

About *qwɣ* and *qwni sähünüg* from Old Turkic Inscriptions¹

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Abstract: Since W. Radloff and V. Thomsen deciphered and published Old Turkic Inscriptions, new suggestions have been made on the reading and interpretation of a variety of words in the inscriptions. Sometimes, a reading or an interpretation that seem “unproblematic” was changed partly or completely through new information or a new suggestion. Most of the matters and discussions about the inscriptions have revolved around Kül Tegin, Bilge Qaghan and Tunyukuk Inscriptions. In this paper, a new reading will be suggested for the parts (in Bilge Qaghan and Tunyukuk inscriptions respectively) that were previously read as *qwɣ sähünüg* and *qwni sähünüg*.

Keywords: Old Turkic Inscriptions, Bilge Qaghan, Tunyukuk, *qwɣ sähünüg*, *qwni sähünüg*.

Özet: W. Radloff ve V. Thomsen’in Eski Türk Yazıtlarını çözüp yayımlamalarından bugüne yazıtlardaki çeşitli kelimelerin okunuşu, anlamlandırılışı konusunda yeni öneriler düzeltildi olmuştur. Bazen ‘sorunsuz’ gibi görünen bir okuyuş veya anlamlandırma, yeni bir bilgi ile veya yeni bir öneriyle bir ölçüde değişmiş, bazen tamamen değişmiştir. Yazıtlarla ilgili konuların tartışmaların büyük çoğunluğu Kül Tegin, Bilge Kağan ve Tunyukuk yazıtları etrafında dönmüştür. Bu bildiride daha önce *qwɣ sähünüg* ve *qwni sähünüg* okunan kısımlar (sırasıyla Bilge Kağan ve Tunyukuk yazıtlarından) için yeni bir okuyuş önerilecektir.

¹ The reading suggested here emerged during our reading studies on Tunyukuk particularly with HAYASHI Toshio 林俊雄, IWAMI Kiyohiro 石見清裕, KATAYAMA Akio 片山章雄 and P. Zieme Okurayama 大倉山 on 17th May, 2015. What led me to write this article is that reading activity. Hereby, I would like to state that I am thankful to them. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to my friend, Mr. Dr. Yoichi TAKAMATSU who helped me reach Japanese literature.

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Anahtar Sözcükler: Eski Türk Yazıtları, Bilge Kağan, Tunyukuk, *quy sänünüg, qunı sänünüg.*

Over 110 years has passed from the date of discovery and deciphering of Turkic inscriptions in Mongolia to date. Although there were huge differences on many subjects in the publications of W. Radloff (1894: 69) and V. Thomsen (1924-1925), similar mistakes in the reading of some words were in question. However, these mistakes, the common mistakes arose from the fact that sufficient amount of materials related to language and history had not been published yet and publication of dictionaries and grammars regarding modern Turkic languages had not started, which would provide correct reading of problematic words. This fact gave rise to difficulties particularly in the assessment of vowels of some words. When the inscriptions were published for the first time, publication of comparative dictionary of W. Radloff had not been completed yet (1893-1911). Publication of W. Piekarski's Yakut dictionary had not started at all (1907-1930). Dictionaries of Turkic languages such as Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Kumyk and credible publications of Qutadghu Bilig were not available, and Dīvān Luġāt at-Turk had not been discovered yet.

Within this scope, I will examine the word that was pronounced as *ku*, *kug* and *kunı* before, encountered three times in total and considered as the same proper noun. The word is seen twice in Bilge Qaghan and once in Tunyukuk inscriptions; see below:

BK S 8 *ku/ sänün : başadu : tört : tümän : sü kälti* : “General Ku'nun komutanlığında kırk bin asker geldi. / Forty thousand soldiers came under the command of General Ku/.”

BK S 9 *ulug : oglum : agrıp : yok bolça : k^uug : sänünüg : balbal : tikä : bertim* “Büyük oğlum hastalanıp vefat edince General Kug'u balbal dikiverdim. / When my older son became sick and died, I appointed General Kug as balbal.”

TI S 2 *tavgaçgaru : k^uunı sänünüg : idmiş* “Çin'e general Ku'yu göndermişler / He is said to have sent General Ku to China.”

According to this, the word appears three times with different affixes but with *säjün* every time:

ku/ säjün BK S8,

k^uug säjünüg BK S9,

k^uuni säjünüg TI S2.

Säjün in here is well known by everyone, and it is not necessary to dwell on it separately (< Chinese 將軍 *jiangjun*). But what are *kU*, *kUn* and *kUg*?

Now, let's look at the reading of the mentioned words respectively in the relevant main publications:

The part found in BK S 8 is lost in Radloff. In BK S 9 (as line 7), *kogsjöng* is transcribed and read as *Kuḡ säjünni* and translated as “den Kung-sängün / Kung-sengün + accusative”. In the dictionary, *kuḡsäjün* “ein chinesischer Beamter / a Chinese officer” appears (1894: 69 and 1895: 110a).

In Radloff's publication named *Neue Folge* (1897) S 8 is read as *Kug Sängün* and appears as “Kug-Säjün” in the translation (p. 146). The example in G 9 is translated from *Kung-sängün* to *Kug-sängün* in that publication.

W. Radloff reads that as *qonisḡöng / kuni-säjünüg* and translates as “Kuni-säjün + accusative” in his publication of Tunyukuk in 1899 (p. 7). He adds *Kuni* in the glossary as “Eigenname / proper name” (p. 94b).

The part appearing in BK S 8 is read as *ku säjün* in the publication of V. Thomsen and it is stated in the notes that the form *kug* in S 9 “has an accusative suffix”. The translation included in *ZDMG* for Tunyukuk publication has “den Kuni säjün / Kuni säjün + accusative” (p. 163). Thus, V. Thomsen considers the form *Kuni* in Tunyukuk as nominative, *Ku+accusative* suffix cannot be considered in here in anyway.

