

# TOWARD A DECIPHERMENT AND LINGUISTIC RECONSTRUCTION OF THE 1101 A.D. KITAN EULOGY FOR EMPRESS XUANYI, WITH NOTES ON MONGOLIC COGNATES: LINES 1–6

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This paper is the first in what aims to be a series of papers toward a new decipherment and linguistic reconstruction of the Kitan Assembled Script Eulogy for Empress Xuanyi of 1101 A.D. In my treatment of this inscription, I have attempted to juxtapose the Kitan text and its very roughly corresponding Chinese text as much as possible, to allow for greater accuracy in decipherment and reconstruction. This methodology has allowed me to identify several words with previously unnoticed Mongolic cognates.

*Key words:* Middle Kitan (ca. 907–1125), Mongolic, historical linguistics, script decipherment, philology, Xuanyi Inscription.

## 1. Introduction

The most recent studies of the *Xuanyi huanghou aice* 宣懿皇后哀冊 inscription include Chinggeltei et al. (1985), Chinggeltei (2002), Kane (2009), and Batu (2012). The most detailed and careful study of the text by far is Kane (2009). My paper would not be possible without these previous studies, or without Oyuunch's groundbreaking exploratory study of Kitan grammar (2007) and the important details and proposals offered by Oyuunch–Janhunen (2010).

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## 2. The Text

Although the Kitan Xuanyi inscription is accompanied by a corresponding Chinese inscription, the two texts differ significantly from each other. There are many parallels to be identified, and many correspondences, but significant portions of these texts differ from each other with regard to specific details. Unlike the *Langjun xingji* 郎君行記 inscription, which consists of a Kitan text and its Chinese *translation*, the Xuanyi Inscription consists of two separate, independently written texts, by separate calligraphers – the Kitan text was calligraphed by Yelü Gu (i.e. \*Yarud \*Gu 𐰚𐰆𐰣𐰆 𐰚𐰆𐰣𐰆 in Kitan), and the Chinese text was calligraphed by the Liao Chinese official Zhang Lin 張琳.<sup>1</sup> It is thus not always possible to juxtapose the Kitan text with corresponding sections in the Chinese text. However, at least for the first six or so lines of the inscription, the Kitan and Chinese texts generally correspond to each other closely. Juxtaposing clauses and sentences from the Kitan text with their corresponding lines in the Chinese text has allowed me to uncover some previously unidentified Mongolic cognates.

For rubbings of the original text, see Chinggeltei et al. (1985), Chinggeltei (2002), Liu et al. (2009), and Liu (2014). See Liu (1999), Chinggeltei (2002), Kara (2005), Kane (2009), and Oyuunch–Janhunen (2010) for the historical background of the text. Note that ‘K’ denotes lines in the Middle Kitan text, while ‘C’ denotes the corresponding lines in the Chinese text. In my treatment of the Kitan lines, I first present a printed version of the original line in Kitan Assembled Script, followed by a philological transcription of the grapheme blocks, then a morphophonological reconstruction of the Kitan words, followed by an interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme gloss, and an English translation of the text, when possible. Following Kane (2009), Kitan data are given horizontally.

My analyses of the text are organised as follows:

1. sentence in Kitan Assembled Script
2. orthographic transcription
3. morphological and phonological transcription
4. interlinear morpheme gloss
5. translation (when relevant)

### [K1]

𐰚𐰆𐰣𐰆	𐰚𐰆𐰣𐰆	𐰚𐰆𐰣𐰆	𐰚𐰆𐰣𐰆	𐰚𐰆𐰣𐰆	𐰚𐰆𐰣𐰆
⟨s.ÿê.n⟩	⟨i.i⟩	⟨nou.e⟩	⟨omo.n⟩	⟨g.en.eñ⟩	⟨č.ai⟩
*sʏɛni		*nɔwə	*ɔmo-n	*gənəñ	*čaywun
PERS.N		earth	mother-GEN	mourning	text

<sup>1</sup> See Kane’s (2009, p. 223) translation of the Chinese text of the Xuanyi inscription.



‘Composed, according to imperial edict, by the official Yelü Gu, Ceremonial Receptionist of the Left Division, Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon, Acting Chancellor of the National University, Keeper of the Daily Agenda of the Emperor, Director of the Hanlin Academy, Commandant of Military Cavalry.’<sup>3</sup>

The phrase 左九木 左化 denotes ‘Left Division’, an administrative division within the Kitan government; Middle Kitan \*čgən 左九木 ‘left (side)’ is cognate to Middle Mongol *je’ün* and Preclassical Written Mongol *jegün* ‘left (side)’.<sup>4</sup> The word \*uwr 左化 ‘division’ superficially resembles modern Khalkha *əpəə* [ə’rə] ‘room (e.g. of a building)’ and modern Written Mongol *örüge* ‘room’ both semantically and phonologically, but a connection, if any, is difficult to ascertain at present; this modern Written Mongol word is not attested in Middle Mongol or the peripheral Mongolic daughter languages, and a Proto-Mongolic word for ‘room’ is not reconstructable. The traditional Serbi-Mongolic dwelling, the yurt (i.e. Middle Mongol *ger* and Middle Kitan \*gər 曲突 <go.ʳ>), does not have rooms.

