

ON THE “SÄKİZ ADAQLİY BARİM” IN THE YENİSEY INSCRIPTIONS

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1. “Säkiz adaqliy barim”

Among the so-called Yenisey Inscriptions, particularly in the First Elegest Inscription, the Begre Inscription, and the First Baj-Bulun Inscription,¹ there appears the expression that can be transcribed into “säkiz adaqliy barim.”

As to how the expression “säkiz adaqliy barim” should be interpreted, several opinions have so far been put forth. For instance, S.E. Malov, in his note on the Begre Inscription, translated the above expression appearing in the Begre Inscription as “well-fed livestock”, paying attention to a proverb of the Kazakh people that “a well-fed horse is eight-legged.”² Malov further translated the same expression appearing in the First Elegest Inscription and the First Baj-Bulun Inscription as “eight-legged livestock”³ and “eight-legged cattle”⁴ respectively, quoting a “folkloric example” recounting that “a chestnut studhorse is eight-legged. A striped studhorse is six-legged” in his note on the First Baj-Bulun Inscription.⁵

By contrast, H.N. Orkun is of the opinion that the “säkiz adaqliy barim” in question signifies “an animal and a four-wheeled vehicle”,⁶ and referring to this four-wheeled vehicle, C. Brockelmann states that the “four

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¹ Formerly, these Inscriptions were designated as Elegeš Inscription, Begre Inscription and an Inscription at the Minusinsk Museum. But, in this paper, I would like to use the names which were given by D.D. Vasil'ev. D.D. Vasil'ev, *Korpus tjurkskih runičeskih pamjatnikov bassejna eniseja*, Leningrad 1983, pp. 18-60, 88-89, 20, 61, 92; 30, 68, 107.

² S.E. Malov, *Enisejskaja pis'mennost' tjurkov*, Moskva-Leningrad .952, pp. 30-31.

³ Malov, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁴ Malov, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁵ Malov, *ibid.*

⁶ H.N. Orkun, *Eski Türk Yazıtları*, vol. 3, İstanbul 1940, p. 74.

wheeled vehicle” was most probably a horsedrawn carriage for carrying dead bodies to a burial place.⁷

Later, Sir Gerard Clauson translated “säkiz adaqlıy barım” in the First Elegest Inscription as “my eight-legged property”, to which he added in parentheses “obscure, perhaps wagons or tents?”⁸

2. Meaning of the word “barım”

Of the above cases what is important is how we should interpret the word “barım.” It is generally accepted that originally barım meant “property or wealth.”⁹ However, there is such an expression as “yılqı barım” in the Bilgä Qayan Inscription, which can be translated into “livestock and property.”¹⁰ In this case “yılqı barım” is used as a rhetorical device, namely, as a hendiadys. Therefore, livestock and property express the same meaning, and here the word barım (i.e., property) indicates yılqı (i.e., livestock). Furthermore, we find the expression “ayı barım” in the Köl Tigin Inscription which can be translated as “treasure and property.”¹¹ As “ayı barım” is also a hendiadys in this case, ayı (i.e., treasure) and barım (i.e., property) can be regarded as expressing the same meaning.

Such hendiadyses can also be found in the Yenisey Inscriptions. For instance, there appears the expression “tört biñ atlarım yılqım” in the Telée Inscription,¹² which can be translated into “my four thousand horses and

⁷ C. Brockelmann, “Zu den alttürkischen Inschriften aus dem Jenissejgebiet”, *Ural Altaische Jahrbücher*, vol. 24, Heft. 1-2, 1952, p. 141.

⁸ G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*, Oxford 1972, p. 366. In addition to these, H. Vambéry, stating that the word “adaq” does not mean “leg” but “oath, to be dedicated”, translated the expression “säkiz adaqlıy barım” as “livestock which were dedicated”. P.M. Melioranskij supported this theory at one time. H. Vambéry, *Noten zu den alttürkischen Inschriften der Mongolei und Sibiriens*, Helsingfors 1899, pp. 93-94, 99-100. Malov, *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 31.

⁹ W. Radloff, *Versuch eines Wörterbuches der Türk-Dialecte*, 2. edition, S'-Gravenhage 1960, vol. 4, p. 1481. Orkun, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, İstanbul 1941, p. 18. T. Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic*, The Hague 1968, p. 308. V.M. Nadeljaev, A.M. Nasilov, E.R. Tenişev, A.M. Šcerbak (red.), *Drevnetjurkskij Slovar'*, Leningrad 1969, p. 84. Clauson, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

¹⁰ Bilgä-Qayan Inscription, East, 24; South 3. For the word “yılqı”, cf.: Radloff, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 485. Orkun, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 142. Tekin, *op. cit.*, p. 402. Nadeljaev and others, *op. cit.*, p. 267. Clauson, *op. cit.*, pp. 925-926.

