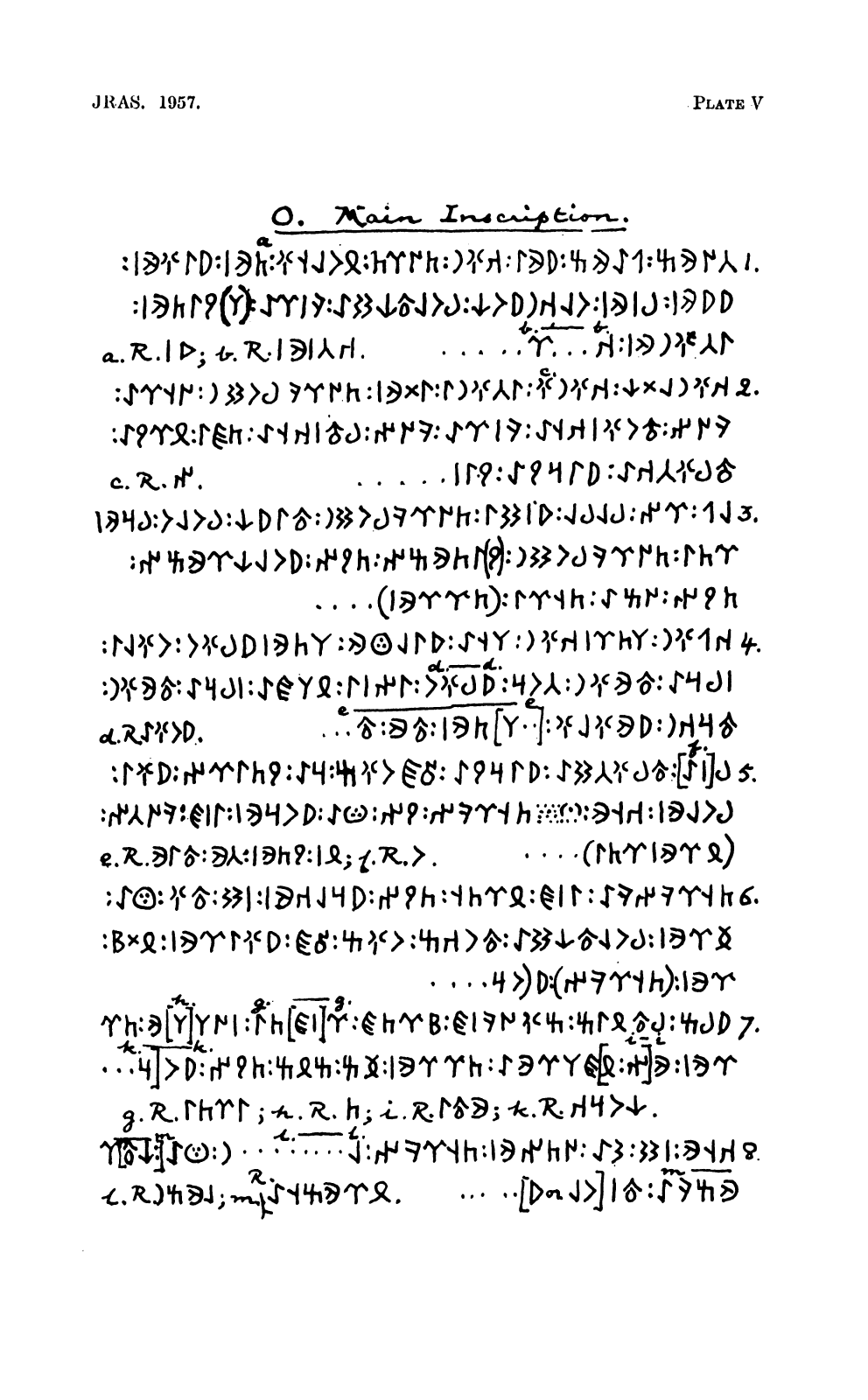
O. Main Inscription.



THE ONGIN INSCRIPTION

By Gerard Clauson

(PLATES V-VI)

The Ongin inscription was discovered in 1891, the year I was born, in Outer Mongolia on the Manet mountains, near a tributary of the River Ongin, from which it takes its name, at a point a little north-east of 46° N., 102° E., that is about 100 miles south of the two great "Orkhon Inscriptions" and some 250 miles west-south-west of the inscription of Toñukuk.[1]

The main inscription of O. is inscribed on the front and one side of a stone stele, running from the top downwards, starting on the right (as you face it) and continuing on the left side. There are eight long lines on the front and four on the side. There is a supplementary inscription of seven short horizontal lines, scratched rather than carved above the last four lines of the main inscription. The stone is badly weathered and parts of both inscriptions are lost beyond recall; these include the bottom third of lines 1 to 7 of the main inscription, much more of the corner lines, 8 and 9, a little of lines 10 and 11, rather more of line 12, and a good deal of the supplementary inscription.

Above the first eight lines of the main inscription on the face of the stele there is carved a *tamğa*, or tribal badge, which can best be described as the *tamğa* surmounting I., with what in English heraldry would be called a mark of difference. The *tamğa* on I. is the stylized silhouette of a mountain goat seen sideways; that on O. is the same with what looks like an inverted walking-stick with a curved handle lying vertically across the middle of the animal, with a similar but more complicated object in front of it. We do not know enough about eighth century *tamğas* to appreciate the exact significance of these differences, but clearly the two *tamğas* are not identical, and it seems legitimate to assume that the person commemorated in O. was a member of the same tribe as Kül Tégin but not of his immediate family.

