

Some Explanations on Yenisey Inscriptions*

Yenisey Yazıtları Üzerine Bazı Açıklamalar

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The Yenisey inscriptions contain very important information with regards to Turkic history and Turkic language history. The Türk Runic script is mostly on gravestones and some others are on mirrors, coins, tablets and sheaths. There are numerous studies done since the inscriptions have been found. In this study after giving the major works that are done previously some words that are found on the inscriptions are investigated closely. The words are presented by the meanings that they are given by previous editions and after that new reading and interpretation ways are suggested.

Key Words: Yenisey Inscriptions, qıyɣ(a)n, içräki, q(i)zɣ(a)q, um(a)y b(ä)g(i)miz, alt(u)n, s(u)ña, uy(u)r.

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The first person who mentioned about the stones placed onto the graves in the settlement areas near and around Yenisey River was Romanian Ambassador MILESCU. Later, following the researchers like TABBERT-STRAHLENBERG and CASTRÉN, and making research in the field, the Archaeological Group of Finland copied 32 Yenisey inscriptions, and published the same in an album titled “*Inscriptions de l’Iénissei*” (*Récueillies et publiées par la Société Finlandaise d’Archeologie*, Helsingfors 1889). This first album was also followed by two albums respectively titled the “*Atlas Drevnostey Mongolii, Trudi Orhonskoy Ekspeditsii*” (St. Petersburg 1892-1899) by RADLOFF, and titled “*Korpus tyurkskih runičeskih pamyatnikov basseyna Yeniseya*” (Leningrad 1983) by VASILYEV. After THOMSEN solved the runic letters, RADLOFF was the first person who published more than 30 of Yenisey inscriptions.

Also in Turkey, ORKUN published 43 inscriptions in volume 3 of his work named “*Eski Türk Yazıtları*”. It was followed by MALOV in his work named “*Yeni-seyskaya Pismennost Tyurkov*” with 52 Yenisey inscriptions, and by VASILYEV with 145 Yenisey inscriptions. VASILYEV in his work named “*Korpus*” described 145 Yenisey inscriptions by tabulating them. That means, today, roughly more than 150 inscriptions were published together with three or five ones previously published. However, according to what I learned from VASILYEV, we know that the number of stones exceeded 225 together with the ones which were found until the year 2013 as from when they were published in the year 2013. Together with those ones which were found in the past three years, this figure must have increased much more as well.

I summarized up this information, which I submitted as an introduction herein, widely in my article titled “*On the E-4 (Ottuk-Daş) Inscription*” in which we published the “E-4 inscription” (Şemen 2015).

I have been making my PhD on the Yenisey inscriptions in the Department of Old Turkic Language of the Faculty of Literature of Istanbul University. The target in my PhD is to make the explanation of all the words contained in the Yenisey’s inscribed texts.

While I was containing the preparation of my PhD thesis, I observed that the Yenisey inscriptions were published many times by Orkun 1940, Malov 1952,

Batmanov 1959, Kunaa-Subrakova 1963, Recebov-Memmedov 1993, Usayev 2011, and others, especially by Radloff 1895.

There are the two last leading works among all these; namely Kormushin 1997 and 2008 abroad, and Aydın 2013, 2015.

And in this statement, I will share some my new reading proposals.

1. qıy(a)γ(a)n > qıyy(a)n

The verb *qıymaq* is used in the meanings of ‘chopping in very thin and small pieces, giving something unmercifully, not refraining, sacrificing, killing someone compunction, screwing up pitilessly and tyrannizing’ in Turkish today spoken in Turkey. But, it is quoted in the meanings of ‘cutting, killing’ as lexical entry at *qıymaq* in EDPT: 677b.

Due to the example given in the item *içräki* in EDPT: 31a, it is mentioned in the word which is read as *qıyayan*. And in the translation, the personal name has been set in the form of *quyayan* instead of *qıyayan* erroneously: *küç qıyayan içräki* ‘Küç Qıyayan the court chamberlain’.