The phrase \*čgən \*uwr 左九木 左化 ‘Left Division’ is followed by Kitan transcriptions of Liao Chinese titles: as shown by Kane (2009, p. 215, note 59), 安火 艾火 令火 伞雨 安雨 伞雨 伞雨 transcribes the Liao Chinese phonological values of MSC *yuyuan tongjin yinqing* 御院通進銀青 and 雨步 伞久 久步 伞 九步 九步 九步 伞步 伞步 伞步 transcribes *chonglu dafu jianjiao guozi jijiu* 崇祿大夫檢校國子祭酒. According to Hucker, *yuyan tongjin* 御院通進 denotes “Ceremonial Receptionist... responsible for receiving memorials, tribute gifts, etc., in audience” (Hucker 1985, #8215). The title *yinqing chonglu dafu* 銀青崇祿大夫 is not discussed by Hucker, but he notes two similar titles, *yinqing ronglu dafu* 銀青榮祿大夫 ‘Grand Master for Glorious Happiness with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon’ (#7980) and *yinqing guanglu dafu* 銀青光祿大夫 ‘Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon’ (#7981). Kane (2009, p. 215, note 59) translates the Liao Chinese title 銀青崇祿大夫 as ‘Grand Master for Exalted Happiness with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon’. According to Hucker, *chonglu si* 崇祿寺 (#1666) is the Liao Chinese equivalent to *guanglu si* 光祿寺 ‘Court of Imperial Entertainments’ (#3348); thus, the Liao Chinese title 銀青崇祿大夫 should be understood as ‘Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon’, i.e. a title equivalent to 銀青光祿大夫 ‘Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon’ in Sui-Sung terminology. The phrase *jianjiao* 檢校 denotes ‘acting’ (#804) and *guozi jijiu* 國子祭酒 is ‘Chancellor of the National University’ (#3540).

The word form 上九 also appears in the *Yelü Jue muzhiming* 耶律袞墓誌銘 inscription (*YJue* 29:38, 25:9, 4:53) and in the *Xiao Hudujin muzhiming* 蕭胡睹墓誌銘 inscription (*XHu* 13:2), but the precise meaning is not clear. In *XHu* (13:2), 上九 modifies ‘daily agenda (日事)’ in the same phrase as here in the *Xuanyi* inscription,

<sup>3</sup> This is my revision of Kane’s (2009) English translation.

<sup>4</sup> The meaning ‘east’ or ‘eastern’ in reflexes of this Middle Mongol word in Khalkha and certain other Mongolic languages is a very recent semantic innovation. In Middle Mongol, this word meant only ‘left (side)’ (Shimunek 2017, p. 345).

i.e. 上九 𠂔关 𠂔 (XHu 13:2–4), although modified with \*-də 𠂔 <.de> ‘dative-locative suffix’.

As shown by Kane (2009) and Oyuunch (2012), Kitan 𠂔关 𠂔 denotes 日事 ‘daily agenda’, literally ‘matters of the day’. The word 𠂔关 is composed of 𠂔 ‘day’ with \*-i 关 ‘genitive case suffix’. Note another occurrence of the noun phrase 𠂔关 ‘of the day’ in the *Xiao Huilian muzhiming* 蕭回璉墓誌銘:

𠂔	𠂔关	𠂔	𠂔
<mas>	<ñayr'.i>	<uñ>	<po>
*mas	*ñayr-i	*uñ	*pə
one	day-GEN	ox	time

‘at the Ox Hour of the first day, ...’ (XHui 28:21–24).

The Kitan word \*k...y-əwr 𠂔𠂔𠂔𠂔 appears to be a verb with \*-Awr 𠂔 <.Awr> ‘converb suffix’.<sup>5</sup> The grapheme 𠂔 [128] is not yet phonologically deciphered, and the other occurrences of this grapheme which I have been able to identify are not particularly informative (e.g. *Gu* 11:17, *Xu* 27:15, 28:13, 42:40, 42:42, 24:34, 41:14; *YXiang* 37:37, 17:4; *XDi* 29:3; *XHu* 26:10; *YJue* 11:37; *Zhong* 14:48, 10:31). As a productive hypothesis, this \*k...y-əwr might be a verbal construction similar to Written Mongol *kiged*, composed of *ki-* ‘do’ + *-GAd* ‘perfective converb suffix’, i.e. ‘do and then...’ Written Mongol *kiged* usually functions as a conjunction, e.g. *qayan kiged qatun* ‘the king **and** the queen’ (Poppe 1954, p. 122, §432). Given the sentential context, Kitan \*k...y-əwr probably has a similar function. The precise semantic value of the converb suffix \*-Awr 𠂔 has yet to be elucidated, but for the time being we may entertain the possibility that it is a perfective converb suffix. Note the following example of this suffix:

𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔𠂔𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔𠂔𠂔
<eñ.e>	<omo.qu.ui>	<k.ui.ir.s.Awr>	<eñ.ʔ>	<jur.en>	<š.én>	<p.o.ju.Awr>
*əñə	*əmoqu-y	*kuyr-səwr	*əñ...	*jur-ən	*šən	*pəju-awr
now	return-CVB	return-CVB	now(?)	painting-PL	new	become-CVB

𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔𠂔
<l.ang>	<go.č>	<ku.ud.uw.ui>	<ʔ.en.er>
*laŋ	*gəč	*kudu-w-i	*...ən-ər
corridor	?-CVB	?-CVB	?-PST

‘Now, he returned, and ... the paintings **had become** new, **and** the corridors were ... and ...’ (*Lang* 3:9–4:6; Shimunek 2014, pp. 103–104).

