang. It was possibly used for modern "Suv." = *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*, i.e. the Old Turkic version of the "Golden Light Sutra".

[2h] How do Old Tkc. *syjar* ‘direction’ (also used as a directive postposition) and *sar* ~ *jar* compare?

In what follows, I shall try to find answers to all four questions.

### 3.

A. Zajączkowski (1932) and M. Lewicki (1938) in principle continue Bang’s interpretation, although with some diverging details.

Zajączkowski (1932: 48) divides Karaim *sary* ‘towards’ into *sa-ry*, and then derives it from «\**sak-ry* ?». Since he also derives Brb., Kzk. *ja-ry* < *jak*, one may assume that he, also here, posits an intermediate link \**jak-ry*.

The question mark put by Zajączkowski after the form \**sak-ry* might seem justified since \*-*kr*- usually changed into *-r*- in older times, as can be seen, even today, in Tksh. *ufarak* < \**ufak-rak* ‘smaller’, *küçürek* < \**küçük-rek* ‘smaller’, *alçarak* < \**alçak-rak* ‘lower’. However, examples of this kind can only be shown for two suffixes: *-rak* (comparative) and *-cık* (deminutive) so that the change usually is explained as a dissimilation at a distance: \*-*Vk* + \*-*CVk* > \*-*VkCVk* > *-VCVk*. This, however, does not concern \**sak-ry*, which has no \*-*k* in the word-final position.

M. Lewicki’s (1938: 21) starting point is Chag. *jaŋkary* ‘to (one/the) side, on (one/the) side’ (< *jan* ‘side’), which he most probably would divide into *jan* + dat. *-ka* + dir. *-ry*. He will have considered the consonant *ŋ* here secondary (*-ŋk*- < \*-*n k*-) because he neither makes any remark about this *ŋ* nor heeds it in his reconstruction. Besides, he criticizes Bang for his formula \**jak* > \**jagar*, which, as Lewicki (l.c.) puts it, contradicts Bang’s own opinion on the phonetic evolution of *jokaru* ‘upward’ that suggests a directive form like \**jakkar* (< \**jak*), rather than \**jagar*,<sup>5</sup> and \**jakkar* could not have possibly come under contraction.

Lewicki in turn traces *jary* ~ *jāry* back to \**jaŋary*. He does not directly explain the structure of \**jaŋary* but saying that it is in close connection with *jaŋkary* (< \**jan-ka-ry*) he probably means a division like \**jan-ga-ry* or \**jaŋ-(g)a-ry*. Both conjectures are hard to accept: Why should the dative form have been \**jan-ga* here if it was \**jan-ka* in case of \**jaŋkary*? A construct like \**jaŋ-(g)a-ry* posits a protoform \**jaŋ* whereas Lewicki operates with \**jan* only.

All in all, both Zajączkowski and Lewicki work in the spirit of Bang: they do not suggest any entirely different solution, nor look for an answer to any of the questions [2e]-[2h].

<sup>5</sup> This passage does not seem fully understandable because Bang (1917: 10, § 5) suggests both \**jokkar* and \**jogar* (however, without any explanation about the relation between the reconstructs).

## 4.

Borgojakov's book (1976) – despite its most promising title – does not contribute really much to the topic. The author makes no reference to the European literature, and the material he has collected is presented in a rather chaotic way. On the other hand, he rightly puts the Turkic postposition *sāry* 'towards' together with Khakas syntagms like *oŋ sarī* 'the right side', *sol sarī* 'the left side', *ol sarī* 'that side', *pu sarī* 'this side' (Borgojakov 1976: 93).<sup>6</sup>

The most interesting passage concerning the *-sar* directives in Borgojakov's book is that on the forming of a new ablative, based on *-sar* forms, i.e.

**[4a]** Forms of the directive I (old lexicalized formations) in *\*-gar* like Khak. *taxsar* (< *\*taš-gar*) 'outside' and *pēr* (< *\*pu-ger*) 'hither' have their ablative I in (*\*-gar*)-*tyŋ/n*, e.g. *taxsar-tyŋ/n* 'from outside', *pēr-tęŋ/n* 'from here'.

**[4b]** Analogically, directive II in *-sar* has also produced its own ablative forms in (*-sar*)-*tyŋ/n* that can be called ablative II, e.g. *tagzar* 'towards a mountain' vs. *tagzar-tyŋ/n* 'from around a mountain', *ibzer* 'towards a house' vs. *ibzer-tęŋ/n* 'from around a house' (Borgojakov 1976: 94).