[1] I quote the Memorial to Kül Tégin as "I.", that to Bilge Kağan as "II.", and the inscription of Toñukuk as "T.". The first two are quoted by side (E. = East, etc.) and line on the side, T. only by the line. In quoting them, I have used the text in H. N. Orkun's *Eski Türk Yazıtları*, Istanbul, 1936 ff., checked by reference to the published reproductions. The present inscription I refer to as "O.". I refer to Prof. V. V. Radloff as "R.", and I quote B. Atalay's translation of Mahmūd al-Kaşğārī's *Dīwānu'l-Luğāti'l-Turk* as "Kaş.", followed by the volume (i, etc.) and page (1, etc.).

R. states that three inked squeezes in all were taken of the inscriptions. A reduced reproduction of one was published on plate 26 of R.'s Atlas der Altertümer der Mongolei, Pt. I, St. Petersburg, 1892. A printed text and translation of both inscriptions was published in R.'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 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 R. 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 O. 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 R.'s thinking.

There are, therefore, four and only four original authorities for the text, two primary ones, the reproductions of the two squeezes, which supplement one another, since letters which can be read on one are illegible on the other, and vice versa, and two secondary ones, the drawing and the printed text.

All these were produced over sixty years ago, when the study of " runic " texts was still in its infancy, erroneous views still prevailed on various points of grammar and orthography of the language used in them, and much knowledge which we have gained from the study of the Uyğur texts and Kaş. was not yet available. Since then no original work has been done on the actual text of O. Indeed, Turcologists seem to have been completely inhibited by R.'s remarks quoted above from attempting to republish it. R. himself returned to the question of the date of the inscription in pp. viii–x of the Preface to the Zweite Folge (1899) of his *Alttürkischen Inschriften*. Vilhelm Thomsen in his excursus on **erinç** in Turcica (*Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne*, xxxvii, Helsingfors, 1916), p. 39, reproduced one short passage, corrected one obvious error, and added that apart from this he had no alternative but to accept R.'s text. Paul Pelliot in a footnote to the study of the 12-year animal cycle, which forms one of his " Nine Notes on Central Asiatic Questions " (*T'oung Pao*, 2nd Series, xxvi, 1929), made

a new suggestion for the date of the inscription. L. K. Katona on p. 414 of the *Körosi Csoma Archiv*, i, 5, Hannover, 1925, made some suggestions, mostly sound, for improving the translation of line 11. Marquart in *Ungarische Jahrbüche* 3–4, p. 83, proposed a probably erroneous identification of the **kağan** mentioned in line 1. H. N. Orkun republished R.'s text with a slightly improved translation in Turkish in his *Eski Türk Yazıtları*, vol. i, stating that he followed Thomsen's example of not revising the original " runic " text. Finally, A. N. Bernshtam in his *Sotsialno-Ekonomicheskiy Stroy Orkhono-Yeniseiskikh Tyurok VI–VIII, Vekov*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1946, devoted a page and a half (pp. 38–9) to the inscription but equally refrained from revising the text, remarking quite truly that R.'s edition gave more than could be seen on the reproductions of the squeezes. This, so far as I can discover, is an exhaustive catalogue of the references to O. in learned works.

One unfortunate consequence of all this scholarly reticence is that O. still seems to enjoy, at any rate in some quarters, the wholly undeserved reputation of being the earliest-dated Turkish text. As Pelliot (op. cit.) pointed out, it got this reputation in the most ludicrous fashion. R.'s original reasoning can best be stated as follows: (1) a memorial as stately as this cannot have commemorated anyone less distinguished than a **kağan**; (2) the inscription says that the man commemorated died in a Dragon Year (of the 12-year cycle); (3) the refounder of the Northern Türkü Dynasty, Éltériş [1] or Kutluğ Kağan died in a Dragon Year; (4) no other early **kağan** is known to have died in a Dragon Year; therefore this is the memorial of Éltériş; therefore it is the oldest dated Turkish inscription.

By 1899, when he wrote the Preface to his Zweite Folge, R. had realized that this reasoning was wrong, but his remarks were so effectually concealed in a Preface mainly devoted to remarks

[1] The exact pronunciation of this name is still uncertain. In I., II., and T., it is spelt **il²t²r²s²**, in O. **l²t²r²s²**. In the Chinese transcriptions recorded by Hirth in his article Nachworte zur Inschrift des Tonjukuk in R.'s Zweite Folge (see above), pp. 53 and 108, it is spelt (in Karlgren's reconstruction of " Ancient Chinese ") *γiet. d'ĭet. ljï* (or *i*). *śiĕ*. The first character, *γiet* is habitually used to transcribe the Turkish word **él** " realm ", and I feel reasonably sure that the pronunciation was **Éltériş**. It may be, therefore, that, unlike most early Turkish personal names, it had a " meaning ", something like " a gathering together of the realm ". If so, it seems probable that this was not his original personal name, but one assumed when he refounded the Northern Türkü Dynasty in A.D. 682.

on T., that A. N. Bernshtam overlooked both them and Pelliot's remarks on the same subject, and still persisted, in the teeth of the internal evidence which had convinced R., in describing O. as the memorial to Éltériş and the oldest dated Turkish inscription; indeed he went further and found an author for it in the latter's younger brother and successor, Mo. cho (*Bügü Çor) Kağan, alias Kapğan, and an occasion for it in the need to publish a counterblast, a sort of "agitational publication" (op. cit., p. 33), to T. But as he still believed that Éltériş died in A.D. 693 (and not, as Pelliot showed, A.D. 691), he felt compelled to shift the date to A.D. 704, unfortunately forgetting that this would completely undermine the theory that O. was a counterblast to T., since R. had shown convincingly in Zweite Folge, Preface p. v., that T. must have been composed in A.D. 716.

