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Dravidian and Altaic Parts of the Body

5. ‘Extremities’ – Head, Finger, Foot/leg

Abstract

The paper discusses three Dravidian and Altaic etymological nests with the meaning ‘head’, ‘finger’ and ‘foot/leg’. In the introductory section some of the theoretical prerequisites are specified with a preliminary conclusion that the character of the Dravidian and Altaic parallels points to an early high contact situation between ancestor languages, in which a process of borrowing took place not long before the historical period started. The great variability/irregularity, or even ‘fuzziness’, of the parallels and the many grammatical ‘lacunae’ can be considered symptomatic of the contact situations as they are described by modern sociolinguistic studies. The three etymological nests then list the available parallels in the two language families (corresponding both formally, and also semantically, including some typical semantic extensions). To illustrate the Dravidian lexical context more clearly, various Dravidian synonyms are included together with a more detailed description of their occurrences and variations in other Dravidian languages and also their occurrences in the oldest literary documents of Old Tamil (Sangam literature, around the beginning of the Christian era).

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In recent years my study of the Dravidian lexical parallels concentrated on several topics. Besides an earlier study of select kinship terms (Vacek, Lubsangdorji 1994), it examined various lexemes from the basic vocabulary (Vacek 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b), some verbs (Vacek 2003, 2004c, 2005a, 2005b, 2006b, 2007c, 2008a, 2009b, 2009d, 2009e), select terms for animals (2002c, 2004a) and also designations of the various parts of the ‘body’ (2005c, 2006c, 2007a, 2008b, 2009d). Some of the

'body' etymologies have already been briefly mentioned.¹ For some terms referring to the parts of the body, which appear to be shared by Dravidian and Uralian, cf. T. Burrow (1943–6; repr. 1968).²

The number of lexical parallels is relatively great and covers a broad field of the basic vocabulary. In what follows the assumption of the phonetic parallels is based on my earlier studies of the phonetic correspondences, mainly interpreted in terms of 'models' within a continuum of forms (Vacek 2002a, and especially 2004b or 2006a). Some more general presentations of the problem of Dravidian and its relations to other language families may be found in the earlier works of K.V. Zvelebil (1990, 1991 including further references).

While dealing with this subject it becomes ever more evident that the general character of the Dravidian and Altaic parallels – their irregularities (or even 'fuzziness'), partial representation of the system (both lexical and morphological) and the obvious lacunae (no parallels in pronouns or numerals) – points to an early contact between the prehistoric ancestor languages and the borrowing of parts of the lexical system as well as of morphology. Though there are some morphological parallels (particularly in the verb structure), we obviously have to do not with a language family in the narrow sense of the word but with ancient high contact languages (Trudgill 1989), which resulted in a rather irregular or fuzzy type of correspondence.

The general implications of this comparison, including the possible historical background, viz. prehistoric linguistic areas, etc., have also been discussed in my previous papers (especially Vacek 2002a, pp. 25f., 155ff.; Vacek 2004b, pp. 392, 441 Note 50, 448f. /repr. 2006a/), and particularly in several most recent papers (Vacek 2009a, 2009c, 2010 in press). For further inspiration cf. also Thomason, Kaufman (1988) and more recently e.g. Stádník (2005), who describes the mechanisms of development of languages in contact ('Mechanismen einer sprachkontaktbedingten Entwicklung'). The irregular correspondences and lacunae, besides a relatively massive presence of lexical parallels, are in fact a 'diagnostic feature' defining or confirming the existence of a high contact situation in the past and the extensive borrowing or creation of an 'ad-stratum' or more layers (a 'sandwich') in the ancient languages of the Indian linguistic area.³ This should then be studied in the context of the works which have dealt with the problems of the Indian linguistic area so far, including its historical dimension (Hook 1987; Southworth 2005, pp. 229ff. with further references; Krishnamurthy 2003,

¹ E.g. Ta. *mey* 'body' (DEDR 5073), Mo. *bej-e* 'body' (Vacek 2007d, No. 28); Ta. *kāl* 'foot, leg' (DEDR 1479), Mo. *köl* 'leg' (Vacek 2004b and 2007d, No. 1); the latter parallel was also mentioned by R. Caldwell (1913[3], p. 617; cf. Vacek 2004b, Note 6; cf. also Note 19 below). These parallels were noticed very early by me after I started learning Mongolian in the mid-1970s.

