ON THE YENISEI KIRGHIZ TITLE *Ā-RÈ*[*]

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This paper examines the term *ā-rè* recorded in mediaeval Chinese historical sources as the title of the ruler of the Yenisei Kirghiz state. The author aims to discover which Old Turkic title this Chinese phonetic transcription corresponds to. By reconstructing the sounds in *ā-rè* according to Middle Chinese the author argues that the most likely pronunciation of the term was *änäl*, which he suggests is a phonetic variant of the Old Turkic title *inäl*. The author also argues that this was a temporary title of the ruler of the Yenisei Kirghiz during their vassalage under the Uyghurs.

Key words: *ā-rè*, *inäl*, Yenisei Kirghiz, Old Turkic, Tang period, Middle Chinese.

1. Introduction

The mediaeval Chinese chronicles, like *Xin Tang Shu*, record – among other titles – the title *ā-rè* for the ruler of the Yenisei Kirghiz. Although many authors have examined the etymology, semantics, and possible Old Turkic equivalents of this title, the exact Old Turkic form to which this Chinese phonetic transcription corresponds is still a matter of debate. Almost all sources on the history of early mediaeval Central Asia merely indicate that the highest status within the social structure of the Yenisei Kirghiz state during that period was *ā-rè*. However, prompted by historical sources, the word *ā-rè*, principally in its Cyrillic transcription as *ажо*, gained wide currency in contemporary Kirghiz language. In my previous publication on this lemma I defined

ажо as a 'ghost word' which appears in lexicographical sources both as a result of inaccurate transcription of early mediaeval Chinese *ā-rè* and as a graphical confusion in Russian and Kirghiz (Alimov 2011, pp. 43–50).

The aim of this paper is to find out which Old Turkic title is represented by the *ā-rè* of the Chinese chronicles and what the functions of the holder of this title were within the mediaeval Yenisei Kirghiz society.

2. The Title of *ā-rè* and Its Interpretations

The title of *ā-rè* appears in only three of the Tang period Chinese official dynastic histories. It occurs three times in the *Tai Ping Huan Yu Ji* (976–984), fifteen times in *Xin Tang Shu* (1060), and finally twice in *Zi Zhi Tong Jian* (1084). In *Zi Zhi Tong Jian* (henceforth ZZTJ), *ā-rè* seems to designate the name of the leader of the Kirghiz. Based on this, some researchers believe that the term is not a title; one of them, Kljashtornyj, remarked that in the Old Turkic epitaphs of the Yenisei basin, the basic domain of the Yenisei Kirghiz, the term *khan* occurs frequently as the title of a ruler, but there is no occurrence of *ā-rè* (*ажо* in Cyrillic) in these texts at all. He accepted *ā-rè* not as a title, but as a name of a ruler of the Kirghiz (Kljashtornyj 1959, p. 164).[1] Golden (1992, p. 177, and note 119) and Drompp (2005, p. 135, note 35) also hesitated to confidently state whether *ā-rè* was a title or a name. Drompp (2002, p. 482) further added that since the (Chinese) sources are in contradiction and the Chinese texts state that *ā-rè* was also the Kirghiz ruler's family name, it may be that the sources are confused and that *ā-rè* thus represents a proper name rather than a title. However, statements in the records such as "Their leader was called as *ā-rè*, and he therefore took the surname *ā-rè* [for the ruling clique of the clan]" in *Xin Tang* Shu (henceforward XTSH) and "their *ā-rè* erected his banner…" in *Tai Ping Huan Yu Ji* (henceforth TPHYJ) make us conclude that *ā-rè* is more than a proper name and is likely to be an official title.

Here, in connection with the above examples, it is appropriate to recall a small detail provided by Maljavkin (1989, p. 106) in the tradition of compiling the Chinese chronicles. It seems to have been the case that the compilers, in situations where they encountered a passage that they themselves wanted to use, adopted this in its original form, what we call today *copying and pasting*.[2] In this method, compilers quoted paragraphs as they were, without any change. In some cases they used to digest them excessively and thus sometimes the meaning has been lost. Suprunenko (1974, p. 238) therefore argued that the all data about the Kirghiz in Chinese sources of the Tang period tend to repeat one another. Lung (2011, pp. 118–120, 129) also confirms that

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[1] However, in his last publication Kljashtornyj (2014, p. 11) accepted Jakhontov's view that *ā-rè* is a Chinese transcription of OldT *inäl*.
[2] This was widely practised by the authors of previous periods, as indeed it was in other cultures, cf. the Greek Universal Historian Diodorus.

the data on the Kirghiz in TPHYJ and XTSH are common. Comparing the related annals Lung concludes that the information on the Kirghiz in TPHYJ and XTSH was taken from the *Kirghiz Memoir*[3] which was compiled in 843. ZZTJ is chronologically the one written the latest, which is why the information that *ā-rè* is a "Kirghiz leader's name" in this source most likely comes from the abridgements of TPHYJ and XTSH.

A review of the available literature identifies three main schools of interpretation for this word. Some explanations link *ā-rè* to Old Turkic (henceforth OldT) *idi* "an owner, a master" or *ata* "father", the correspondences as well as the reflexes of which, in their opinion, have been preserved not only in the modern Turkic languages, but also in some Mongolic and Manchu-Tungusic languages. Others base their interpretations on the phonetic reconstruction of Early and Late Middle Chinese (henceforth EMC and LMC respectively), the period when the *ā-rè* was recorded. Meanwhile another group of researchers confine their interpretations to the original form of the title *ā-rè* and argue that its original Turkic form cannot yet be established (Kljashtornyj 1959, p. 164; Drompp 2005, p. 36, n. 84).