The phrase 𠂔𠂔 𠂔𠂔𠂔 𠂔 𠂔关 denotes ‘Director of the Hanlin Academy’ (Kane 2009). This title is attested in the same form in the *Daozong huangdi aice* 道宗皇帝哀冊 inscription (*Dao* 2:19–22), which Liu et al. (2009, p. 466) gloss as ‘Director of the Hanlin Academy (總知翰林院事)’. It is informative to note that the title 知事 ‘administrator’ or ‘administrative clerk’ in Chinese corresponds to a verb phrase in Kitan, usually a subordinate clause marked with a converb suffix or a finite clause

<sup>5</sup> On the phonological value of the grapheme 𠂔, see Shimunek (2017, pp. 423, 428).

ending in a past tense suffix. Titles formed from the verb 𠂔 ‘to manage’ are attested throughout the Kitan Assembled Script inscriptions, but the phonological value of this verbal root is, for the time being, enigmatic. Note other instances of titles based on the verb root \*...-𠂔 ‘manage’:

𠂔 𠂔𠂔  
 <ui> <?.er>  
 \*uy \*...-ər  
 matter manage-PST<sup>♂</sup>  
 ‘Administrator (知事)’ (*Jiao* 13:26–27).

𠂔𠂔 𠂔𠂔𠂔𠂔 𠂔 𠂔𠂔  
 <ta.an> <č.eu.un> <ui> <?.er>  
 \*tan \*čəw-un \*uy \*...-ər  
 Tan prefecture-GEN matter manage-PST<sup>♂</sup>  
 ‘Administrator of Tan Prefecture (檀州之知事)’ (*Song* 10:32–35; Liu et al. 2009, pp. 270, 468).

Kitan \*wugiwi 𠂔𠂔 𠂔𠂔 𠂔𠂔 𠂔𠂔 is a transcription of the Liao Chinese pronunciation of the title *wuji wei* 武騎尉, translated by Hucker as ‘Commandant of Military Cavalry’ (#7741).

The word \*puwku 𠂔𠂔 𠂔𠂔 <pu.uw.ku> denotes ‘official (臣)’ (Kane 2009, p. 215, note 59), and is a compound composed of \*puw 𠂔𠂔 <pu.uw>, a transcription of Old Mandarin 僕 ‘servant’ (cf. Kane 2009, p. 115, §3.179), and the inherited Serbi-Mongolic word \*ku 𠂔 <ku> ‘person’, cognate to attested Middle Mongol *kü’ün* ~ *gü’ü* ~ *gü’ün* ~ *kümü* ~ *kümün* ‘person’.<sup>6</sup>

The word 𠂔𠂔 <k.em> is cognate to Middle Mongol *kem* ‘limit’ (*SHM* §199).<sup>7</sup> The word 𠂔𠂔 <?.or> has not been phonologically deciphered, although it has been semantically deciphered as a Kitan verb equivalent to Chinese 奉 ‘receive from a superior or to submit to a superior’ (Kane 2009). The suffix 𠂔 <.or> denotes the masculine past tense, and suggests that the verbal root 𠂔 ends in the vowel *o*. I thus reconstruct \*...𠂔 𠂔 <?.o> ‘to submit to a superior or to receive from a superior (奉)’. Here the phrase 𠂔𠂔 𠂔𠂔 literally means ‘received an edict’, but the general meaning is ‘according to imperial edict’.

The word 𠂔𠂔𠂔 <?.a.ar> is a masculine past tense verbal noun based on the verbal root 𠂔 ‘compose’. Although this root has not been phonologically deciphered, the fact that there is an 𠂔𠂔 <a.ar> concatenated to the root suggests that 𠂔 includes a [-ATR] vowel, possibly \*[a]. In the *Yelü Pusuli muzhi beiming* 耶律蒲速里墓誌碑銘 inscription, this verb appears with the [-ATR] causative-passive suffix \*-𠂔𠂔 𠂔 in the form \*...𠂔𠂔 𠂔𠂔𠂔 <?.ya.ar> (*YPu* 1:25), and also with the causative-passive allomorph \*-𠂔𠂔 𠂔𠂔 in the converb form \*...-𠂔𠂔-y 𠂔𠂔𠂔𠂔𠂔 <?.l.ya.ai> (*YPu* 21:27), which might also suggest that the root of this verb contains an \*[a] vowel. Note also

<sup>6</sup> See Shimunek (2017, p. 349) for the etymology of this Serbi-Mongolic word.

<sup>7</sup> Shimunek (2017, p. 347). See also Shimunek (2011, p. 104).



which I reconstruct as \*slb, denotes ‘order of years in the hexagenary cycle’.<sup>12</sup> Kitan \*syawqu 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 ‘blue’ and \*tawlya ‘hare, rabbit’ 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 are well-known words. Middle Kitan \*par 𐰇𐰏 ‘ten’ is my revision of Róna-Tas’s reconstruction (2016). Most of the other words in this line are well known in the Kitanological literature.

The word 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 is a relatively high-frequency expression occurring across many Kitan Assembled Script texts (e.g. *XHu* 29:35; *Xing* 1:13; *Renyi* 11:19; *Dao* 4:13; *Zhong* 50:13), also written 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 (YPu 1:10; YJue 1:25, 34:40, 7:39, 31:53; XHu 27:32, 30:3, 1:11; XHui 1:15; Gu 25:11), and 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 (Gu 15:21). Kane explains 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 in *Xuan* (K4:14) as ‘first period of the month (朔)’ (2009, p. 215, note 61). It is possible that the literal meaning of this word in Kitan is more idiomatic. It appears to be a verbal noun construction, composed of the verbal root \*ɢol- 𐰇𐰏 ‘see’, corresponding to Chinese 睹 ‘see, observe’ in the *Langjun xingji* 郎君行記 inscription (*Lang* K3:1, C2:11).<sup>13</sup> Although no cognates to this Middle Kitan verb have been identified in Middle Mongol or the modern Mongolic daughter languages, the 𐰇 element is a high-frequency functional morpheme, which I reconstruct as \*-bǎñ ‘past or perfective verbal noun suffix’, cognate to Middle Mongol *-bAi* ‘firsthand past tense suffix’.<sup>14</sup> This suffix is also written 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 ~ 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎. The Middle Kitan translational equivalent to Chinese 朔 ‘first period of the month’ thus probably literally means ‘saw’ or ‘observed’. The Middle Kitan suffix \*-bǎñ is regularly used for forming relative clauses, and precedes the noun it modifies. Thus, the Kitan sequence 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 probably literally means, in idiomatic Kitan, ‘The third day, White Chicken, which saw/observed the eleventh month, Yellow Goat...’ This sheds some light, however dim, on the idiomatic structure of Middle Kitan calendrical formulae. The *actual* meaning is still enigmatic. Future work on the word forms 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 ~ 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 ~ 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 should carefully address the possibility of homophones, and re-examine the previous proposals on the semantic values of this word as ‘first, first-born’, ‘preface’, and ‘first day of the month’,<sup>15</sup> as well as the personal name(s) taking this phonological form.