I think, it will be appropriate that the word which was read as *qıy(a)γ(a)n* by the first editors has been transcribed in the form of *qıyy(a)n*, by depending on that the word read as *q(a)p(a)γ(a)n* has been corrected as *q(a)pγ(a)n*, and prefer the reading of it as *qıyy(a)n* 𐰇𐰏𐰔𐰕𐰖 $q^1Iy^1g^1n^1$.¹

It is also possible to identity this personal name with the personal names which are as pronounced as *qıyan güci ve qıyan (sälçük)* in Dädä Qorqut.

2. içräki < iç+räk+i

The word stated as *içräki* in E-4 is explained by CLAUSON in the form of *iç+rä+ki* in the item *içräki* ‘situated within’ in EDPT: 31a. The word *iç* has been used in the name of Köl-İç-Çor inscription in Turk Runic texts. In addition, it is mentioned in *iç buyruq* (BQ S14). It is observed that the word *iç* is used in the title *iç oylan* meaning ‘young, drover which is brought up as candidate for civil services of any kind in palaces in the Ottoman Empire’ as well as in the phrases such as *iç*

¹ cf. Şirin 2016: 154.

güväyi(si) as well. The word *ič+räk* which is formed by the suffix {+rAk} which is used to derivate a noun from same noun and added to the word *ič* is seen in the form of *ič+räk+i* and *ič+räg+i* with the possessive suffix {+I} in texts written with runic letters.

We see, in Yenisey inscriptions, the example of *tabyač qayannıñ ičräki* (KT S12 = BQ N14) in compliance with the formula of noun + noun with genitive suffix + possessive suffix, and the examples of *ben qara qan ičrägi bän* (E-37/1); *tör apa ičräki bän* (E-11/2), *küč qıyyan ičräki* (E-4/1) in compliance with the formula of noun + noun (without suffix) + possessive suffix, both of which are general formulae of the clauses.

The usage of the word in the form of *ičräk* without taking a suffix, which means ‘nearer’ is used in 617th verse of *Qutaδyu Bilig*.

küniñä örü bardı *ičräk* bolu

qoquz boldı qadγu säwinči tolu

“He continued to rise up by approaching nearer and nearer to the emperor day by day. His disquiet diminished gradually, and his joy increased gradually.”

The word *ičräk* is used as *ičräk+i* and *ič+räg+i* taking a possessive suffix in the texts written with runic letters.

The changed changes of the above phrases are thus: the example of *tabyač qayannıñ ičräki* (KT S12 = BQ N14) in compliance with the formula of noun + noun with genitive suffix + possessive suffix, and the examples of *bän qara qan ičrägi bän* (E-37/1); *küč qıyyan ičräki* (E-4) in compliance with the formula of noun + noun (without suffix) + possessive suffix, both of which are general formulae of the clauses.

The word *ičräki* ᠶᠢᠴᠢᠷᠠᠬᠢ *ičr²k²i ičr(ä)ki* < *ič+räk+i* as compared is explained in the form of *ič+rä+ki* by CLAUSON in the item of *ičräki* ‘situated within’ in EDPT: 31a.

3. q(a)zy(a)q > q(i)zy(a)q

For the word which is mentioned in *q(a)zy(a)q > q(i)zy(a)q* ᠶᠢᠴᠢᠷᠠᠬᠢ (E-3/5) and read as *q(a)zy(a)q(i)m* since RADLOFF, any clear interpretation has not been made.

At latest, AYDIN has interpreted the phrase which he read as *qazyaqım oylumın* in the form of ‘my gaining (and) my child(ren)’.

The most famous sentence containing the word *oyul* and related adjectives is *bäglık urı oyluñ qul boldı, işilik qız oyluñ kün boldı*. In this sentence, *urı oyl* for ‘son’ is used, and *qız oyl* for ‘daughter’.

We can formulate this as follows:

I	<i>urı oγ(u)l</i>	<i>q(ı)z oγ(u)l</i>
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In the later periods of Turkish, instead of the adjective *urı*, the adjective *är ~ er* is used, and the phrase gets the form of *är oγ(u)l ~ er oγ(u)l*.