However, these facts, as interesting as they are, do not contribute to our problem in any way.

## 5.

As can be seen from what has been said above, no real progress was achieved during the 60 years between Bang (1917) and Borgojakov (1976), and Bang's presentation still remained the best. All-embracing Soviet studies like Ščerbak 1977 and ÈSTJa did not change the situation either.

Ščerbak (1977: 49) only derives the directive suffix *-sa(r)*<sup>7</sup> from *sary* 'side' – however, unlike Zajączkowski 1932, without any mention of forms like *jāry* and without any comments.

In ÈSTJa IV, one can find modern attestations of *\*jāk* on p. 82 (cf. [2b] above), and those of *\*jān* (like Trkm. *jān* 'side') on p. 113 but no explanation of

<sup>6</sup> The direct phonetic predecessor of Khak. <сари> *sarī* is not really known. In non-first syllables, the vowel *i* is pronounced long, i.e. <сари> = [sa'ri:], and, what is even more important, it evolved from *\*CV+VC* and *\*VC+V(C)* sequences, e.g. *ojnīr* 'he will play' < *\*ojna-* 'to play' + *-ar*, *pęstī* 'the ours' < *pęstęŋ* 'our' + *-ę* (Baskakov 1975: 13f.). Here, however, no such group seems to be possible because Khak. *sarī* certainly goes together with Tkc. *sāry* 'towards' back to *\*syŋaru* (see below), and no form like *\*syŋaru-(g)a* or alike is possible.

<sup>7</sup> Borgojakov (1976: 93f.) also attests the loss of *-r* in Oyrot dialects (*-sā*) and in Khakas (*-sā*, *-sa*, *-sē*, *-se*, *-zā*, *-za*, *-zē*, *-ze*).

the proportion between *\*jāk* and *\*jān* is suggested, nor is a reconstruction of the directive suffix presented.

From Bang's time till the end of the 20th century, virtually nothing changed. It was only W. Heschke (2001) who (indirectly) suggested new possibilities (even if it was not his goal to etymologize the directive suffix) when deriving the postposition *syŋaru* 'towards' < dir. *\*syŋar-ru* < *syŋar* 'direction'.<sup>8</sup> The simplification of *\*-rr-* > *-r-* might raise some doubts because the *-r r-* sequence (as in Tksh. *nar reçeli* 'pomegranate marmalade', *sonbahar rapsodisi* 'autumn rhapsody', *her resim* 'every picture') is never shortened to *-r-*.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, other solutions are connected with even greater complications:

- [5a] «*Syŋaru* is the 3Sg possessive form of *syŋar* 'direction'.» – This solution would have been very good<sup>10</sup> if the possessive suffix were labial in Old Turkic (or still earlier) times. In actual fact, it was illabial in Old Turkic (Erdal 2004: 160) and still even in 14th and 15th century Ottoman Turkish (Zajaczkowski 1934: 155). Thus, the Old Turkic possessive form would have been *\*syŋary* whereas the runic script leaves no doubt: the word-final rune of *syŋaru* may only be read *-u*, not *-y* (Heschke 2001: 56).
- [5b] «*Syŋar* is a deverbal formation (aorist *-ar*) < *\*syŋ-* or *\*syn-*.»<sup>11</sup> – A verbal stem *\*syŋ-* seems never to have existed. But there was a verb *sy-n-* 'to be broken' (Erdal 1991 II 613), and one cannot exclude a connection between this verb and the substantive *syn* (? < *\*sy-n*) '1. (Old Uyg.) member, component; 2. (MK.) body, trunk', as well as *syŋar* '1. half; 2. side' (semantically, maybe: 'broken' → *\*fragment* → 'component' → '(one) half' → 'side'; how should the meaning 'body, trunk' be incorporated into this chain?). – Also this idea requires some additional assumptions and it cannot explain the form *syŋaru*, so it cannot be readily considered better than Heschke's solution.

<sup>8</sup> A list of attestations of *syŋar* can be found in Heschke (2001) and Li (2004).

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, no indigenous Turkic example with *-rr-* in the word-medial position could be found.

<sup>10</sup> I consider it "very good" because such a construction has parallels in Turkic, cf. Tksh. *gibi* 'as, like' << *\*kēpi* < *\*kēp* 'picture' + 3.Sg. possessive suffix *-i*.