² For further references concerning the lexical comparison of Dravidian and Altaic and of the theoretical implications cf. Vacek 2004b (repr. 2006a) and 2009.

³ In fact a similar interpretation based on the concept of language contact within a linguistic area may be applied to the partly 'controversial' Altaic 'hypothesis' in assessing the mutual relation of the 'genetic framework' and 'areal factor' (Schönig 2003, pp. 403–404; with further references pp. 418–419).

pp. 2ff., 43ff., 501ff.), and also its social aspects (cf. Deshpande 1995). As I have pointed out elsewhere (Vacek 2009), this requires first of all patient heuristic work in order to provide the broadest possible material basis.

What remains to be determined is the approximate time and space of the early contact, in other words the presumed external history, which is still hidden in the dark. There may, however, be some clues which point to the first half of the first millennium B.C. and the process may have been connected with the arrival of iron-using megalithic people to India from Central Asia.⁴ It would require further investigation and specification of the characteristics of the megalithic culture to see whether it could have been ethnically mixed, or alternatively carried by parallel groups of nomads (?), who could have spoken not only a variety of early Indo-Aryan, but also some other language of the originally Central Asiatic nomads (cf. also Vacek 2009, note 7; and Vacek 2010 in press).

In order to illustrate the Dravidian lexical context more clearly, the following Dravidian lexical items compared with Altaic are accompanied by a number of their synonyms in Dravidian. These synonyms in fact confirm that there were more lexemes in the Dravidian languages for these concepts, which also supports the possibility that some of them could have originated in a high contact situation with an Altaic source language. Besides that I also provide a selective examination of the frequency of the compared Dravidian words and of their synonyms in the oldest Dravidian texts from the time around the beginning of the Christian era, viz. Old Tamil Sangam literature (if the synonyms are found in Old Tamil). Only a few important texts of the Akam genre (love poetry – *Akanāṇūru*, *Narṇai*, *Kuruntokai*, *Aiṅkurunūru*) and Puram genre (public life etc. – *Puṇāṇūru*) were used for this purpose. These texts represent something like a point of reference in space and time. Some of the words are used very frequently in the old texts, but in some cases the frequency of the synonyms is rather low and their distribution in Dravidian is limited. These facts will have to be considered in future with regard to a more exhaustive range of material, which will allow a better understanding of the character and extent of the linguistic processes involved.⁵

1. Head

'Head' appears to be the basic meaning of the following etymon, though there are a few 'natural extensions' of its meaning to 'hair', 'top', 'tip' and the like. In these extensions this etymon also seems to agree with its Altaic counterparts.

⁴ For the megalithic culture and its interpretation cf. e.g. an earlier work of Parpola (1973), who connects the megalithic culture with Indo-Aryans (also Parpola 1999). But inspiration may also be drawn from purely archaeological reports, e.g. Satyamurthy (1992), who clearly shows that the megalithic culture was not homogeneous in form, and perhaps this can be of special importance in this context. Cf. also Vacek 2009.

⁵ The requirement to know the history of the individual words in the context of comparative Altaic studies was also voiced by Ts. Shagdasarjüng (2005).

As for the phonetic variations, some of them may be symptomatic of an early contact situation (cf. St ad n i k 2005).