¹¹ Köl-Tigin Inscription, South-West, For the word “ayı”, cf.: Radloff, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 154. Orkun, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 5. Tekin, *op. cit.*, p. 300. Nadeljaev and others, *op. cit.*, p. 17. Clauson, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹² Vasil'ev, *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 68, 109.

livestock." In this case since *yilqī* (i.e., livestock) and *at* (i.e., horse) are used as a hendiadys, livestock must signify horses. Therefore, we may say that Malov correctly translated "tört biñ atlarım yilqim" into "my four thousand horses."¹³

Furthermore, in the Hemčik-čyrgaky Inscription there is an expression which can be transcribed into "ayımğa altmıš at(γa) bintim."¹⁴ This expression may be translated into "I rode the treasure and sixty horses." In this case also, *ayī* (treasure) and *at* (horse) are used as a hendiadys, both expressing the same meaning.

The above hendiadyses make it clear that among the ancient Turkic peoples the word *barīm* whose original meaning was "property or wealth" was used in the same meaning as *yilqī* signifying livestock and *ayī* meaning treasure, and that there were cases in which the words *yilqī* and *ayī* signified "at," namely, "horse."

Incidentally, W.W. Radloff pointed out that the Kazakh people who "are indisputably a nomadic people" called livestock "mal" in Arabian, which originally meant property, and stated that "for the Kazakh people a horse is the essence of all kinds of beauties, and the pearl among livestock."¹⁵ In other words, for the Kazakh people livestock was their property itself, and a horse was "the pearl among livestock", that is, the most precious and important creature among livestock.

With the above-mentioned examples of the hendiadys appearing in the Orkhon Inscriptions and the Yenisey Inscriptions as the main evidence, and with Radloff's account of the Kazakh people's idea on property, livestock and horse as supporting evidence, we may suppose that in the Yenisey Inscriptions the work "barīm" which originally meant "property" was used in the same meaning as the word "at" which signifies "horse." If this supposition is acceptable, we may conclude that the expression "säkiz adaqlīy barīm" indicates "the eight-legged horse."

3. Eight-legged horse and shamanism

Then, how should we interpret this strange expression "the eight-legged horse"?

¹³ Malov, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

¹⁴ Vasil'ev, *op. cit.*, pp. 29, 67, 106.

¹⁵ W. Radloff, *Aus Sibirien, Lose Blätter aus meinem Tagebuche*, vol. 1, Leipzig 1893, pp. 414-420.

It seems to be an accepted view that the ancient Turkic peoples were shamanists.¹⁶ Regarding this, M. Eliade, in his account on the role of “the ‘horse’” in shamanic ritual as “the funerary animal and psychopomp”, states, “... among the Muria a funeral is accompanied by ritual songs announcing the deceased’s arrival in the other world on horseback. The description includes a palace in which are a golden swing and a diamond throne. The deceased is brought there by an eight-legged horse.”¹⁷

Such an oral tradition on “the eight-legged horse” has been handed down not only among the Muria. It can also be found in a Buryat legend. As regards this legend, Eliade states as follows: “According to a Buryat legend, a young woman takes as her second husband the ancestral spirit of a shaman, and after this mystical marriage one of the mares in her stud gives birth to a foal with eight legs. The earthly husband cuts off four of them. The woman cries: ‘Alas! It was my little horse on which I used to ride like a shamaness!’ and vanishes, flying through the air, to settle in another village. She later became a guardian spirit of the Buryat.”¹⁸

As we have seen above, the presence of “the eight-legged horse” in “shamanic mythology and ritual” is particularly important for considering the meaning of the expression “the eight-legged horse.” Because this shows that the expression “the eight-legged horse” is closely related to shamanism.

What should be mentioned in making reference to shamanism is the chief god Odin in Nordic mythology. Because Eliade first refers to Odin, stating, “... in the religion and mythology of the ancient Germans some details are comparable to the conceptions and techniques of North Asian shamanism. We will cite the most striking instances”, and then he relates as follows: “The figure and the myth of Odin —The Terrible Sovereign and Great Magician— display several strangely ‘shamanic’ features. To acquire the occult knowledge of runes, Odin spends nine days and nights hanging in a tree. Some Germanists have seen an initiation rite in this; Otto Höfler even compares it to the initiatory tree-climbing of Siberian shamans. The tree in

¹⁶ R. Dankoff stated that the Ancient Turks were not shamanists. R. Dankoff, “Kaşgarî on the Beliefs and Superstitions of the Turks”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 95, 1, 1975, p. 77. But there is no doubt that the Ancient Turks believed in Shamanism. M. Mori, “Tokketsu no Shinkō —Tokuni Shāmanizumu ni tsuite—”, *Mikami Tsugio Hakase Kiju Kinen Ronbunshū: Rekishihihen* (“Belief of the T’u-chüeh—Especially on Shamanism—”, *Commemorative Essays Dedicated to Dr. Tsugio Mikami on His 77th Birthday: History*), Tokyo 1985, pp. 304-319.