The word 𐰇𐰏 ‘white’ has been semantically deciphered for some time, although its phonological value has remained a mystery. Recently, the Inner Mongolian scholar Jürkh (‘Jiruhe’ in Pinyin) proposed to read this grapheme as “su” or “siu” based on a variant reading (Oyuunch 2014). I revise this to \*su 𐰇𐰏 ‘white’. This word has no known cognates.

<sup>12</sup> See Kane (2009, p. 110, §3.147) for the semantic value of this word.

<sup>13</sup> In my article on the *Langjun xingji* 郎君行記 inscription, this character is erroneously given as “賭” (‘gamble’) in the retyped Chinese sentence, but it appears correctly as “睹” (‘see, observe’) in my commentary (Shimunek 2014, p. 102). Oyuunch and Janhunén (2010, p. 53) treat the Kitan word 𐰇𐰏𐰍𐰎 as ‘preface’ < ‘first’, which they analyse as based on a root 𐰇𐰏 ‘to begin’. Although they are correct that this word is formed from a root in 𐰇𐰏, their proposal on the semantic value of the root is unlikely, given the known Kitan verb ‘see’ in the *Langjun xingji* 郎君行記 inscription.

<sup>14</sup> See Brosig (2014) on the value of this suffix in Middle Mongol and Shimunek (2017, pp. 287, 295, 322–323) on the Kitan–Mongol correspondence.

<sup>15</sup> Osada Natsuki proposed these semantic values for the word (Kane 2009, p. 25).



## [K5:1–8]

𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏  
 <s.ÿê.n> <i.i> <nou.e> <omo> <eu.r.eñ> <γ.oγ.en> <n.ad.ebu.d.i> <l.iu.r.en>  
 \*sqeni \*nɔwə \*ɔmo \*əwr-əñ \*ɔɔɛ-ən \*nadbud-i \*liwr-ən  
 PERS.N earth mother eternity-GEN river-GEN tent.palace-LOC(?) pass.away-PST<sup>♀</sup>  
 ‘Xuanyi Earth Mother passed away around/near her tent palace along the Eternal River (i.e. Changqing River).’

## [C4:1–10]

先懿德皇后崩于長慶川

‘The late Empress Yide [i.e. Empress Xuanyi] died at Changqing River.’<sup>16</sup>

The Kitan and Chinese lines above closely correspond to each other. Most of the words in the Kitan line are well-known, deciphered words, with the exception of 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏, which I reconstruct as \*əwrəñ \*ɔɔɛn, and which clearly corresponds to 長慶川 Changqing River in the Chinese text. The word \*nadbud 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 公东生𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 is known from other texts to denote the mobile tent palace, or *ordo*, of Kitan nobility, i.e. the *nabo* (Kane 2009, p. 56, §2.176, p. 92, p. 107, §3.130). Oyuunch (2007, p. 72) proposes that the 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 element appended to this word form might be a low-frequency locative case suffix, and identifies another attestation of this grapheme with a locative meaning in the *Yelü Gui* inscription, although he states that the specific grammatical function of this grapheme in these instances requires additional consideration. Although the specific meaning of the 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 element is unresolved, the Kitan text clearly specifies that Empress Xuanyi died at her *ordo* along the Changqing River. The \*-ən 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 element is a genitive-attributive suffix, well attested in this form throughout many other texts. The phrase \*əwrəñ \*ɔɔɛn 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 contains two well-known genitive-attributive suffixes, i.e. \*-əñ 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 and \*-ən 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 and thus must be composed of NOUN+GEN NOUN+GEN. This construction is the Kitan equivalent to the hydronym 長慶川 ‘Changqing River’, which literally means ‘Eternal Blessings River’ in Chinese. The noun \*ɔɔɛ 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 corresponds to Chinese ‘river (川)’ and is cognate to Middle Mongol *qoroqan* ‘rivulet, brook’.<sup>17</sup> Middle Kitan \*əwr 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 ‘eternal’ corresponds to Chinese 長慶 ‘eternal blessings’, and is cognate to Middle Mongol *e’üri* ~ *e’üre*, glossed in the *Secret History of the Mongols* as ‘a long time, for a long time; forever’.<sup>18</sup> This Middle Mongol word is the root of later Written Mongol *egüride* > Khalkha *üüird* [u:rt] ‘forever, always, eternally’. The Middle Kitan form is inflected with \*-əñ 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏 ‘genitive-attributive suffix’. Compare Written Mongol *egüride-yin* ‘everlasting, eter-

<sup>16</sup> My translation of this line of the Chinese text is a revision of Kane (2009, p. 223).

<sup>17</sup> See Shimunek (2017, pp. 340–341, 426) for a detailed etymology and for my revised reading of the grapheme 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏.