It is very unfortunate that our Russian colleagues, who alone have, presumably, access to the squeezes, and indeed to the original monument if it still survives, should have contented themselves with commentary on R.'s version of the text, instead of revising it in the light of the additional knowledge which has accumulated in the last sixty years. It is unlikely that a completely satisfactory text can be produced without access to the originals; but even with the published material which is available considerable improvements can be made. Perhaps if someone like myself tries his hand at it, Russian scholars better qualified than me may feel moved to improve on my performance.

Obviously the first step must be to produce a new edition of the "runic" text. Plates I and II show what I believe, after a careful study of the two squeezes, to be an accurate reproduction of such parts of it as can be read thereon. I have added in (round brackets) letters included in R.'s text which are *prima facie* probable, but cannot be read on the squeezes. Letters in [square brackets] are letters which are not clearly visible on the squeezes but are in my opinion more probable than those supplied by R. All such passages are discussed in the notes attached.

The "runic" alphabet was mainly derived from the Aramaic, through one or more Iranian intermediaries, and retained most of the spelling conventions peculiar to that alphabet. These included such things as leaving short vowels unwritten and using the letters *beth*, *daleth*, and *pe* (and perhaps others) for two purposes, that is to represent both **b** and **v**, **d** and **ḍ**, and **p** and **f** respectively. It

departed from Aramaic, however, in some respects. In Aramaic *yod* is used both for **y** and for long **i**; in " runic " there are different letters for these sounds. In Aramaic *aleph* is used for any short initial vowel and for long **a** elsewhere; in " runic " it is used for long **a** or **e** in any position, initial short **a** and **e** are not written and the same vowel letters are used for **ı/i, o/u,** and **ö/ü** respectively as initials, long or short, and as long vowels elsewhere. As R. pointed out in 1895, the spelling of O. is rather shaky in some respects; in particular some consonants appropriate for use only with front vowels, which when necessary I mark with a raised ², are sometimes, and in the case of **s²** nearly always, used in the place of consonants appropriate for use only with back vowels, which I mark when necessary with a small raised,[1] but not vice versa; initial **ı/i** is sometimes omitted in the same way as initial **a/e**; and medial long vowels are sometimes omitted. This is not, as R. suggested, necessarily a sign of great antiquity; there have been bad spellers at all periods. My method of transcription in the transcribed text is as follows. All vowels written in the text, except initial **ı, i, o, u, ö** and **ü,** are shown as long by an attached colon; short vowels are supplied as required, initial **ı/i,** when not written, being marked with a *. The ligatures **l¹d¹/l¹t¹, n¹d¹/n¹t¹, ık/kı, uk/ku** and **ük/kü** are transcribed as the context requires. The colon-like signs used in the original text to separate words or groups of words are represented, when visible or reasonably to be inferred, by commas. In this connection one point requires special mention. Groups of words between colons seem to have been regarded as a single unit for spelling purposes, so that a short vowel at the end of the first word of such a group could be treated as a medial short vowel and left unwritten. Actually it seems probable that, unless some of the final vowels which are written and so are transcribed as long vowels were in fact short, very few eighth-century Türkü words ended in short vowels, but the name **Tü:rkü** apparently did. In I., II., and the inscriptions at Ikhe Khoshotu and Shine-usu the word is invariably spelt **Tü:rkü** with the ligature for **kü**; in T. up to line 20 the word occurs only as the first of a pair of words between colons and is spelt with a **k**; but at that point Toñukuk must have realized that this was wrong and in the rest of the inscription it is spelt with the ligature **kü,** In O., too, the word is spelt with a **k,** but only as the first of a pair of words between colons; accordingly I have transcribed it as **Tü:rkü.**