¹⁷ M. Eliade, *Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, New York 1964, p. 469.

¹⁸ Eliade, *ibid.*

which Odin 'hanged' himself can only be the Cosmic Tree, Yggdrasil; its name, by the way, means the 'steed of Ygg(Odin).' In Nordic tradition the gibbet is called the 'hanged man's horse' and certain Germanic initiation rites included the symbolic 'hanging' of the candidate, for this custom is abundantly documented elsewhere. But Odin also ties his horse to Yggdrasil, and the occurrence of this mythical theme in North and Central Asia is well known."¹⁹

Thus, in "the figure and the myth of Odin" several "shamanic" features can be recognized, and concerning this "shamanic" steed of Odin's, Eliade goes on to say, "Odin's steed, Sleipnir, has eight hooves, and it is he who carries his master, and even other gods (e.g., Hermódhr), to the underworld. Now, the eight-hoofed horse is the shamanic horse par excellence; it is found among the Siberians, as well as elsewhere (e.g., the Muria), always in connection with the shaman's ecstatic experience. It is probable, as Höfler supposes, that Sleipnir is the mythical archetype of a many-footed hobbyhorse that played an important part in the secret cult of the men's society."²⁰ Eliade says, "the eight-hoofed horse is the shamanic horse par excellence" as quoted above, and he further says, "We know that the octopod horse is typically shamanic."²¹

Judging from what has been stated above, we may think that "säkiz adaqlĪy barĪm" appearing in the Yenisey Inscriptions, which can be translated as "the eight-legged horse", indicates "the eight-legged horse" as seen in "shamanic mythology and ritual", or "the shamanic horse par excellence", or "the eight-hoofed horse" which is a "typically shamanic" horse, or "the octopod horse."

4. The Yenisey Inscriptions and Shamanism

Then, why is it that "the eight-legged horse" as seen in "shamanic mythology and ritual", or "the eight-hoofed horse" which is "the shamanic horse par excellence" and "typically shamanic" or "the octopod horse", is enumerated in the Yenisey Inscriptions together with many properties the deceased owned while he was alive?

This question is related to the essential character of the Yenisey Inscriptions. It is well known that most of them are written in the "strange"

¹⁹ Eliade, *op. cit.*, pp. 379-380.

²⁰ Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

²¹ Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

descriptive form that one who died and was buried records in the first person not only his name and title, but also his age of death, and mourns over his death which forced him to part with his wife and children, relatives, friends as well as sovereign and land, along with his various kinds of properties, and that the deceased records also in the first person his career and in some cases puts forth his requests toward the living and the mourners. In this sense, the Yenisey Inscriptions may be called “the elegy or dirge or funeral song the deceased himself composed for the repose of his soul.” In short, the Yenisey Inscriptions mostly consist of the words of the deceased.

To what should we trace the origin of this “strange” descriptive form of the Inscriptions?

In answering this question, what is to be noted is that a shaman or shamaness falls into a trance in a state of ecstasy or possession, and in that state narrates in the first person the words of the deceased through his/her own lips.

Considering this fact and the above fact that most of the Yenisey Inscriptions consist of the words of the deceased, the origin of the “strange” descriptive form peculiar to the Yenisey Inscriptions may possibly be traced to the trancedly narrated words of the deceased which were spoken by the shaman or shamaness. This line of thought leads us to the supposition that among the ancient Turkic peoples there was probably the custom of having a shaman or shamaness narrate the deceased’s words by means of his/her necromancy. And we are also led to think that when the ancient Turkic peoples learned the use of letters and came to engrave the memorial writing of the deceased on the surface of a stone, they did it based on this custom or tradition, and that resulted in the formation of the “strange” descriptive form of the Yenisey Inscriptions.

In connection with this, Malov and S.G. Kljaštornyj state that each of the Yenisey Inscriptions is a kind of “*in memoriam* poem.”²² This reminds us that the narration by a shaman or shamaness often takes the form of a poem.

To repeat once more, we may trace the origin of the “strange” descriptive form of the Yenisey Inscriptions to the custom or tradition of having a shaman or shamaness as a necromancer narrate in the first person the words of the deceased.

²² Malov, *op. cit.*, S.G. Kljaštornyj, *Drevnetjurkskie runičeskie pamjatniki kak istočnik po istorii srednej azii*, Moskva 1964.

