

ON SOME OLD TURKIC WORDS IN KAZAKH*

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Abstract:

Old Turkic Runic inscriptions has been researched for more than a century. Though researchers have quite a lot of understandings on the Orkhon inscriptions so far, there are still a few keywords remain lacking convincing explanations. Using archives in Kazakh and Old Uighur materials, this paper explores the meanings of several words that appeared in Orkhon inscriptions, such as erig, id-, azman, yay, yalma, and yariy.

Key words: *Old Turkic inscriptions, some words, Kazakh, Old Uighur*

Kazakçadaki Bazı Eski Türkçe Sözcükler Üzerine

Özet:

Eski Türk Runik yazıtlarının araştırması yüz yıldan daha fazla tarihi geçmiş. Şimdi biz Orhon yazıtları üzerinde çok anlayışlı olduk. Amma yana birkaç sözlerin anlamı hakkında ikna edici anlayışımız olmalıdır. Bu makalede Kazak dili ile eski Uygurca maddeler kullanarak, Orhon yazıtlarındaki erig, id-, azman, yay, yalma ve yariy kelimelerinin anlamına tahlil etmek istiyoruz.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Eski Türk yazıtları, bazı kelimeler, Kazakça, Eski Uygurca*

In his paper *Notes on Some Old Turkic Words*, Professor Geng Shimin discusses words such as *qid-*, *alp*, *kügäli*, *iyar* in the Orkhon inscriptions by comparing them with examples from the Kazakh language (*Acta Orientalia*, 2002: Vol55). That paper greatly inspired me to write this article. To this day

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a number of Old Turkic words are preserved in the Kazakh language, some of them without any phonetic or semantic changes; some have had phonetic changes but maintained the original meaning (*yoq* > *joq*, *ädgü* > *iygi* ~ *izgi*, *oγlan* > *ulan*, *yay* > *jaw*, *yabiz* > *jawiz*, *adaq* > *ayaq*); some other words not only had phonetic changes but also became polysemous or their semantic meanings transferred. In such a sense, it is quite necessary to study the meaning and scope of these words in order to correctly understand diction and development in the language of the Orkhon inscriptions.

For example, *ämgak* means “pain” in both the Orkhon inscriptions and Uighur texts, however, in Kazakh, the sound changed into *engbek*, which means “labor.”¹ Is there any connection between these two? If yes, how did the semantic transformation happen? The only possible association could be war prisoners doing manual work in ancient times. Could it be their hard life experiences gave the meaning of “manual labor” to “pain?” It’s worth mentioning a proverb about *ämgak* in Kazakh: *engbegi barding embegi bar*. The original meaning of this proverb is not what is explained in the dictionary “He that works will gain the fruit” (You reap what you sow). I propose that in this proverb, *engbek* doesn’t have the “contemporary” meaning of “labor,” instead, it takes the “original” meaning of “pain.” Therefore, the proverb actually means “He that suffered from pain will gain the fruit.”

Just as the example of *ämgak*, which featured both phonetic and semantic changes, here I would like to talk about some more specific examples in the Kazakh language that were retained from Orkhon inscriptions times.

I.erig

y[ay]juq el ärsär anča taqı erig yertä irsär anča erig yertä bänggü taş toqıtdım (Kültegin, S13). Thomsen read it as ^ärīg ~ ^ärīg (Thomsen, p. 119), and Radloff read it as *äriq* (Radloff, p. 153), but both of them misread the previous *yayjuq*, hence the understanding for *erig* is affected. Several scholars also have their own interpretations of the word: “barren”(čorak) (Orkun, p. 28), “appropriate” (Onogawa, p. 37), “communication hub” (Malov, p. 35). In 1968, Tekin translated it as “much frequented”(Tekin1968, p. 263). In 2010, it is translated as “easy to get access to”(ayrıca kolay erişilir bir yer) (Tekin 2010, p. 23). Sartqoja translated it as “holy place” (kiyeli) (Sartqoja, p. 179). Geng Shimin translated it as “bustling,” also explained as “populated” in the vocabulary table (Geng, p. 120).

1 *emek* means ‘labor’ in Turkish, as well. Kaşğarî translates it as *mihna* (modern *mihnet*), which also means something like ‘toil’.

