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AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ

T^1G^2 in the Ongi Inscription

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ABSTRACT

The word T^1G^2 occurs three times in the Ongi Inscription. The sentences containing T^1G^2 have been interpreted in a variety of ways, with no single reading thus far being deemed satisfactory. A notable aspect of the Old Turkic script is the presence of two distinct characters for the majority of consonant sounds, one representing a back-vocalic and the other a front-vocalic sign. Given that T^1G^2 occurs on three occasions, it is plausible that the individual(s) responsible for inscribing the text may have deliberately employed this format. The author hypothesizes that T^1G^2 in question represents the Turkic rendering of the Chinese character *dí* 敵, which translates to "enemy; hostile."

KEYWORDS

Old Turkic script, Ongi Inscription, Orkhon inscriptions, Orkhon Turkic, Turkic, *dí* 敵

I. INTRODUCTION

Orkhon Turkic is the oldest Turkic dialect whose written records have come down to us (Tekin 1968: 7). It is known to us through the inscriptions found in present-day Outer Mongolia, mainly in the basin of the Orkhon River, and is therefore conveniently called 'the Orkhon inscriptions.' The inscriptions in question are the Kül Tegin, Bilgä Kagan, Tuñukuk, Išbara Tarkan (Ongi), and Küli Čor (Ikhe-Khüshötü) inscriptions (Tekin 1968: 9).

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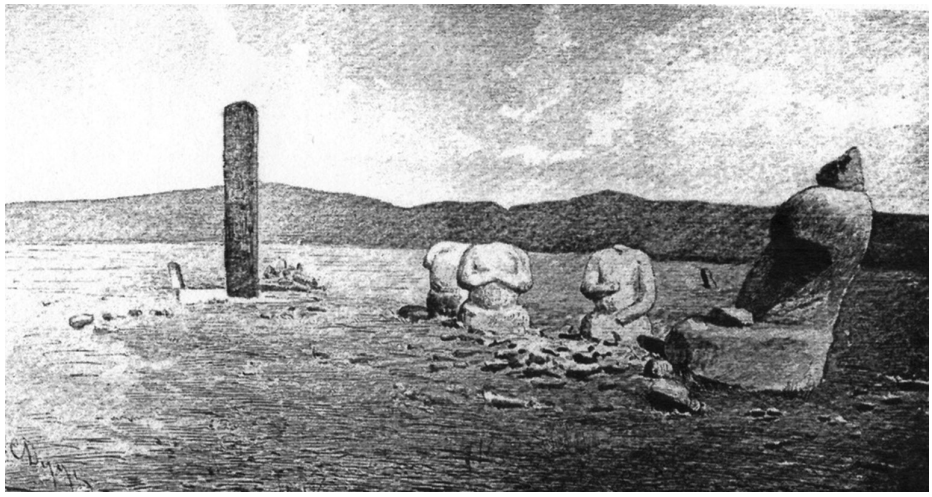


Fig. 1 Sketch of the Ongi site by Jadrincev

Informed by Chinese traders and local nomad Mongolians, Jadrincev discovered the Ongi site and inscription on 20 August 1891[1] (see Fig. 1).[2] The center of the sarcophagus of this site is located at latitude 46° 20′ 20.3″ North, longitude 102° 11′ 02.5″ East and at a height of 2110 m (Ōsawa 2008: 254; Ōsawa 2011: 149).[3]

This stele had eight lines on the front side and four lines on the right side. In the upper part of the four vertical lines on the right side, there were seven horizontal lines. Radloff designated the side of eight lines of the wide side (O), the side of four lines of the narrow side (O.a), the same side of seven horizontal lines in the upper part (O.b), and the inscription on a single stone (O.c)[4] (see Fig. 2).[5]

In connection with the rubbings made by Radloff, Clauson (1957: 178) writes as follows:

'Radloff states that three inked squeezes in all were taken of the inscriptions. A reduced reproduction of one was published on plate 26[6] of Radloff's *Atlas der Altertümer der Mongolei*, Pt. I, St. Petersburg, 1892. A printed text and translation of both inscriptions was published in Radloff's *Die Alttürkischen Inschriften der Mongolei*, St. Petersburg, 1895, pp. 243 ff. A reproduction of a second squeeze, reduced to a slightly different scale and partly out of focus (?), was published on plate 83 of Pt. III of the Atlas, 1896. This is accompanied by a reproduction of a "retouched

[1] See Ōsawa 2008: 253, Ōsawa 2011: 147, and Radloff 1895: 243.
[2] http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/Lc-22/V-1/page-hr/0057.html.en (retrieved on 25 March 2023).
[3] For the discovery of Ongi site and stele, the investigation of the site and the inscription, as well as the rubbings of the Ongi inscription, see Ōsawa 2007–2008: 161–164, Ōsawa 2008: 253–256, and Ōsawa 2011: 147–153.
[4] See Ōsawa 2008: 258–259, Ōsawa 2011: 151, and the information about Plate LXXXIII on the first page of Inhaltsverzeichnis der Dritten Lieferung at the beginning of the third part.
[5] http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/Lc-22/V-1/images/PDF/0233.pdf (retrieved on 25 March 2023).
[6] See Fig. 3 (No. 1 and No. 2) (http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/Lc-22/V-1/images/PDF/0081.pdf) (retrieved on 25 March 2023). The information for No. 1 and No. 2 is given as follows on the second page of Inhaltsverzeichnis at the beginning of the second part:
No. 1: Tü-küe-Inschrift (O) auf den Grabsteine des Chansgrabes am Flusse Ongin (unretouchirt)
No. 2: Querzeilen auf dem unteren Ende desselben Steines (ohne Retouche)

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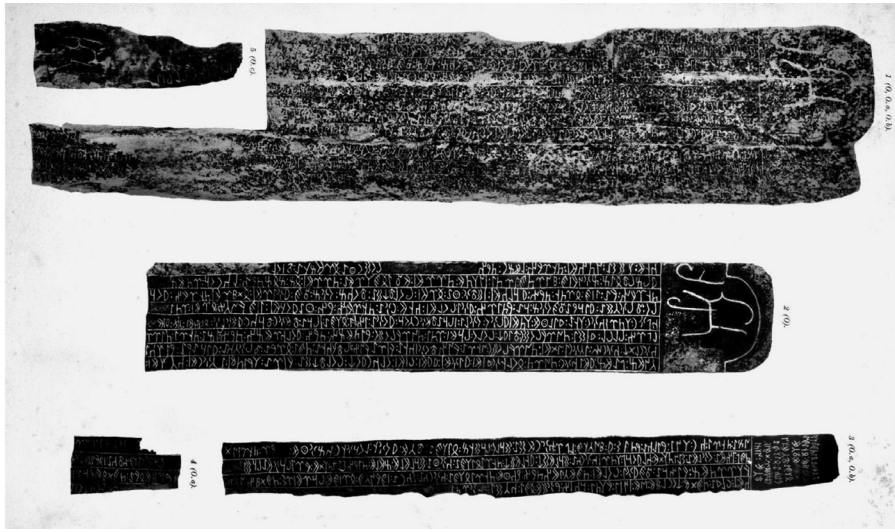


