

On *TŪzA:bntrAKRG:sŷkdm* in the 25th Line of the Tuñuquq Inscription

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Abstract: Orkhon Turkic is the oldest Turkic dialect whose written records have come down to us. It is known to us through the inscriptions found in present-day Outer Mongolia, mainly in the basin of the Orkhon River. These are the Kül Tegin, Bilgä Kagan, Tuñuquq, Išbara Tarqan (Ongi), and Küli Čor (Ikhe-Khüshötü) inscriptions.

The Tuñuquq inscription consists of the stone steles which are still standing. The first and bigger stone contains an inscription of 35 lines. There are 27 lines on the second and smaller stone. This monument is obviously a memorial to Tuñuquq who worked under the first two kagans of the second East Turkic Empire.

Most parts of this inscription are well understood. However, the sentence *TŪzA:bntrAKRG:sŷkdm* in the 25th is not so. This sentence has been interpreted differently in the publications.

There are some spelling errors or insufficient spellings in the Tuñuquq Inscription. The letter group *bntrA* may be a misspelling of *bntgrA* [bän tägrä]. If that is the case, we can read the sentence in question as *at üzä bän tä<g>rä qarïγ sökdüm* “On horseback I broke through the snow around (me).” However, *tägräki* would be more appropriate than *tägrä* in this case.

Key words: insufficient spellings, Orkhon Turkic, second East Turkic Empire, spelling errors, Tuñuquq inscription

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Özet: Orhon Türkçesi, yazılı kayıtları bize kadar gelen en eski Türk diyalektidir. Moğolistan'da, başlıca Orhon Irmağı havzasında bulunan yazıtlar vasıtasıyla bize biliniyor. Bunlar Kül Tegin, Bilgä Kagan, Tunyukuk, İşbara Tarkan (Ongi) ve Küli Çor (İhe-Hüşötü) yazıtlarıdır.

Tunyukuk Yazıtı hâlâ dik duran iki dikili taştan oluşuyor. Daha büyük olan birinci taş 35 satırlık bir yazıt içeriyor. Daha küçük olan ikinci taşta ise 27 satır vardır. Bu anıt belli ki İkinci Doğu Türk İmparatorluğu'nun ilk iki kağanının emrinde çalışmış olan Tunyukuk'un anısına yapılmıştır.

Bu yazıtın büyük kısmı iyi anlaşılıyor. Fakat 25. satırdaki *TWzA* : *bntRKRg* : *swkdm* cümlesi öyle değildir. Bu cümle yayınlarda farklı şekilde yorumlanagelmiştir.

Tunyukuk Yazıtı'nda bazı yazım yanlışları veya eksiklikleri bulunmaktadır. *bntR*A harf grubu da *bntgrA* [bän tägrä] yerine bir yazım yanlışı olabilir. Eğer öyle ise, söz konusu cümle *at üzä bän tä<g>rä qarıg sökdüm* "At üstünde ben çevre(m)deki karları söktüm" olarak okunabilir. Ancak, burada *tägräki*'den *tägrä* daha uygun olacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İkinci Doğu Türk İmparatorluğu, Orhon Türkçesi, Tunyukuk Yazıtı, yazım eksiklikleri, yazım yanlışları

Orkhon Turkic is the oldest Turkic dialect whose written records have come down to us.¹ It is known to us through the inscriptions found in present-day Outer Mongolia, mainly in the basin of the Orkhon River, thus being conveniently called 'the Orkhon inscriptions'. These are the Kül Tegin, Bilgä Kagan, Tuñuquq, İşbara Tarqan (Ongi), and Küli Çor (Ikhe-Khüşötü) inscriptions.²

The Tuñuquq inscription is found in the vicinity of Bain Tsokto, along the upper course of the Tola River. This monument consists of the stone steles which are still standing. The first and bigger stone contains an in-

1 Tekin 1968: 7.

2 Tekin 1968: 9.

scription of 35 lines. There are 27 lines on the second and smaller stone.³

This monument is obviously a memorial to Tuñuquq who worked under the first two kagans of the second East Turkic Empire. In this inscription, Tuñuquq gives a brief report on the first two kagan's and his achievements, and relates the military campaigns which he, together with Ilteriš and Kapgan kagans, carried on.⁴