Clauson discussed the multiple meanings of *erig* in the Old Turkic and Old Uighur text period, but didn't propose any explanation for its significance in the Kültegin Inscription, and a “?” symbol is marked to show that it is unknown. As Clauson pointed out, *äriḡ* in Uighur text holds two meanings such as “enlightenment,” “teach” (*ötlä- äriḡlä-*) and “action” (*äriḡ barıy*). However, this *erig* is written as *ryg* or *rg* in the Kültegin Inscription, therefore it is justifiable to reconstruct it as *erig*. In Uighur texts, *öt äriḡ* or *ötlä- äriḡlä-* have wide vowels, and the vowel of the first syllable should be marked as *ä* rather than *e*. In this way, *äriḡ* in Uighur texts can be differentiated with *erig* in the Kültegin inscription.

Since *erig* has no connection to either *äriḡ barıy* or *öt äriḡ*, what exactly does *erig* mean? What is *erig yer* like? To what place is it close? (*yayıq*)

Although there has been a phonetic change for *erig* in Kazakh (*erig* > *eriw*), the original meaning has been retained, thus providing evidence for the interpretation of the Kültegin inscription.

In Kazakh, *eriw* refers to behaviors such as camping for a temporary stay while migrating from pasture to pasture. According to the Kazakh's common law of *törü*, when a family temporarily camps in a place during migration, the surrounding families are obligated to prepare a variety of food for their provisional “neighbor.” Such food or practices are called *eriwlik* or *eriwlik beriw*, as in the Kazakh saying *eriw elding eriwligi bar* (Those who are passing through will be given *eriwlik*) (Januzaqov, p. 180). If the stay lasts for days, it is called *eriw bol-* or *eriwle-*. According to the scope of meaning for *erig* in Kazakh, the term likely means “temporary camp during migration,” or even more likely means the inevitable path in migration from the winter village or spring pasture to the open range. It is adjacent (*yayıq*) to a variety of caravan routes to and fro in it, so the inscriptions are erected here for passerby to read. Strictly speaking, *erig* is not a “holy place,” nor “convenient place,” but a “temporary camp during migration.”

Some may ask, according to the phonetic change rules in Kazakh, is *-g* at the end of a syllable becoming *-y* equivalent to *-γ* at the end of a syllable becoming *-w*? This is quite a legitimate question, *-γ* > *-w* and *-g* > *-y* are indeed universal laws in Kazakh, however, in individual cases, *-g* ~ *-k* in the end of the syllable can also be changed to *-w*, as in the following examples, OT. *elig* ~ Kaz. *eliw* “fifty,” OT. *tiläg* ~ Kaz. *tilew* “wish,” **küzäg* ~ *küzew* “autumn pasture” (likewise: *qıstaw* < *qışlay* “winter pasture”)

2. *id-*

türk bodun illädük ilin içyünü idmiş, qayanladuq qayanin yitürü idmiş (Kültegin, E 7). Gabain interpreted *içyün-* as “lose”(verlieren), “wane”(schwinden) (Gabain, p. 336). “inkıraza yüz tutmuş” (Orkun, p. 32); “lose” (Onogawa, p. 42); “go to ruin” (Tekin 1968, p. 264), “elden çıkarmak”(lose) (Tekin 2010, p. 141); “distinguish”(joy-) (Sartqoja, p. 201); “lose” (Geng, p. 122).

There exist many examples in old Turkic showing that *içyün-* and *yit-* mean “extinction” or “die out”:

ol qan yoq boltuqta kisrä el yitmiş içyünmish...“After that Khan died, the nation collapsed too.” (The Ongin inscription E 1).

tay bilgä totok yablakın üçün bir eki atlıg yablakın üçün kara bodunım ölting yetding ‘Tay Bilge Totok kötülük düşündüğü için (kalan) bir iki ünlü kimse de kötülük düşündüğü için (ey) halkım “öldün, mahvoldun”’(Şine Usu Inscription E5, Erhan, p. 40).

içyün- was used with *unut-* (forget) in Buddhist documents in Uighur script, meaning “forget”, or “disappear.”

kägdäkä bitimiş kuyn bitig täg sansiz tümän azunta bärü ünımatın içyünmatın“Just as written on the scrolls, which have for millions of years never been forgotten.”