Fig. 2 Unretouched rubbing (above) and retouched rubbing (below) of the Ongi inscription

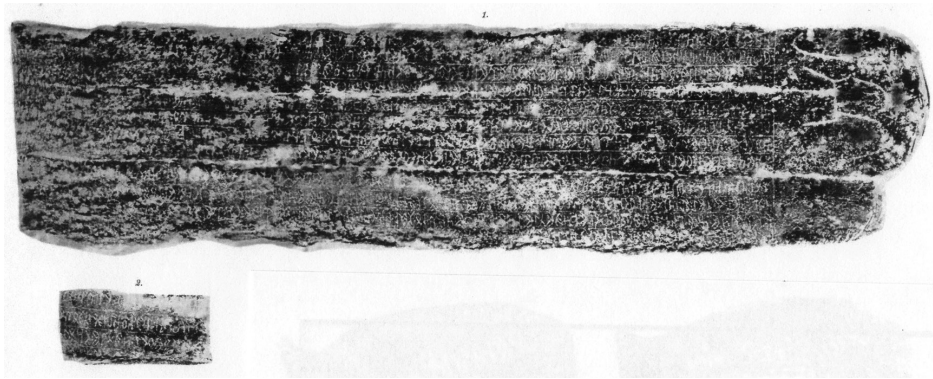


Fig. 3 Unretouched rubbing of the Ongi inscription (on plate 26 of *Atlas der Alterthümer der Mongolei*)

squeeze", that is a fair copy of the squeeze with nearly every letter drawn in. It appears that this drawing, though published later, was in fact made before the printed text, since Radloff says that he spent months over the three squeezes before he finally completed his text and translation, and ventured the opinion that any future reconsideration of Ongi inscription would probably lead to a less complete rather than a fuller text. Thus the drawing, which differs to some extent from the printed text, seems to represent an intermediate stage in Radloff's thinking.'

Currently, the stele is preserved in four small fragments[7] at Arvaikheer Museum and the Ongi site: (1) a fragment of the head stone of the stele lying near a pile of bricks in the mound of Ongi

[7] For details regarding the original position of these four pieces within the inscription, please refer to Ōsawa 2008: 317 and Ōsawa 2011: 156.

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site, (2) a small fragment, (3) a medium fragment, (4) and a large fragment. Three of the stele fragments have runic letters and are preserved in the local museum of Arvaikheer of Övörkhangai Aimag; however, the other fragments of the Ongi stele have not been discovered until now (Ōsawa 2008: 260; Ōsawa 2011: 156) (see Figs. 4, 5, and 6).

Despite the extensive research conducted by philologists on this inscription, several words remain unresolved. One such word is 𐰋𐰢 T^1G^2.

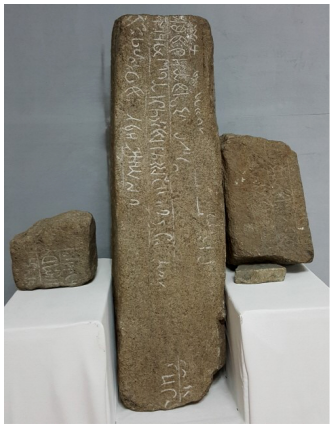


Fig. 4 Fragments of stele in the museum (Photo taken by the author on 26 July 2018)



Fig. 5 Ongi site today (Photo taken by the author on 26 July 2018)

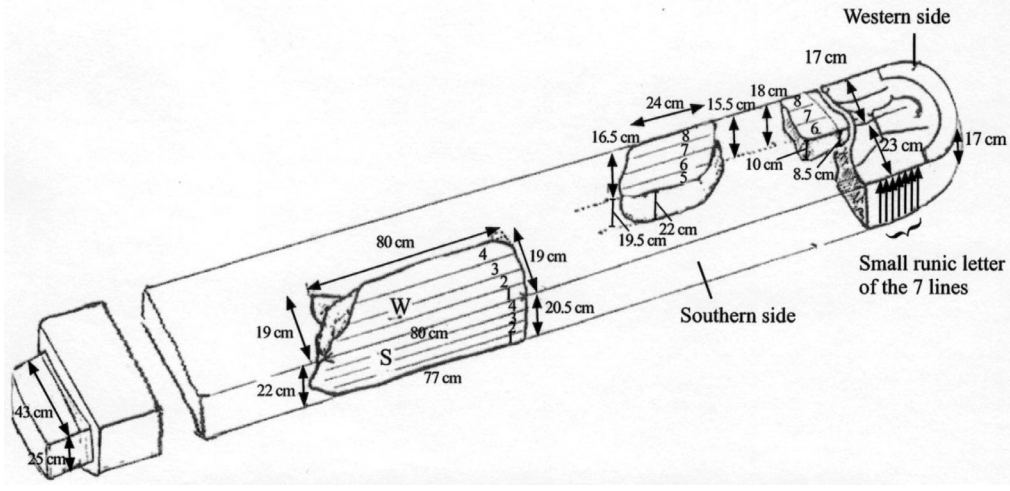


Fig. 6 The identification of the headstone and the small, medium-sized and large fragments of the Ongi stele. Reconstruction by Ōsawa Takashi (2011: 156)

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II. RESEARCH UP TO THE PRESENT

The word 𐰴𐰚 T^1G^2 occurs three times in the inscription: lines F 5, F 6, and R 2. The sentences containing 𐰴𐰚 T^1G^2 are transliterated and transcribed in Latin script according to the retouched rubbing of the inscription as follows:

(1) Line F 5
B^1W : $T^1B^1G^1ČD^1A$: $Y^1IR^1Y^2A$: $T^1G^2WG^1Z$: R^1A : $Y^2T^2IR^2N^2$: Y^1G^1I : $B^1WL^1MS^2$
bo : tabγačda : yïr(ï)ya : T^1G^2 oγ(u)z : ara : yeti äräп : yaγï : bolm(ï)š