Schott (1865, p. 434), who was the first to consider the subject, claimed that it is related to OldT *ata* with the presumptive meaning of "the father (of the nation)". Schott believed that it was a variant of the word that can be seen in the Samoyed language as *ässe* and *aetsea*, in the Lapp language as *aćće*, and in Mongolian as *ećí* (> *ećige*), which also means "father". Kyzlasov (e.g. 1992, pp. 213–219) also defended the idea that *ā-rè* of the Chinese chronicles ultimately represents Samoyedic *ässe*, adopted by the Yenisei Kirghiz with the meaning of "father of the nation". A similar opinion was expressed by Margulan (1959, p. 181) who argued that in earlier times this word meant "a father", then with the semantic extension it became "the head of a large patriarchal family", and later, with the formation of the state, it took a broader meaning and began to denote the title of a ruler of the state. I would argue here that Kyzlasov and Margulan's views are simply the reinstatements of Schott's interpretation. Besides, Kyzlasov claimed that *ā-rè* (*ажо* in Cyrillic) was in use until recent times in the Khakass language and cited as a proof of the name of *Боти-ажо*. He argued that *Боти-ажо* was a judge and a member of the Yezer clan of the Khakass according to a Russian source dated 1701 (Kyzlasov 1992, pp. 213–219). However, as Barthold had noted earlier, the first scholar who mentioned this name was Kozmin. Based on the Russian archival works, Kozmin pointed out that the second part of the

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[3] Lung remarks that the *Wanghuitu* in the Chinese sources is the Kirghiz Memoir. According to Tang Kaijian (2011, pp. 79–83) *wáng-huì-tú* was drawn by the Tang dynasty's famous painter Yan Lide (阎立德) in 629. It was an imaginative depiction of many foreigners who came to China and was based on the circumstances at that time instead of a pictorial archive that reflected the whole historical reality. It was made for meeting the smug mentality of the early Tang dynasty's ruler and showed the peace and harmony and national prosperity in an exaggerated gloss art, while *xiá-jiá-sī-cháo-gòng-tú-zhuán* ("Depicted transmission of the gift delivery by the Kirghiz during the ceremony of the official reception") which was drawn in 843 served as a documentary picture providing information received from Kyrgyz diplomats on their countries, rulers, customs, habitats and so on, supported by relevant drawings (see Fu xuan zong 2002, pp. 20–22). Therefore, *Wáng-huì-tú* should not be taken as the Kirghiz Memoir.

name had three different spellings, namely *ожо*, *ажо* and *оджа* (Barthold 1963, p. 480). Butanaev remarked that until the 18th century historical sources related to the Khakass people had never mentioned this title. He further opined that the word *ажо* was not reflected at all in the historical memory of the native inhabitants of Khakassia, otherwise the Khakass folklore or ethnographic works would refer to this word. Butanaev (2000, p. 164) also believed that the second part of the name of *Боти-ажо* could be derived from OldT *eči* "elder brother, (junior) paternal uncle". Its reflex as *a:ǯa* is still in use in the Turkic languages of Southern Siberia as a term that is honorific to refer to an "older brother, paternal uncle".[4]

Bernshtam was another researcher who had great interest in the interpretation of this term. Comparing the data of the Ostyak and Ket languages in Castrén's dictionary with the linguistic data of the Turkic Runic monuments of the Yenisei basin, Bernshtam claimed that he had found some parallels. These parallels are: Ostyak *hiji~hije* and Ket *hyiio* "master, owner" as the reflexes of *ажо* "the Yenisei Kirghiz's overlord" which are, at the same time, the cognates of *idi* "owner" in OldT (Bernshtam 1998, p. 35). A similar opinion was also proposed by Menges (1976, pp. 101–110) who claimed that OldT *idi* was nothing but a different phonetic variant of the aforementioned title in the Chinese chronicles. Menges considered that *idi* was subsequently borrowed by the Southern Samoyedic language with the meaning "a lord, an owner of the house; spirit, soul". However, Menges as well as Bernshtam apparently failed to note that these words not only have distinct phonetic forms, but also differ from each other semantically. Menges believed that the semantic loads of both terms were identical, with the "minor exception" that *idi* signified "master, owner, God" whereas in the *ажо* the last meaning was not presented. The opinion of Menges has recently been fully supported by Mokeev. Extending Menges's view, Mokeev says that the more ancient term *ā-rè*, which previously was used along with the titles *elteber* and *qagan* in the Mongol period, was transformed into *idi* while fully retaining its original meaning as "lord, master, owner". He concludes that the title *ā-rè* of the rulers of the Yenisei Kirghiz during the so-called "Kirghiz great power" evolved into *idi* due to the specific dialect of the Altai Kirghiz (see Mokeev 2014).[5] Butanaev–Hudjakov (2000, p. 57) and Geng (2005, p. 159) pointed out that the *ā-rè* stands for an OldT tribe of *Az*. According to Butanaev–Hudjakov and Geng the *Az* were the ruling clan of the Yenisei Kirghiz, even though the texts of the Turkic runic inscriptions clearly show that they were a separate tribe, neighbours of the Kirghiz.

Despite the great variety of conclusions they have drawn, all scholars who have studied the question of the *ā-rè* share one thing in common: they have all ignored the fact that the pronunciation of the word in the Tang period was much different from its pronunciation in modern Mandarin. Researchers failed to take its probable pronuncia-

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[4] I would argue that the *ожо*, *ажо* or *оджа* that occur with the name of Boti may also be the Persian *hʾajah* adopted in Khakass. In Khakass there are a considerable number of words of Persian origin in comparison to other neighbouring Turkic languages (see further Butanaev 1973, pp. 145–148).

[5] http://kghistory.akipress.org/unews/un_post:2211

tion in Middle Chinese (henceforth MC) into account. At the same time, from the point of view of Turkic historical phonology, the methods applied by this group of researchers to the etymological study of *ā-rè* are not valid. Moreover, all the cognates[6] of OldT *∗idi* with which these researchers associated *ā-rè*, are borrowings from Middle Mongolian *∗eǯi/en* "a master, an owner" which appeared chronologically later (Dybo 1996, p. 6, note 19), and thus, these cognates do not correspond to the period when *ā-rè* was actually recorded.