The Main Inscription

1. eçü:miz, apa:mız, Yamı:, Kağan, tö:rt, bu:luŋuğ, etmiş, yığmış, (y)aymış, basmış, ol kan yo:k, bo:ltukda:, kisre: (, el,) yi:tmiş, ıçğınmış, k^1 . . . r^2. [*10 to 14 words missing*].
2. kağanladuk, kağanığ, ıçğını:, ıdmış, Tü:rkü bo:d̲un, öŋre:, kü:n, toğsıkıŋa:, kisre:, kü:n, batsıkıŋa:, tegi:, beriye:, tavğaçka:, yı:raya:, yı:ş(ka:, tegi:) [*10 to 14 words missing*].
3. alp, eren, balbal, kısdı:, Tü:rkü bo:d̲un, atı: yo:k, bo:lu:, barmış erti:, Tü:rkü bo:d̲un, (yit)mezün, teyin, yo:luk ermezün, teyin, üze:, teŋri:, (ter ermiş) [*10 to 14 words missing*].
4. Kapğan, Éltériş Kağan, eliŋe:, kı:lındım, El etmis, yavğu:, oğlı:, *Işvara:, tamğan, ço:r, yavğu:, inisi:, Bilge:, *Işvara: tamğan, tarkan, aymağlığ, [. . el] etmis, [atım, t^1 (?) *10 to 14 words missing*].
5. ba[sa:], tavğaç(d)a:, yı:raya:, T^1g^2 Oğuz, ara:, yeti: eren, yağı:, bo:lmış, kaŋım, [. . .] Teŋriken, *iyin, anda:, yo:rımış, işig kü:çin, (bermiş erti:,) [*10 to 14 words missing*].
6. Teŋrikenke:, işig, bertiŋ, teyin, yarlıkamış, şad̲, atığ, anda:, bermiş, bo:ltukda:, to:kuz, Oğuz, T^1g^2, yağı: ermiş, (be)d̲ük, ermiş, (Teŋriken), y(o:rımış) [*10 to 14 words missing*].
7. yavuz, bat bi:z, aziğ üküşüg, kö:rtig, er[sig]ti:, sü:le[li]m, ter ermiş, m[en] (be)glerime:, ter ermis, biz, az biz, teyin, yo: [*10 to 14 words missing*].
8. kaŋım, şad̲, ança:, ötünmiş, Teŋriken, al(mazun, teyin) [*4 or 5 words missing*] (bo:d̲u)n, anda:, [kut] ermezke: t^1s^2 [o^1l^1 *or* ık *10 to 14 words missing*].
9. k^1m., balıka:, tegdim, ko:nuldum, aldım, sü:si:, kelti:, (kara)si(n, yığdı)m, (be)gi:, (kaç)dı:, . . . ğ, er(ti:, tavğaç bo:d̲un) [*about 5 words missing*] (yığdım, basdım, yaydım) [*about 5 words missing*] bo:z(k)u:(nça:)
10. kelir ertimiz, eki:n ara:, T^1g^2 yağı:, bo:lmış, tegmeçi: men, teyin, sakındım, teŋri: Bilge:, Kağanka:, [ta]kı:, *işig, kü:çig, bersegim, bar ermiş, erinç, tegd(ükin) [*3 or 4 words missing*] sançdım, evke:, tegdükim, uruş kı(lıp,)
11. tegip, inime:, oğluma: ança: ötledim, kaŋ yo:rip, Élteriş Kağanka:, ad̲rılmaduk, yaŋılmaduk, teŋri: Bi:lge:, Kağanda:, ad̲rılmalım, azmalım, teyin, ança:, ötledim, kerü: barığma:, bardı:, (Bilge:, Ka)ğan(ıŋ, bo:d̲unı) [*1 word*] l^2r^2i, bardı:, ögen atka:, *işig, kü:çig, bert(i:),

12. **üze:, teŋri:, [ko:ñ], yı:lka:, yeti:nç (ay), kü:çlüg, (alp,) ka(ğanı)mda:, aġrılu: bardıŋız, bi:lge:, ataçım, yo:ğıŋ, ko:rığıŋnı, ko:[rıdı]m, . . . leyü:, teŋri:** [*8 to 10 words missing*] **ki:rü:r, er . . .**

Commentary

General Observations.—The only two lines even approximately complete are lines 10 and 11, which contain thirty to thirty-two words each; the approximate number of words missing in the other lines has been calculated on this basis. Even allowing for the large gaps, the first impression given by the inscription is one of utter incoherence. Line 12 makes it clear that the author of the inscription is erecting a memorial to his father (**ataçım** "my dear father"); it is "my father" (**kaŋım**) whose exploits are related in lines 5 and 8, and so presumably the lines between; but the beginning of line 4 is an autobiographical statement presumably about the author himself, and lines 9 to 11, with the retrospective reference to "father" (**kaŋ**) in line 11, must be an account of his own exploits.

It seems to me that there is a fairly simple explanation of this apparent schizophrenia. No one in his senses could have produced anything quite like this as an original composition, but if the author, when he decided to erect a memorial to his father, had cast about for a model and decided to follow both I. and T., with the limitation that, for physical reasons or considerations of "protocol", he had to pack everything he wanted to say into twelve lines, compared to the seventy lines of I. and the sixty-two of T., this is the kind of memorial that he might have composed. The difference between the two models adequately explains the sudden changes of subject in the text. I. is a memorial to Kül Tégin, ostensibly composed by his elder brother Bilge Kağan, who purports to speak in the first person throughout; the references to "my father" in lines 5 and 8 are an exact counterpart of the references to "my younger brother" in I., and the historical review in lines 1 to 3 is patently a highly compressed summary or paraphrase of I.E., 1 to 11. T., on the other hand, is Toñukuk's own autobiography written by himself; the opening words of line 4 are a direct "crib" from the opening words of T. 1, and there are many parallels in T. to "my" exploits and the advice which "I." gave, as described in lines 9 to 11.