Most parts of this inscription are well understood. However, the sentence *TW̄zA:bntrAKRG:sṽkdm* in the 25th is not so. This sentence has been interpreted as follows:

(1) mDQS:grkaR(zOJ):AzOt (Radloff 1899: 12)

at özä jýzpä карыб cöктým (Radloff 1899: 13)

“Den auf einem Pferde (sitzenden) bis zum (Gesichte) reichenden Schnee durchbrach ich mit Gewalt.” (Radloff 1899: 13)

jýз (?) ‘das Antlitz’; aR(zOJ) (26,7) jýzpä bis zum Antlitz reichend (?). (Radloff 1899: 98)

(2) “*at üzä bintürä* (aRTNB) *qariy sökdim* ... »je me suis frayé un passage à travers la neige en les faisant monter sur les chevaux; ...».” (Thomsen 1916: 75)

“Entre *at üzä* et *qariy* il⁵ lit [jüz]rā (de *jüz* ‘visage’). Mais la pierre porte nettement **b²n²t²r²a**, où seulement N n² est un peu efface, bien que distinctement lisible. C’est le gérondif en -ä de *bintür-* ‘faire monter’. Est-ce que *jüzrā* pourrait signifier ‘jusqu’au visage’ et meme comme adjective „bis zum Gesichte reichend“? Je ne me souviens pas d’avoir jamais vu un parallèle d’un tel emploi de l’affixe -ra, -rā (des forms telles que *ičrā* ‘(en, au) dedans’, *tašra* ‘(en, au) dehors’ ne pourraient pas être citées comme des analogies).” (Thomsen 1916: 76, in the footnote 1)

3 Tekin 1968: 10.

4 Tekin 1968: 10-11.

5 = Radloff.

- (3) “Indem ich sie auf die Pferde steigen ließ, bahnte ich uns den Weg durch den Schnee.” (Thomsen 1924: 166)

- (4) “Ordering them to mount their horses, I made a way for us through the snow.” (Ross 1930: 40)
- (5) mDQS:grkaR(TNB):AzOt (Orkun 1936: 109)
^at üze bⁱnt^üre k^ar¹g s^ökdⁱm (Orkun 1936: 116)
 “At üstüne bindirerek karı sökdüm.” (Orkun 1936: 116)
bintür- ‘bindirmek’
 -ä T. 25 (I, 158) (Orkun 1941: 27)
- (6) mDQS:grkaRTNB:AzOt (Sprengling 1939: 15)⁶
- (7) mDQS:grkaRTNB:AzOt (Malov 1951: 58)
 at üzä bintürä, qaryγ sökdim (Malov 1951: 62)
 “Приказав сесть на лошадей, я пробил дорогу сквозь снег” (Malov 1951: 67)
bintür- ‘приказать сесть на лошадь, посадить верхом’, Тоñ., 25. (Malov 1951: 371b)
- (8) mDQS:grkaRTNB:AzOt (Aalto 1958b: 38)
^at özä: bⁱnt^ürä q^arⁱγ: s^ökdⁱm (Aalto 1958b: 39)
 “Zu Pferde steigen lassend watete ich durch den Schnee.” (Aalto 1958b: 38)

6 “Therefore this writer here sets forth for the use of students a new text and reading of Tonyukuk. It is constructed from as close a study as the writer’s eyes and mind could give to the poor photographs and squeezes published in Radloff’s *Atlas*. The copy in the Munich state library was used, since Chicago has none. The *Atlas* was checked by Radloff’s text and notes and Thomsen’s and Ramstedt’s notes, based in part on later photographs taken by Ramstedt. The writer had hoped to see these later photographs in Copenhagen. He learned there that, through some chemical defect, they are irretrievably lost. Since Russian Mongolia is hermetically sealed to all foreigners, even to men like John D. Littlepage, what is here given is the best that can be done at present.” (Sprengling 1939: 11).

(9) Tüza : bntraQRG : sk^odm (Giraud 1961: 26)

At üzä bän तरä⁷ qarïy sökdïm (Giraud 1961: 55)

“Moi, monté sur mon cheval, je franchis péniblement la neige épaisse.”