The methods adopted by the researchers mentioned above are not compatible with the principles of historical phonology. The correct approach is to take into account the phonological characteristics of the Chinese language in the relevant period.

Jakhontov was one of those who examined the title according to the LMC and came to the conclusion that the *ā-rè* should be reconstructed as *añar/añär/añal/añäl* or *V+ñar/V+añär/ V+añal/V+añäl* (Jakhontov 1970, pp. 100–120). Similarly, Suprunenko (1970, pp. 79–81) reduced the possible variants of Jakhontov's reconstruction to six as *añat/añar/añal* or *ayat/ayar/ayal*. Although Jakhontov did note that this subject was not clear and there could be different consequences, both Sinologists were inclined to believe that *ā-rè* actually comes from the direct phonetic adaptation of the early mediaeval Turkic title *inäl* in MC.

3. The *ā-rè* in Middle Chinese

With the exception of a few words that carry certain semantic loads and therefore are translated into Chinese as loan-translations, all the OldT personal names and titles appear in Chinese sources by phonetic transcription.[7] Since the combination of the characters 阿 (*ā*) and 熱 (*rè*) has no lexical meaning, we can confidently think that this is a phonetic adaptation of an OldT title to Chinese.

The term is registered in the Chinese sources chronologically dated between EMC (7th–10th centuries) and LMC (10th–12th centuries). In order to identify which OldT title the phonetic adaptation exactly corresponds to, we need to turn to the phonetic reconstruction of MC.

The reconstruction of the characters 阿 and 熱 gives the following results:

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[6] For example, Evenk. *eǯen* "an owner, a master", Solon. *edĭ*, *eǯĭ* "an owner, a master", Negid. *eǯen* "an owner, a master, a ruler", *eǯexe* "a guardian spirit of a hunter", Oroch *eǯe(n)* "a master, a king", Ud. *eǯe(n)* "a ruler, a king, a spirit host", Ulch *eǯe(n)* "a ruler, a king, a spirit host", Orok *ede(n)* "a master, a king", *eǯexe(n)* "a guardian spirit of a hunter", Nan. *eǯē* "an owner, a master", Manch. *eǯe(n)* "a master, a king".

[7] An example of a loan-translation title, a former title of Inäl Qagan, who in 716 ruled in the 2nd Turkic qaganate for a short time, was "Little qagan". Qapagan probably gave him the title "Expander of the west" since Inäl was the governor of On Oq people in the west as well. In Chinese chronicles the title of Inäl appeared as *tuò-xī-kě-hán* and this is a qalque of "the qagan who expanded to the west".

Chinese character	阿		熱	
According to *Ancient Chinese Dictionary* the pronunciation and meaning of the characters (1998, p. 1, 1311)	ā	The prefix of kin or nick name, e.g. 阿爹 (ā-diē) means "father" (1998, p. 1)	rè	1. High temperature 2. Body fever 3. Warmly emotional 4. Lively 5. To describe the prominent position and exalted and powerful. (This kind of meaning is found in poems of the Tang and Song dynasties).
	ē	1. Big hill composed mainly of earth. e.g. 崇阿 (chóng-ē) 2. The bend place of hill 3. Hillside 4. Cater to 5. Light fine silk fabrics 6. Surname etc.		
According to Guo-xiliang (2010, p. 1, 32) the most likely pronunciation of the characters	ɑ		nzĭɛt	
According to Zheng Zhang – Shang Fang – Lin Lian Tong (2012) the most likely pronunciation of the characters in MC	ʔa		ŋiɛt/nziɛt	
According to Karlgren (1940, p. 330, note j) the most likely pronunciation of the characters in Tang period (7th – 10th centuries) Chinese	'ā		ńźiät/ńiät	
According to Baxter and Sagart (2011, p. 2, 108) the most likely pronunciation of the characters in MC (7th – 10th centuries)	'a		nyet	
According to Pulleyblank (1991, pp. 23, 265) the possible pronunciation of the characters during EMC and LMC	ʔa ʔa		ɲiat riat	

4. The Characters 阿 and 熱 in the Borrowings in Middle Chinese

4.1. The Phonetic Correspondences of 阿

The first character 阿 (ā) corresponds to /a/ as an initial vowel in borrowed words recorded in Chinese, e.g. in Sanskrit words Siniticised in MC: San. *arghya* > 阿伽 (MC *agĭa*, Pinyin *a-jiā*) "(ceremonial) water", San. *ānanda* 阿難 (MC *a-nan*; Pinyin *a-nán*) "name of the most learned disciple of Buddha, and famed for hearing and re-membering his teaching" (Shu-fen Chen 2000, p. 415) or the Syriac words in Nestorian monuments in China: Syr. ܐܕܡ ādām > 阿談 (MC *ʔa-tham*; Pinyin *atán*) "Adam" (Takahashi 2013, p. 15).

The same character is also used for initial vowels in Old Uyghur (henceforth OldU) words such as *adruq*, *apa*, *ašan*, *ata*, *ašuq, altun*, *arslan* written in Chinese characters (see Hamilton 1955, p. 170, character 8).

Other initial vowels should be examined in order to find out what other sounds the related character may correspond to. Labial front vowels in words borrowed from Sanskrit that are found in MC texts are given in characters such as 鄔 (MC *u*; Pinyin *wū*), 和 (MC *ɣua*; Pinyin *hè, huò, huó*), 盂 (MC *jĭu*; Pinyin *yú*), whereas close un-rounded vowels are given in 因 (MC *ĭĕn*; Pinyin *yīn*). The case observed in proper nouns in Nestorian texts is similar: Syr. . ܐܘܪܫܠܡ Ōrishlem > 烏梨師斂 (LMC[8] *ʔuă-li-şr-liam*; Pinyin *wū-lí-shī-liăn*) "Jerusalem".

