

RE-READING AND RE-INTERPRETATION  
OF SOME OF THE YENISEI INSCRIPTIONS

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*kök tenride kutum yuyka boldı  
yagız yerde yolım kıska boldı*

In this paper, *three* re-readings and re-interpretations are put forward concerning a few lines of the Yenisei inscriptions. **(1)** Line 3 of the 3rd Elegešt inscription (E-53) is transcribed as *kök t(ä)ŋr(i)-dä bul(i)t k(ä)ru (a)lk(i)nur törüm(i)š* and understood as “The cloud(s) became visible in the blue sky to disappear over again”. **(2)** The 10th line of the Abakan inscription (E-48) is transcribed as *(ä)rdämi b(a)r üč(ü)n (a)k(i)nınta : kü tutup : (a)tka t(ä)gm(i)š b(ä)g(i)m : (ä)siz : (ä)r b(a)şı yuta (a)č(ıg)-a* and interpreted as “In consequence of his virtue he achieved reputation in his battle. Alas my *beg!* What a pity! Commander! Alas! Pity!”. **(3)** The 14th line of the same Abakan inscription (E-48) is transcribed as *y(e)ti urı ogl(u)ŋ(u)zka : bükm(ä)d(ü)k : k(a)ŋ(i)č(i)m : (a)lp kušči (a)bči tüş(ü)rg(ä)k (ä)rt(i)ŋ(i)z tolkı t(a)š(i)n b(ä)ŋkü tik(ä)r m(ä)n yuta* and interpreted as “Daddy who passed away without having enough of his seven sons! You were a brave fowler and a hunter! You were the dexterous hunter! I am erecting the massive stone as *beŋkü* (or I am erecting *beŋkü* with the massive stone)”.

*Key words:* Yenisei inscriptions, Old Turkic.

The texts of the tombstones in Khakassia and Tuva, known as the Yenisei inscriptions, contain unique information about the social life of the ancient Turkic society. These are significant documents inasmuch as they comprise a wealth of information on the Old Turkic worldview and provide unique data on how the ancient Turkic societies perceived and interpreted their own *il* (state), *bodun* (ethnos), *kan/kagan* (king), *kadaš* (kinsfolk), *kunčuy/ogul/kız* (household), *eš/adaš* (friend/comrade), etc. The Yenisei epitaphs inform us about not only the social and cultural conditions of the time but also contain hints concerning the economic position of the deceased. These texts, in terms of style, unlike the later Mongolian inscriptions, illuminate vari-

ous aspects of Old Turkic society, ranging from the average life span to the names and titles of the ancient Turks as well as they yield ample evidence about other aspects of life such as family, property, heroism (*erlik erdem*), sacred territories, totemic animals, etc. In the present paper, I propose three re-readings and re-interpretations of a few lines of the 3rd Elegešt (E-53) and the Abakan (E-48) inscriptions.

**1. The 3rd Elegešt inscription (E-53)** was found 5 km southward from the monument E-52 on the right bank of the middle reaches of river Elegešt by Granö in 1907, and it was moved to the Tuva Museum in 1961. The inscription was carved on a *deer stone*<sup>1</sup> which had been regarded as sacred by the early nomads of bronze age in Mongolia.

The 3rd Elegešt inscription is an epitaph of a *beg* named *Bäg tarkan ögä tirig*. It is a relatively short document consisting of three lines. The age of the *beg* was not documented on it. His official titles *tarkan* and *ögä* indicate the high-level position of the deceased. From the sentence *elimdä bäs kata tägzindim* "I travelled around my country five times" (line 2), one can conclude that *Bäg tarkan ögä tirig*'s administrative function in the state organisation (*il*) must have been connected with travelling. Possibly this task could have been a kind of itinerant ambassadorship.