(Giraud 1961: 61)

“at üzä/bän तरä qarïy/sökdïm : Signalons pour mémoire la mauvaise lecture de R. yüzrä, que Thomsen a dûment refute. La correction en : at üzä est incontestable. Mais la lecture bintürä «faisant monter à cheval» est impossible.

La construction avec at üzä s’expliquerait d’autant moins que üzä a toujours une valeur locative, jamais directive. Il faut donc obligatoirement lire bän तरä.

Ce mot pose un nouveau problem. Nous le rattachons à la racine ter- «rassembler», «amonceler». Une autre forme serait derin «profond»⁸ ; तरä serait une épithète de qar «neige.» (Giraud 1961: 96-97)

bän ‘pronom 1^{re} personne singular : 1, 5, 7, 11, 15 (rest.), 17, 15, ...’ (Giraud 1961: 141)

ter- ‘«rassembler».’

तरä : derive du precedent : «accumulé, profond» (eau, neige) : 25. (Giraud 1961: 153)

(10) at üzä bintürä qarïy sökdüm (Tekin 1968: 251)

“I ordered them to mount their horses and I broke through the snow.”

(Tekin 1968: 286)

bint(ü)r- ‘to cause to mount’

b.-ä (at üzä b.) TI N1 (Tekin 1968: 314b)

(11) **BINTÜR-** ‘нобуд. om bin-: at üzä bintürä приказав сесть на лошадей (Тон₂₅).’ (Nadeljajev 1969: 101a)

(12) mDQS:grkaRTNB:AzOt (Ergin 1970: 154)

7 Correctly, तरä.

8 Correctly, profond.

At üze bintüre qarıġ sökdüm (Ergin 1970: 78)
 “At üzerine bindirip karı söktüm.” (Ergin 1970: 40)
bintür- ‘bindirmek’ (Ergin 1970: 92)

(13) mDQS:grkaRTNB:AzOt (Ajdarov 1971: 321)
 At үзе бінтүре қарығ сөкдім “Приказав сесть на коней, я пробил
 [дорогу] сквозь снег.” (Ajdarov 1971: 328)
Бінтүр- ‘приказать сесть на лошадь’ [Тон., 25] (Ajdarov 1971:
 357b)

(14) “**bin-** ‘to mount, or ride (a horse, etc. *Acc.*)’. C.i.a.p.a.l.; in SW Osm.
bin-, elsewhere **min-/mün-**.” (Clauson 1972: 348a)
 “**bintür-** Caus. f. of **bin-**; ‘to make (someone *Dat.*) mount’ (a horse, etc.
Acc., or **üze:**). S.i.m.m.l. with the same phonetic changes as **bin-**.
Türkü VIII at üze: bintüre: ‘telling (the men) to mount their horses’ T
 25: ...” (Clauson 1972: 350a)
 “**1 sök-** Trans.; ‘to tear apart, pull down, break through (an obstacle)’,
 and the like. S.i.a.m.l.g. with these and extended meanings. **Türkü VIII**
karıġ sökd̄m ‘I forced my way through the snow’ T 25; o.o. *I E 35, II*
E 27 (batım): ...” (Clauson 1972: 819a)

(15) “**mün-tür-** is attested in ...: ‘to make or help someone mount (a horse
 etc.)’. The base is attested as *bin-* in Orkhon Turkic, as *min-* in the IrqB
 and as *mün-* in Uighur and Qarakhanid. Several scholars (including
EDPT) read ‘*bintürä*’ in Toñ 25 and assign the form to the verb
 discussed here. This is quite unlikely as the second vowel is not written
 out and cannot therefore be rounded, and the converb vowel of this
 formation is not /A/. Read perhaps *ävin terä* instead. *bin-* etc. governs
 the horse (or whatever) as direct object; *mündür-* retains this
 government in the DLT but governs the beast in the dative in our two
 Uighur exs.” (Erdal 1991: 801-802)

(16) mDQS:grkaRTNB:AzOt (Tekin 1994: 10)