The Parallel Chinese Text: 亦是十二部大经卷也。无始以来。转读不尽 (Oda, p. 126).

There are nouns in Kazakh such as *jetim* (orphan/ parentless child) that is constructed from *yet-* (dead).

Although *içyün-* and *yit-* indeed mean “die”, “perish,” or “lose”, the translation of this sentence in the Kültegin inscription is worth being reconsidered. From the sentence, we can see that *il* “nation” and *qayan* “Khan” are with objective adjunctive parts, with the transitive verbs *id-*. The main verb of this sentence is *id-*, and from the affixes of *yitir-* and *içyün-* it is clear these two auxiliary verbs are merely modifying the main verb *id-*. Thus when we translate this sentence we shouldn’t focus on the meaning of the auxiliary verbs, but rather the main verb.

In Uighur Buddhist texts, *id-* corresponds to 遣 “dispatch,” 扔 “throw away” and 捨 “abandon,” for example, *trs tätrü törüsün idalap köni kirtü nomqa törükä kirdilär* 捨邪归正 “give up evil and return to good” (Oda, 143). Interestingly, in the London version(Or. 8212.104) of *Säkiz yüikmäk yaruq* edited by Oda, the translator used *qod-* instead of *idalap-*, proving that *id-* is

synonymous with *qod-* which means “throw away,” “discard.” Therefore, we can say that *id-* in the Kültegin inscription can be interpreted as “discard.”

As for *ičyïn-*, it appears in the form of *išqïn-* in Kazakh language, meaning “exert all the strength,” “break free” (Januzaqov, p. 763), generally derogatory. There are several phrases that can be found in Kazakh with *išqïn-*:

išqïnip jila- “wail,” *išqïnip soqqıla-* “beat furiously,” *boran išqïnip...* “blustery,” *özen išqïnip...* “rolling waves”...

The above examples of *išqïn-* show that *išqïn-* (or *ičyïn-*) can be used as an auxiliary verb to modify main verbs in Kazakh. If we consider the meaning scope of *ičyïn-* in Kazakh, then it can be inferred that *ičyïnu id-* and *yitürü id-* shouldn't be translated as “lose” or “a loss of,” and be translated as “using all (their) might (they) hurls it.” Anyways, as a whole sentence, Tekin's translation (1968, p. 264) is also acceptable now².

3. *azman*

kültegin azman aqıy binip oplayu tğdi (Kültegin, N5).

Many scholars such as Thomsen, Radloff, Orkun, Onogawa, Malov, Sartqoja and Geng all take *azman* for transliteration, as though it is a horse's name (Thomsen, p. 112; Radloff, p. 145; Orkun, p. 49; Onogawa, p. 60; Malov, p. 42; Sartqoja, p. 177; Geng, p. 133). Gabain translated it as “pony” (junger Wallach) (Gabain, p. 323), Tekin translated it as “yellowish white” (Tekin 1968, p. 270), “yellow” (sarımtrak) (Tekin 2010, p. 125). Thomsen mentioned in his paper once that *azman* is “five or six years old castrated horse” (Thomsen 1924, p. 171). Giraud approved this and had some discussion (Giraud, pp. 121-123), however, it seems their opinions didn't receive much attention.

azman is a term for horse, but is retained in the form of *azban* in the Kazakh language. There are a series of denominations for horse in Kazakh culture, for example, from birth to 6 months old: *qulınşaq* ~ *qulın*; 6 months to 1 year old: *jabayı*; 1-year-old to 2 years old: *tay*; 2 to 3 years: *qunan* (male) ~ *qunajın* (female); 3 to 4 years: *dönen* (male) ~ *dönejin* (female); 4 to 5 years old: *besti* (male) ~ *baytal* or *biye* (female). Some male horses must be castrated at 4 to 5 years old, and after castration all horses are called *at*. Horses that are not castrated are called *säwirik* or *ayyır*. *ayyır* are herded separately, and bear the task of reproduction. *azban* are *ayyır* that have been castrated for various reasons, but the term can also widely refer to other castrated

2 The Turkic people caused their state which they had established to go to ruin, and their kagan whom they had crowned collapse (Talat 1968: 264).