The above-mentioned line of E-52 (*elimdä bäs kata tägzindim är ärdämim ücün*), the 2nd left line of E-29 (*ilimdä tört tägzindim ärdämim ücün*), and the 4th line of E-31 (*elindä üç kata tägzinti*) conveys parallelisms in style. The parallelism in meaning and style shows that the number of journeys was such a serious matter that it required to be registered on the epitaphs. In the Turkic Runic inscriptions the activities performed in order to achieve the *er erdem* include the number of battles fought by the *alps/begs*, the enemies they killed, the wild animals they hunted, along with the political services they conducted in the name and on behalf of their states and countries. My assertion that the journeys of the deceased referred to in the epitaphs may have been political services related to ambassadorial missions, derives from the sentence *är ärdäm ücün töpöt kanga yalabač bardım* "I went to the Tibetan king as an ambassador for (proving my) virtue", registered on the 2nd left line of the 2nd Altinköl Inscription. This sentence was written right after the sentence *ilimdä tört tägzindim ärdämim ücün* "I travelled around my realm four times for my merit". The sentence *töpöt kanga yalabač bardım* documents *yalabačlık* as a diplomatic mission that required travelling from a ruler to another, while the sentences *ilimdä üç/tört/bäs (kata) tägzindim* written in the 2nd Altinköl, 3rd Elegešt and 2nd Uybat inscriptions, can be considered evidence for the *yalabačs'* reconciliatory mission among the Turkic tribes as well as between the non-Turkic and Turkic tribes.

Differences in reading and interpretation concerning line 3 of the inscription are as follows:

Malov: *kök täñride boltum är alqınur törümış* "V golubom nebe ja byl muž stal (tam) sijat!" (Malov 1959, p. 72).

<sup>1</sup> For more details about the *deer stones* of Mongolia, see Jacobson (1993) and Fitzhugh (2009).

Batmanov – Kunaa: *kök tejride boltu(m)*. *Er ol. Qan ur(i) törümüš(i)m* “Ya okazalsja na golubom nebe. Geroj, soedinis’! Ja podilsja ot potomka xana” (Batmanov – Kunaa 1963, p. 40).

Ščerbak: *kök täjridä bulut kär ulqanur (?) törimiš* “Na golubom nebe pojavilos’ strašnoe uveličivayuščeesja oblako (? t.e. prišlo nesčast’e)” (Ščerbak 1964, p. 148).

Vasil’ev (transliteration only): *kükt<sup>2</sup>ŋr<sup>2</sup>d<sup>2</sup>ä:b<sup>1</sup>ul<sup>1</sup>t<sup>1</sup>kr<sup>2</sup>1qn<sup>1</sup>ur<sup>1</sup>lt<sup>2</sup>ür<sup>2</sup>ms<sup>2</sup>* (Vasil’ev 1983, p. 19).

Amanžolov: *k<sup>ö</sup>k t<sup>ä</sup>ŋr<sup>i</sup>dä bul<sup>u</sup>t ul<sup>u</sup>q<sup>n</sup> or tür<sup>ü</sup>m<sup>i</sup>š* “Na golubom nebe pojavilas’ tuča, temnoryžaja s grjaznoj xolkoj (verojatno tuča upodoblena gnedoj lošadi)” (Amanžolov 2003, p. 137).

Kormušin: *kök täjridä boltik är ol qan urī törämīš* “[Nekogda] na golubom nebe voznik [blagorodnyj] muž. Ot togo xana pošlo mužskoe potomstvo” (Kormušin 2008, p. 145).

Kormušin’s revisions are criticised by Erdal as such: “Unakzeptabel ist es, wenn Kormušin die Zeichensequenz *wl<sup>1</sup>k<sup>1</sup>n<sup>1</sup>wr<sup>1</sup>* in E-53 als, *ol kan urī liest*” (Erdal 2002, p. 61).

The original Runic writing of the sentence is in the form of **k<sup>2</sup>Wk<sup>2</sup>t<sup>2</sup>ŋr<sup>2</sup>d<sup>2</sup>A b<sup>1</sup>Wl<sup>1</sup>t<sup>1</sup>k<sup>2</sup>r<sup>1</sup>qn<sup>1</sup>Wr<sup>1</sup>t<sup>2</sup>Wr<sup>2</sup>ms<sup>2</sup>**. Although the researchers have transcribed the predicate of the sentence differently from each other (i.e. *töri-* /*törü-* /*türü-* /*törä-*), they all agree that the meaning of the predicate is “to be created”. On account of the intransitive form of the verb *töri-*, controversial words cannot be objects. As a matter of fact, they should be subject and adverb, or subject only/adverb only of the sentence.