- Ta. *talai* head, top, end, tip, hair⁶
talaippu beginning, ending, end or edge of cloth
talaimai leadership, pre-eminence
talaivan chief, headman, lord; fem. *talaivi*
- Ma. *tala* head, top, point, extremity
talakkam, *talappu* top of tree
talāṭi, *talāṭu* top of tree, point, tip
- Ko. *tal* head, top, above, superior
talp end (of stick, branch, rope, etc.)
- To. *tal* head, end, edge
taṣ superior division of *ti*: dairy
taṣm top
taṣt which is on top
talp tip (of stick, horn, penis)
taṣ-tiṇ platform (*tiṇ*) against inner wall of house, where vessels, etc., are kept
teṣamf- to perform child's hair-cutting and naming ceremony (lit. to prepare head; for *-amf-*, see 162)
- Ka. *tale*, *tala* head, being uppermost or principal
- Koḍ. *tale* end
talami hair of head or body; *talami-kaḷe* a single hair (*kaḷe* a weed; see 1373)
- Tu. *tarè* head, top, hair of head
- Te. *tala* head, hair of the head; top, end, front; place, side, quarter
- Kol. *tal* head
- Nk. *tal* (*pl. -kul*) id.; (*pl. -śil*) honeycomb
- Nk. (Ch.) *tal* head
- Pa. *tel* id.; honeycomb
- Ga. *tal*, *tallu* head
- Go. *talla*, *talā*, *talā*, *talla*, *tala* id.
tallā (Tr.) the part of the comb in which honey is stored
talla (Ma.) honeycomb
- Konḍa *tala* head
- Kui *tlau* head, hair of head
tlāmbēri, *tlāmēri* hair of head (cf. 4707)

⁶ The lexeme is very frequent in Old Tamil Sangam literature, though with different meanings, not necessarily related to this etymon, e.g. 'place', 'to rain' (S a n g a m total **581x**; including derived forms **786x**). The ratio between the most frequently represented meanings, e.g. in *Puṇanāṇūru*: **50x** 'head', **37x** 'place' (VIS s.v.); in *Akanāṇūru*: **47x** 'head', **25x** 'top', **58x** 'place' (SVS s.v.); in *Narriṇai*: **52x** 'head', **12x** 'place' (Wilden 2008, III, s.v.); in *Kuṟuntokai*: **14x** 'head' (plus **1x** 'head of an elephant', Kuṟu. 308,2), **4x** 'top', **10x** 'place' (K r i ś n a m b a l s.v.); in *Aiṅkūṟunūru*: **6x** 'head', **2x** 'top', **4x** 'place' (E l a y a p e r u m a l s.v.).

- Kuwi *thṛāyū*, *trāyu* head
 Malt. *tali* hair of head (DEDR 3103)⁷
 To. *talk* head (in songs) (Saktivel 343)⁸

The Dravidian synonyms in the DEDR etyma are interesting in that the first one (1989) appears to be semantically variable and the specialised meaning 'head, summit' is limited only to Tamil. The second etymon is well represented in South and Central Dravidian.

- 1989 Ta. *ceṇṇi* head, summit⁹
 4682 Ta. *maṇṭai* head, skull, cranium, brainpan, top portion as of palms, a standard of measure, mendicant's bowl (Ma., Ko., To., Ka., Koḍ., Tu., Kor.)¹⁰

⁷ The DEDR adds the following remark: 'for the combination of meanings 'head' and 'honeycomb', cf. Pe. *pūki kapra* honeycomb (*kapra* head)'. Perhaps the latter word (*kapra*), which otherwise is not found in the DEDR, may be compared with Skt. *kapāla*-. Cf. Mayrhofer, KEWA and EWA s.v., where besides possible IE etymologies references are also made to (for Mayrhofer) unsatisfactory non-IA comparisons.

⁸ To be noted is the formal closeness of this word with Mo. *toluyai* (see below).

⁹ In Old Tamil Sangam literature also 'top', 'peak' and Chola king's title 'chief', 'leader' etc. (cf. VIS s.v., Subrahmanian 1966, s.v.; cf. also *talaivaṇ* above). Relatively frequent in Sangam (Sangam total 46x; including derived forms 60x; plus 2x *ceṇṇi* 'the Chola' Pura. 27,10; 225,9). Interestingly, the lexeme is more frequent in the Puraṇāṇūru (14x 'head', 4x 'Chola King'; VIS s.v.) than in the Akaṇāṇūru (6x 'head', 1x 'peak'; SVS s.v.), in *Narriṇai* (4x 'top', 1x Chola King's title; Wilden 2008, III, s.v.), in *Aiṅkuṇūru* (1x 'head', 1x 'top'; Elayaperumal s.v.), in *Kuṇṭokai* (2x 'head', 1x 'top'; Krishnambal s.v.).