livestock (Januzaqov, p. 16). According to *Dīwānū lughāt t-Türk* by Mahmud al-Kashgari, *azma* refer to “A ram of which the skin of the testicles has been cut so that it is no longer able to mount the female.” In a recent article, Useev also discussed *azman* in the Kültegin inscriptions. Judging from the meaning “cattle”(ökiüz) in spoken Kirgiz, he points out that *azman* in the Kültegin inscription is a person’s name just as *arslan*, *bars* and *qoşqar* which are also borrowed from animal terms in old Turkic (Useev, pp. 292-293). Useev did not notice that *öküz* is also the name for castrated cattle, while cattle not castrated are called *buqa*. In short, *azman* in the Kültegin inscription doesn’t mean castrated sheep, cattle or a person’s name borrowed from animal terms, but is a name for castrated horses.

However, the corresponding relationship of *m* and *b* between *azman* and *azban* requires explanation. Although the dialectal features in Orkhon inscriptions provide partial evidence, such as *bängü* ~ *mängü*, *bing* ~ *ming*, *bän* ~ *män* (Gabain, p. 53). In Kazakh language, one can also find examples of alternation between *m* and *b*, such as: *muni* ~ *buni* “this,” *matiriw* ~ *batiriw* “soak ... in water,” *küybengdew* ~ *küymengdew* “busy.” Some examples from other Turkic languages include:

Kaz. *qobiz* ~ Kır. *qomus* ~ Yak. *homuz* ~ Uig. *qomuz* (name of a musical instrument); Kaz. *şibin* ~ Kır. *çimin* ~ Uig. *çiwin* “flies.”

4. *yay*

yay bolsa üzä t[ängri] köbürgesi ätärçä anç[a] tayda sıyun ätsär [] saqınurmän (Bilge qayan, W3-5).

As for *yay*, it is mostly translated as “summer” or “spring”: “summer”(Sommer) (Radloff, p.157); “spring”(ilkbahar) (Orkun, p. 73); “spring” (Onogawa, p. 68); summer (Tekin 1968, p. 281), “spring”(ilkbahar) (Tekin 2010, p. 70); “comfortable”(jaylı-) (Sartqoja, p. 208); “summer” (Geng, p.173). Clauson discussed *yay* as a noun, and emphasized *yay*’s double meanings of “spring” and “summer” in various modern Turkic languages (p. 980).

I believe that *yay* in this sentence means neither “spring” nor “summer,” but actually means “lightning,” and it is written as *jay* in the Kazakh language. Some other words meaning “lightning” include *najayay* ~ *nayzayay*, *jasil*, but *jay* is most common. Examples: *jay tüs-* “hit by lightning,” *jay bol-* “with lightning,” *jay otınday* “like a lightning fire,” *jay soqqanday* “as if hit by a lightning” (Januzaqov, p. 191).

In the Bilge Qayan Monument this sentence is paralleled: “lightning” in the sky corresponds to “deer cry” on the earth, with *ätärčä* being the keyword connecting the two sentences: Tekin correctly translated it as “*bögürür gibi*”. Lightning is closely followed by thunder, while interestingly ancient Turkic interpreted thunder as the “drumbeat of the heaven.” The author of the inscription vividly describes his sentiment for Bilge qayan in such a poetic way: “As the heavenly drum beats when lightning comes, my heart yearns for the qayan when the mountain deers cry.”

saqin- in this sentence doesn’t take its usual meaning of “think” or “consider,” but means “to miss” or “to yearn,” as *sayin-* in Kazakh language.

5. *yalma*

yariqinta yalmasinta yüz artuq oqun urti (Kültegin, E33).

Neither Radloff and Thomsen read it correctly (see Tekin 2010, related comments on p. 90). Thomsen’s reading and interpretation were harshly criticized by Bartold (Bartold, p. 4). Orkun correctly read it as *yalmasında*, but his translation “atının zirhına” was also not proper (Orkun, p. 45). Tekin translated it as *caftan* (Tekin 1968), “robe”(kaftan) (Tekin 2010, p. 33). Sartqoja translated *yariq* as “defensive weapons” (*jaraq*) in Kazakh, but *yalma* as “shield” (*qalqan*) (Sartqoja, p. 175). Geng Shimin read it as *yalma*, and translated it as “robe” (Geng, p. 145).