<sup>18</sup> See Shimunek (2017, pp. 340–341) for a detailed etymology.

nal' (Khalkha *üürdiin* ['u:rtiŋ] 'id.') and Middle Mongol *e'üri urtu*, glossed as 'a long time, eternally' (HYYY). The Kitan name of this river thus appears to literally mean 'Eternal River', and partially corresponds semantically to the literal meaning of its Chinese name.

Chinggeltei et al. (1985) suggested that the word 𠂔𠂔 denotes 'crow' or 'bird'. This proposal is based on a passage in the Xuanyi inscription which they suggested corresponds to the Chinese phrase 金烏西下，玉兔東昇 'the gold crow sets in the west, the jade hare rises in the east' (cf. Chinggeltei 2002, p. 41, §76; Kane 2009); however, this phrase does not appear in the Chinese text of the Xuanyi inscription, and in the relevant passage in which this word occurs in the Kitan text, the well-known Kitan graphemes for 'west' and 'east' make no appearance. In fact, little of this passage has been deciphered, aside from the word 'jade hare', the word for 'golden' or 'yellow', the high-frequency negative marker \*gi, and two converb suffixes, \*-i and \*-Awr (or segments homophonous to these converb suffixes):

𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔	𠂔𠂔
<g.u>	<tau.li.a>	<gi>	<?.i>	<?>	<γ.oy>	<k.s.ge.l>	<iu.m.ÿê>	<t.m.d.Awr>	
*gu	*tawlya	*gi	*...-i	*...	*ᠭᠤᠨ	*ksgəl	*iwmye	*tmd-əwr	
jade	hare	NEG	?-CVB(?)	golden/yellow	?	?	?	?-CVB(?)	

'The jade hare did not... and the golden/yellow ... .. and then...' (*Xuan* 29:9–17).

Although the phrase \*gu \*tawlya in this passage probably does mean 'jade hare', and despite the widespread acceptance of Chinggeltei et al.'s proposal, the specific meaning of 𠂔𠂔 in this particular passage is unclear, and it is unlikely that this Kitan passage corresponds to the Chinese phrase proposed by Chinggeltei et al. (1985).

The word 𠂔𠂔 is attested in a few other texts, e.g. in the *Xiao Dilu* inscription, in the sequence 主 𠂔𠂔 𠂔𠂔 (*XDi* 7:22–23), which is a genitive case form composed of 主 𠂔𠂔 <γong> <γ.oy> + 𠂔𠂔 <eñ> 'genitive case suffix'. As shown by Oyuunch–Janhunee (2010, p. 73), this 主, which I transcribe as <γong> and read as \*ᠭᠤᠨ, is a transcription of a Chinese syllable read *huang* in Modern Standard Chinese. This \*ᠭᠤᠨ \*ᠭᠤᠨ 主 𠂔𠂔 <γong> <γ.oy> is possibly a rendering of the Kitan name of the 潢水 Huang River, a major tributary of the Liao River, near the Kitan homeland. The sequence \*ᠭᠤᠨ \*ᠭᠤᠨ 主 𠂔𠂔 also appears in the *Yelü Jue muzhiming* 耶律玠墓誌銘 inscription (*YJue* 21:44–45). Another occurrence of the grapheme sequence 𠂔𠂔 is in the *Yelü Xiangwen muzhi* 耶律詳穩墓誌 inscription (*YXiang* 46:3), although the meaning is not clear.

Despite the ambiguity of these attestations, I believe I have established the meaning of 𠂔𠂔 as 'river' based on the very straightforward correspondence with the Chinese river name Changqing, as discussed above. I have found no unequivocal evidence for the putative 'crow' ~ 'bird' value of this grapheme sequence, despite its widespread acceptance in the Kitanological literature, although we should not rule out the possibility of homophonous words rendered by the same sequence of graphemes as 𠂔𠂔 'river'.



The word \*twiwr 令夾友安 <t.ui.uw.wr> is attested only one other time in the Kitan Assembled Script texts which were available to me at the time of writing this paper, in the form \*twiwr-ər 令夾友安𠂇 <t.ui.uw.wr.ər>, in which \*twiwr 令夾友安 <t.ui.uw.wr> seems to be a noun of unknown semantic value, with \*-ər 𠂇 <.ər> ‘accusative-instrumental-comitative suffix’. Not much more can be said, although the phonological form of this word is quite interesting, and seems to provide evidence of a \*tw sequence. Consonant + /w/ glide sequences are also attested for the related Serbi language of the Tuyuhun or ‘Azha’ (cf. Shimunek 2017, pp. 183, 184, 193).

The word 𠂇 denotes ‘tomb’ (Kane 2009, p. 36, §2.006; Oyuunch–Janhun 2010, p. 116).

The word form \*šur 𠂇安 <š.ur> probably denotes ‘coffin’. This meaning is evident in the the *Xiao Huilian muzhiming* 蕭回璉墓誌銘 inscription (*XHui* 12:27–32), the *Daozong huangdi aice* 道宗皇帝哀冊 inscription (*Dao* 5:29–30), and in the *Song Wei guofei muzhiming* 宋魏國妃墓誌銘 inscription (*Song* 6:1–7).<sup>21</sup> Middle Kitan \*u regularly corresponds to both Middle Mongol *ō* and *ū*, and Middle Kitan \*š corresponds to Middle Mongol *s* (Shimunek 2017, p. 371). Middle Kitan \*šur ‘coffin’ thus phonologically resembles modern Written Mongol *sūr* ‘splendor, grandeur, magnificence, majesty’ and *sör* ‘support, stand, trestle (e.g. for dried grass or for grapes)’ ~ *sörü* ‘treillis ...; hangar couvert de chaume; s. modun juniper’ (Kow. II 1435b), but a connection, if any, remains to be determined. Neither of these modern Written Mongol words are attested in Middle Mongol sources.