<sup>11</sup> Bang (1917: 10, fn. 3) tried to divide *syŋar* into *\*syn-ka-r* which is an understandable device in view of its resemblance to Chag. *jaŋkary* 'to(wards) a side', and so on. However, he only could adduce a Kazakh substantive *syn*, attested in Radl. IV 628 with the meaning of 'das Äußere, die Gestalt'. The problem is that Radloff exemplifies this meaning with Kzk. *syn tas* 'eine aufgestellte Steinfigur' (l.c.), and this syntagm actually means 'Götzen-Stein', cf. Kzk. *syn* 'Götze', Oyr. *syn* 'Menschengestalt' (l.c.). In other words, the word *syn* means '1. human figure; 2. idol', the Kazakh nominal group *syn tas* literally means 'idol stone' (what we would rather call a 'stone idol'), and a Kazakh word *syn* 'appearance, shape' does not exist at all – it is just a wrong translation in Radloff's dictionary.

Now, it might seem that Hesche's explanation would remain for years in Turkology. The phonetic problem with *-rr-* is admittedly connected with a morphological question: why should a work like *syŋar* have received the suffix *-ru*, if there was also an *-ar*? A formation like *\*syŋar-ar* would have been quite easy to pronounce. Nevertheless, the previous tempo of discussion did not permit one to expect another solution really soon. And yet, only three years later M. Erdal (2004) suggested another etymology – one that can be accepted as the best solution, which, in addition, can be incorporated into the Turkic system of dative forms. According to this explanation, the word *syŋar*, «being similar to the datives *aŋar* and *muŋar*» (Erdal 2004: 178) was originally a dative form «from the putative pronoun», represented by «the 3rd person possessive suffix *+(s)In+*» (l.c.)<sup>12</sup> whereas *syŋaru* was a directive form from the same pronoun (op.cit. 207). – Cf. [7b].

## 6.

Having made a presentation of opinions starting with Bang's times we can move on now to our question [2f]: How do *jak* 'side' and *sak* compare? It comes as something of a surprise that the equivalence of *j-* and *s-* was passed over in silence in the discussion because it is only known as a proportion between Yakut (*s-*) and Standard Turkic (*j- ~ ǰ- ~ ǰ̣-*). Another peculiarity is that *jak* has its parallel variants *jan* and *jaŋ* while there exists no *\*san* or *\*saŋ* for *sak*.

The form *sak* is adduced by A. Zajączkowski (1932: 48) as a Sagay and Chagatay word meaning 'side, place', and it is probably cited after Radl. IV 240 because no other dictionary, as far as I know, records it. But Radloff's notation is not quite clear. It reads as follows: «(Dschag.) Sag.», and it is hard to explain why the abbreviation "Dschag." is put in parentheses. What follows is a one-sentence example in which this word appears three times – however, always only as *sagymda*, i.e. *ikki sagymda* 'on my both sides', *oŋ sagymda* 'on my right', *sol sagymda* 'on my left'. It remains unclear whether the unpossessive nominative form actually is *sak* or, maybe, *sag* here. Finally, yet another possibility cannot be excluded either: *sagymda* evolved as a result of nasal dissimilation from *\*saŋymda*, and, consequently, the unpossessive nominative was *\*saŋ*. In other words: The formation *sagymda* is attested three times but in only one sentence; the word *sak* as such is not attested at any place (besides Radloff). In this situation, I feel compelled to exclude it entirely from my further consideration.

<sup>12</sup> For this pronoun, which is better noted as *+sI(n)+* (Erdal 2004: 207), as well as for the reconstruction of the Turkic pronominal system, see esp. Kotwicz 1936.

Nevertheless, the existence of the directive suffixes *-jār ~ -jar* and *-sār ~ -sar* is beyond any doubt.

The *j-* variants cause few problems because they can easily be derived from *\*jān* ‘side’, Unlike Bang, however, I am not ready to explain *\*jān* as a morphological formation parallel to *jāk* and *jāη* and going back to a root *\*√jā*. I would rather opt for a purely phonetic evolution: PTkc. *\*jāη* ‘side’ > [α] *jāη* ~ [β] *\*jāg* (> *jak ~ jagV*) ~ [γ] *jān*. In this situation the dative (*-ga*) was:

[6a] *\*jāη-ga, \*jān-ga > \*jāηa* (for [α] and [γ]);

[6b] *\*jāgga* (for [β]).

Each of these dative forms could have also received a directive suffix: *-(a)r, -ra* or *-ru*,<sup>13</sup> so that the following variants would have turned up:

[6c] *\*jāηa-r, \*jāgga-r > jār*;

[6d] *\*jāηa-ra, \*jāgga-ra > jāra*;

[6e] *\*jāηa-ru, \*jāgga-ru > jāru*.