Ščerbak and Amanžolov read the first word of the phrase **b<sup>1</sup>Wl<sup>1</sup>t<sup>1</sup>k<sup>2</sup>r<sup>1</sup>qn<sup>1</sup>Wr<sup>1</sup>t<sup>2</sup>Wr<sup>2</sup>ms<sup>2</sup>** which comes right after *kök t(ä)ŋr(i)dä*, as *bulut*. Even though the word *bulut* “cloud” is not documented in the Turkic Runic texts but for *Irk Bitig*, one can be confronted with it in the Turkic Buddhist manuscripts and Kašgari’s *Divan* referring to the object/subject of the verbs *belgür-*, *agut-*, *ör-*, *örüş-* (ED pp. 80b–81a, 195ab, 240a, 341a; DLT Vol. I, p. 173-27; 186-12212-7). Due to the fact that *bulut* denotes the object/subject of the verbs which means “to appear, to become visible” and “to rise”, one can conclude that it also serves to the ones that mean “to disappear, to cease to exist”; hence, I presume the adverb of the sentence is *tükä-n-* or *alk-(X)n-*. The original Runic spelling (**l<sup>1</sup>qn<sup>1</sup>Wr<sup>1</sup>**) enables (*a*)*lk(i)nur* transcription. As a matter of fact, Malov already transcribed it as such (1959, p. 71). Thus, the sentence becomes clear as *kök t(ä)ŋr(i)dä bul(i)t k<sup>2</sup>r<sup>2</sup>W (a)lk(i)nur törüm(i)š*. Despite its correct grammatical structure, the verb *alkin-* is formed with the participle suffix which functions unusually as a gerund suffix. However, one can come across the samples of it in the Turkic historical texts<sup>2</sup>. *Kazan Bigün kartaşı çapar yetdi* (Ergin 1994, p. 59-13) “Brother of Kazan Beg immediately reached galloping”; *Beyregün atasına anasına muştulğa çapar gitdi* (Ergin 1994, p. 117-3) “(He) went galloping to the parents of

<sup>2</sup> OT *er-ken* > *irken* > *iken* > TT *-ken*; cf. Tat. *iken*; OT *er-kli* (*ança olurur erkli*, Toñukuk 8, “while (we were) inhabiting in that manner”; Az. *-mamış/-memiş* (*yay girmemiş, havalar istileşir; payız gelmemiş yağışlar başladı* “The weather got warmer before summer; rainfalls started before winter” etc. (Öner 1999, p. 834).

Beyrek for good news”; *Görür görmez tanıdı* (TT) “He/she recognised him/her at first sight” etc.

The mentioned line of the 3rd Elegešt inscription can be explained as “The clouds appeared in the blue sky to disappear  $k^2r^2W$ ”. It is apparent that the undecipherable word must have had adverbial function. Most probably we must read  $k^2r^2W$  as *k(ä)rü* which means ‘backwards, behind’ and ‘west’<sup>3</sup> referring to both place and direction. This spelling mistake with the back vowel might have been caused by the inattentiveness of the scribe (*bitigci*) or it might be one of the usual orthographic errors of the Yenisei epitaphs. Thus, the sentence *kök t(ä)yr(i)dä bul(ı)t k(ä)ru (a)lk(i)-nur törüm(i)š* can properly be explained as “The cloud(s) became visible in the blue sky to disappear over again”. It is semantically parallel with the passage *kişi oğlu : kop : ölg(ä)li : törüm(i)š* “The sons of men are all born to die” as documented in the inscription of Kül Tigin (N 10).

The mortality of human beings is reflected by the following sentences in *Kutadgu Bilig*: *törümüš neñ erse yokalgu turur* “if something comes into existence it is destined to perish” (Arat 1979a, p. 692), *törügli ölür ol törütgen kalur* “the created dies, the Creator remains” (Arat 1979a, p. 1242). The phrase *törümüš neñ* documented in Old Turkic texts, includes all entities from human being (*kişi oğlu*) and nature (*ıgaç, çeçek, yemiš, töš* etc.) to the celestial body (*teñri, ay, kün* etc.).

Referring to the subject of the verb *alkın-*, one can frequently find numerous phrases which connote *törümüš neñs* (“created things”) in Old Turkic texts: *kişi sözläsär sav alkinur* “if a man speaks his words come to nothing” (*UW* p. 98; *ED* p. 139a); *agı barım alkinsar* (*IKP* Vol. VII, p. 9; Vol. IX, p. 2) “if the properties are all used up”; *tün kün keçe alkinur ödlek bile ay* “as the days and nights pass, time is consumed and the months elapse”; *er alkındı* “the man died and perished” (*DLT* Vol. I, pp. 82, 254; *ED* p. 139a); *neçe tirse dünya tüker alkinur* “whatever this world accumulates comes to an end and is used up”; *ay ilig bu dünya keçimlig turur/tiriglik kü-nünje tüker alkinur* “O king! This world is transitory/ Life comes to an end as the days go by”; *tutamča tiriglik tüker alkinur* “A handful of life comes to an end and perishes” (*KB* pp. 114, 3782, 5265), etc. These examples show that the verb *alkın-* (*ED* pp. 138b–139a; *UW* pp. 97–98; *DTS* p. 38) signifies both ‘to exhaust’ and ‘to die’<sup>4</sup>. This re-reading and re-interpretation concerning the last line of the 3rd Elegešt inscription perfectly suits the epitaph style. Expressing the human mortality through the image of a cloud a metaphorical correlation is established between the transience of human beings and the ephemeral character of the clouds. Through the medium of this relationship, series of connotations appear ranging from the mortality of human-kind and temporality of the clouds to the cyclical and mutual link between human being and the universe.