The word form 令生𠂇伏 <t.Abu.AL.ñ> is probably a verb cognate to Written Mongol *talbi-* ‘to place, set down’ with \*-ñ 伏 <.ñ> as an imperfective converb or past tense or perfective verbal noun. Since the verb stem 令生𠂇 <t.Abu.AL> ‘place, set down’ appears elsewhere with the causative-passive suffix \*-ka- clearly indicating [-ATR] vowel harmony, this verbal root should probably be read \*tabul- or \*tabwal-, suggesting that the grapheme 𠂇 denotes <ebu> ~ <abu> ~ <bu> depending on phonological context.<sup>22</sup>

The specific semantic value of the verbal suffix \*-ñ 伏 <.ñ> ~ \*-əñ 𠂇 <.eñ> is not clear. It appears appended to several well attested verbs, e.g. \*kuyr- ‘arrive’ in the form \*kuyr-əñ 𠂇夾化𠂇 <k.ui.ir.eñ> (*XHui* 24:1), \*tgə- ‘die’ in the form 令𠂇𠂇 <t.ge.eñ> (*XHu* 15:35), \*man- ‘hunt’ as 𠂇出𠂇 <m.an.eñ> (*YJue* 41:14, 6:35; *YPu* 19:2, 6:18; *XHui* 12:25), \*...- ‘manage’ as 𠂇伏 <?.ñ> (*YJue* 11:16), \*ǰu- ‘close (e.g. a tomb)’ as \*ǰu-ñ 𠂇子伏 <o.ǰu.ñ> ~ 𠂇子𠂇 <o.ǰu.eñ> (*XHui* 10:6; *YJue* 4:52, 16:48, 3:14; *YPu* 2:29), and numerous other semantically undeciphered verbs. Superficially, this suffix resembles, and is possibly cognate to, Middle Mongol *-n* ‘imperfective converb suffix’.<sup>23</sup> In some other instances this same \*-ñ ~ \*-əñ suffix, or a homophonous suffix, appears to indicate a finite past or perfective verbal noun. More work is necessary to determine the specific semantic value of this \*-ñ ~ \*-əñ suffix or suffixes.

<sup>21</sup> Liu et al. (2009, p. 269) gloss 𠂇安 here as ‘temporarily (權)’ and 令生𠂇𠂇 as ‘place a coffin in a temporary shelter pending burial (厝)’.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Oyuunch and Janhun 2010’s proposal to read this grapheme as <ebu> (Oyuunch–Janhun 2010, p. 154).

<sup>23</sup> As demonstrated by Brosig (2014), Middle Mongol *-n* is a ‘imperfective converb suffix’.

## [K5:18–K6:4]

天	本升及圪	尤安	𠂇	𠂇	艾	丁	包	𠂇
⟨heaven⟩	⟨ar.u.o.oy⟩	⟨ud.ur⟩	⟨ai⟩	⟨six⟩	⟨month⟩	⟨twenty⟩	⟨γur⟩	⟨day⟩
*...	*aruḡ	*udur	*ay	*...	*sayr(?)	*juri	*gur	*ñayr
heaven	assistance	first	year	six	month	twenty	three	day
𠂇	捺	𠂇及困	𠂇生𠂇			力𠂇𠂇𠂇出		
⟨eternal⟩	⟨qutug⟩	⟨γ.o.ʔ⟩	⟨qa.Abu.ʔ⟩			⟨na.as.γa.a.an⟩		
*...	*qutuq	*ḡo...	*qabu (*qa *əbu ʔ)-...			*nas-ḡa-n		
eternal	fortune	?	imperial.ancestors-SUFF(?)			lower-CP-PST <sup>⊕</sup>		

‘In the first year of the Heavenly Assistance reign period, in the sixth month, on the twenty-third day, she was caused to be lowered among [her] imperial ancestors in the Eternal Fortune Tomb.’

𠂇	𠂇圪𠂇𠂇	𠂇安𠂇𠂇	
⟨ritual⟩	⟨k.Awr.uw.j⟩	⟨uw.ur.uw.en⟩	
*...	*kəwru-j	*uruw-ən (?)	
ritual	say-CVB	enter(?) -PST <sup>⊕</sup>	

‘Rituals were said, and [her body] entered [the tomb].’

## [C4:17–C6:7]

即以乾統元年歲次辛巳六月庚寅朔二十三日王子將遷座於永福陵禮也

‘In the first year of the Qiantong period, the year was *xinsi*, the sixth month, *gengyin*, the new moon, on the twenty-third day, *renzi*, she was reburied in the Yongfu Tomb with the appropriate rituals.’

The reign period 天 本升及圪 ‘Heavenly Assistance’ is composed of 天 ‘heaven’ and \*aru-ḡ 本升及圪, from \*aru- ‘assist’ with \*-ḡ ‘deverbal noun suffix’.<sup>24</sup>

Róna-Tas (2016) reads the grapheme 丁 ‘twenty’ as \*jūri, which I revise to \*juri ‘twenty’.

The grapheme 𠂇 probably renders a suffix, the precise semantic and phonological value of which remains to be determined.

The Kitan verb \*nasḡa- 力𠂇𠂇 corresponds to 遷座 ‘be reburied’ in the Chinese text, and is probably cognate to modern Written Mongol *namusqa-* ‘to lower, to cause to be lowered’, the causative of the verb *namus-* ‘to be low’. Although this word is not attested in Middle Mongol, its semantics and phonology match the Kitan verb well.

<sup>24</sup> See Shimunek (2017, pp. 421–422). See Kane’s (2009) treatment of Kitan reign period names.