Detailed Observations. Line 1.—The first four words are a direct "crib" from the words in I. E., 1, **eçü:miz apa:mız, Bu:mın Kağan, İştemi: Kağan** and we may perhaps legitimately wonder whether,

The Main Inscription

1. **eçü:miz, apa:mız, Yamı:, Kağan, tö:rt, bu:luŋuğ, etmiş, yığmış, (y)aymış, basmış, ol kan yo:k, bo:ltukda:, kisre: (, el,) yi:tmiş, ıçğınmış, k^{1} . . . r^{2}.** [*10 to 14 words missing*].
2. **kağanladuk, kağanığ, ıçğını:, ıdmış, Tü:rkü bo:d̲un, öŋre:, kü:n, toğsıkıŋa:, kisre:, kü:n, batsıkıŋa:, tegi:, beriye:, tavğaçka:, yı:raya:, yı:ş(ka:, tegi:)** [*10 to 14 words missing*].
3. **alp, eren, balbal, kısdı:, Tü:rkü bo:d̲un, atı: yo:k, bo:lu:, barmış erti:, Tü:rkü bo;d̲un, (yit)mezün, teyin, yo:luk ermezün, teyin, üze:, teŋri:, (ter ermiş)** [*10 to 14 words missing*].
4. **Kapğan, Éltériş Kağan, eliŋe:, kı:lındım, El etmis, yavğu:, oğlı:, *Işvara:, tamğan, ço:r, yavğu:, inisi:, Bilge:, *Işvara: tamğan, tarkan, aymağlığ, [. . el] etmis, [atım, t^{1} (?)** *10 to 14 words missing*].
5. **ba[sa:], tavğaç(d)a:, yı:raya:, T^{1}g^{2} Oğuz, ara:, yeti: eren, yağı:, bo:lmış, kaŋım, [. . .] Teŋriken, *iyin, anda:, yo:rımış, işig kü:çin, (bermiş erti:,)** [*10 to 14 words missing*].
6. **Teŋrikenke:, işig, bertiŋ, teyin, yarlıkamış, şad̲, atığ, anda:, bermiş, bo:ltukda:, to:kuz, Oğuz, T^{1}g^{2}, yağı: ermiş, (be)d̲ük, ermiş, (Teŋriken), y(o:rımış)** [*10 to 14 words missing*].
7. **yavuz, bat bi:z, aziğ üküşüg, kö:rtig, er[sig]ti:, sü:le[li]m, ter ermiş, m[en] (be)glerime:, ter ermis, biz, az biz, teyin, yo:** [*10 to 14 words missing*].
8. **kaŋım, şad̲, ança:, ötünmiş, Teŋriken, al(mazun, teyin)** [*4 or 5 words missing*] **(bo:d̲u)n, anda:, [kut] ermezke: t^{1}s^{2} [o^{1}]^{1}** *or* **ık** *10 to 14 words missing*].
9. **k^{1}m., balıka:, tegdim, ko:nuldum, aldım, sü:si:, kelti:, (kara)si(n, yığdı)m, (be)gi:, (kaç)dı:, . . . ğ, er(ti:, tavğaç bo:d̲un** [*about 5 words missing*] **(yığdım, basdım, yaydım)** [*about 5 words missing*] **bo:z(k)u:(nça:)**
10. **kelir ertimiz, eki:n ara:, T^{1}g^{2} yağı:, bo:lmış, tegmeçi: men, teyin, sakındım, teŋri: Bilge:, Kağanka:, [ta]kı:, *işig, kü:çig, bersegim, bar ermiş, erinç, tegd(ükin)** [*3 or 4 words missing*] **sançdım, evke:,**

the realm of China." (Tamğan Çor) **Yavğu:**; R. read **yo:ğa:**, but this word is quite unknown elsewhere and **yavğu:**, which can be read equally well on the squeezes, which are not at all clear at this point, is entirely appropriate as the last component of a proper name. The latter part of this line is one of the major *cruces* of this text; R. read **yumğılığ beş yetmiş eçim atı:m** and translated it "my elder and younger relatives, sixty-five in all", which is clearly preposterous. **Y^{1}mğl^{1}ğ** must surely be **aymağlığ** "belonging to the **aymağ** ("tribal confederation" or the like) of (the person just mentioned); and after this another proper name must surely follow. The letters **t^{2}ms^{2}** are reasonably clear and the preceding letter might well be **l^{2}**; this makes **El-etmiş**, a proper name already recorded earlier in the line; very little can be made of the preceding word which R. read **beş**, but it might be a short component of a proper name, and **Alp** occurs to me as possible. In the word read **eçim** by R., the first letter is almost certainly not **ç**, but might be **t^{1}**, making **atım**, so that the phrase would run, quite appropriately after the opening words, "my name is (Alp ?) El-etmiş of the **aymağ** of," etc. R. read the following word **t^{1}ım**, the **t^{1}** is vaguely visible on the squeezes, but nothing thereafter. If we could read **t^{1}çm**, (**i** and **ç** are not unalike), the sentence would go on, "my dear father" (did, or was, so and so), which would lead naturally on to the events recorded in the next line.

Line 5.—**Ba[sa:]**; the stone is split here; the **b^{1}** is quite clear; R. read **bu:** "this," which is quite inappropriate; **basa:** "then" is the right length and fits the context. **T^{1}g^{2}** 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 **t^{1}** 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 **t^{1}**. The word is obviously the name of a tribe; the reading (**tağ, tığ, atağ, atığ**) is quite uncertain; perhaps **Atığ** is the likeliest. **Teŋriken**, as its occurrences elsewhere (chiefly in Uyğur) show, is a descriptive title rather than a proper name; "His Sacred Majesty" is probably the closest equivalent. The word before it is really illegible; the first letter is most like the ligature **n^{1}d^{1}**, suggesting a word beginning **and**, but hardly **anda:** which follows almost immediately afterwards. As it is clear from line 11 that "His Sacred Majesty" here is Éltériş, R.'s reading

Bağa: Teŋriken as a proper name is clearly impossible, apart from the fact that it does not fit the traces of letters on the squeezes.