However, it is not that all of the Yenisey Inscriptions exclusively consist of the deceased’s own words. In fact, several inscriptions adopt the form of a dialogue between the living and the dead.²³ Considering that shamanists sometimes have a dialogue with a shaman or shamaness, the origin of the dialogue between the living and the dead as appearing in several inscriptions of the Yenisey Inscriptions may be traced to this custom or tradition in which the living engage in dialogue with a shaman or shamaness who in turn narrates the words of the dead through his/her own lips.

In any case, the narration by the deceased using the first person in the Yenisey Inscriptions seems to be based upon the custom or tradition in which a shaman or shamaness narrates the words of the deceased in a trance.

If this supposition is correct, the reason why in the Yenisey Inscriptions “the eight-legged horse” is enumerated together with many properties the deceased owned while he was alive is probably because the remnants of a narration by a shaman or shamaness in which the shaman or shamaness mentioned “the eight-legged horse”, or “the eight-hoofed horse”, or “the octopod horse”, which is “the shamanic horse par excellence” and “typically shamanic”, as his/her property, have been preserved as they were, thus making it seem to be the property of the deceased.

5. “At”, “yunt”, “yilqī” and “barīm”

Among the ancient Turkic peoples, besides the word “at”, “yunt” was used to mean “horse”,²⁴ and the word “yilqī” was also used to signify livestock, particularly a herd of horses.

If “säkiz adaqlīy barīm” truly signifies “the eight-legged horse”, why is it that the word barīm which originally meant “property” was used in particular, and not such similar words as “at”, “yunt”, or “yilqī”?

I. Hori, one of the distinguished Japanese scholars specializing in religion, once stated, quoting M. Weber’s words, “For ordinary persons who are unable to relate themselves to the realm of ‘Holiness’, or for those secular, disqualified persons who lack the nature to be a founder of a religion, a shaman is the one who possesses a very extraordinary, rather supernatural physical and spiritual nature which defies any attempt to imitate it.”²⁵ The

²³ For example, the First Altyn-kel’ Inscription. Vasil’ev, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 64-65, 102-103.

²⁴ For the word “yunt”, cf.: Radloff, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 418. Orkun, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 144. Nadeljaev and others, *op. cit.*, p. 281. Clauson, *op. cit.*, p. 946.

²⁵ I. Hori, *Nihon no Shāmanizumu (Shamanism in Japan)*, Tokyo 1971, p. 53.

description of the Bugut Inscription tells us that a qayan of the T'u-chüeh performed the functions of a shaman.²⁶

A shaman or shamaness in ancient nomadic society was regarded as a "bearer of charisma" or a "specialist in the holy realm", a person who can rouse awe in others.

If that was so, it is mostly clear that why "the eight-legged horse" which is not only closely related to a shaman or shamaness, who was regarded as a sacred, awe inspiring person, but also is described as "the shamanic horse par excellence" or "typically shamanic" was called not by the word "at", or "yunt" which means a horse itself, nor by the word "yilqi" which signifies livestock, particularly a herd of horses, but by the word *barim* which originally meant "property". The reason is because such words "at" and "yunt" were "tabooed words" which should not be uttered when referring to "the eight-legged horse" which was none other than a holy "shamanic horse par excellence" and "typically shamanic", and *barim* served as a substitute for them. This seem to be the very reason why only in the case of "the eight-legged horse" the word *barim* was used to mean a horse, not "at", or "yunt", or "yilqi".

Conclusion

What I have so far stated can be summarized as follows:

1. The expression "säkiz adaqliy *barim*" appearing in the three Yenisey Inscriptions signifies "the eight-legged horse".
2. "The eight-legged horse" was "the shamanic horse par excellence" or the "typically shamanic" horse.
3. The narration by the deceased using the first person in the Yenisey Inscriptions is based upon the custom or tradition of having a shaman or shamaness as a necromancer narrate in a trance the words of the deceased through his/her own lips.
4. The reason why "the eight-legged horse" is enumerated together with many properties which the deceased owned while he was alive is probably because the remnants of a narration by a shaman or shamaness in

²⁶ S.G. Kljaštornyj, V.A. Livsic, "The Sogdian Inscription of Bugut Revised", *Acta Orientaliae Hungaricum*, vol. 26,1,1972.

which the shaman or shamaness mentioned “the eight-legged horse” which was “the shamanic horse par excellence” or “the typically shamanic” horse as his/her own property, have been preserved as they were, thus making it seem to be the property of the deceased.

5. The reason why only in the case of “the eight-legged horse” the word *barīm* meaning “property” was used, not “at” or “yunt” or “yīlqī”, is probably because “the eight-legged horse” was considered to be sacred as “the shamanic horse par excellence” or the “typically shamanic” horse, while “at”, “yunt” and “yīlqī” were “tabooed words.” In short, *barīm* must have functioned as a substitute for “at”, “yunt” or “yīlqī”.