In OldT titles and proper names in MC, unrounded front vowels are rendered with characters such as 伊 (LMC *i*; Pinyin *yī*), 移 (LMC *ji*; Pinyin *yí*) or 乙 (LMC *ʔit*; Pinyin *yǐ*). For instance, the name of Bilge Qagan's successor *Ĭ-jan* was given with 伊然 (LMC *ʔji-rian*; Pinyin *yī-rán*), and the name of his predecessor (Qapaghan's son) Inäl Qagan was rendered with 移涅可汗 (LMC *ji-niat-kʰaʼ-xhan*; Pinyin *yí-niè-kě-hán*) and that of Irbis *Dulu* Qagan from the *Dulu* qaganate of Western Turks was rendered with 乙毗咄陸可汗 (LMC *ʔit-phji-thun-liwk-kʰaʼ-xhan*; Pinyin *yǐ-pí-duō-lù-kě-hán*). In some cases, characters with similar sounds were used, as in the example of Išbara Qagan 沙鉢羅可汗 (LMC *şa:-puat-la`-kʰaʼ-xhan*; Pinyin *shā-bō-luó-kě-hán*).[9]

The characters like 回 (LMC *ɣwəj*; Pinyin *huí*) or 烏 (LMC *ʔuă*; Pinyin *wū*) were used separately for the labial vowel, for example: Uyghur 回纥 (LMC *ɣwəj – ɣɛt*; Pinyin *huí – hé*); Ozmïš Qagan 烏蘇米施可汗 (LMC *ʔuă-şuă-mjiajʼ-şi-kʰaʼ-xhan*; Pinyin *wū-sū-mǐ-shī-kě-hán*). Hamilton (1955, pp. 166–169) adds that for OldU words signs such as 嗚 (LMC *ʔuă*; Pinyin *wū*), 鶻 (LMC *xhuă*; Pinyin *hú*), 屋 (LMC *ʔewk*; Pinyin *wū*), 預 (LMC *jiăˋ/jyăˋ*; Pinyin *yù*), 于 (LMC *ʔiăʼ/ʔyă*; Pinyin *yú*) were also used for the same vowels.

Due to unique phonological characteristics and the writing system of Chinese, which could be roughly defined as logographic, it was impossible to fully reflect the phonetic profile of the imported words as they were in the source language. In view of

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[8] LMC reconstructions are given according to Pulleyblank (1991).
[9] The same is true for Syriac proper names transcribed in Chinese characters (see further Takahashi 2008, pp. 631–662; 2013, pp. 13–24; 2014, pp. 240–249).

the examples above, it is observed that during the MC period, initial vowels in loan-words were given in written form with characters that correspond to similar or near-pronunciation of the related words.

When examined in relation to Turkic, it is observed that bipolar vowel contrasts in labial front vowels are largely taken into consideration. It could then be argued that in theory, the character 阿 in OldT words corresponds to the vowel /a/ as well as its front-unrounded variant /ä/. Indeed, the front-unrounded vowel in the name of an OldT tribe *ädiz* is given with 阿 (阿蹀) (LMC *ʔa-dɛt*; Pinyin *ā-dié*) in MC sources. It can therefore be proven with examples that the character 阿 is used to reflect vowels /a/ and /ä/ in the beginning of words.

4.2. The Phonetic Correspondences of 熱

The second character that constitutes the title is 熱. According to specialists on historical Chinese phonology, the initial sound of the syllable during MC was /nz̧/, /ńź/, /ny/ or /ɲ/ as it is shown above.[10] This sound that was traditionally rendered as *bàn chĭyīn* "half front-tooth" originally was a palatal nasal /ɲ/ during MC. Through LMC, as stated by Pulleyblank (1991, p. 265), this consonant developed into /r/. Consequently, 熱 became *riat* first and later in Mandarin Chinese (ManC) it turned into *rè* (IPA: ʐʂ̀). Giles (1912, p. 708, character no. 5649) remarked that 熱 can be seen in modern Chinese languages with the pronounciation as follows: in Cantonese as *yt*, in Hakka Chinese as *ngiet*, in Wenzhou dialect as *ngiet*, in Ningbo Chinese as *jêh/ngih*, in Beijing Chinese as *jê'* and in Sichuan Chinese as *je/ye*.[11]

熱 was also adopted by other languages such as Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese during the MC period. It should be noted at this juncture that a great majority of the words of Chinese origin in these languages were imported during the MC period. Most of these words are phonetically "frozen" in that they directly reflect the phonology of MC and so these same words have been used in the reconstruction of the MC phonological system. The Korean pronunciation of the word is *yŏl*[12], Japanese *netsu* and Vietnamese *nhiệt* (see Giles 1912, p. 708, character no. 5649). All of these examples are to be considered important for the subject at hand for two reasons. The first is that the related sound is /ɲ/ during the MC period, while at the same time it may be argued that in transcribing non-Chinese words in Chinese characters it was used for /n/ in the position of $(V^2) + /n/ + (V^2)$[13]. Indeed, the nucleus vowel of 熱 in

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[10] All these transcriptions represent the same sound. Guo-xiliang's /nz̧/, Karlgren's /ńź/, Pulleyblank's /ɲ/ and Baxter's /ny/, as stated by the latter, are due to the different phonetic transcription alphabets used (see Baxter 1992, p. 55).

[11] The letter /j/ in Giles's transcriptions corresponds to /r/ in the Pinyin romanisation system. According to IPA it is /ʐ/.

[12] The Old Korean pronunciation of the word is most likely *nyəl,* as front consonants in words of Chinese origin in South Korean show the sound development *ny- > y-* and *ry- > y-*. North Korean in this sense is more conservative and archaic.