II	<i>är oγ(u)l ~ er oγ(u)l</i>	<i>q(ı)z oγ(u)l</i>
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At the third stage, the suffix {+käk} instead of the word *oγ(u)l* is used, and the phrase turns to *är+käk ~ ir+käk* ‘man’.²

III	<i>är+käk ~ er+käk</i>	<i>q(ı)z oγ(u)l</i>
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That this suffix is used has also caused to fall the word *oγ(u)l* in the parallel phrase, so the suffix {+gAk}, which is the form of the suffix {+käk} in thick sequence, is added to the word, and it becomes the form of *qızyaq*. We can show this as follows:

IV	<i>är+käk ~ er+käk</i>	<i>q(ı)z+γaq</i>
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I evaluate this phrase as *q(ı)zy(a)q oγ(u)l* and the phrase *qazyaqım oylumın*, which AYDIN reads and interprets in the form of ‘my gaining (and) my child(ren)’ as ‘my daughters’ instead.

² cf. Erdal 1991: 41, and also see the review of Tekin about Erdal 1991, 2004: 202.

4. um(a)y b(ä)g(i)miz³

4a. E-6/2 **D»»** wmy¹ the word *um(a)y*⁴ takes part in the sentence of *umay täg ögüm qatun qutıña inim köl tigin är at bultı* ‘For happiness of my mother (who looks) like *umay*, my little brother gained the name of man(hood)’ in the texts written with Runic letters in 31st line of Kök Tegin inscription, and in the sentence of *täñri umay iduq yer sub basa berti ärinč* ‘God Umay has granted peace to the sacred place’ in 38th line of Tonyuquq inscription. And thirdly, we see that the same takes part in the phrase in Altın Kök II (E-28).

And in the later texts, it is emphasized that it becomes a goddess in the figure of ‘Umay mother’. For instance, in Kyrgyz it is narrated as *mänim qolum ämäs, Umay änämdin qolu* ‘not my hand, my Umay mother’s hand’.⁵

4b. E-6/3 **𐰇𐰪𐰸𐰸** b²g²mz The word *b(ä)g(i)m(i)z* < *bäg+imiz* ‘our ruler’. The word *bägi+m* > *bägü+m* is used the title *hanım* ‘queen’. *Umay* is female. The word *bägi* is used as a woman title in middle Turkic texts. In particular, there are many examples of this in *Vaqayi’ of Bābur*.⁶

Common Turkish /ä/ = Tatar /i/; Common Turkish /i/ = Tatar /ä/, a word *bägi* which is pronounced in Old Turkic is used as *bigä* and *bikä* in Tatar. A typical example is seen in Tatarian title *Söyem Bikä*. According to this, the title *um(a)y b(ä)g(i)+miz* in Runic Turkic should be understood as ‘our Umay queen’. As a matter of fact, an example is given here above as *mänim qolum ämäs, Umay änämdin qolu* ‘not my arm, my Umay mother’s hand’ in Kyrgyz.

5a. altu > alt(u)n

E-38-1/1 **𐰇𐰪𐰸** *altu* > *(a)lt(u)n*. The word had been read as *(a)ltu* by editors. But, there is not a word like *altu* in Turkish. If *Runa* which is read as **𐰇** w /u/ is read as *Runa* **𐰇** n¹, the pronunciation of this word is corrected as *(a)lt(u)n*. And a similar correction is also seen in Šine Usu East 8 where *Runa* is read as **𐰇** w /u/

³ See Klyashtorniy 1976; Tekin 2004: 545; Aydın 2013: 83; Kormushin 1997: 80-81 and Erdal 2002: 69.

⁴ Potapov 1973: 265-286; 1991: 84-298; Gömeç 1989: 630-634; Sinor 1984: 1771-1781; Kyzlasov 1998: 39-53.

⁵ Yudahin 1948: 783.

⁶ Arat 1946: 576-577: *Zührä Bāgi Ayača, Bāgi Sultan Ayača* etc.

at the end of the phrase which is pronounced as $(a)qs(i)r(a)q$ ordu is corrected as $\text{D} \text{ n}^1$, and read as $q(a)s(a)r q(o)rd(a)n$.