The root and converb suffix of the word \*kəwruw-ʝ 収北穴狗 are probably cognate to Written Mongol *kemegdejü*,<sup>25</sup> although there may be a suffix \*-ruw- or \*-uw- (or a sequence of affixes) of unknown semantic value.

This Kitan sequence may mean something like ‘She entered [the tomb] with the rituals being said’. The last word in this section, \*uwuruw-ən 及安穴当, is a verb with the feminine past verbal noun suffix \*-ən 当, suggesting that the subject of the verb is feminine – it must be Empress Xuanyi. One may entertain a possible cognate in Written Mongol *oro-* ‘enter’, although this poses phonological problems. The word \*uwuruw- brings up the interesting question of rounded vowels and their orthographic representation in Kitan Assembled Script. This question remains to be addressed by Kitan scholarship. Many questions remain in the decipherment and linguistic reconstruction of this and many other Kitan texts.

### 3. Middle Kitan–English Glossary

#### *Semantically and Phonologically Deciphered Grammatical Morphemes*

- \*-an 出 ‘feminine past tense verbal noun suffix’.
- \*-Awr 北 <.Awr> ‘converb suffix (perfective?)’.<sup>26</sup>
- \*-bəñ 中 <.beñ> ‘past or perfective verbal noun suffix’.
- \*-də 矢 <.de> ‘dative-locative suffix’ < CSM.
- \*-ən 和 <.en> ‘genitive-attributive suffix allomorph’ < CSM.
- \*-ən 当 <.en> ‘feminine past tense verbal noun suffix’ < CSM.
- \*-əñ 及 <.eñ> ‘genitive-attributive suffix’ < CSM.
- \*-əñ 及 <.eñ> ‘verbal suffix’ (converb or past tense?).
- \*-i 关 <.i> ‘genitive-attributive suffix allomorph’ < CSM.
- \*-i 关 <.i> ‘lexicalised locative suffix (?)’.
- \*-ʝ 狗 <.ʝ> ‘converb suffix’ < CSM.
- \*-n 公 <.n> ‘genitive-attributive suffix allomorph’ < CSM.
- \*-ñ 伏 <.ñ> ‘verbal suffix’ (converb or past tense?).
- \*-r 突 <.er> ~ 本 <.ar> ~ 仝 <.or> ~ 刃 <.r> ‘masculine past tense verbal noun suffix’ < CSM.
- \*-un 安 <.un> ‘genitive-attributive suffix’ < CSM.

#### *Semantically and Phonologically Deciphered Words and Phrases*

- \*ay 年 <.ai> ‘year’.
- \*aru 本井及北 <.ar.u.o.oy> ‘assistance’ < \*aru- ‘assist’<sup>27</sup> + \*-ʝ ‘deverbal noun suffix’.

<sup>25</sup> See Oyuunch–Janhunen (2010, p. 69) for a similar proposal.

<sup>26</sup> See Shimunek (2017, pp. 422–423) for the reading of this grapheme.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. LKit \*aru- as in \*aru-βəñ/\*aru-βən [阿魯盪] ‘assistance (輔佑)’ (LS 116, p. 1545; Shimunek, 2017, p. 422).

- \*čaywun 未安 未安 <č.ai> <w.un> ‘text’ ← OMan. 冊文 ‘id.’.
- \*čgən 未几 未 <č.g.en> ‘left’ < CSM.
- \*əwr 未卡 <eu.r> ‘eternal, long-lasting (長)’ < CSM > PMgl > MMgl *e’üri ~ e’üre* ‘eternal’.
- \*ema 圣为 <em.a> ‘goat’ < CSM > PMgl > MMgl *ima’a-n* ‘goat’.
- \*gənəñ 几未 <g.en.ən> ‘mourning, grieving (哀)’ < \*gən- 几未 ‘mourn, grieve’ (cognate to WMgl *γuni-* ‘be sad, melancholy’?) + \*-əñ 未 ‘verbal suffix’ (converb or past tense?).
- \*gəmgyaw 几圣 几考 <g.əm> <g.iau> ‘acting (of an official position)’ ← OMan. 檢校.
- \*guytsitsiw 几火 伞咨 伞关 伞丙 <g.ui> <ts.i> <ts.i> <ts.iu> ‘Chancellor of the National University’ ← OMan. 國子祭酒.
- \*gəl- 几尔 <γo.l> ‘see, observe’.
- \*gəb 几尔 <γ.oy> ‘river (川)’ < CSM > PMgl > MMgl *qoroqan* ‘rivulet’ (with *-qan* ‘diminutive suffix’).
- \*gur 包 <γur> ‘three’ < CSM > PMgl > MMgl *qurba-n* ‘three’.
- \*juri 丁 <juri> ‘twenty’.<sup>28</sup>
- \*kəm 取企 <k.em> ‘edict’ < CSM > PMgl > MMgl *kem* ‘limit’.
- \*kəwruwǝ 取比穴灼 <k.Awr.uw.j> ‘being said’.<sup>29</sup>
- \*ku 几 <ku> ‘person’ < CSM > PMgl > MMgl *gü’ü* ‘person’.
- \*liwr- 几丙刃 <l.iu.r> ‘pass away (of an emperor or empress) (崩)’.
- \*mas 毛 <mas> ‘one’.
- \*nadbud 公东生空 <n.ad.°bu.d> ‘moving tent palace’.
- \*naska- 力冬圭为 <na.as.γa.> ‘cause to be lowered’ < CSM > ? PMgl > WMgl *namusqa-* ‘to lower, cause to be lowered’.
- \*nəwə 穴旁 <nou.e> ‘earth’ < ? CSM > PMgl > MMgl *noqo’an* ‘green’.
- \*ñayr 日 <ñayr> ‘day’ < CSM > PMgl > MMgl *nara-n* ‘sun’.
- \*ñinsinčauñludaypu 安雨 伞用 雨半 伞久 久半 伞 <ng.in> <s.ing> <čau.ung> <l.u> <da.ai> <pu> ‘Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments’ ← OMan. 銀青崇祿大夫.
- \*ñüqentunǝsin 安央 艾芳 令火 伞雨 <ng.ü> <ÿê.ên> <t.ung> <ts.in> ‘Ceremonial Receptionist’ ← OMan. 御院通進.
- \*omo 阿 <omo> ‘mother’ < CSM > PMgl > MMgl *eme* ‘woman, female’.
- \*par 七 <par> ‘ten’.<sup>30</sup> < CSM > PMgl > MMgl *harba-n* ‘ten’.
- \*puwku 出友几 <pu.uw.ku> ‘official’ ← OMan. 僕 ‘servant’ + MKit \*ku ‘person’ (< CSM).
- \*qa \*əbu / \*qabu (?) 圭生 <qa.Abu> ‘ancestors’, a compound composed of \*qa 圭 <qa> ‘emperor’ (< CSM) and \*əbu 圭 <ebu><sup>31</sup> ‘forefather, old man’ (< CSM).
- \*quru 里今 <qur.u> ‘controller’.