R. Giraud reads the example in Tunyukuk as *konu säjünig* and translates it as “le general Qonı” (p. 54, 60). Giraud explains the word as “*kuni / konu* personal name” in the glossary (p. 150).

In the grammar of T. Tekin, the form *ku+ni säjün+üg* in Tunyukuk is explained as “General Ku'yu / general Ku + accusative” (Tekin § 262, p. 109).

The same part is read as *kunı säñünüg* by V. Rybatzki and translated as “*Kunı Säñün* + accusative” (p. 47, 90). Rybatzki states in his notes that the whole *Kunı* part may be a Chinese name or surname, and the first part of that name appears as *ku* in BK G 8 and 9 as the name of a commander from the Qitany or the Tatabi. Rybatzki notes that it would not be correct to consider the *+ni* as accusative suffix as Talat Tekin does, that the accusative suffix *+ni* can only be added to pronouns in the inscriptions and the accusative form of the word *ku* appears already as *ku+g*. According to Rybatzki again, those whose names appear in BK and Tunyukuk cannot be the same persons. The *+ni* here may be the Chinese word *nu* “slave” which used to be added to personal names and gained function of an affix in old Uighur period (p. 90).

In the publication of Árpád Berta, the form appearing in BK S 8 is read as *kug säñwn* and translated as “*Kug Säñün*” (p. 174 and p. 201). Therefore, he does not consider the first element as *ku+g* in here. The relevant part is read as *kwnı säñwnwög* (Kuni Szengün) in Tunyukuk (p. 49 and 77).

Conclusion, questions and suggestion:

It was emphasized clearly for the first time by V. Rybatzki in European publications that the names appearing in BK and Tunyukuk cannot be the same. The first question marks about the subject are seen in the studies of V. Thomsen and R. Giraud.

In Japan, ONOGAWA Hidemi read the expression in BK S 8 as *kug säñün* and translated it as “郭將軍 / general 郭 Kaku” in his study dated 1942.

In fact, the general mentioned in Bilge Qaghan inscription is a person who fought against Turks. The other one whose name appears in Tunyukuk is a general who was sent by Turks to fight against China. Thus, the persons whose names appear in BK and Tunyukuk cannot be the same persons.

In this situation, we can read and translate the relevant parts in Bilge Kagan inscription in the light of above mentioned reading and information as follows:

BK S 8 *ko/. säjün : başadu : tört : tümän : sü kälti* : “General Ko/’nun komutanlığında kırk bin asker geldi. /Forty thousand soldiers came under the command of General Ko/”

BK S 9 *ulug : oglum : agrıp : yok bolça : k^oog : säjünüg : balbal : tikä : bertim* “Büyük oğlum hastalanıp vefat edince General Kog’u balbal dikiverdim. / When my older son became sick and died, I appointed General Kog as balbal.”

In Chinese, the name that may correspond to *kog* in here is 郭 *guo*: About the ending of the word with a glottal stop cf. Pulleyblank L. *kuak* / E. *kwak* (p. 116); Cantonese *kwok*, Japanese *kwaku*, Vietnamese *kwak*, Korean *kwak* etc. Giles Nr. 6617 (for phonetic value Nr. 6618). So, if it is asked who is that person Guo, two names among Chinese generals of that period stand out: 郭虔瓘 Guo Qianguan and 郭知運 Guo Zhiyun.² When it comes to the question that which one of these generals fought against Bilge Qaghan, it appears that none of them did. However, both of them fought against Turks in Beshbaliq. The general 郭虔瓘 Guo Qianguan killed Tonga Tegin and he was awarded for this reason. The question to be answered is which Chinese general is Kog Sängün whose name appears in Bilge Qaghan inscription.³

The second issue and question is what *Ko/Konu* that is seen in Tunyukuk inscription is. If the *ko* in question is look for, we find a general who escaped from the Bökküli and took refuge in Turks, and fought against China. The name of that general is 高拱毅 *Gao Gongyi*.⁴ According to Chang’an dialect in Tang period, Chinese word was transferred to Turkish as *ko / ho*, cf. *Hoço* “高昌 Gaochang”. For 高 *gao* cf. Pulleyblank L. *kaw*, E. *kaw* (p. 104); Korean *ko*, Vietnamese *kau*, Cantonese *kou* (Giles Nr. 5927).

² 郭虔瓘 Guo Qianguan appears many times at 新唐書 Xin Tangshu related with Turks (Tujue) and one time as 大將軍郭虔瓘 Da Jiangjun Guo Qianguan (大將軍 is *tay säjün* “great general” at Inscriptions); cf. 舊唐書 Jiu Tangshu (→ Togan et alii 2006: 281), Stark 313; for both persons s. Liu Mau-Tsai, I p. 275.

³ I would like to state that I am thankful to my historian colleague Jaehun Jeong whom I consulted and asked for information on the history of China.

⁴ I am thankful to Jaehun Jeong on the determination of the general in question.

In conclusion, we have no choice but to read the name as *ko* and accept *+m* as accusative until a more appropriate explanation is made. In this case, we can read the mentioned lines in Tunyukuk as follows:

TI S 2 *tavgaçgaru* : *k'oni sãñünüg* : *ıdmiş* “Çin’e general Ko’yu, göndermişler / He is said to have sent General Ko to China”

In my opinion, the reading suggestions above and the parts of the inscriptions read as *ku/kug* before should be read as *kog* (for BK) and *ko* (for Tunyukuk) until any other credible reading is suggested.

Abbreviations:

BK: Bilge Qaghan Inscription

TI: Tunyukuk Inscription, first stone

S: South

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