[13] V^2 = front vowel.

the phonetic profile of MC indicates the same observation. The other reason is that the final consonant (*final/coda*) of the character 熱 in MC is rendered as *-t* by researchers. There are a certain number of sounds or sound groups as coda sound of a syllable in MC which are a total of twelve sounds including *-t* as well as Ø, *-w*, *-j*, *-i*, *-ng*, *-wng*, *-m*, *-n*, *-k*, *-wk* and *–p* (Baxter 1992, p. 61). However, the number of final consonants is only six with plosives /p/, /t/, /k/ and nasals /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ (Barat 1996, p. 7). Shu-fen Chen (2000, p. 409) has clarified that when Sanskrit borrowings were transcribed in Chinese during MC, the words, the final consonants of which are different from those six ones, were not reflected in written form due to phonetic and writing limita-tions of Chinese or were reflected with a similar sound mentioned above. The same is true not only for Sanskrit, but also for borrowed words from other languages in MC or for proper names and titles transcribed in Chinese characters of that period (for the transcription of Syriac names during MC (Tang period) see Takahashi 2008, pp. 631–662; 2013, pp. 13–24).

These claims refer to a possibility that the final sound of the Kirghiz ruler ren-dered with 阿熱 could be *-t* or could be another consonant articulated in a similar way.

Nevertheless, based on the Tibetan transliterations of works such as MC *Quan-wenzi*, *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and *Amitābha Sūtra* where the Chinese final sound *-t* is invariably rendered in Tibetan script with *-r*, Luo (1933, p. 69) ar-gues that during the Tang and Five Dynasties Period (7th–10th centuries), *-t* is no longer a plosive but a liquid consonant. Pulleyblank (1971, p. 138) also verifies that the said *-t* is regularly rendered with *-r* in Tibetan scripts[14], adding that the *-r* in foreign words during the MC period was also rendered with *-t* in Chinese transcriptions. Luo, just as Pulleyblank, explains this situation by suggesting that *-t* is no longer a plosive consonant in MC but rather a fricative or of a similar characteristic (Barat 1996, pp. 8–9). Shogaito and Barat, who work on Chinese borrowings in OldU, also state that the *-t* in words of Chinese origin in OldU are rendered with *-r* (see further Shogaito 1987, pp. 134–135 and Barat 1996, p. 9). Barat (1996, p. 8) adds that the consonant /t/ existed in OldU and the corresponding letter was also presented in its alphabet, and therefore the reason for rendering the final consonant *-t* in MC with OldU *-r* instead of *-t* should be sought not in OldU but in Chinese itself.

For this very reason Jakhontov (1970, p. 115) agrees with the others in that in MC *-t* was most probably pronounced similar to the consonant /r/. Dybo (2007, p. 768) offers a similar argument and states that in MC the phonetic development as *-t* > *-r* is a dialect feature that was observed up until the 7th century.[15]

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[14] The Tibetan inscriptions Pulleyblank refers to should be actually *Quanwenzi* "One-thou-sand-character text" written in MC period (7th century) in Dunhuang. In the Tibetan transcription of this text the Chinese character *-t* is invariably rendered as *-r* (see Takahashi 2008, p. 637).

[15] In relation to that Dybo gives the following examples: **demür* "an iron": OldT *temür* (*temir*), MK *temür*, Tuv. *demir*, Yak. *timir*, Chuv. *timər* are borrowings from LMC **diēt-mwyt* (= *mwut*) "ironware". The most possible form in a LMC dialect that served as a source for its forms in Turkic languages is *diēr-mwur*, compare: (1) 鐵 ModC *tie3*, MC *thiet*, OldC *λhīt* "an iron"; (2) 物 ModC *wu4*, MC *müt*, OldC *mhət* "a kind, a sort; an object, a thing, a range of things".

Nevertheless, the Korean pronunciation of the 熱 we have examined is *yeol* with /l/ as final sound.[16] As is widely acknowledged, the final sounds of -*p* and -*k* were preserved as they are in the entire MC imports into Old Korean (henceforth OldK), the final -*t* in this example turned into -*l* in Sino-Korean (Miller 1967, pp. 105–110; Kang–VanNess Simmons 2001). According to Lee–Ramsey (2011, p. 69), words that belong to the native vocabulary of Old Korean never show a change from -*t* to -*l*, and the Old Korean use of -*l* in MC loanwords must therefore reflect some aspect of the pronunciation of final -*t* in Middle Chinese itself. Lee–Ramsey argues that the said equivalency (MC -*t* = OldK -*l* in Sino-Korean words) stems from Chinese. For the same reason, Martin (1997, pp. 263–271) argues that the final -*t* in MC actually corresponds to the rolled /r/ in Korean and the word rendered with -*r* is transferred to OldK through Northern Chinese dialects.[17]

When we consider the -*t* (= MC Northern dialects -*r*) > OldK -*l* sound change in Chinese borrowings in Korean, it becomes increasingly likely that the said consonant in MC, at least in its Chang′an dialect, was a lateral fricative consonant.[18]

In fact, the Chinese spelling of the Christian names on the Nestorian monument in Chang'an (dated 781) clearly supports this view. On the said stele, there are Syriac proper names transcribed in Chinese characters with -*l* as final sound which are all rendered with -*t* in Chinese characters. For example: 郍寧逸 (LMC *naniajŋ-jit*; Pinyin *nuó-níng-yì*) which corresponds to Syr. ܕܢܝܐܠ, *Dānī'el*/*Dānīyel* "Daniel", 彌沙 曳 (LMC *mji-ṣa:-jiat*; Pinyin *mí-sha-yè*) which corresponds to Syr. ܡܝܟܐܝܠ *Mī-shā'ēl* "Michael", 及烈 (LMC *khip-liat*; Pinyin *jí-liè*) which corresponds to Syr. ܓܒܪܐܝܠ *Gabrī'ēl* "Gabriel", 遥越 (LMC *jiaw-yat*; Pinyin *yáo-yuè*) which corresponds to Syr. ܝܘܐܝܠ *Yō'ēl* "Yoel" etc. (see further Takahashi 2008, pp. 640–654).