(2) Line F 6
T^1WK^1Z : WG^1Z : T^1G^2 : $Y^1G^1IR^2MS^2$
toq(u)z : oγ(u)z : T^1G^2 : yaγï ärm(i)š

(3) Line R 2
$K^2IN^2R^1A$: $T^1G^2Y^1G^1I$: $B^1WL^1MS^2$
ekin ara : T^1G^2 yaγï : bolm(ï)š

These sentences have been read and translated by former researchers as follows:[8]

(1) Radloff (1895)[9]
бу табҕачда jipijä (таҕ? тың?) оҕуз ара jäti äräп jаҕы болмыш (F 5) (p. 249)
'Von diesen Chinesen nach links unter den mächtigen (Berg?) Oguz sieben Helden wurden (uns) Feinde.' (p. 248)
тоkуз оҕуз . . jаҕы ärміш, (F 6) (p. 249)
', wurden die Toguz-Oguz mächtige Feinde,' (p. 249)
äкін ара. . . jаҕы болмыш (R 2) (p. 251)
'Zwischen beiden war ein gewaltiger Krieg.' (p. 250)

jаҕы
𐰾𐰸𐰃 (O 5,7) jаҕы болмыш wurden Feinde; 𐰾𐰸𐰃𐰴𐰚 (Oa 2,5) тың (?) jаҕы ein heftiger Krieg; 𐰇𐰾𐰼𐰾𐰃:𐰴𐰚 (O 6,13) тың (?) jаҕы ärміш. (p. 274a)

Оҕуз
𐰋𐰍𐰺𐰴𐰚[10] (O 5,4) тың (?) Оҕуз die starken (?) Ogusen; 𐰋𐰸𐰺 (O 6,12) тоkыз Оҕуз die neun Ogusen. (p. 271ab)

[8] Researchers used different languages and transcription/transliteration systems. The author tried to give the reading of each researcher chronologically and just as it is.
[9] '5,5. Der Ausdruck 𐰋𐰸𐰺:𐰴𐰚 ist sehr auffallend. Nähme man an dass 𐰴𐰚 für 𐰸𐰚 steht, so müsste «Berg-Oguse» übersetzt warden, dies ist aber gewiss zu verwerfen, da 6,11–15 𐰇𐰾𐰼𐰸𐰃:𐰴𐰚:𐰋𐰸𐰺:𐰋𐰍𐰺𐰚 und Oa 2,2–4 :𐰇𐰾𐰺𐰃:𐰼𐰸𐰃𐰴𐰚:𐰼𐰍𐰋𐰼𐰆 steht. Wo doch unmöglich übersetzt warden kann: «die neun Ogus waren ein Bergfeind» und «zwischen beiden war ein Bergfeind». Sollte nicht 𐰴𐰚 für 𐰼𐰆 тың «heftig, stark» stehen? Dann wären alle Stellen verständlich: 1) «unter den mächtigen Ogusen»; 2) «die neun Ogusen waren ein mächtiger Feind»; 3) zwischen beiden entstand ein heftiger Krieg»' (Radloff 1895: 254).
[10] An editorial error for 𐰋𐰸𐰺𐰴𐰚.

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(2) Orkun (1936)

bu tᵃbgᵃçda yˡrˡya tᵉğ ogᵘz ᵃra yᵉti ᵉrᵉn yᵃgı bolmⁱş (F 5) (p. 128)
'Bu Çinde öteye (= şimale) doğru Oğuzlar arasında yedi er düşman olmuş (?)' [In this China, allegedly seven men became enemies among the Oghuz towards the far (= north) direction (?)] (p. 128)
to*k*ᵘz ogᵘz tᵉğ yᵃgı ᵉrmⁱş (F 6) (p. 128)
'Dokuz Oğuzlara kadar (?) düşman imiş' [Allegedly they were enemies as far as (?) the Toquz Oghuz] (p. 129)
ᵉkⁱn ᵃra tᵉğ yᵃgı bolmⁱş (R 2) (p. 130)
'İkisinin arasına kadar (?) düşman olmuş.' [Allegedly they became enemies as far as (?) between the two] (p. 130)

(3) Clauson (1957)[11]

ba[sa:], tavğaç(d)a:, yı:raya:, T¹g² Oğuz, ara:, yeti: eren, yağı:, bo:lmış, (F 5) (p. 182)
'Then to the north of China among the Atığ (?) and Oğuz seven men started hostilities (against us).' (p. 188)
to:kuz, Oğuz, T¹g², yağı: ermiş, (F 6) (p. 182)
'[Next] the Tokuz Oğuz and Atığ (?) started hostilities (against us).' (p. 188)
eki:n ara:, T¹g² yağı:, bo:lmış, (R 2) (p. 182)
'Between the two the Atığ started hostilities (against us.)' (p. 189)

(4) Malov (1959)

бу табҕачда jыраjа бäг оҕуз ара jäті äрäн jаҕы болмыс. (F 5) (p. 9)
'От этих табгачей на север, среди бегов огузов семь мужей (предводителей) были врагами.' (p. 10)
тоkуз оҕуз бäг jаҕы äрміс (F 6) (p. 9)
'[; после этого] девять бегов огузов были врагами,' (p. 10)
äкін ара бäг jаҕы болмыс (R 2) (p. 9)
'[Мы пришли] среди двух . . . беги были врагами.' (p. 10)

бäг XT VI, IX; Oa 1; Mor. 1, O7; КЧ 6; Chwol. 1890, 48, 5 (XXII); Oa 2; Радлов и Оркун читают тг 𐰉𐰆; я читаю бг 𐰉𐰚 (бäг), Altt. Inschr., 254; см. Örÿң. (p. 92b)

(5) Tekin (1968)

ba[sa] tabγačda yïriyä atig oγuz ara yeti ärän yaγī̈ bolmis. (F 5) (p. 255)
'Then to the north of China among the Atig and Oguz seven men started hostilities (against us).' (p. 291)
toquz oγuz atig yaγï ärmis (F 6) (p. 255)

[11] '*Line 5.*— … **T¹g²** occurs here and in lines 6 and 10, and, as far as I know, nowhere else. It is just possible that the first letter used on all three occasions in this word but not elsewhere (see Plate I), which is not exactly identical with the **t¹** used elsewhere, should be read in some other way, perhaps as some kind of ligature with a front vowel; but pending further clarification it seems better to retain **t¹**. The word is obviously the name of a tribe; the reading (**tağ, tığ, atağ, atığ**) is quite uncertain; perhaps **Atığ** is the likeliest. …' (Clauson 1957: 185).