In Kazakh, *yalma* is retained in the form of front vowels, for example *jelbe* ~ *jelbey*, meaning “raincoat without sleeves.” The derivative words include *jelbegey* (*jelbegeylen-*, *jelbegey jamil-*) meaning “cloaked but not wearing sleeves.” Though the back vowel *jalba* also means clothes, its semantic meaning shifted to “ragged clothes that wind can blow through.” The derivative idioms include *jalba-julba* “worn out clothes,” *jalbayay* “hood connected to the coat that blocks wind, rain and sun” (Januzaqov, p. 198; p. 226). From *jelbe* ~ *jelbey*, *jelbegey* and its variants *jalbayay*, we can see that *jalba* is actually a kind of robe without sleeves, but has a headcover that can block rain and wind in a battle³.

How do we interpret the relationship of front-back vowel between *jelbe* and *jalba*? In fact, there are many such examples in Kazakh language: Kaz.dongyalaq ~ Kaz.donggelek “round,” Contaminated with Oguz *dön-* ‘to turn’. OT. *qop* ‘all’ ~ Kaz. *köp* “many,” OT. *tuy-* ~ Kaz. *tüy-* (*tüysik*) “conscious, feeling,” OT. *tatıy* “taste” ~ Kaz. *tätti* “sweet,” OT. *qari* ~ Kaz.

3 See the explanation of *azman* regarding the correspondence of *b* and *m*.

käri “old,” (compare the Kazakh *qart* “old people” and *käri* “old”) OT. *säri*- ~ Kaz.*säri*- “endure,” OT. *tıl* ~ OT. *tıl* “tongue”⁴.

The *yalma* worn by Kültegin is most likely this kind of robe, and its floating feature can keep off the shooting arrows from behind. Thus, it is neither “caftan” nor “armour for horse”

yariq in this sentence is transcribed by Tekin as *y(a)r(i)q*, as to differentiate from *y(a)r(a)q* in KT E23, KT E32 (Tekin2010, p.90). I believe these three *yrk* (KT E 23, E 32, E 33) can all be read and transcript as *y(a)r(i)q* (see Clauson, p. 962), because if there were differences, the writer might have distinguished them by adding vowels in between⁵.

Weapons used by ancient warriors are called *qaruw-jaraq* in Kazakh, and *qaruw* specifically refers to offensive weapons, such as *nayza* “spear,” *sünggü* “short spear,” *šoqqar* “big stick,” *aybalta* “ax,” *sadaq* “bow and arrows” etc., while *jaraq* refers to defensive weapons, such as *qalqan* “shield,” *sawit* “armor,” *dulıya* “helmet” and so on. However, it seems that *yariq* in Kültegin inscriptions only to refer to “armour” instead of other defensive weapons such as “shield” or “helmets.” In the Uighur text of *Buddhāvataṃsakamahāvaiṇya sūtra* in Yuan period, *yariq* and its phonetic variants *yiriy*, which all correspond to the Chinese character “甲” (armor).

yariy usiy kaddäciläriḡ körtüktä qamay tınly oylanı uz-atı ädgü nomluḡ usiyiy kädip baxšisizın bilgülük nomya barzunlar “見著甲冑，當願眾生；常服善鎧，趣無師法” (Geng 1986, p. 62).

ädgü ögli biliş böşük-lär sär-inmäk-lig yiriy-lar-in kädür-mäk üz-ä ... “由善知識被忍辱甲” (Haneda, p. 199).

This example can be seen as evidence that *yariq* and its phonetic variant *yiriy* corresponds to “甲” (armor). *yariq* in the Kültegin inscription means “armour” worn by Kültegin, while *yalma* is “cloak” - they are both used for defending against the enemies’ spears, arrows and other offensive weapons.

Abbreviations

Kaz. = Kazakh, OT = Old Turkic, Uig. = Uighur, Kır. = Kırgız, Yak. = Yakut, Tuv. = Tuvan, DTS = Древнетюркский Словарь.

EDP = *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*.

4 *tıl* was original, and it was secondarily fronted, like a number of other single-syllable words with *i*.

5 Old Turkic has no *yaraq* at all; *yara-g* is discussed in OTWF 215-6. *yaraq* appears only from Middle Turkic on, either as a new derivate from *yara-* or with final devoicing due to Mongolian influence.

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