Line 6.—**Şaḍ** is an Iranian word, etymologically identical with "Shah", which was used by the Türkü as the title of an office, not a hereditary distinction; the nearest modern equivalent is probably "Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief".

Line 7.—**B^{1}t^{1}** is clear, but the pronunciation uncertain. *Kaş.*, i, 319, lists a word **bat** meaning *al-ṭacīr* "the residue of pressed dates", and that word may be used here metaphorically for "rubbish, débris", or the like. After **kö:rtig** there seems to be an **r^{2}**, then room for one, or two, letters, then **t^{2}i**. R.'s reading **irti:** is meaningless and cannot be right. Tentatively I suggest **er[sig]ti:**; this adverbial form of **ersig** "brave" is not actually recorded, but is morphologically probable in Türkü; there are two or three similar adverbs in the *Irk Bitig*. **Sü:le[li]m** seems preferable to R.'s reading **sü:letim** which is grammatically incorrect (for **sü:ledim**) and does not suit the context as well. **M[en]**; the **m** is clear, but the rest very doubtful; R. read **amtı:**, "now," which hardly suits the context; a change of subject seems to be required, and **men**, "I," does suit the context. **Yo: . . .**; R. read **ko:r** and expanded it to **ko:rkmiş**, "he was afraid"; this is certainly wrong; the first letter is clearly **y^{1}** and the word must be something like **yo:rımış**.

Line 8.—There is nothing to be made of this after the first five words, but I have made one or two minor alterations, which seem closer than R.'s text to what can be seen on the squeezes.

Line 9.—**K^{1}m.**; R. read **kamuk**, translated "many"; this is unlikely for two reasons; first "many", or rather "all", is **kamağ**, not **kamuk**, in Türkü, and the third letter is certainly not **ğ**, and looks more like **l^{1}** than **uk**; secondly "all" does not make good sense here. It seems likely that the word is a place-name, but I cannot suggest one; the **k^{1}** is reasonably clear; the second letter is probably **m**, but might be **d^{1}**; the third is a thin one, probably **l^{1}**, **s^{2}**, **ı:** or **a:**. Most of the rest of the line is quite illegible on the squeezes, and I have reproduced R.'s text for what it is worth, which cannot be much, since even the retouched squeeze shows nothing after **kaçdı:** except the last word, which is fairly clearly **bo:zku:nça:** or perhaps, better still **bo:zku: ança:**.

Line 10.—**Takı:** seems quite clear on the squeezes; R. read **sakınu:** which makes no sense here. **Bersegim** is a typical Türkü desiderative noun of action, "my wish to give"; such forms were

not properly understood before the rediscovery of Kaş. **Sançdım** seems to me quite clear on the squeezes; R. read **(y²)ığdım,** which is improbable.

Line 11.—**Kaŋ yo:rıp** is quite clear on the squeezes; R., being under the impression that **aḍrılmaduk** was the 1st Pers. Plur. of the Perfect, which is **aḍrılmadımız** in Türkü, read **kalyu:rıp,** which is morphologically impossible, and invented a meaning "being angry" for it. The last four words of the line are quite clear on the squeeze; the word before looks like **ögen** and can hardly be **ölgen** "dying" as R. read it. **Ögen** can hardly be "thinking", from **ö:-**; it could perhaps be **ög(g)en** "praising" from **ög-**. **At** cannot here be "horse" as R. translated it, but "to give one's services to a name" is a very curious expression.

Line 12.—R. read **üze:, teŋri:, kan, lü:i: yılka:,** "the Kan of heaven is above. In the Dragon Year." This is impossible for several reasons. **Kan** is an inappropriately humble title in this context; two consecutive vowel sounds never occur in Türkü; "dragon" in Türkü must have been **lu:** not **lü:** and certainly not **lü:i:**; and the reading does not agree with the traces on the squeezes. **Üze:, teŋri:** "Heaven is above" seems to be an echo of I. E., 1, **üze:, kö:k, teŋri:,** The next letter is pretty clearly **k**[1] and the next more like **o:** than **n**[1]; what follows is obscure, but might well be **ñ,** a rare letter, which greatly puzzled R. till it was finally fixed by the name **To:ñukuk** in T., which was not discovered till 1897. I have no reasonable doubt that the phrase is **ko:ñ yı:lka:** "in the Sheep Year". **Ataçım**; R. read **Taçam,** which he tentatively described as a proper name, a theory widely accepted later; but it is surely **ataç** with the 1st Pers. Sing. possessive suffix. **Ataç** is an affectionate diminutive of **ata:** "father", recorded in *Kaş.* i, 55, in the phrase **ataç oğul** "a boy who acts like an old man, as if he was the father of the tribe". **Yo:ğıŋ, ko:rığıŋnı:, k[o:rıdı]m**; R. read **yu:ğıŋ alu:r ağıŋın kazğandım,** translated "I have become rich by your bounty which I received at your funeral ceremonies", which is quite impossible grammatically and as a matter of sense. **Yo:ğıŋ** "your funeral ceremonies" is obvious. The next word is certainly **ko:rığıŋnı:**; *Kaş.* i, 375, translates **korığ** as "something reserved (*al-ḥimā*) for amirs and others", adding that any enclosed (*maḥūz*) place is called **korığ**; obviously here it means "a plot of ground set apart as a grave"; the verb which follows is uncertain; it might be **ko:rıdım** in some such sense as "I set apart" (your