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'the Tokuz-Oguz and Atig started hostilities (against us).' (p. 291)
ekīn ara atig yaγī bolmis. (R 2) (p. 256)
'Meanwhile, the Atig started hostilities, we were told.' (p. 292)

atig ethnic n. (? = A-tie of the Chinese sources) O R2 (p. 305b)
toquz oγuz a. O F6
a. oγuz ara O F5

(6) Tekin (2000)
tokuz oguz atig yagı ärmiş 'Dokuz Oğuzlar ve Atigler (bize) düşman imiş' [Allegedly the Toquz Oghuz and Atig were enemies (against us)] (F 6) (p. 193)

Atig (?) etnik ad (Çin kaynaklarındaki **A-tie** etnik adı mı?) [ethnic name (? = *A-tie* of the Chinese sources)] (O 5, 6, 10) (p. 239a)

(7) Amanžolov (2003)[12]
bu tᵃbγᵃčda jïraja[13] tᵘ̈γ oγᵘz ᵃra jᵃ̈ti ᵃ̈rᵃ̈n jᵃγï bolmᵘ̈š. (F 5) (p. 176)
'К северу от этих табгачей среди сильных огузов врагами были "семь мужей"'. (p. 177)
toqᵘz oγᵘz tᵘ̈γ jᵃγï ᵃ̈rmᵘ̈š (F 6) (p. 176)
'[а в то время] токуз-огузы ("девятиплеменные огузы") были сильными врагами,' (p. 177)
ᵃ̈kin ᵃra tᵘ̈γ jᵃγï bolmᵘ̈š. (R 2) (p. 176)
'Среди (этих) двух были сильные враги.' (p. 178)

(8) Berta (2004)
b**o** taβγačᵒδa yïrya tý(?) oγwz ara yeti ärän yaγï bolmwš (F 5) (p. 217)
'Ezen *tabgac*soktól északra, az … *oguz*ok között hét harcos (tkp. férfi) (állítólag) ellenség[ünk] lett.'[14] [To the north of these Tabgaches, among the ... Oguz, seven warriors (lit. men) (allegedly) became [our] enemy.] (p. 222)
toqwz oγwz (?) tý(?) yaγï ärmiš (F 6) (p. 218)
'[Ezután] a *Kilenc Oguz* … lett (állítólag) az ellenség[ünk].'[15] [[Then] the Nine Oguz ... became (allegedly) [our] enemy.] (p. 222)
ekin ara tý yaγï bolmwš (R 2) (p. 219)
'A két [esemény] között … (állítólag) az ellenség[ünk] lett.'[16] [Between the two [events] … (allegedly) he became [our] enemy.] (p. 223)

[12] The text is taken from the second edition in 2010.
[13] An editorial error for jïrᵃja.
[14] This sentence is translated into Turkish as 'Bu *Tabgaç*lardan kuzeyde, … *Oguz*ların arasında yedi er düşman[ımız] olmuş' [In the north of these Tabgaches, allegedly seven men became [our] enemies among the … Oguz people] in Berta 2010: 218.
[15] This sentence is translated into Turkish as '[Ondan sonra] *Dokuz Oguz* … düşman[ımız] olmuş' [[Then] allegedly the *Nine Oguz* … became [our] enemy.] in Berta 2010: 218.
[16] This sentence is translated into Turkish as 'İki [olay] arasında … düşman[ımız] olmuş' [Between the two [events] … allegedly he became [our] enemy] in Berta 2010: 219.

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(9) Aydın (2008)[17]

bo tabgaçda yırya t^1g^2 oguz ara yeti erin yagı bolmış (F 5) (p. 24)
tokuz oguz t^1g^2 yagı ermiş (F 6) (p. 25)
ekin ara t^1g^2 yagı bolmış (R 2) (p. 26)

(10) Ōsawa (2008)

bu : tabγačda : yïriyä : täg oγuz : ara : yeti ärin : yaγï : bolmïš (F 5)[18] (p. 268, 288)
'[It was said that his son Tamγan] became the enemy with the 7 worriers[19] among Oγuz tribes up to the northern regions of this Tabγač (China).' (p. 274)
toquz : oγuz : täg : yaγï ärmiš (F 6)[20] (p. 269, 293)
'It was said that [when he became Šad,] he opposed up to the Toquz Oγuz.' (p. 274)
ekin ara : täg yaγï : bolmïš (R 2)[21] (p. 270, 296)
'[We came and] we became enemy against them up to two groups.' (p. 275)

[17] 't^1g^2 (5. Satır): Yazıtın bir diğer problemli yeri de t^1g^2 şeklinde yazılmış kelimedir. Kelime hakkında bugüne kadar mantıklı bir açıklama yapılamamıştır. … Yazıtta 5, 6 ve 10. satırda olmak üzere üç kez geçen ve hep aynı şekilde yazılan ve büyük bir olasılıkla boy adı olan bu kelimede yazım yanlışı olduğunu söylemek güçtür. … Çince A-tie~A-thie~Ye-tie'nin Edizlerin karşılığı olup olmayacağı, eğer Edizler değilse Ongi yazıtından hareketle *Atıg~Atig* şeklinde bir boy adına ihtiyaç olduğu konusunun yeniden ele alınmasında yarar olduğu düşünülmektedir. Aksi takdirde yazıtta üç kez geçen ve yazımında eksiklik ya da hata olduğunu düşünmeyi gerektirecek herhangi bir kuşku bulunmayan t^1g^2 yazımının hangi boyu karşıladığı anlaşılamayacaktır' [t^1g^2 (Line 5): Another problematic part of the inscription is the word written as t^1g^2. To date, no logical explanation could be given about the word. … It is difficult to say that there is a spelling mistake in this word, which is mentioned three times in the 5th, 6th and 10th lines of the inscription and is always written in the same way and is most likely a clan name. … It is thought to be useful to reconsider the issue of whether Chinese A-tie~A-thie~Ye-tie is the equivalent of Ädiz, and if it is not Ädiz, there is a need for a clan name in the form of Atıg~Atig based on the Ongi inscription. Otherwise, it will not be possible to understand which tribe the spelling t^1g^2 corresponds to, which does not have any doubt to think that there is a defect or mistake in the spelling, which is mentioned three times in the inscription] (Aydın 2008: 34–35).