**2. The Abakan II inscription (E-48)** was found on the right bank of the river Abakan in old Tutatchikov, a village of Middle Khakassia. It is currently in the Minu-

<sup>3</sup> See *ED* p. 737a for the meaning of ‘backwards, behind; west’.

<sup>4</sup> For the last meaning see *DLT* Vol. I, p. 254.

sinsk Museum, registered at inventory number 44. The inscription was carved on a considerably tall stone. It is approximately 2.6 m high from the buried part, its width varies from 64 to 75 cm, and its thickness varies from 22 to 27 cm (Kormušin 1997, p. 44). Kiselev, who was the first to publish this inscription, supposed that its first line was the buried part and he thought that the sides and the undecipherable wide surface are the subsequent lines. After examining the inscription in detail, Kormušin altered the row of the lines. According to him, there are six lines on the front face, two lines on the left face, six lines on the back face, and one line on the left face; from them the 3rd, 5th and 6th lines are undecipherable. In this article I accept the enumeration in Kormušin (2008).

**2.1.** Differences of reading and interpretation regarding the 10th line of the inscription are as follows:

Kiselev:  $\overset{a}{r}d\overset{a}{m}i\ b^{\overset{a}{r}}\ \overset{u}{c}\overset{a}{n}\ \dots\ t\overset{u}{t}\overset{u}{k}\ l^{\overset{a}{q}}a\ t^{\overset{a}{g}}m\ \overset{a}{s}\ b^{\overset{a}{g}}m\ s\overset{a}{z}\ \overset{a}{r}(m)^{\overset{a}{s}}\ \dots\ \dots\ s\overset{u}{y}\overset{a}{l}\ (t\overset{a}{m}\overset{i}{s})$   
 “Tak kak ja byl mužestvennym, byl ja tutuk. Toka moj rod. Sputnik beg moj. Vy byli ... oplakany.” (Kiselev 1939, p. 127).

Malov: *ärdämi bar ücün kanita Aza tutuk toka tägmiš bāgim siz är ... ayılna*  
 “Tak kak u nego byla doblest’, to u svojego xana moj beg, Aza tutuk, dostig prjažki (činovno go pojasa). Vy muž(i) ...” (Malov 1952, pp. 94–95).

Batmanov – Subrakova: *ärdämi bar ücün kanita ... tutuk toka tägmiš bāgim siz är ... ayılna* (ili *ayılina*) “Maxtaglii polgan ücün, miniñ pigim Tutuk xanda kübejege čidip algan. Sırer čaačılar...” (Batmanov – Subrakova 1970, pp. 21–22).

Vasil’ev – Nasilov: *erdämi bar ücün qaninta (ekü-? ~ kü-?) tutuq atqa tegmiš begim esiz er (b-?)eš(i) ... ata ücün(na-?)* “O gore! Moj beg-vojenáčal’nik, polučivšij ot xana za svoju doblest’ zvanie ekju(-?) (slavnyj-?) tutuk!” (Vasil’ev – Nasilov 1987, p. 65).

Vasil’ev (transliteration only):  $r^2d^2mib^1r^1ücn^2:qn^1int^1amit^1t^1uq:t^1qa:t^2gms^2b^2g$   
 $m:s^2iz:r^2b^1s^1i<...>at^1a:čin^2:n^1a$  (Vasil’ev 1983, p. 32).

Tekin (without translation): *Ärdämi bar ücün kaninta Kü Totok atka tägmiš begim, äsiz! Ėr baši, yita, açig a!* (Tekin 2000, p. 235).