grave plot), but this is not entirely satisfactory and it might be something else, but hardly R.'s **kazğandım** " I gained ". After this word R. read **(su:)v, yer, teŋri:**, but this does not agree with the traces on the squeezes or the ordinary Türkü phraseology, as for example in II. E., 35, **teŋri:, ıd̲uk, yer, su:v** " heaven and the sacred land and water ". In any event **leyü:**, is quite clear before **teŋri:** and very tentatively I suggest **[meŋi]leyü:** on the assumption that the phrase ran something like " rejoicing you have gone to the heavenly land ", but this may be mere phantasy.

Translation

(*Note.*—In view of the large gaps in the text the translation is necessarily disjointed, but in some cases I have suggested in [square brackets] what may have been the gist of the missing passages. Words in (round brackets) merely explain, or expand the meaning of words actually in the text.)

1. Our ancestor Yamı: (? İştemi) Kağan organized, gathered together, distributed, and subjugated the four quarters (of the world). After that Kan had died, the realm went to ruin, collapsed and [disappeared. The Türkü people forgot their old allegiance]. 2. They let the Kağan whom they had made kağan collapse. The Türkü people [went on expeditions] eastwards to the sunrise, westwards as far as the sunset, southwards to China, and northwards to the mountain forests (i.e. the Siberian *taiga*) [in the service of foreign masters. Their enemies inflicted heavy losses on them ; they killed] 3. their warriors, and thrust *balbals* (commemorating their slaughter) in the ground. The name Türkü was on the way to complete disappearance. Then, (it seems) Heaven on high said, " Let not the Türkü people go to ruin, let them not be victims. [It raised up Éltériş, and restored the Türkü realm.] 4. I grew up for (i.e. as a subject of) the realm of Kapğan and Éltériş. My name is [? Alp] El-etmiş of the tribal confederation of Bilge Işvara Tamğan Tarkan, the son of El-etmiş Yavğu and the younger brother of Işvara Tamğan Çor Yavğu. [My dear father (?) was one of Éltériş Kağan's first followers.] 5. Then to the north of China among the Atığ (?) and Oğuz seven men started hostilities (against us). My father . . . thereupon marched behind His Sacred Majesty and gave him his services. [The enemy were routed. The Kağan] 6. deigned to say " You have given your services to my Sacred Majesty " and there and then gave him the title of **şad̲**. Next the Tokuz Oğuz and Atığ (?) started hostilities (against us). They were (dangerously) powerful. His Sacred Majesty marched

[against them. The situation became critical. The Kağan said] 7. " We are (no better than) worthless rubbish. You have seen (that we are) few (and our enemies) many. Let us attack [bravely ?]." I said to my begs " We are few [but let us march too ". Some words of advice to the Kağan.] 8. This is what my father, the **şad**, humbly submitted. His Sacred Majesty [. . . At this point there is a transition from " my father's " exploits to " mine ".] 9. I reached the city of K . . . settled there and took it. (The enemy's) army came ; (I gathered together his common people, his begs fled . . . the Chinese people . . . I gathered together, subjugated and distributed . . .) 10. We were coming. Between the two the Atığ started hostilities (against us.) I thought " I shall not get through ", but I had a wish to give my services to the sacred Bilge Kağan [and so I got through . . .] I transfixed [those who tried to stop me], on my way home, fighting, 11. and reaching (home) I advised my sons and younger brothers as follows, " Just as father marched and would not be parted from, or betray, Éltériş Kağan, so let us not be parted from the sacred Bilge Kağan or go astray." This is what I advised. Those that meant to go back went (back). (The people of) Bilge Kağan went [forward] and . . . gave their services to his name (?). 12. Heaven is above. You parted from my mighty (brave Kağan) in the seventh month of the Sheep Year and went away. My wise, dear Father (I celebrated) your funeral ceremonies and [set apart ?] your grave plot. [You rejoic]ing (?) [went to the] heavenly [land (?)] . . . entered.

The Supplementary Inscription

Very little of this inscription is visible on either squeeze, the second in particular being out of focus (?) at this point. R. has restored nearly the whole of it, but the printed text and the " retouched squeeze " differ, in some places widely. They read as follows (with **ataçım** substituted for **Taçam**) :—

	" Retouched Squeeze "	Printed Text
1.	**Ataçımka: bi:tig taşığ**	**(Ataçım)ka:, bi:tig, tasığ**
2.	**. . . . . dım, beŋi:gü:**	**(Kı:l)dım beŋi:gü:**
3.	**. . . . . m, ataçım**	**(kağan)ım ataçım**
4.	**bilge: ataçım lü:**	**bi:lge:, ataçım, lü:**
5.	**y^2ı:lka: bi:lge:**	**y^1ı:lka:, bilge:**
6.	**uluğ alp er eḏgü: k^1. . .**	**kü:lüg er eḏgü: k(an)**
7.	**ataçım, ölti:**	**ataçım, ölti:**

What seems to be visible on one or both squeezes is :—

1. . . . . **ka:, bi:tig** t^1 . . . **ğ**
2. . . . . **dım, beŋi:gü:**
3. . . . . **m,** t^1 . . **m**
4. . . . [g^2**ü:**], t^1 . . **m**
5. . . . [k^2**ü:**], **bi:t** . . .
6. . . . . g^2**er, eḍgü: ç** . . .
7. . . . . t^1l^1**,m** (*or* n^1d^1) . . .