[18] '… In this text, this curious usage of *T g* is confirmed three times. In my view, this can be considered as a postposition *täg* as Orkun [Orkun 1936: 128]. In this case, a back consonant *T* might be used in the place of front consonant *t* to coincide with back vowel sound *a* of *yïraya*. In my view, if this word is transcribed as *täg* 'up to', this can be regarded as a variant of a postposition *tägi* 'up to; as far as' [ED: 477; Tekin 2003: 154, No.358] of Old Turkic with a difference of Turkic dialects or the periods. For example, it is well known, there are some kinds of *tegi* such as *degin*, *dek*, *degi*, *dak* '-e kadar' in Old Anatolian Turkish, *degin*, *dek*, *dak* '-e kadar' in Osmanli Turkish, *değin*, *dek* '-e kadar' in Türkmen language, *-dan/-dän/-dak/-däk* '-e kadar' [Cf. Li 2004: 471–472] and *tek* 'kadar, değin' in Çorum dialect [TDK, *Derleme Sözlüğü* XII, 1982: 4747] in a colloquial Turkish. Until now, this word had not been analyzed from this viewpoints, so now I would like to suppose this word as a variant of *tegi* that reflects the colloquial sound at that time' (Ōsawa 2008: 289–290). [Viewpoints is an editorial error for viewpoint.]
'On some hepothesis [Bazilkhan 2005: 56, n. 110]. Bazilkhan himself transcripted *at eg* in the W-5, 6 and 10 lines of this stele and interpreted a ethonum having horse and animal for transport, however, there is no evidence in historical sources of Old Turks' (Ōsawa 2008: 289, footnote 11). [Hepothesis is an editorial error for hypotheses; transcripted is an editorial error for transcribed; ethonum is an editorial error for ethnonym.]

[19] An editorial error for warriors.

[20] 'As to a word *täg*, it is carved as *T g* and it seems problematic because there is no dative suffix in the preceding word *oyuz*. If *täg* is a postposition, it needs a dative suffix *+qa/+a* in the preceding word. Clauson, Tekin and SAWADA considered it as a tribal name that cannot be attested in other Turkic inscription. At this present, I would like to consider to (sic!) a variant of a postposition *tegi* 'up to' as I mentioned above in the note of W-5' (Ōsawa 2008: 293–294).

[21] 'As to a word *T g*, it is regarded as a variant *teg* of a postposition *tegi* 'up to' as one of the W-5 line' (Ōsawa 2008: 297).

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(11) Ōsawa (2011)

bu : tabγačda : yïriyä : täg oγuz : ara : yeti ärin : yaγï : bolmïš (F 5)[22] (p. 169, 183)
'[It was said that his son Tamγan] became the enemy with the seven warriors among Oγuz tribes up to the northern regions of this Tabγač (China).' (p. 173)
toquz : oγuz : täg : yaγï : ärmiš (F 6)[23] (p. 169, 187[24])
'It was said that [when he became Šad,] he opposed up to the Toquz Oγuz.' (p. 173)
ekin ara : täg yaγï : bolmïš (R 2)[25] (p. 170, 189)
'[We came and] we became enemies against them as far as to the location between the two groups.' (p. 174)

(12) Erdal (2011)

bo T(a)vgaç : (a)ra : yırya : ^{O}t (tä)g Oγ(u)z : (a)ra : y(e)ti (ä)r(ä)n : y(a)γı : bolm(ı)ş (F 5) (p. 365)
'Bu Çinliler arasında ve kuzeydeki, ateş gibi olan Oğuz (kavmi) arasında yedi kişi düşman olmuş.' [Among these Chinese and among the fire-like Oghuz (tribe) in the north, allegedly seven people became enemies.] (p. 372)
toq(u)z Oγ(u)z ^{O}t-(tä)g y(a)γı (ä)rm(i)ş (F 6) (p. 365)
'Tokuz Oğuz ateş gibi düşmanmış' [Allegedly the Toquz Oghuz were fire-like enemies] (p. 372)
(ä)kin (a)ra : ^{O}t-(tä)g y(a)γı : bolm(ı)ş (R 2) (p. 365)
'İkisinin arasında ateş gibi düşmanlık çıkmış.' [Allegedly a fire-like enmity arose between the two.] (p. 372)

(13) Aydın (2012)

bo tavgaçda yıry²a t¹g² oguz ara yėti eren yagı bolmış² 'Bu Çin'de, kuzeyde tg(?) Oğuzlardan yedi asker düşman olmuş.' [In this China, in the north seven soldiers from the tg(?) Oghuz became enemies.] (F 5) (p. 130)

[22] '… In this text, this curious usage of *T g* is confirmed three times. In my view, this can be considered as the postposition *täg* (Orkun 1936: 128). In this case, the back consonant *T* might be used in the place of the front consonant *t* to coincide with the back vowel sound */a/* of *yïraya*. In my view, if this word is transcribed as *täg* 'up to', this can be regarded as a variant of the postposition *tägi* 'up to; as far as' (ED: 477; Tekin 2003: 154, No. 358) of Old Turkic with differences between Turkic dialects or the periods. For example, it is well known that there are some kinds of *tägi* such as *degin*, *dek*, *degi*, *dak* '-e kadar' in Old Anatolian Turkish, *değin*, *dek*, *dak* '-e kadar' in Osmanli Turkish, *değin*, *dek* '-e kadar' in the Turkmen language, *-dan/-dän/-dak/-däk* '-e kadar' (cf. Li 2004: 471–472) and *tek* 'kadar, değin' in the Çorum dialect (TDK, *Derleme Sözlüğü* XII, 1982: 4747) in colloquial Turkish. Because until now this word had not been analyzed from this viewpoint, I would like to suggest that this word is a variant of *tegi* that reflects the colloquial pronunciation at that time' (Ōsawa 2011: 184).
'Bazylxan (2005: 56, n. 110) made transcriptions such as at eg in the W-5, 6 and 10 lines of this stele and interpreted the ethnos as having had horses and animals for transport, although there is no evidence of this in historical sources of the Old Turkic peoples' (Ōsawa 2011: 184, footnote 12).

[23] '*Täg* is carved as *T g* and it seems problematic because there is no dative suffix in the preceding word *oγuz*. If *täg* is a postposition, it requires a dative suffix *-qa/-a* in the preceding word. Clauson, Tekin and Sawada considered it to be a tribal name that cannot be attested in other Turkic inscriptions. At present, I would like to consider it to be a variant of a postposition *tägi* 'up to' as I mentioned above in the note of W-5' (Ōsawa 2011: 187).