As regards our discussion on the character 熱, the situation in Korean of the same word reveals that it is impossible for the final sound to be -*t*. It could be only -*r* or -*l*. When we consider the phonetic characteristics of the initial consonant and nucleus vowel of the character 熱 in conjunction with front-back-vowel harmony – an essential aspect of Turkic – the original form of the title of the Kirghiz ruler rendered as 阿熱 must be *änär* or *änäl*. As was stated above, it is highly likely that the final sound was a lateral consonant in MC which therefore makes the final variant *änäl* more likely to be in the original.

Another piece of evidence that supports this view is related to the same name in Chinese sources. As is widely known, the son of Qapaghan Qagan, one of the rulers of the 2nd Turkic qaganate, was later given the title Inäl Qagan. This title is recorded as *yí-niè kě-hán* in Chinese sources. In as early as 1924, Thomsen had established that this historical figure and Inäl Qagan found in the Tonyuquq inscription of Mongolia

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[16] It is important to note that the Korean consonants /l/ and /r/ are allophones.

[17] Eom (2002, pp. 101–117) rejects the idea of Martin and argues that MC -*t* = OldK -*l* equivalency took place within Korean itself long before the MC -*t* > *liquidification*.

[18] That 熱 is rendered as *netsu* in Japanese (< OldJ *net*) and as *nhiệt* in Vietnamese, which indicates that the asserted sound event in MC as regards -*t* is limited to northern dialects including Chang'an and is not seen in dialects that affect Japanese and Vietnamese.

was one and the same person.[19] This character cluster reconstructed as EMC *ji-net-kʰaʾ-ɣan*, LMC *ji-niat-kʰaʾ-xhan* is pronounced as *i-nyŏl-ga-han* (IPA: *i-yəl-ga-han*)[20] in Korean. The final sign in 移涅 (which is 涅) and the second character of 阿熱 (which is 熱) that transcribes *inäl* in the same period are pronounced very similarly in MC while completely overlapping in Korean. This situation also verifies that the final *-t* in 阿熱 should not be rendered with *-r* but with *-l*. Consequently, instead of the eight different variants suggested by Jakhontov or six different variants by Suprunenko, we have a single variant: *änäl*.

5. Is *ā-rè* a Transcription of *inäl*?

Could it be possible that the phonetic profile of the title rendered with *ā-rè* is *inäl* or *ïnal* rather than *änäl*? Given the situation of proper names of Ancient Turks and Nestorians as well as the Sanskrit borrowings transcribed in Chinese characters, it becomes evident that this is not possible (see examples in subsection 4.1). Considering that in OldT, especially in the inscriptions from Khakassia attributed to the Yenisei Kirghiz,[21] the /ä/~/i/ alternation is very frequent which reveals that *änäl* is a phonetic doublet of *inäl~ïnal* commonly used among Ancient Turks and evidenced in Turkic runic texts. The existence of this variant is also indicated in the *inal~enal* clan among the Tien-Shan Kirghiz and the *Inallu~Eynallu* ethnic group of Turkic origin living in southern Iran (see Karatayev 2003, p. 78).

The title *ā-rè* is mentioned in the Chinese chronicles only between 840–847 on the Kirghiz–Uyghur wars and the Kirghiz–Tang diplomatic relations. Contrary to the opinions of Jakhontov and Suprunenko, this title does not have a long history. Jakhontov (1970, p. 119) argued that the title *ā-rè* must have been known prior to the 8th century, in 648 to be precise. He mentioned that the diplomatic relations between the two countries were cut off from the mid-8th century, adding that soon after *ā-rè* earned the qagan title. However, historical sources reveal that *ā-rè* took the title of qagan on his own "as soon as the Uyghurs lost a bit of their strength" (see XTSH, volume 19, p. 6149). This date is 843, according to the notes of the Tang high official Li Deyu (Drompp 2005, p. 136). In addition to this, Suprunenko (1970, p. 81) claimed that the title belongs to the 7th century and refers to ZZTJ (volume 9, p. 7946). However, the related section of ZZTJ does not include such information.

In chronological terms, the title *ā-rè* is first ascribed to approximately year 820 in Chinese records. XTSH (volume 19, p. 6149) states that *ā-rè* fought with the Uyghurs for 20 years and eventually destroyed the capital of the Uyghur qagan. The XTSH (volume 19, p. 6149) additionally asserts that the *ā-rè* was honoured with the title of *pí-jiā-dùn-jié-jīn* (EMC *bji-kaɨ/kɛ:-twənʰ-kɛt-kin*; OldT *Bilge Tuŋ Erkin*)

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[19] According to some researchers, it should be read as *ini il qaɣan* and not as *inäl qaɣan* (see Sertkaya 1995, pp. 96–97), but neither of the pronunciations poses a problem for us, as what concerns us is the fact that *-t* in MC corresponds to *-l* in both cases.

[20] 涅 in Korean is originally *nyəl* with *n* as the first sound.

[21] For instance: *äči~iči* "an elder brother, an uncle", *äl~il* "a state, a clan union", *äki~iki* "two", *äš~iš* "a company; a spouse" etc. (see Kormushin 1997, pp. 282–293).

which is also related to these dates. The records of the title *ā-rè* in Chinese documents of the Tang period are based on the information given to the Chamber of Diplomatic Relations by the 2nd Kirghiz embassy delegation led by *Zhù-wú hé-sù* who came to Chang'an at the end of February 843 (see Fu xuan zong 2002, pp. 20–22). On behalf of the Tang Dynasty emperor Wuzong, prime minister Li Deyu ordered his chancellery to obtain and take full records of detailed information from the delegates, as was remarked above, on the rulers of the Kirghiz people, their administrative order, customs and traditions, clothing, beliefs, agricultural products, geographical features of the lands which they inhabit, and the routes to China from their country, as well as a description of their rulers (see Suprunenko 1963, p. 71; Lung 2011, p. 128).