Bi:tig taş "an inscription" and **beŋi:gü: taş** "a memorial" are familiar phrases; the first occurs in I. and both in II., more or less side by side; the two phrases are likely to be used here in co-ordination, and accordingly the missing words at the beginning of lines 2 and 3 are likely to be appropriate verbs, also used in co-ordination. R. may well be right in his restoration of the first line and I suggest that the beginning of the inscription was something like :—

1. **[Ataçım]ka, bi:tig taşığ,**
2. **[tokı:t]dım, beŋi:gü:**
3. **[taşığ, urd]ım,**

"I have erected the inscription and placed (here) the memorial for my dear father." This at any rate fits the space on the stone. The last word in line 3 and the last word in line 4 both look rather like **ataçım,** particularly the first. The letter before it in line 4 is almost certainly not **e:** and looks more like **ü:**; if R. is right in reading **bilge:** or **bi:lge:** (the variation in spelling is some measure of his uncertainty) the co-ordinatory form of expression may have continued with some such words as "my dear father was wise, my dear father was (some other adjective)"; but this is not much like the ordinary Türkü lapidary style and I doubt if it is right. There is no trace of **lü:** at the end of line 4 on either squeeze, and the first letters visible at the beginning of line 5 are almost certainly not **ka:**; they look more like **kü:** or **rü:**. If I am right in reading **ko:ñ yı:lka:** in line 12, then **lü: yı:lka:** cannot possibly have occurred here, and it is hard to resist the conclusion that R. read it, because he was expecting to find some such words here. It is perhaps significant that at one time he read y^2**ı:lka:** and at another **y**^{1}**ı:lka.** The second word in line 5 almost certainly begins with **bi:t** . . . and this suggests that, as in I. and II., the "post-script" of the inscription mentioned the author of it. In line 6 **eḍgü:** is reasonably

clear; the letter after it is quite unlike **k**^{1} but might well be **ç**. In line 7 **t**^{1}, **l**^{1} (certainly not **ç**) and **m** are reasonably clear, but the last might be **n**^{1}**d**^{1}; a colon seems to separate the last two letters, but I cannot think of a word ending **t**^{1}**l**^{1}, so this is probably a flaw in the stone. There is no trace of **ölti:** on either squeeze, and it is not a probable word in this context; "to die" of persons commemorated in this way is **uç-, uça: bar-** or, as in line 12 of the main inscription, simply **bar-**; **öl-** seems to be reserved rather for undignified death and is used more for enemies, rebels, and the common folk. To sum up, no continuous sense can be made of more than the first two and a half lines of the supplementary inscription, and of that only tentatively, but R.'s reconstruction is certainly wrong, and the whole thing is likely to have been no more than a statement of the circumstances in which the memorial was erected.

Concluding Observations

It will be seen that the translation which has emerged from this reconsideration of O. differs widely from R.'s. So far as the main inscription is concerned, the changes in the "runic" text are trivially small, as will be seen from the critical text in the Plates; but quite small corrections have served to produce a much more coherent text, and the identification of a few words like **basa:, berseg** and **ko:rığ,** which were unknown to R. in 1895, have made it possible to produce a much more plausible translation. Perhaps the largest single change, that of the latter half of line 4, has been achieved simply by altering the reading of four letters and considering what logically should have appeared at this point. Similarly the alteration in the date formula has been produced by very minor adjustments in the "runic" text. So far as the supplementary inscription is concerned, R.'s prophecy that any future edition of the text would be less complete than his has been abundantly fulfilled; the reason is, quite simply, that the readings which he suggested cannot be accepted.

Finally I come to the question regarding this inscription which has been most hotly debated, its date. As long ago as 1899 R. saw that it must have been composed during the reign of Bilge Kağan, that is not earlier than A.D. 716, the date of his accession, nor later than January, A.D. 735, the date of his death. These limits can

be greatly narrowed, if my contention is accepted that the author used I. as one of his models, since that was not erected till A.D. 732. This means that O. was composed between A.D. 732 and the end of A.D. 734. This fits the revised date formula in line 12 admirably, for A.D. 731 was a Sheep Year; it makes the Dragon Year, which would have been A.D. 728, much less plausible.

The picture is now quite clear. The man whom O. commemorates died in A.D. 731, and his monument, as might have been expected, was erected very soon afterwards. Indeed it is perhaps not too imaginative to suggest that its author was one of the distinguished guests who attended the funeral of Kül Tégin described at the end of I., and that it was on this occasion that he saw the newly erected memorial and conceived the idea of composing a memorial for his own father, recently deceased, based on it and on the memorial on the grave of his father's most distinguished non-royal contemporary, " Wise " Toñukuk.