Kormušin: *ärdämi bar ücün qaninta kü tutuq atqa tägmiš bāgim äsiz är[än] baši ajiṭa açiṭa* “Blagodarja svoje j doblesti on dostig na xanskoj (službe) slavnogo titula tutuk; moj bek! – žal’ predvotitel’ mužej-(voinov), o gore, pečal’” (Kormušin 2008, pp. 139–140).

Kiselev confuses the position of the line cited as the 2nd line in Malov (1952), with the following one. According to Kormušin, the 14th letter N:  $n^1$  was ignored by Kiselev and Malov although it is present in Vasil’ev – Nasilov’s edition. “Znaki 17–18 Kiselev videl kak ym:  $mj^2$ , ostavljaja bez čtenija, Malov – kak aZ, čitaja vmeste so sledujuščim slovom kak imja sobstvennoe i titul: *Aza tutuk* (Malov 1952, p. 95). Vasil’ev – Nasilov, imeje v prorisi im, v transkripcionnom tekste byli na pravil’nom puti, čitaja s variantami *ekü-? kü-?*, počemu-to somnevajas’ v normativnosti vtorogo iz nix” (Kormušin 1997, p. 50). This letter was considered as  $ük : k^2w$  by Kormušin, and according to him, the rest of the letters till the 36th in this line were correctly ascertained in the previous editions. Kormušin also notes the difficulty of determining

the 37th and 38th letters. He indicates that the 37th letter might be d: d<sup>2</sup> and the 38th letter, transcribed as ř: š by Vasil'ev–Nasilov, is probably k: k<sup>2</sup>.

“39 znak i: I (kak u Vasil'eva–Nasilova, no ne a: A kak u Kiseleva i Malova). Poslednie dva slova stroki, znaki 40–47, izdateli ne pročitali opredeliv verno tol'ko čast' run (v raznyx izdanijax – raznye). Na meste 40 znaka u Vasil'eva–Nasilova pokazan štrixovkoj skol, čto neverno, čitaetsja znak Y : j<sup>1</sup>, verno opredelennyj, kak i sledujuščij 41 i: I (a ne a: A – u Vasil'eva–Nasilova), u Kiseleva i Malova. Vmesto dvux znakov NI: I<sup>2</sup>n<sup>1</sup> u Kiseleva i Malova, na pamjatnike odin znak Ŵ: t<sup>1</sup> (42 znak), kak pravil'no pročitano u Vasil'eva–Nasilova. 43 znak a: A pročitali vse izdateli. Poslednee slovo stroki Kiselev i Malov sovsem ne pročitali, Vasil'ev–Nasilov ustanovili pravil'no tri znaka iz četyrex, no byli daleki ot pročtenija: na 46 pozitsii vmesto g<sup>1</sup> oni uvideli dva znaka s razdelitelem N: n, razdelili jedinoe slovo na dva –üčün (na -?). V tselom, znaki 40–47 skladyvajutsja v deplorativnye slova-častitsy **yItA: ČIĞA** jita ~ (a)j(ĭ)ta: (a)čĭga, i dannoe sočetenye analogično kontsovke 8 stroki, pri etom runy oboix slov identifitsirujutsja bez malejšix somnenij.”  
(Kormušin 1997, pp. 50–51)

Through Kormušin's determination one can obviously read the word *kü* written right before the title *tutuq*, but it is quite doubtful to mention either a phrase *kü tutuk* or attribute a sense as “renowned *tutuq*” to *kü tutuk*. In the Turkic Runic inscriptions the word *kü* constructs a noun phrase merely when it is formed with the suffix +Ilg<sup>5</sup>: *külüg apa bän* (E 20/2); *külüg tirig bän* (E 3/3); *arslan külüg tirig oĭlı bän ... külüg toĭan bän* (E 44/6); *bay apa sangun oĭlı külüg čor* (E 7/1); *tüz bay küč bars külüg* (E 17/1); *külüg čigši urungu čigši* (E 70/1); *beš yüz başı külüg oĭrı*: (Ta B 6) etc. (Sertkaya 1995, pp. 214–215, Tekin 2004, p. 184). Furthermore, the identity of the deceased, for whom the Abakan monument was erected, is affirmed by himself on line 7 of the epitaph *as töl(ä)s b(i)lgä tutuk b(ä)n*. Consequently, the word written right before the word *kü* could not be the title *tutuq*. In the handmade copies of the inscription, the original spelling of the word is **t<sup>1</sup>Wt<sup>1</sup>q**. If one takes into account the small cracks and splits on the stone and considers that the handmade copies were made erroneously, the possibility of reading **p** instead of **q**, for the last letter of the word, becomes evident. In this case, the word written right after the word *kü* ought to be the adverbial form of the verb *tut-* with the suffix *-(X)p*; that is, *tut(u)p*. The verb *tut-* (with the subject *kü*) signifies “to achieve a reputation, to become famous”, and it also carries numerous figurative meanings<sup>6</sup>, e.g. *t(a)b]g(a)čka : bunča : süŋ(ü)š(ü)p : (a)lpın : (ä)rd(ä)min : üčün : kü bunča : tutu* “Making so much war upon China, (he) achieved a reputation due to his heroism and bravery” (KČ, Line 12; Şirin User 2009a, p. 470).