Today there is no trace of the ten-chapter report that was written on that date, officially entitled *xiá-jiá-sī-cháo-gòng-tú-zhuán* "Depicted transmission of the gift delivery by the Kirghiz during the ceremony of the official reception", but the notes that Li Deyu gave to the emperor on this report and the descriptions have been preserved (Drompp 2005, pp. 132–133, also see Suprunenko 1963, p. 79). However, the report written by the members of the Chamber of Diplomatic Relations was apparently not lost until at least the early 11th century, because the information in the section on the Kirghiz and their ruler *ā-rè* in XTSH is entirely based on the data provided by this report (Drompp 2005, p. 133, footnote 29; Lung 2009, p. 210; Lung 2011, p. 129). The notes of Li Deyu state that in return for the Kirghiz defeat of the Uyghurs, the Kirghiz *ā-rè* requested to be awarded the title of qagan by the Tang emperor Wuzong through an embassy delegation led by Wen-wu Alp. Li Deyu also states that the *ā-rè* had already declared himself as qagan around these dates (between 840–843) and what he requested from the emperor was only the confirmation of the title of Teŋri Qagan (or another title that bears the same expression). The letter written by Li Deyu on behalf of the Chinese emperor states that this title belonged to the defeated Uyghur qagan, and would therefore be inappropriate for a Kirghiz ruler, and he therefore asks the Kirghiz leader[22] to consider the title *dudu* (> OldT *tutuq* "governor, ruler of a region") given to the Kirghiz leader who paid a personal visit to the Chinese capital in ancient times (648) (Suprunenko 1963, pp. 67–81; Drompp 2005, pp. 139–140). As a result, the Tang palace awarded the Kirghiz ruler in 845 the honorary title of *zōng-yīng-xióng-wǔ-chéng-míng kě-hán* "hero of the clan,[23] warrior, honest and bright qagan").

6. Was *inäl* the Title of the Kirghiz Rulers?

With the relating suggestions by researchers such as Kononov (1958, pp. 95–96, note 118), Jakhontov (1970, pp. 110–120) and Suprunenko (1970, pp. 79–81), most his-

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[22] The name of this Kirghiz sources in Chinese records is referred to as 失鉢屈阿棧 (EMC. ɕip-pat-kʰut-ʔa-dʐain ʰ/dʐɛːn ʰ; Pinyin *shī-bō-qū-ā-zhàn*) (see http://www.chinaknowledge.de/History/Altera /kirgizes.html).

[23] 英雄 (P. *yīng-xióng*) means "hero", 宗 (P. *zōng*) means "a clan, a faction". As stated by Drompp (2005, p. 149), this refers to the blood relations between the Kirghiz rulers of the past and the Li imperial family.

torical studies refer to the title *inäl* as the title of the mediaeval Kirghiz rulers. It might be argued that the statements "… although they have other names, their (Kirghiz) rulers are called inäl" in Rašīd al-Dīn's *Jāmiʻ al-tawārīkh* (Berezin 1858, pp. 130– 131) and "Qïrγïz ėli töresini inäl dėrlär, Moγol <qaan> ve Tājīk pādšāh dėgän dėk" in Abū al-Ghāzī Bahādur Khān's *Shajara-i Turk* (see Schott 1865, p. 460; Sablukov 1854, p. 41) played a role in how this opinion took root. But was *inäl* indeed the title of the ruler of the mediaeval Kirghiz state or people? First of all, we can note that there is no record in the Turkic runic texts that refer to *inäl* as the title of the Kirghiz ruler. The inscriptions dating from the 2nd Turkic qaganate in Mongolia refer to the Kirghiz ruler with the title qagan only. For example, *Qïrqïz qaγanda tarduš ïnanču čor kelti* "From the qagan of the Kirghiz Tarduš Inanču Čor came" (KT N13); *Qïrqïz qaγanïγ balbal tikdim* "I erected the qagan of the Kirghiz as balbal" (KT E25, BK E20); *Qïrqïz küčlüg qaγan yagïmïz boltï* "The Küčlüg qagan of the Kirghiz became our enemy" (T 20). The inscriptions from the Uyghur period (ŠU E11) refer to the ruler of the Kirghiz with the title khan: *Qïrqïz qanï kögmen irinte ... ermiš* "The khan of the Kirghiz was … in the north of Kögmen".[24]

On the other hand, the inscriptions from the Yenisei region roughly dated to the second half of the 9th century (Kormushin 1997, p. 25) refer to the title *inäl~ïnal* six times, but none of these are the inscriptions from the Khakassia. However, this region, also referred to as the Mönsü basin, was one inhabited by the Kirghiz in the 9th century and according to Chinese sources the situation did not change even after the victory against the Uyghurs in 840 when the Kirghiz took control over the entire Mongolian plateau (Suprunenko 1974, p. 239; Drompp 2005, p. 147). The vernacular characteristics observed in the Southern Siberian Turkic runic texts also confirm that the inscriptions in the said region belong to the Kirghiz (Ponarjadov 2007, pp. 127– 132). In view of these observations, considering the inscriptions of Mongolia of the 8th century and those 9th-century ones inscribed by the Kirghiz themselves, which actually correspond to the lifetime of *ā-rè*, it is very interesting to note the absence of the title *inäl* with reference to the Kirghiz in the Khakassia inscriptions.