[24] yaγï ärmiš instead of yaγï : ärmiš.

[25] 'The word *T g* is regarded as the variant *täg* of the postposition *tägi* ('up to') as in line W-5' (Ōsawa 2011: 189).

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tokuz oguz t¹g² yagı ermiş 'Dokuz Oğuz (ve) tg(?) düşman imiş' [Allegedly the Toquz Oghuz (and) tg(?) were enemies] (F 6) (p. 130)
ėkin ara t¹g² yagı bolmış 'İkisinin arasında tg(?) düşman olmuş.' [Between the two, allegedly tg(?) became enemies.] (R 2) (p. 131)

(14) Ölmez (2012)
ba[sa] : tavgaç[d]a : yırye : t¹g² oguz : ara : yėti eren : yagı : bolmiş (F 5) (p. 190)
'(...) sonra Çinlilerin kuzeyinde ... (?) Oğuzların arasında yedi asker düşman olmuş.' [(...) then in the north of the Chinese, among the ... (?) Oghuz, allegedly seven soldiers became enemies.] (p. 192)
tokuz : oguz : t¹g² : yagı ermiş (F 6) (p. 190)
'Tokuz Oguzlar'a kadar ... (?) düşmanmış.' [As far as the Toquz Oghuz (they) were ... (?) enemies.] (p. 192)
ėkin ara : t¹g² yagı : bolmiş (R 2) (p. 191)
'İkisinin arasında <....> (?) düşman olmuş.' [Between the two, allegedly (they) became <....> (?) enemies.] (p. 193)

(15) Ölmez (2016)
ba[sa] : tavgaçda : yırye : t¹g² oguz : ara : yėti eren : yagı : bolmiş (F 5) (p. 46, 52)
'.....sonra Çinlilerin kuzeyinde ... (?) Oğuzların arasında yedi asker düşman olmuş.' [(...) then in the north of the Chinese, among the ... (?) Oghuz, allegedly seven soldiers became enemies.] (p. 53)
tokuz : oguz : t¹g² : yagı ermiş (F 6) (p. 47, 52)
'Tokuz Oguzlar'a kadar ... (?) düşmanmış.' [As far as the Toquz Oghuz (they) were ... (?) enemies.] (p. 53)
ėkin ara : t¹g² yagı : bolmiş (R 2)[26] (p. 47, 49, 52)
'İkisinin arasında <....> (?) düşman olmuş' [Between the two, allegedly (they) became <....> (?) enemies.] (p. 54)

[26] 'Erdal, metin boyunca *t¹g²*lerin tamamını *°t-t(ä)g* "ateş gibi" olarak yorumlamış. Metin boyunca üç kez karşımıza çıkan sözcük iki kez *oguz* ile bir kez de bu satırda olduğu gibi *oguz*'suz olarak görülür:
O 5: *tąvgąç[d]a : yırye : t¹g² ogųz : ąra : yęti ęręn: yągı : bolmiş*
O 6: *tokųz : ogųz : t¹g² : yągı ęrmiş*
O 10 için Erdal'ın çevirisi "İkisinin arasında ateş gibi düşmanlık çıkmış." şeklindedir. Bana göre bu çeviri biraz zorlama, olsa olsa bu satır "ikisinin arasında düşman olmuş" şeklinde dönüşlü bir ifadeyle bugünkü Türkçeye çevrilebilir; *oguz*'suz olan bu örnek "ateş gibi" yorumunun uygun düşmeyeceğini gösterir. Belki de E. Aydın'ın tahmini üzere yine bir boy, bir kavim adıdır. Şu an bunu cevaplayabilecek bilgim yok. Ayrıca bk. E. Aydın'ın zikrettiği, A. Taşağıl 2004, A-tie (s. 49)' [Erdal interpreted all *t¹g²*s as *°t-t(ä)g* "like fire" throughout the text. The word, which appears three times throughout the text, is seen twice with *oguz* and once without *oguz* as in this line:
O 5: *tąvgąč[d]a : yïryä : t¹g² ogųz : ąra : yętі äṙäṇ: yągï : bolmiš*
O 6: *tokųz : ogųz : t¹g² : yągï äṙmiš*
Erdal's translation for O 10 is in the form of "Allegedly a fire-like enmity arose between the two". In my opinion, this translation is somewhat forced; at best this line can be translated into today's Turkish with a reflexive expression as "Between the two, allegedly (they) became enemies"; this example without *oguz* shows that the interpretation of "like fire" would not be appropriate. Perhaps, as E. Aydın guessed, it is again the name of a tribe. I do not have the information to answer this at the moment. See also A. Taşağıl 2004, A-tie (p. 49) cited by E. Aydın.] (Ölmez 2016: 47).

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III. DISCUSSION

As seen above, 𐰴𐰚 T¹G² has been interpreted differently so far:

(1) *atïγ* ‘ethnic name’ (Clauson 1957);
(2) *atig* ‘ethnic name’ (Tekin 1968; Tekin 2000);
(3) *bäg* ‘the head of a clan, or tribe, a subordinate chief’ (Malov 1959);
(4) *ot-täg* ‘fire-like’ (Erdal 2011);
(5) *täg* ‘up to, as far as’ (Orkun 1936; Ōsawa 2008; Ōsawa 2011);
(6) *tý* (?) ‘no translation’ (Berta 2004);
(7) *t¹g²* (?) ‘no translation’ (Aydın 2008; Aydın 2012; Ölmez 2012; Ölmez 2016), ‘up to, as far as’ (Ölmez 2012; Ölmez 2016);
(8) *tïγ* ‘strong, powerful’ (Amanžolov 2003);
(9) *tïŋ* (?) ‘fierce, strong’ (Radloff 1895).

The letter 𐰚 is also found in the following expressions:

𐰚𐰇𐰃𐰆𐰚:𐰚𐰉𐰍𐰺 *b(i)r(i)yä : tabγačqa* ‘southwards up to China’ (F 2)
𐰚𐰉𐰇𐰋:𐰚𐰸𐰃𐰆𐰚 *tabγačda : yïr(ï)ya* ‘to the north of China’ (F 5)
𐰚𐰴𐰍𐰃𐰉𐰚𐰽 *matï bäglär(i)m ä* ‘O my faithful lords!’ (F 7)

It is clear that the letter 𐰚 in these examples stands for *t*. Therefore, the readings of Malov (1959) and Erdal (2011) are problematic.