The word *altun* is used in the meaning of ‘gold, precious metal’ in Yenisey texts. However, it also bears the meaning of ‘centre, middle’ metaphorically because of its yellow colour. For instance, *altun yiš* ‘central forest’.

5b. š(a)nta > s(u)ŋa

38-1/2 J⊙Y̆. The problem is related with the value of Runa ⊙. VASILYEV has transcribed the sound value of this Runa as /nd/ ~ /nt/ in some inscriptions, and as /ŋ/ in some inscriptions in his work titled “*Grafičeskiy Fond Pamyatnikov Tyurkskoy Runičeskoj Pismennosti Aziatskogo Areala*” (Moskva 1983).

According to this:

1. When the word is transcribed as J⊙Y̆ š(a)nta, it can be separated in the form of *šan+da* ~ *šan+ta*. The word *šan* (< Chinese 山 *shan*) means ‘mountain’. And {+dA} ~ {+tA} can be considered as a locative suffix in locative or ablative function. Accordingly, it is possible to give the meaning of ‘from mountain’ to the word.

2. J⊙Y̆ s(u)ŋa. When /ŋ/ value is given to Y̆ Runa of the word, and when /ŋ/ value is given to s¹ ⊙ Runa of the word, it is possible to read this word in the forms of *s(u)ŋa*. Depending on the phrase *altun suŋa yiš käyiki artyıl toyyl* mentioned in E-28b, it is possible to read the word as *s(u)ŋa*. According to this, it is possible to comprehend the text in the form of $(a)lt(u)n s(u)ŋa$ ‘to *yišya* forest or from *yišta* forest’, and to translate it in the form of ‘to of from Altun Suna forest’.⁷ I accept this second form.

6. uy(a)r > uy(u)r

ЧD> *uy(u)r* < *u-yur* ‘competent, powerful’. I was previously read as *uy(a)r* in 17/2, 3; 32/11, 92/2 and 100/2, due to the fact that the second vowel in its dictation, and read as *uy(a)r(i)n* in 10/2, 28/7. Later, by depending on the dictation of ЧD>> wy¹wr¹ *uy(u)r* mentioned in Irq Bitig, 28, TEKIN has combined the items

⁷ See Klyashtorniy 1976: 26; Tekin 2004: 550; Kormushin 2008: 119-120.

uy(a)r and *uyur* men, and explained the word as the present continuous tense participle form of the verb *umaq* in the form of *u-yur* in the publication E-28.

The word is used with the dictation *uyur* in the texts written with Uighur and Arabic letters. Also cf. *ilig b(ä)glär [uy]urlar* ‘der Könige und Mächtigen’ (Bang-Gabain 1928: 31 [p. 250-251]). Editors thinks it as meaning ‘Hochmögende, Adlige’ (Anm. 31 [p. 254-255]).

The word *uyur* has been used in the forms *uyur qadınım* ‘my woman/wife’ (2), *uyur bāgim* ‘my esquire’ (3), *uyur qadašim* ‘my brother/sister’ (3) with the nouns taken possessive suffix in E-17. The word is used in similar forms like *uyur içiçim* in E-32, and *uyur (...)* in E-100 as well.

The word *uyur* is used in nominative form and together with last inflexional suffix *üçün* as suffixed in the form *uyurın*, and seen in the examples of E-10/2 *yüz är qadašim uyurın üçün* and E-28/2 *inim äçim uyurın üçün bängümin tikä bertı*. And its last example is the form of *u-yuk* in E/41 as compared to *är at uyuk üçin yeti ašnuqı äšim taš urı tikti*.

Finally, I can suggest many more proposals of new reading and interpretation for the lexicology of Yenisey inscriptions. However, I am doing with these examples within the period of time allotted to me, and waiting for comments of my esteemed professors.

Abbreviations

BQ	Inscription of Bilge Qayan.
EDPT	Clauson 1972.
KT	Inscription of Kül Tegin.
N	North.
S	South.

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