The trilingual Qarabalgasun inscription commemorating the Uyghur ruler Ay täŋridä qut bulmïš alp bilgä qaγan (reigned between 808–821) during the lifetime of *ā-rè* refers to the Kirghiz ruler as *jiān-kūn-kè-hán* "Kirghiz qagan" (Chinese section, line 14, the signs 15–18, see Schlegel 1896, p. 84). This situation actually demonstrates that the title *inäl* is unique to the Kirghiz ruler who defeated the Uyghurs in 840 only and not the mediaeval Kirghiz state rulers in general. According to Chinese sources (e.g. XTSH, volume 19, p. 6149) the Kirghiz–Uyghur war broke out in 758– 759, and as mentioned in the Qarabalgasun inscription, the Uyghurs "killed the Kirghiz qagan, a brave, powerful, wise and forceful warrior who used to hit the bull's eye with his first shot and confiscated the enormous number of his cows and horses, weapons piling them up like a mountain and displaced his people" (Schlegel 1896, pp. 83–86; Kamalov 2001, pp. 194–197).

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[24] Based on the usage in the Turkic Runic inscriptions, researchers argue that *qan* generally means "khan, ruler" whereas *qagan* solely refers to the official title of the 2nd Turkic qaganate, Chinese, Qidan, Uyghur, Turgesh, Kirghiz rulers (Kormushin 2008, p. 269).

According to a widely held belief, these events took place between 758–759, while the Qarabalgasun inscription clearly states that the last incident occurred during the reign of Ay täŋridä ülüg bulmïš alp qutluγ uluγ bilge qaγan of the Ediz dynasty (see Schlegel 1896, pp. 72–95; Kamalov 2001, p. 196). The reign of the said qagan was between 795–805 (Hamilton 1955, pp. 153–154). Following these events, the Kirghiz were dominated by the Uyghurs, as stated by the historical sources, and were given the status of vassals. It can be concluded that in the very first years of the 9th century, the Uyghurs appointed a deputy ruler over the Kirghiz. The title of this deputy was *inäl*. He was subject to the Uyghurs for nearly 20 years and then fought against them for another 20 until he finally attained victory in 839–840.

The studies on OldT do not give a clear definition of *inäl* in Turkic runic texts. Most researchers simply refer to it as "a title qualifier" (e.g. Şirin User 2009, p. 524). While others, Kormushin (2008, p. 306) for instance, argue in reference to the Yenisei inscriptions that it lost its quality as a title but turned into a fragment of a title that could mean "noble, honourable", used as a compliment. However, based on many examples in historical documents, Doerfer (1975, pp. 196–199) defines *inäl* as "Stellvertreter (eines höheren Würdenträgers) [Deputy (of a higher dignitary)]". The same definition is given by Shirvashidze (1990, p. 81) who specifies that *inäl* is "a permanent deputy governor, a representative of a khan at certain actions".

Following the defeat of the Uyghurs that ruled over the Kirghiz in 840, *ā-rè* (= *inäl*) immediately adopted the qagan title and requested the confirmation of this title from the Tang emperor Wuzong, which must be related to his insistence that he was no longer a deputy governor but an independent qagan.

Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī defines *inäl* as "the name for any young man whose mother is a khatun 'princess' and whose father is a commoner" (Dankoff–Kelly, 1982, p. 147). Referring back to *ā-rè*, XTSH (volume 19, p. 6149) states that his mother was the daughter of the Türgesh qagan and his wife was the daughter of the Qarluq yabgu. This quality of his must be one of the reasons that the Uyghurs appointed him and not anybody else as the deputy governor of the Kirghiz.

7. Conclusion

As noted earlier, only methods compatible with the principles of historical phonology should be considered as the right approach in interpreting the term *ā-rè*. Based on the attempts of reconstructing the sounds of MC, it is observed that the title of the ruler of the Yenisei Kirghiz transcribed with the combination of the characters 阿 and 熱 in fact corresponds to a phonetic variant of the Old Turkic *inäl*. The situation with the OldT and Syriac proper names and titles as well as Sanskrit loanwords written in Chinese characters during the MC period helped to determine that the title *inäl* was written as *ā-rè* according to the standard pronunciation of the Tang period, as used in the city of Chang'an.

We have established which Old Turkic word stands behind *ā-rè* and now can argue that this term was not a proper name but a title of the Yenisei Kirghiz ruler.

From the foregoing arguments and contrary to several historical studies we can confidently conclude that *ā-rè* was not a permanent official title of the mediaeval (7th−9th centuries) Kirghiz rulers, but a temporary title of a Kirghiz ruler who was first appointed as a deputy governor by the Uyghurs over the Kirghiz after the last war between them during the reign of Ay täŋridä ülüg bulmïš alp qutluɣ uluɣ bilge qaɣan (795−805).

Abbreviations

BK	Bilge Qagan inscription
BK E20	The Inscription of Bilge Qagan, East side, line 20
DLT	Divanu Lugat al-Turk
E.	Yenisei inscription
EMC	Early Middle Chinese
Evenk.	Evenki language
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
KT	Kültegin inscription
KT E25	Inscription of Kültigin, East side, line 25
KT N13	Inscription of Kültigin, North side, line 13
Kyrg.	Kyrgyz
LMC	Late Middle Chinese
Manch.	Manchu
MC	Middle Chinese
MCND	Middle Chinese Northern Dialect
ModC	Modern Chinese
Nan.	Nanai
Negid.	Negidal
OldC	Old Chinese
OldJ	Old Japanese
OldK	Old Korean
OldT	Old Turkic
OldU	Old Uyghur
Oroch.	Oroch
Orok	Orok
P.	Pinyin
San.	Sanskrit
Solon.	Solon dialect of Evenki
ŠU E11	Inscription of Šine-Usu, East side, line 11
Syr.	Syriac
T20	Inscription of Tonyuquq, line 20
Ton.	Tonyuquq inscription
TPHYJ	*Tai Ping Huan Yu Ji*
Ud.	Udege
Ulch	Ulch
XTSH	*Xin Tang Shu*
ZZTJ	*Zi Zhi Tong Jian*

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