The ethnic name *atïγ* or *atig* is not attested in Chinese historical records and other Turkic inscriptions. The ethnic name *A-tie* [阿跌 *Ā-diē*][27] mentioned in Tekin (1968) and Tekin (2000) is known to refer to Ädiz, which appears in lines 5 and 6 of the north side of the Kül Tegin Inscription. Therefore, the readings of Clauson (1957), Tekin (1968) and Tekin (2000) are problematic.

In Orkhon Turkic, the postposition governing the dative-locative case is *tägi* ‘up to, as far as’, not *täg*. The forms of *dek* and *tek*, in which the final vowel *i* of this *tägi* is dropped, appear much later in the languages of the Oghuz group.[28] The postposition *täg* ‘like’ governs the nominative case in Orkhon Turkic.[29] For this reason, the readings of Orkun (1936), Ōsawa (2008), Ōsawa (2011), Ölmez (2012) and Ölmez (2016) are also problematic.

Although *tïŋ* ‘fierce, strong’ is found in some modern Turkic languages such as Kazakh, Altay and Khakas, 𐰴𐰚 T¹G² cannot be read as *tïŋ*. Consequently, Radloff’s (1895) reading is also problematic.

[27] The pronunciation of 阿跌 is *ʔa-det* in Early Middle Chinese and *ʔa-tʰiat* in Late Middle Chinese. ‘… Early Middle Chinese is the language of the *Qieyun* [切韻 — Y.-S. Li] rhyme dictionary of A.D. 601, which codified the standard literary language of both North and South China, the preceding period of division. … Late Middle Chinese is the standard language of the High Tang Dynasty, based on the dialect of the capital, Chang’an [長安 — Y.-S. Li]’ (Pulleyblank 1991: i).
[28] For details, please refer to Li 2004: 470–475 and Li 2022: 484–489.
[29] For details regarding the distribution of the postposition *täg*, please refer to Li 2004: 457–469 and Li 2022: 471–484.

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Tïγ ‘strong, powerful’ is not attested in any Turkic language. Therefore, the reading of Amanžolov (2003) is also problematic.

A notable aspect of the Old Turkic script is the presence of two distinct characters for the majority of consonant sounds, one being a back-vocalic and the other a front-vocalic sign.[30] However, there are cases where certain front-vocalic consonant signs are used instead of their back-vocalic counterparts.[31] There are numerous examples of this in the Ongi Inscription[32]:

(1) 𐰉𐰆𐰃:𐰉𐰆𐰋𐰋:𐰉𐰆𐰾𐰋𐰃:𐰉𐰆𐰉𐰽:𐰾𐰖𐰇𐰾:𐰓𐰃𐰇𐰴 T²ẄR²T²:B²WL¹ŊG¹.ⁱKS²MS²:Y¹Y¹MS²:Y¹IG¹MS²:B¹S²MS² *tört : bul(u)ŋ(u)γ : qïsm(ï)š : yïγm(ï)š : yaym(ï)š : basm(ï)š* ‘[our ancestor Yamï Kagan] suppressed, frightened, routed and subdued (the peoples in) the four quarters of the world’ (F 1) instead of 𐰉𐰆𐰾𐰇:𐰉𐰆𐰋𐰋:𐰉𐰆𐰾𐰋𐰃:𐰉𐰆𐰾𐰉:𐰾𐰖𐰇𐰇:𐰓𐰃𐰇𐰴 T²ẄR²T²:B¹WL¹ŊG¹:ⁱKS¹MS²:Y¹Y¹MS²: Y¹IG¹MS²:B¹S¹MS²
[𐰴 B² ⇔ 𐰇 B¹; 𐰃 S² ⇔ 𐰾 S¹; 𐰃 S² ⇔ 𐰾 S¹]

(2) 𐰉𐰆𐰓:𐰋𐰾𐰇𐰍:𐰆𐰾𐰾:𐰇𐰓:𐰃𐰓𐰇𐰾𐰆 K¹G¹N¹L¹D²ʷK:K¹G¹N¹N²:IČG¹N¹I:ID²MS² *qaγanladoq : qaγan(i)n : ïčγ(ï)nï : ïdm(ï)š* ‘(The Turkic people) let their kagan whom they had made kagan collapse.’ (F 2) instead of 𐰉𐰆𐰔:𐰋𐰾𐰇𐰍:𐰆𐰾𐰾:𐰇𐰔𐰓𐰇𐰾𐰆 K¹G¹N¹L¹D¹ʷK:K¹G¹N¹N²:IČG¹N¹I:ID¹MS²
[𐰓 D² ⇔ 𐰔 D¹; 𐰓 D² ⇔ 𐰔 D¹]

(3) 𐰾𐰃𐰆𐰾𐰀 𐰉𐰆𐰋𐰋:𐰾𐰖𐰇𐰋 ẄŊR²A:K²ẄN²T¹WG¹S²K¹ŊA *öŋrä : kün tuγs(ï)q(ï)ŋa* ‘eastwards up to the sunrise’ (F 2) instead of 𐰾𐰃𐰆𐰾𐰀 𐰉𐰆𐰋𐰋:𐰾𐰖𐰇𐰋 ẄŊR²A:K²ẄN²T¹WG¹S¹K¹ŊA
[𐰃 S² ⇔ 𐰾 S¹]

(4) [𐰚𐰋𐰍]𐰾𐰃𐰚𐰚:𐰾𐰚𐰚𐰍𐰇 Y¹IR¹IY²A:Y²IŠK¹A[T²G²I] *yïrïya : yïšqa [tägi]* ‘northwards as far as the wooded mountains’ (F 2) instead of [𐰚𐰋𐰍]𐰾𐰃𐰚𐰚:𐰾𐰇𐰚𐰇 Y¹IR¹IY¹A:Y¹IŠK¹A[T²G²I]
[𐰀 Y² ⇔ 𐰇 Y¹; 𐰀 Y² ⇔ 𐰇 Y¹]

(5) 𐰾𐰀𐰃𐰇:𐰾𐰔𐰃𐰾𐰢 T¹B¹G¹ČD¹A:Y¹IR¹Y²A *tabγačda : yïr(ï)ya* ‘to the north of China’ (F 5) instead of 𐰾𐰇𐰃𐰇:𐰾𐰔𐰃𐰾𐰢 T¹B¹G¹ČD¹A:Y¹IR¹Y¹A
[𐰀 Y² ⇔ 𐰇 Y¹]