However, the Tamil lexeme is isolated concerning the specialised meaning and form. The same form with a shifted meaning is reflected in

Ma. *cenni*, *kenni* temples; *cennam* jaw, cheek

Ka. *kenne* upper cheek

Tu. *kenni*, *kennē* cheek

The other languages included within this DEDR etymon display a rather great

formal variation (e. g. medial velars – Te. *cekku* etc., Ka. *kekke* cheek; medial labials – Ka. *keppe* temple, etc.; and even medial liquids! – Ma. *cella* cheek; Go. *gōrwī* cheek), and also

semantic variation, some of which may be related to other DEDR etyma: Ma. (temple, cheek, jaw; gills), Ko. (cheek just in front of ear), Ka., Tu. (cheek, temple), Te. (cheeks, gills, temples), Kol. (temple), Kol. (temple, cheek), Kuwi (jaw).

They may perhaps be related to some of the following DEDR etyma, with which they seem to be formally and semantically closer, cf.:

1977a Ta. *cevi* ear; *ceviṭu* cheek; etc. e.g. Ka. *kivi*, *kimi*, *kemi* ear; Pa. *kekol* id.; Kur. *xebdā* id.; **but** Koṇḍa *giṭoṇi* id.; Pe. *giṭul* (cf. 1199)

1977b Tu. *ceraḍu* ear, Kui *kriu*, *kiru*, *id.* (+ Kuwi)

1337 Ta. *kavul* temple or jaw of the elephant; Ma. cheek, etc. (Tu., Te., Pa., Kui); plus reference to Skt. *kapola*-id. Turner, CDIAL No. 2755

1199 Ta. *katuppu* cheek, hair (Kurub., Ka.)

2114 Ko. *kopli* mouth; Nk. *kopli* id.; Pa. *kuplong* cheek.

¹⁰ Old Tamil Sangam texts have preserved mainly the last meaning, viz. 'mendicant's bowl' – 8x in Puraṇāṇūru (VIS s.v.), 1x in Kuṇṭokai (Kuru. 169,4, Krishnambal s.v.), and also just a 'vessel' – 7x in Puraṇāṇūru (VIS s.v.), 4x in Akaṇāṇūru (SVS s.v.), and 'brain pan' (Pura. 372,7, cf. VIS s.v.). Sangam total of the lexeme is 16x (plus 6x inflected forms). Further cf. N. Subrahmanian (1966, s.v.). The word is not found in *Narriṇai*

1630 Kur. *kukk* head, extremity; mother-tuber (Malt. *kuku* head)¹¹

Besides that there are several other DEDR etyma where the meaning ‘head’ is also found, but the primary meanings appear to be ‘hair’, ‘face’, ‘top’ and the like.

Mo. *toluyai* head; top, tip, hillock
terigün head (anat., honorif., and fig.); chief; beginning; first, chief, foremost

MTD. *DIL* head, skull (Evenk., Sol., Neg., Oroch., Ud., Olcha, Orok., Nan.) (MTD I,205–6)

DULKUMI crown of the head (Nan.) (MTD I,223)

Orok. *tolpomū*, *torpomū* crown of the head

Nan. *tōrpoā* crown of the head (s.v. *TUŃULKĒN*, MTD II,217)

OT. *tuluŋ* the temples (anatomical); hence ‘the hair of the temples’, and later more generally a lock of hair’ (Cl. 501)¹²

2. Finger

Ta. *virāl* finger, toe; finger’s breadth¹³

veraṭṭi (Koll.) finger

Ma. *virāl* finger, toe; inch

Ko. *verl* finger, toe

To. *pe-ḷ* id.

Ka. *berāl*, *beraḷ* id.; tip of an elephant’s trunk

Koḍ. *bera* finger, toe

Tu. *bireḷu*, *berelū*, (B-K. also) *pireḷu* id.

(Wilden 2008, III) and *Aiṅkuṟunūṟu* (Elayaperumal). Similarly Ka. (*maṇḍage* ‘a big jar’ and Tu. *maṇḍē* ‘large earthen vessel’). The remaining forms in Ma., Ko., To., Ka., Koḍ., Tu., Kor. preserve the meaning of ‘head, skull’. The DEDR also refers to Skt. *maṇḍa-* ‘head’ (lex.), which is not found in Mayrhofer and is a non-IA element in Sanskrit lexicon.