<sup>5</sup> What Kormušin read as *kü çekünj tutuq* in the 2nd line of E 25 should be *küč kül tutuq* (Malov 1952, p. 46; Sertkaya 1995, p. 215).

<sup>6</sup> For these meanings see Şirin User (2009a, pp. 362, 372, 386, 401, 408).

One apprehends the glory of the ancient Turkish *alps* and leaders who commanded battles depending on his achievements during the wars. Under these circumstances, I want to draw attention to the spelling **qn<sup>1</sup>In<sup>1</sup>t<sup>1</sup>A** documented right before the phrase *kü tut(u)p*, which can probably be *(a)k(i)nunta* “in his raid, in his fight”. Thus, the sentence *(ä)rdämi b(a)r üč(ü)n (a)k(i)nunta : kü tutup: (a)tka t(ä)gm(i)š b(ä)g(i)m : (ä)siz : (är) b(a)šı yita (a)č(ig)-a* becomes definite connoting “In consequence of his virtue he achieved reputation in his battle. Alas my *beg!* What a pity! Commander! Alas! Pity!”

## 2.2. The interpretation of line 14 of the same inscription is also disputed:

Kiselev: *äti ury oγ<sup>u</sup>l<sup>1</sup>η zqn(?) b<sup>ü</sup>k(ti) a<sup>q</sup>ηum alp qošči b<sup>a</sup>z<sup>1</sup>η[i] tüş<sup>ü</sup>rm<sup>ä</sup>z ä<sup>r</sup>i<sup>1</sup>η<sup>1</sup>z bünka tor (ür) b<sup>a</sup>ηü<sup>1</sup> alk<sup>a</sup> r(i)η b<sup>a</sup>n yita* (adırıldım) “Ego imuščestvo u syna ... ostalos’. Moj upokoivšijsja otets, vitjaz’, prisoedinitel’, vaši muži gorju [t.e. smerti] obtesali pamjatnik-stremlenie geroja [t.e. stel’, k kotoroj stremitsja geroj]. Ja ot (vas ot-delilsja) [t.e. umerj]” (Kiselev 1939, p. 127).

Malov: *orizka aηızka bökmädım öldım alp (?) kušča čablı tüşürmiš ärtiηız buηka tašin bänküün tikär bän yita* “Ja ne nasladilsja (na zemle) sčast’em i (svoimi) poljami (i) umer. Kak ptitsa sokolom vy byli nizrinuty; k pečali ... v pečali ja večnyj pamjatnik stavlju” (Malov 1952, p. 95).

Batmanov–Subrakova: *orizga... aηızke bökmedi(m) ... alp kušča čablı tüşürmiš ertijiz. Buηka (atın) beηküün (t)ikär bän. Yita* “Irizima paza čazılarına čöpsinmedim. Alıp xus čili čablanıp (?) tüsteer. Čobaga ...” (Batmanov–Subrakova 1970, pp. 21–22).

Vasil’ev–Nasilov: *yeti urı ogulunizqa bökmädük qaη eçim alp kušča bal(a) tüşürmək ertijiz buηqa tašin beηkü tükälmiš yita* “Vy, moj otets, ne nasladivšijsja svoimi synov’jami, kak smelym sokolom ptenets, Vy byli nizrinuty. Uvy, s pečal’ju byl sooružen (zaveršen) večnyj pamjatnik!” (Vasil’ev–Nasilov 1987, p. 65).

Vasil’ev (transliteration only): *y<sup>2</sup>t<sup>2</sup>iur<sup>1</sup>iuy<sup>1</sup>ηzqa:b<sup>2</sup>ükmd<sup>2</sup>ük:qηçm:l<sup>1</sup>pqus<sup>1</sup>ça:-b<sup>1</sup>l<sup>1</sup>a:t<sup>2</sup>ü s<sup>2</sup>r<sup>2</sup>mk:r<sup>2</sup>t<sup>2</sup>ηz:b<sup>1</sup>uηqa:t<sup>1</sup>s<sup>1</sup>iη:b<sup>2</sup>ηkü:t<sup>2</sup>ükl<sup>2</sup>ms<sup>2</sup>:y<sup>1</sup>it<sup>1</sup>a* (Vasil’ev 1983, p. 32).