(a)t üzä : b(i)nt(ü)rä k(a)r(ı)g : sökd(ü)m (Tekin 1994: 11)
 “(Askerleri) at üzerine bindirip karları söktüm.” (Tekin 1994: 11)
bintür- ‘bindirmek’
b.-ä 25
 (at üzä b.-) 25 (Tekin 1994: 56a)

(17) At üze bintüre qarığ sökdüm (Tekin 1995b: 88)
 “(Askerleri) at üzerine bindirip karları söktüm.” (Tekin 1995b: 89)
bintür- ‘bindirmek’ (Tekin 1995b: 100a)

(18) “In der Zeile 25 der Inschrift von Toñuquq ist der folgende Textteil zu finden: ... [at üzä]⁹ bintürä qarığ sökdüm, ...” (Berta 1995: 317)
 “Erdal (1991, 801-802) bezweifelt aus guten Gründen die für die Runenzeichen-Gruppe B²N²T²R²A bisher angenommene Lesung *bintürä*.”

Diese Lesung ist äußerst problematisch und kaum zutreffend:

- (1) Es gibt in der ersten Silbe eine defektive Schreibung.
- (2) Im Falle der Lesung “bintürä” müßte der Labialvokal in der zweiten Silbe ausgeschrieben sein.
- (3) Das Konverb für ein Verb mit dem Kausativsuffix auf *-tUr-* ist *bintürü* und nicht *bintürä*.

Dementsprechend möchte Erdal B²N²T²R²A als *ävin terä* lesen. Für *ävin terä* gibt er zwar keine Übersetzung, geht aber sicherlich davon aus, daß der Ausdruck *ävin terä* aus den entsprechenden Formen der Lexeme *äb* (*äv*) ‘Zelt’ und *ter-* ‘sammeln’ zusammengesetzt sei.

Das ist nicht die einzige Stelle, wo Erdal eine scharfsinnige Verbesserung empfiehlt, die an und für sich einwandfrei ist, jedoch nicht ohne weiteres in den Kontext hineinpaßt.

äbin (*ävin*) *terä* kann ‘[das Volk] seine Zelte gesammelt habend’ bedeuten. Dieser Ausdruck kommt innerhalb des Berichtes Toñuquq vor, er scheint aber nach dem kontextuellen Zusammenhang dort nicht am

9 *at üzä* is omitted.

Platze zu sein.

Die Frage bedarf daher einer weiteren Untersuchung. Ich kann zur Zeit nicht entscheiden, welche in der Literatur existierende Lesung zu präferieren ist. Möglicherweise muß man hier noch auf die richtige Lösung warten.” (Berta 1995: 318)

(19) *tṽzA : bntrAqry : sṽkdm* (Rybatzki 1997: 33)

at üzä : bintürä qarīy : sökdüm (Rybatzki 1997: 57)

“Ich ließ [die Männer] auf [ihre] Pferde steigen und drang durch den Schnee.” (Rybatzki 1997: 106)

“... Berta [1995.317-318], akzeptiert Erdals Kritik an den bisherigen Lesungen dieser Stelle, da diese orthographisch äußerst zweifelhaft sind, er hat jedoch Zweifel an Erdals Verbesserung, da diese nicht in den Kontext paßt. Auch Tekin [1995.212:4] bleibt bei der traditionellen Lesung und nimmt an, daß es sich bei *bntrA* um einen Schreibfehler für *bIntÜrA* handelt; hier auch Verweise auf weitere offensichtliche Schreibfehler in der Toñuquq-Inschrift. Ich folge Tekins [1995] Lesung.” (Rybatzki 1997: 58, in the footnote 161 pertaining to *bintürä*)

(20) *at üzä bintürä karıg sökdüm* “(Askerleri) at üzerine bindirip karları söktüm” (T 25) (Tekin 2000: 154)

bintür- ‘(ata) bindirmek’ (Tekin 2000: 241a)

(21) *TWzA : bntrAKRG : sṽkdm* (Berta 2004: 36)

at üzä äßin terä qarīy sök^oḍw̄m (Berta 2004: 58)

“A lo(vak)ra [az emberek] sátrait öszegyűjtve, a havat feltörtem.”¹⁰ (Berta 2004: 81)

“A jelcsoport olvasatai és értelmezései nem egységesekek az irodalomban. Közöttük számos evidensen téves, mások vitathatók. A tradicionálisnak tekinthető olvasatok és értelmezések a következők: *at*

10 This sentence was translated into Turkish as “[İnsanların] çadırlarını at[lar]a yıgıp karı söktüm.” in Berta 2010: 89.