¹¹ This etymon appears to be isolated in the North Dravidian languages.

¹² Starostin (II,1455) reconstructs Alt. **r’ōlu* ‘head’; PTung. **tōl-po-* ‘sinciput, top of head’; PMong. *tolugai* ‘head’; PTurk. **tul(g)uŋ* ‘temple, plait’; Cf. Uralic Vog. *tol’ax*, *tal’ax* Gipfel, Spitze, Ende; oberer Lauf des Flusses; Osty. *toi* etc. Gipfel, Kopf, Spitze (Burrow 1968, No. 1, p. 71–2); However, Rédei (I,533–4 s.v. *tuḍ’ka*) does not mention the meaning ‘head’, only ‘etw. Hervorragendes, Spitze’.

¹³ As for Old Tamil, in Sangam the word is preserved relatively frequently (Sangam total 58x, plus 6x derived forms). The distribution in texts varies, e.g. 18x in *Akanāṇūṟu* (SVS s.v.), 5x in *Puṇanāṇūṟu* (VIS s.v.), 3x in *Kuṟuntokai* (Kṛishnambal s.v.), 9x in *Narṟiṇai* (Wilden 2008, III, s.v.), 3x in *Aiṅkuṟunūṟu* (Elayaperumal s.v.).

- Kor. (O.) *berolu*, (M.) *berli* finger
 Te. *v(r)ēlu* finger, toe; inch
 Kol. *vende* finger, toe
 Nk. *vende* finger
 Pa. *vanda* id.
 Ga. (Oll. S.) *vande* id.
 Go. (Tr.) *wirinj*, *warēnj* finger, toe
 vers (L.), *viṛaskū* (pl.) (M.), *verenj*, *vaṛanj* (A.), *vaṛnj(i)* (Ma.), *vaṛnj* (Ko.) finger
 Konḍa (BB, K.) *ṛaska* finger, toe
 ṛeska, *veṛska* (K., dial.) finger
 Pe. *vacka* id.
 Mand. *vehpe* id.
 Kui *vanju* finger, toe, thumb
 Kuwi (F.) *vwānjū*, (S.) *wansu* (pl. *waska*), (Su. Isr.) *vanju* (pl. *vaska*), (P.) *veṛma* finger
 (DEDR 5409)

This etymon is common for South and Central Dravidian and it is the only one found in Old Tamil.

The other Dravidian synonyms in the DEDR etyma are rather limited and partly isolated:

- 4493 Ka. *boṭṭu*, *baṭṭu*, *beṭṭu* finger, toe (Te., Go., Konḍa, Kuwi)
 2720 Kur. *sūgul* forefinger (Malt.)

- Mo. *erekei* thumb, big toe

- MT. *hURUGUN* finger (Evenk., Even., Neg., Oroch., Neg., Ud., Ulch.) (MTD II,354)
 Only two languages preserve the initial labial:

- Nan. *perke* thumb
 Orok. *poror(n-)* thumb
 Ma. *ferxe* thumb; ring
 ferge spur (fourth finger of a bird)

- OT. *eṛṇe:k* finger (Cl. 234)
 Survives only as *ergek* in most NE languages including Khak. and Tuv., elsewhere displaced by *barmak* (*parmak*) which is noted in this meaning in all medieval languages (ibid.)
 Yak. *ärbäx* thumb (MTD II,354)¹⁴

¹⁴ For the Altaic reconstruction of this etymon (**p*"*erekei*) with a partly lost initial labial in the three Altaic groups cf. Cincius (1984, p. 71, No. 99). The initial labial was preserved in the MT. languages. Starostin

3. Foot

In this etymon there are a few unexpected semantic extensions ('relationship', 'excrement'), provided that they really belong to the etymon.