Tekin: *yeti urı ogluηızka bökmädök kaηıçım. Alp kušča buηı tüşürmək ärtiηız. Buηka tura beηkü tikär män* (without translation) (Tekin 2000, p. 235).

Kormušin: *jäti urı oyl-iηizqa bökmädük qaηıçam üqušča buηı tüşürmək ärtiηız buηqa tura bänkü tikär män ayıta* “Na nasladivšis’ sem’ju Vašimi synov’jami, moj batjuška, ogromnoe gore opustili Vy (na nas). Prebyvaja v gore, ja vozdvig (e ètot) večnyj pamjatnik” (Kormušin 2008, p. 140).

The first three words which were partially read by Kiselev and not identified by Batmanov and Subrakova, were confirmed by Nasilov and Vasil’ev as *yeti urı ogluηızka* and reaffirmed by Tekin and Kormušin. The predicate of the sentence was read as *bükti* by Kiselev, and *bökmädım* by Batmanov and Subrakova and *bökmädük* by the rest.

Approximately 95 percent of the Yenisei epitaphs were written in the form of the first person narrative; for this reason they can be defined as brief autobiographical documents as told by the deceased. One can ascertain, however, that some of the epitaphs involve some parts written in the form of second and third person narrative



as well (e.g. Altın Köl I/E 28, Uybat III/E 32; Uybat VI/E 98 etc.). Abakan is one of the inscriptions which was mixed in style. For example, its first line is narrated by the deceased and the other lines are told by the *bitigçi* who carved the inscription. The transcription as *y(e)ti urı ogl(u)η(u)zka : būkm(ä)d(ü)k : k(a)η(i)ç(i)m* “Daddy who passed away without having enough of his seven sons” verifies this narration.

The word written right after this sentence was transcribed as *(a)lp* by all the researchers who had examined the Abakan inscription, except for Kormuşin. Assuming the letter  $\text{I}^2$  as  $\text{W}^2$ , and supposing that the one read as **p** is a split on the stone, Kormuşin recommended the *üquşča* transcription. With regard to the following word, it is transcribed as *koşçı* by Kiselev and *kuşča* by the rest of the researchers.

*Töles Bilge Tutuk* on behalf of whom the Abakan inscription had been erected, was a *beg* known as a master shooter and hunter in his tribe. Lines 12 and 13 which were transcribed correctly by Kormuşin, affirm this fact: *iç y(e)r : (ä)l(i)ki : (a)rtzun : (a)tçi [or (a)t(ta)çi] : (a)lp tutuk yok ... togd(a)y : turı(a)sı : (a)rtz(u)n : kuş(a)d(a)-çi : b(i)lgä tutuk : yok* “Let the gazelle(s) of *Iç Yer* multiply. There is no *Alp Tutuk* who will hunt them. ... Let the crane(s) of *Togday* increase. *Bilge Tutuk* who will shoot them is no longer alive”.

The verb *at-* designates the *abçi* ‘hunter’ identity of *Töles Bilge Tutuk* and the verb *kuşla-* denotes the *kuşçı* ‘bird hunter’ identity of him. The Old Turkic word *kuşçı* signifies both hunters who shoot the birds by arrow and those who hunt with the help of birds of prey (Şen 2007, p. 47).

The *hunter* identity of *Töles Bilge Tutuk* written on the two lines of the epitaph points to the importance of this identity. Therefore, the original runic spelling of the 6th and 7th words of line 14 should be read as  $\text{I}^1\text{pk}^1\text{W}^2\text{ş}^2\text{I}$  instead of  $\text{I}^1\text{pk}^1\text{W}^2\text{ş}^2\text{A}$ . I suppose that the first word must be *pL (a)lp* as it is in the previous researchers opinions and deduce the final letter of the latter should be *i* instead of *a* agreeing with Kiselev’s transcription. In addition, the word which was transliterated as  $\text{b}^1\text{I}^1\text{A}$  by Vasil’ev, transcribed as *b(a)la* by Vasil’ev and Nasilov and *buñi* by Tekin and Kormuşin should be read as  $\text{b}^1\text{I}^1$  = *(a)bçi*. Consequently the phrase *(a)lp kuşçı (a)bçi* perfectly accords with the context.