özä jüürä ‘auf einem Pferde (sitzenden) bis zum (Gesichte)’ (R), *at üzä bintürä* ‘at üstüne bindirerek’ (O), *at üzä bän tärä* “Moi, monté sur mon cheval” (G), *at özä bintürä* “zu Pferde steigen lassend” (RGA), hasonlóan M, A, T 68, T. Erdal (1991: 801-802) a *bintürä* olvasat helyett fordítás nélkül *ävin terä* olvasatot javasolt, melynek értelmezése aligha lehet más, mint ‘a sátra(i)k)t összegyűjtve’. Korábban (Berta 1995: 317-318) kevesebb valószínűséget tulajdonítottam Erdal javaslatáak mint most. Vö. még legújabban Rybatzki (1997: 58, 161. j.) véleményét, aki megmarad a tradicionálnak mondható olvasat értelmezés mellett.”¹¹ (Berta 2004: 59, in the footnote 569 pertaining to *äbin terä*)

(22) mDQS:grkaRTNB:AzOt (Alyılmaz 2005: 212)¹²

(23) (a)t üzä : b(i)nt(ü)rä k(a)r(ı)g : sökd(ü)m (User 2009: 205, 217, 344, 410)

bintür- ‘ata bindirmek’ (User 2009: 410, 520b)

(24) mDQS:grkaRTNB:AzOt (Aydın 2012: 113)

11 This footnote was translated into Turkish as “Harf grubunun okunması ve anlamlandırılması literatürde aynı biçimde deđdir. Çođu kesinlikle yanlış, diđerleri de tartıřmalıdır. Geleneksel deđerlendirmeye dayalı okuma ve anlamlandırmalar řunlardır: *at özä jüürä* “auf einem Pferde (sitzenden) bis zum (Gesichte)” (R), *at üzä bintürä* “at üstüne bindirerek” (O), *at üzä bän tärä* “Moi, monté sur mon cheval” (G), *at özä bintürä* “zu Pferde steigen lassend” (RGA), benzer olarak M, A, T 68, T. Erdal (1991: 801-802) *bintürä* okuyuşu yerine çevirisiz olarak *ävin terä* okuyuşunu öneriyor. Bu okuyuşun anlamının “çadırları toplayarak”tan başka bir şey olması çok güçtür. Daha önce Erdal’ın önerisine řimdi olduđundan daha az ihtimal vermiřtim (Berta 1995: 317-318). Son zamanlarda Rybatzki’nin (1997: 58, 161. dipnot) geleneksel okuyuş ve anlamlandırmayı kabul ettiđi görüşüyle krş.” in Berta 2010: 67 (in the footnote 326).

12 “**Siyah:** Sağlam durumda olan harfleri göstermektedir.

...

Pembe: Tamamen yok olmak üzere olan harfleri göstermektedir.

...

Yeşil: (Alttan veya üstten) bir kısmı kırılmış olan harfleri göstermektedir. ...” (Alyılmaz 2005: 30, 119).

at üze bintüre karıg sökdüm (Aydın 2012: 113)
 “(Askeri) ata bindirerek karları söktüm.” (Aydın 2012: 114)
bintür- ‘bindirmek’
 b.-e T 25 (Aydın 2012: 157b)

(25) mDQS:grkaRTNB:AzOt (Ölmez 2012: 181)
at üze : bintüre karıg : sökdüm (Ölmez 2012: 165)
 “Ata üzerinde karı sökerek çıktık.” (Ölmez 2012: 173)
bintür- ‘bindirmek’ (Ölmez 2012: 310a)

As seen above, the letter groups *TWzA* and *KRG:sökdüm* have been read as *at üzä* (or *özä*) ‘on the horse’ and *karıg sökdüm* (or *sökdüm*) ‘I broke through the snow’ respectively. However, the letter group *bntrA* has been interpreted differently as follows:

- (1) *yüزرä* ‘reaching to the face’ (Radloff 1899)
- (2) *bintürä* ‘ordering (them) to mount (their horses)’ (Thomsen 1916; Thomsen 1924; Ross 1930; Orkun 1936; Malov 1951; Aalto 1958b; Tekin 1968; Nadeljajev 1969; Ergin 1970; Ajdarov 1971; Clauson 1972; Tekin 1994; Tekin 1995; Rybatzki 1997; Tekin 2000; User 2009; Aydın 2012; Ölmez 2012)
- (3) *bän terä* ‘I (passed through painfully the) thick (snow)’ (Giraud 1961)
- (4) *ävin terä* (Erdal 1991)
- (5) *äbin (ävin) terä* (?) ‘[the people] having collected their tents (?)’ (Berta 1995)
- (6) *äβin terä* ‘[the people] having collected their tents’ (Berta 2004)

Most of the researchers interpreted the letter group *bntrA* as *bintürä* ‘ordering (them) to mount (their horses)’. However, as Giraud (1961), Erdal (1991) and Berta (1995, 2004) pointed out, the second vowel is not written out and the converb vowel of this formation is not /A/ but /U/. Therefore, the reading of *bntrA* is problematic.

Moreover, the verb *mündür-* ‘to make (someone *Dat.*) mount’ (< *bintür-*) governs the nominative case of the word *at* in *Dīwān Luyāt*

at-Turk 365 as follows:

*ol maña at mündürdi*¹³ “He made me mount the horse (or other)”
(Dankoff & Kelly 1984: 61)

The same would be true of *bintür-* in Orkhon Turkic. Then it is expected not *at üzä bintürä*, but *añar at bintürü*.

By the way, the reading of Erdal (1991) and Berta (1995, 2004) has the following problems:

- (1) In Central Asia, the usual pack animals are not horses, but Bactrian camels, yaks, mules, or donkeys;
- (2) The vowel for “the 3rd person possessive suffix”, i.e. *i*, is not written out between B and N;
- (3) The appropriate converb suffix for the verb *ter-* ‘to collect’ would be *-p*, not *-ä* in this sentence;
- (4) The converb suffix for the verb *ter-* ‘to collect’ is *-ü*, not *-ä* in N 5 of the Moyun Čor Inscription¹⁴;
- (5) The appropriate verb would be *yüdür-* ‘to load’¹⁵ (or *yüd-* ‘to carry’¹⁶), not *ter-* in this sentence.

Giraud’s interpretation of *terä* ‘thick’ (< ‘deep’) as a derivative of *ter-* ‘to collect’ is unacceptable, because *täriñ* (> osm. *derin*) ‘deep’ has nothing to do with *ter-* ‘to collect’.¹⁷ Moreover, the letter group is aRT, not hRT [täriñ].

Tekin (1994: X) listed 9 spelling errors or insufficient spellings in the Tuñuquq Inscription. The letter group *bntrA* may be a misspelling of *bntgrA* [bän tägrä¹⁸]. If that is the case, we can read the sentence in

13 This sentence is translated into Turkish as *O, beni ata bindirdi*, not *O, bana at bindirdi*.

14 The sentence in question is *toquz oyuz bodunumın terü qubratı altım* “Collecting (Hend.) my people the Toquz Oyuz, I took them” in this inscription.

15 See Clauson 1972: 893b and Erdal 1991: 726.

16 See Clauson 1972: 885b and Erdal 1991: 644.

17 See Clauson 1972: 551a.

18 “**tegre:** (d-) Dev. N.(?) fr. ***tegir-**; used both as an Adv. (and Postposn.) meaning ‘(all) around’ and the like, and as a N. meaning ‘surroundings’. Survives in both

question as *at üzä bän tä<g>rä*¹⁹ *qariy sökdüm* “On horseback I broke through the snow around (me).”

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meanings in SC Uzb. **tegra**.” (Clauson 1972: 485b). The word is found in several modern Turkic languages. See Li 2004: 475-478.

19 *Tägräki* would be more appropriate than *tägrä* in this case. See “**tegreki: (d-)** N./A.S. fr. **tegre:**; ‘in the neighbourhood of’ and the like. Pec. To Uyğ. ...” (Clauson 1972: 486b).

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