(6) 𐰾𐰔𐰆:𐰉𐰾𐰃:𐰃𐰘𐰞 𐰴 :𐰾𐰋:𐰓 𐰉𐰔𐰃 S²D¹T¹G¹:NTA:B²R²MS²:B¹WL¹T¹ʷKD¹A *sad at(ï)γ : anta : berm(i)š : boltoqda* ‘when (Täŋrikän) granted him the title of *šad*’ (F 6) instead of 𐰾𐰔𐰆:𐰉𐰾𐰃:𐰃𐰘𐰞 𐰴 :𐰾𐰋:𐰓 𐰉𐰔𐰓 S¹D¹T¹G¹:NTA:B²R²MS²:B¹WL¹T¹ʷKD¹A
[𐰃 S² ⇔ 𐰾 S¹]

(7) 𐰚𐰔𐰓𐰍:𐰋𐰃𐰃𐰋 K¹R¹S²N²:Y²G¹D¹M *qaras(i)n : y(ï)γd(ï)m* ‘I terrified their common people’ (R 1) instead of 𐰚𐰔𐰓𐰇:𐰋𐰃𐰃𐰋 K¹R¹S²N²:Y¹G¹D¹M
[𐰀 Y² ⇔ 𐰇 Y¹]

In the Ongi Inscription, the letters B², M and T¹ have two variants as follows:

(1) B²
𐰴 : 8 occurrences
𐰵: 13 occurrences

[30] Tekin 1968: 38.
[31] Tekin 1968: 39.
[32] The English translations are based on Tekin 1968: 291–292.

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(2) M
𐰣: 21 occurrences
𐰦: 48 occurrences
(3) T^1
𐰚: 19 occurrences
𐰤: 6 occurrences

The examples presented demonstrate that the individual(s) responsible for preparing the Ongi Inscription exhibited a lack of proficiency in the Old Turkic script, particularly in the use of certain letters. Incidentally, 𐰍𐰤 T^1G^2 may be a misspelling of 𐰍𐰦 T^2G^2. That is, it may be an instance in which the back-vocalic consonant sign 𐰤 T^1 is used instead of its front-vocalic counterpart 𐰦 T^2. However, given that 𐰍𐰤 T^1G^2 occurs on three occasions, it is possible that the person(s) who prepared the inscription may have deliberately written it in this manner. Had this word been written as 𐰍𐰦 T^2G^2, it would have been confused with the postposition *täg* 'like' which governs the nominative case.

The author regards 𐰍𐰤 T^1G^2 in question as the Turkic rendering (*täg*) of Chinese *dí* 敵 'enemy; hostile'. The pronunciation of 敵 is *dɛjk* in Early Middle Chinese and *tʰiajk*[33] in Late Middle Chinese. If this is indeed the case, it suggests that the individual(s) responsible for preparing this inscription possesed some knowledge of Chinese.

Thus, the three sentences in which 𐰍𐰤 T^1G^2 occurs can be read as follows:

(1) Line F 5
$B^1W : T^1B^1G^1ČD^1A : Y^1IR^1Y^2A : T^1G^2WG^1Z : R^1A : Y^2T^2IR^2N^2 : Y^1G^1I : B^1WL^1MS^2$
bo : tabγačda : yïr(ï)ya : täg oγ(u)z : ara : yeti ärän : yaγï : bolm(ï)š
'To the north of these Tabgaches, among the hostile Oghuz, allegedly seven men became (our) enemies.'
(2) Line F 6
$T^1WK^1Z : WG^1Z : T^1G^2 : Y^1G^1IR^2MS^2$
toq(u)z : oγ(u)z : täg : yaγï ärm(i)š
'Allegedly the Toquz Oghuz were (our) enemies.'
(3) Line R 2
$K^2IN^2R^1A : T^1G^2Y^1G^1I : B^1WL^1MS^2$
ekin ara : täg yaγï : bolm(ï)š
'Between the two, allegedly (they) became enemies.'

The expression *täg oγ(u)z* can be compared with the expression *oγ(u)z yaγï* in line 8 of the north side of the Kül Tegin Inscription:

oγ(u)z yaγï : ordoγ : basdï 'The hostile Oghuz suddenly attacked the camp.'[34]

The expression *täg yaγï* can be regarded as a kind of hendiadys, consisting of a combination of a borrowed word and a synonymous native word. It can also be compared with the expression *otča*

[33] *j* represents *y*.
[34] The English translation is according to Tekin 1968: 271.

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borča in line 37 of the east side of the Kül Tegin Inscription and in line 27 of the east side of the Bilgä Kagan Inscription:[35]

türg(i)š : qaγan : süsi : bolčuda : otča : borča : kälti 'The army of the Türgiš kagan came (upon us) like fire at Bolču'[36] (KT E 37)

türg(i)š : qaγan : süsi : otča : borča : kälti 'The army of the Türgiš kagan came (upon us) like fire'[37] (BK E 27)

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[35] Regarding *otča borča*, Adamović (1996: 171) writes: 'Das tocharische Wort por „Feuer" wird in den einschlägigen Wörterbüchern dem sogenannten A-Dialekt zugeschrieben, der im östlichen Teil des Sprachgebiets lag und daher auch unter der Bezeichnung Ostdialekt bekannt ist. Das gleiche Wort lautet im B-Dialekt (Westdialekt) puwar, pwār id. Die beiden Dialektformen lassen deutlich erkennen, daß der Vokal des tocharischen Wortes zu der Klasse o gehörte und lang war, was auf einen Prototyp *pōr hinausläuft. Beim Eingang eines derartigen Wortes ins Alttürkische mußte das anlautende p- im Systemzwang zu b- sonorisiert werden, da das Alttürkische bekanntlich keinen p-Anlaut kannte. Die ursprüngliche Vokallänge blieb dagegen erhalten, so daß man alles in allem eine Lautentwicklung toch. *pōr > attü. *bōr ansetzen darf. Alle Umstände sprechen also dafür, daß das tocharische Wort *pōr den Autoren der zitierten alttürkischen Inschriften bekannt war, die dieses Lehnwort offenbar mit dem einheimischen Wort ōt „Feuer" zu einem Synonymkompositum zusammengefügt haben, um die Extensität des Feuers hervorzuheben: ōtča bōrča „wie ein großes Feuer, wie ein großer Brand"."

[36] The English translation is based on Tekin 1968: 269.

[37] The English translation is based on Tekin 1968: 276. Adamović (1996: 172) translated this sentence as 'Das Heer des Türgesch-Kagan kam wie ein Flächenbrand herbei.'

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