Thus, the origins and the phonetic evolution of the *j-* postpositions may be considered – at least roughly speaking – settled.

## 7.

The *s-* variants of the directive suffix *-sār* cannot possibly be explained in a parallel way because no serious hints point to a PTkc. *\*sāη* (or even *\*sāk*) ‘side’. That is why I would like to suggest another evolution of *-sār(V)*, namely:

[7a] The substantive *syηar* ‘direction’ was, in Old Turkic, also used as a postposition with the meaning ‘in the direction of, towards’ (Erdal 2004: 403) (originally probably ‘towards him’, see below).

[7b] It probably was in order to intensify the postpositional meaning of *syηar* that it received the old directive suffix *-ru*, i.e., if one accepts Erdal’s explanation, one will be inclined to say: The directive suffix *-ru* was attached to the fossilized dative, i.e. *\*syηgar* (dat.) + *\*-ru* (dir.) > *\*syηarru*, and in this way we have reached Hesche’s reconstruction, and it has proved to be useful after all.

I in turn would rather suggest that both *syηar* and *syηaru* can be explained as original directives based on the dative form *\*syηa* (< *\*syn-ga*), i.e. earlier directive: dat. *\*syηa* + dir. *\*-(a)r > syηar* (> *-sār > -sar*); later directive: dat. *\*syηa* + dir. *\*-ru > syηaru* (> *-sāry > -sary*). – The fact that the directive *syηar* in the course of time received a substantival meaning has a good parallel in Tksh. *tašra* ‘provinces, country’ < *\*taš* ‘outside’ + dir. *\*-ra*. – The semantic substantivization of *syηar* may have been a good reason to form a new directive

<sup>13</sup> For the variants of the directive suffix cf. the table in Lewicki 1938: 36.

postposition *syŋaru* that was semantically more transparent. Be that as it may, we should talk about *syŋar* as a postposition that became a substantive, rather than about a postpositionally used substantive. – The starting point of this explanation is of course the pronoun +*sI(n)*+, as suggested by Erdal (see § 5).

Similarly, a formation like *\*syn-ga-ra* (> *\*syŋara*) might be posited, too. A further phonetic evolution: *\*syŋara* > *-sāra*, *syŋaru* > *-sāry* is easily imaginable. But it is also possible that, in an epoch in the history of Turkic, *\*syŋara* and *\*jāŋara*, as well as *syŋaru* and *\*jāŋaru* coexisted in one dialect or in some adjacent dialects. In this case a contamination would also be conceivable:

[7c] *\*jāŋara* ↔ *\*syŋara* > *\*saŋara* (and then: > *-sāra*);

[7d] *\*jāŋaru* ↔ *syŋaru* > *\*saŋaru* (and then: > *-sāry*).

In this way, *-jāra* and *-sāra*, *jaru* and *-sāry* came into being – forms that look very similar, indeed, even if the long vowel in *j*- variants is simultaneously original and secondary (*\*-āŋa-* > *-ā-*), while in *s*- variants, it is always secondary (*\*-yŋa-*, *\*-aŋa-* > *-ā-*).

## 8.

Let us try now to formulate answers to our questions [2e]-[2h]:

Ad [2e]: Tk. *jak* and *jan* are newer phonetic variants of the older *jāk* and *jān*. Their third variant is *jaŋ* < *\*jāŋ*. There is no necessity to introduce a new root *\*√ja* (W. Bang) or rather *\*√jā* because *\*jāk*, *\*jān* and *\*jāŋ* can be all derived phonetically from an original PTk. *\*jāŋ* (see § 6).

Ad [2f]: No word *sak* is attested as such. Its derivative *sagynda* ‘on my side’ is uncertain and it still remains to be explained (see § 6).

Ad [2g]: The final vowels in *jary*, *sara* and so on reflect the final vowel of the old directive suffix *-ru*, *-ra*.

Ad [2h]: *Sar* is a younger variant of *sār* which in turn comes from *syŋar*, used both as a postposition ‘towards’ and as a substantive ‘direction’. *Jar*, too, is a new variant; its source is *jār* that reflects a directive form (*\*jāŋar*, *\*jāggar*) of the original *\*jāŋ* or its variant *\*jāg* (see § 6.7). Thus, the proportion should be *syŋar* ~ *sar* vs. *jar*, rather than *syŋar* vs. *sar* ~ *jar*, as it was put in the question.

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