- Ta. *kāl* leg, foot, base (of tree), quarter, family, relationship¹⁵
kālāl foot soldier
kālī herd of cows, cow
- Ma. *kāl* leg, foot, stem, pillar, quarter
kālāl foot-soldier
kālī cow, cattle; she-buffalo
- Ko. *ka-l* leg, foot, base (of tree), quarter
- To. *ko-l* leg, foot, quarter, family, progeny
kaḍ xo-l mox last-born son (for *kaḍ*, see 1109)
ko-lk ir- (child) sits on mother's leg to defecate
ko-ṣ excrement
me-ṇ go-ṣ shade (lit. foot) of tree
- Ka. *kāl* foot, leg down to the knee, quarter
kālu-naḍe walking on foot; a cow; *kālāl* foot-soldier
- Koḍ. *ka-li* leg, foot, quarter
- Tu. *kāru* leg, foot; *kālū* quarter
- Te. *kālu* leg, foot, quarter; *kālari* foot-soldier
- Kol. *kāl* leg, foot
- Pa. *kəl* leg
- Ga. (Oll.) *kāl* id.
- Go. *kāl* id.
- Konḍa *kāl* id.
- Pe. *kāl* id.
- Mand. *kāl* id.
- Kui *kaḍu* leg, foot
- Kuwi *kāl* leg
- ? Br. *trikkal* tripod of three sticks on which tent is hung (DEDR 1479)¹⁶

(2003.II, p. 1093) uses different data and reconstructs Alt. **p̄āri* 'finger, finger width (measure)'; PTung. **pargan* 'ski bedding for a foot, a measure of length (one centimeter)'; PTurk. **biaryak* 'finger, thumb'; Cf. also Uralic **pālkä* 'Daumen' (Rédei 1988.I, p. 363).

¹⁵ In Sangam the basic meaning 'leg' is preserved frequently: e.g. **54x** in *Narriṇai* (Wilden 2008, III, s.v.), **37x** in *Akanāṇūru* (SVS s.v.), **26x** in *Puṇanāṇūru* (VIS s.v.), **21x** in *Kuṇṭokai* (Kriṣṇambal s.v.), **4x** in *Aiṅkuṇūru* (Elayaperumal s.v.), besides the extended meanings 'foot of a tree' (Aka. **31x**, Aiṅk. **8x**), 'flower stalk' (Aka. **9x**, Kuṇ. **3x**), 'stem' (Aka. **6x**, Aiṅk. **8x**, Puṇ. **11x**), and even 'relationship' (Aka. **1x**). The Sangam total of the word with all the different meanings (related also to different etyma, e.g. 'wind', 'time', 'wheel' etc.) is relatively very high (**540x**).

¹⁶ The DEDR mentions the Brahui word with a question-mark. If it is accepted, it is a combination of an IA (*tri-* 'three') and Dravidian (*kāl*) lexeme.

This etymon is well represented in South and Central Dravidian (plus the slightly questionable word in Br.) and it is almost complementary with DEDR 1943 (Central and North Dravidian; note also the distribution of meanings):

1943 Te. *giṭṭa* etc. hoof (Kol. 'foot, leg, hoof'; Nk. 'foot'; Pa. 'leg from knee to ankle'; Go., Konḍa 'hoof'; Kur. *xedḍ* 'foot, leg'; Malt. *qedu* 'the legs, the feet')

The other DEDR synonyms are from South and Central Dravidian. Note that in South Dravidian there are practically three almost synonymous etyma. The last etymon seems to be related to an IA etymon:

3185 Ta. *tal* leg, foot, foot of a tree or mountain, stem, pedicle, stalk (+ Ma., Ko., To., Ka., Kod., ?Te.)¹⁷

72 Ta. *aṭi* foot, footprint, base, bottom (+ Ma., Ko., To., Ka., Kod., Tu., Te., Ga., Go., Konḍa)¹⁸

App. 6 Ko. *aj* footprint (To., Ka., Tu., Te. *ajja* foot, footprint) (reference to Turner CDIAL No. 7778 *pādya* footsteps, path etc., Pali *pajja*- path)

Mo. *köl* a. foot, leg; b. something resembling or functioning as a leg or foot; foot, leg, base, stand, lower part of an object, etc.¹⁹