The spelling which was transcribed as *tüş(ü)rm(ä)z, түş(ü)rm(i)ş* and *tüş(ü)rm(ä)k* in the previous editions of the Abakan inscription, is seen as  $\text{t}^2\text{W}^2\text{ş}^2\text{r}^2\text{mk}^2$  in the handmade copies of the inscription. It is highly probable that the letter **m** was mistakenly copied in lieu of  $\text{g}^2$ , i.e. the plausibility of being  $\text{t}^2\text{W}^2\text{ş}^2\text{r}^2\text{g}^2\text{k}^2$  *tüş(ü)rg(ä)k* of the mentioned word is quite possible. One of the tasks of the suffix *-gAk* is to form agent nominals: one can find many examples such as *uduzgak* ‘leader’; *saçgak kişi* ‘a person who throws about his money’; *kızgak* ‘stingy’, *ögäk* ‘mindful’, *täzgak* ‘a man who shies away from a task’ (Erdal 1991, p. 393). The word *tüşür-gäk* may have meant ‘(one) who constantly fells (the prey with the arrow); dexterous hunter’.

“Some other nouns in *-gAk* are agent nominals in a much more limited sense; e.g. the following Karakhanid military forms: *tut-gak (DLT)* is ‘a mounted detachment that goes out at night to capture the enemy’s patrols and reconnoiters’, *yat-gak (DLT and QB)* is ‘a guard or sentry by night’, *turgak (TA, QB)* is ‘a sentry during

daytime' (Erdal 1991, p. 392). Some occupational titles correspond to the sample Tat. *baskak* 'tax collector of the Golden Horde khans'.

I suggest that the word *tüšürgek* is an occupational title rather than the one who continuously do(es) the action *tüšür-*. This derivative and another occupational title *uduzgak* are in similar structure: verb root + the causative suffix *-Xz-/Ur-* + *-gAk*. So the final interpretation is as follows:

(a)lp kuščı (a)bčı tüš(ü)rg(ä)k (ä)rt(i)η(i)z "You were a brave hunter and a fowler!"

The first word of the final sentence of line 14 was transcribed as *bunğa* in previous editions and explained as *bunğ* 'grief, sorrow, melancholy' with the dative suffix *+kA*. In the handmade copies of the inscription, original spelling of the word is **b<sup>1</sup>W<sup>1</sup>ηk<sup>1</sup>A**. The sentences *bunğa tašin* (*taška*) *bänjkü tikär bän* or *bunğa tura bänjkü tikär bän yta* which were previously proposed, make no sense. So I propose the modified spelling **t<sup>1</sup>wl<sup>1</sup>k<sup>1</sup>I** instead of **b<sup>1</sup>W<sup>1</sup>ηk<sup>1</sup>A**. Thus, a sentence as *tolkı t(a)š(i)n b(ä)ηkü tik(ä)r m(ä)n yta* appears which means "I am erecting the massive stone eternally. Alas!" The word *tolkı* 'massive (stone)' is attested in the Tariat Inscription (W 3) with rounded vowel as *tolku t(a)ška toktd(i)m* "I engraved on (this) single-piece stone".

Consequently, line 14 of the Abakan inscription can be interpreted as *y(e)ti urı ogl(u)η(u)zka : bük(m(ä)d(ü)k : k(a)η(i)č(i)m : (a)lp kuščı (a)bčı tüš(ü)rg(ä)k (ä)rt(i)η(i)z tolkı t(a)š(i)n b(ä)ηkü tik(ä)r m(ä)n yta* which means "Daddy who passed away without having enough of his seven sons! Brave fowler and hunter! You were the dexterous hunter! I am erecting the massive stone as *beñkü* (or I am erecting *beñkü* with the massive stone)".

### Abbreviations

<i>DLT</i>	Atalay (1998–1999)
<i>DTS</i>	Nadeljaev et al. (1969)
<i>ED</i>	Clauson (1972)
<i>KČ</i>	Küli Čor Inscription, Şirin User (2009a)
<i>MEPT</i>	Malov (1952)
<i>QB</i>	<i>Qutadgu Bilig</i> , Arat (1979a)
<i>TA</i>	Tariat Inscription, Şirin User (2009a)
<i>TT</i>	Republican Turkish
<i>UW</i>	Röhrborn (1977–1998)

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