Cf. also

yuja-a thigh, rump; shank, leg²⁰

¹⁷ This word is relatively well represented in Old Tamil. The Sangam total of the word with all the different meanings (related also to different etyma, e.g. 'pin that holds the tenon in a mortise', 'effort') is relatively very high (172x). The basic meaning 'foot' is preserved frequently: e.g. 13x in *Akanāṇṇūru* (SVS s.v.), 31x in *Puṇāṇṇūru* (VIS s.v.), 24x in *Narṇṇai* (Wilden 2008, III, s.v.), 3x in *Aiṅkuṇṇūru* (Elāyaperumal s.v.), 2x in *Kuṇṇutokai* (Krishnambal s.v.), besides the extended meanings 'foot of a tree' (Aka. 7x; Kuṇ. 4x), 'flower stalk' (Aka. 5x; Kuṇ. 2x; Puṇ. 2x), 'foot of crane' (Kuṇ. 1x), 'foot of crab' (Kuṇ. 1x).

¹⁸ The Sangam total of the Tamil word with all the extended meanings is also relatively very high (164x). The basic meaning 'foot' is preserved frequently: e.g. 33x in *Akanāṇṇūru* (SVS s.v.), 32x in *Puṇāṇṇūru* (VIS s.v.), 14x in *Narṇṇai* (Wilden 2008, III, s.v.), 9x in *Kuṇṇutokai* (Krishnambal s.v.), 2x in *Aiṅkuṇṇūru* (Elāyaperumal s.v.), besides the extended meanings 'root' (Aka. 1x), 'base of the arrow' (Aka. 1x), 'base of the mortar' (Kuṇ. 1x).

¹⁹ This is an early Dravidian parallel with 'Scythian' proposed by R. Caldwell. Cf. Caldwell 1913(3), p. 617: Tungusian *chalgan*, *halgan*; Mo. *k'ul* (Caldwell's spelling). His Tungusian example probably corresponds to MT. *ĀLĀN* II 'boots' (in Ma., MTD I,460). Cf. also MT. *GULĀ* 'boots' (Olcha, Nan., Ma., Jurchen; MTD I,170) and the formal and semantic variation of MT. *GAJIN* below.

²⁰ Cf. DEDR 1840 Ta. *kuṇṇu* thigh;

and note the variants with dentals, cerebrals, liquids and glides: Kol. *kudug* id.; Pa. *kudu*, *kuḍu* id.; Ga. *kuyug* etc. id.; Go. *kurkt*, *kurki*, *kurk*, etc. id.; Kui *kuju* etc. id.;

and particularly the sibilants in North Dravidian: Kur. *xosga* leg, thigh; Malt. *qosge* thigh.

The variation of sibilants and liquids is interesting in that it is reminiscent of a similar phenomenon in Altaic (Vacek 2002a, pp. 28ff., 277ff.; 2004b, p. 391; No. 23, p. 422; p. 426). For the Kurukh and Malto forms, cf. Burrow (1968, p. 95) referring to Zyr. *kosk*, *kusk* Kreuz am Leibe; Voty. *kus* Hüfte, Mitte des Leibes, etc. However, Rédei (II,648) has *kask* Kreuz (des Körpers), Mitte des Körpers.

MT. *GAJIN* trouser leg (Neg. < **gari*; the liquid is preserved in the other languages: Oroch., Olcha, Orok., Nan., Ma.; the meaning varies from 'trouser leg' to 'high boots') (MTD I,136)²¹

Conclusion

The above three etymological nests represent another piece in the mosaic of Dravidian and Altaic lexical parallels belonging to the basic lexical stock. It is evident that there are some rather regular formal and semantic features (including the semantic extensions) besides a number of variations. On the Dravidian side the three compared lexemes have a number of synonyms, which could perhaps be another feature symptomatic of a mixture of languages in contact.

Thus these etymological nests confirm the findings made in my previous studies and also correspond to the conceptual framework defined above. However, it has to be underlined again that though the proposed general character of the linguistic relationship between Dravidian and Altaic (high contact in an early linguistic area) is a promising working hypothesis (cf. Vacek 2004b, p. 450), a lot of systematic heuristic work has still to be done to be able to better understand the ancient linguistic processes.

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²¹ No parallel was found in Turkic and this etymon does not seem to have been recorded by Starostin (2003).

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