<sup>28</sup> This is my revision of Róna-Tas (2016).

<sup>29</sup> See Oyuunch–Janhunén (2010) for a similar proposal.

<sup>30</sup> This is my revision of Róna-Tas (2016).

<sup>31</sup> Oyuunch and Janhunén (2010, p. 154) read the grapheme 圭 as <ebu>.





- \*... 𠂔 <?> ‘six’.
- \*... 𠂔 <?> ‘tomb’.
- \*... 𠂔 <?> ‘rites, rituals’.
- \*...- 𠂔 <?> ‘compose’.
- \*...- 𠂔 <?o> ‘present to a superior, receive from a superior (奉)’.
- \*...- 𠂔 <?> ‘manage’.
- \*...g 𠂔 <?g> ‘writing’.
- \*... 𠂔 <?> ‘heaven’.
- \*...d 𠂔 <d> ‘ancestors, superiors, upper ones’ (cf. Kane 2009).

### **Fully Undeciphered Words or Morphemes**

- \*... 𠂔 <?>.

### **Onomastic Data**

- \*gu 𠂔 <g.u<sup>w</sup>.u> ‘Gu (personal name)’.
- \*sqeni 𠂔 <s.ÿê.n> <i.i> ‘Xuanyi’.
- \*yarud 𠂔 <y.ar.uw.ud> ‘Yelü (Kitan imperial clan name)’ < \*yar 𠂔  
‘imperial clan name’ + \*-ud 𠂔 ‘plural suffix for people’.<sup>36</sup>

## **Sigla and Abbreviations**

### **Sigla for Kitan Assembled Script Texts**

- 1101 *Dao* *Daozong huangdi aice* 道宗皇帝哀冊 (Chinggeltei 2002).
- 1115 *Gu* *Gu Yelü shi mingshi* 故耶律氏銘石 (Chinggeltei 2002).
- 1053 *Jiao* *Yelü Zongjiao muzhiming* 耶律宗教墓誌銘 (Liu et al. 2009).
- 1134 *Lang* *Da Jin huangdi dutong jinglüe langjun xingji* 大金皇帝都統經略郎君行記 (Chinggeltei 2002).
- 1076 *Renyi* *Renyi huanghou aice* 仁懿皇后哀冊 (Chinggeltei 2002).
- 1110 *Song* *Song Wei guofei muzhiming* 宋魏國妃墓誌銘 (Liu et al. 2009).
- 1114 *XDi* *Xiao Dilu fushi muzhi* 蕭敵魯副使墓誌 (Oyuunch – Janhunen 2010).
- 1091 *XHu* *Xiao Hudujin muzhiming* 蕭胡睹墓誌銘 (Oyuunch 2012).
- 1080 *XHui* *Xiao Huilian muzhiming* 蕭回璉墓誌銘 (Oyuunch 2012).
- 1055 *Xing* *Xingzong huangdi aice* 興宗皇帝哀冊 (Chinggeltei 2002).
- 1105 *Xu* *Xuwang muzhi* 許王墓誌 (Chinggeltei 2002).
- 1101 *Xuan* *Xuanyi huanghou aice* 宣懿皇后哀冊 (Chinggeltei 2002).
- 1071 *YJue* *Yelü Jue muzhi* 耶律玠墓誌銘 (Oyuunch – Janhunen 2010).
- 1105 *YPu* *Yelü Pusuli muzhi beiming* 耶律蒲速里墓誌碑銘 (Oyuunch 2012).

<sup>36</sup> See Shimunek (2017, pp. 67, 198) for this imperial clan name in Kitan Assembled Script and in Persian, Old Mandarin, and Middle Chinese transcription.

- 1091 *YXiang Yelü Xiangwen muzhiming* 耶律詳穩墓誌 (Oyuunch – Janhunen 2010).  
 1150 *Zhong Xiao Zhonggong muzhi* 蕭仲恭墓誌 (Chinggeltei 2002).

### ***Sigla for Chinese Texts***

LS Tuotuo 脫脫 [Toqto'a]. *Liao Shi* 遼史. Peking, Zhonghua Shuju, 1974.

### ***Sigla for Middle Mongol Texts***

HYYY *Hua-Yi yiyu* 華夷譯語. 14th century (Kuribayashi 2003).  
 SHM *Mongqol-un niuča to[b]ča'an* (*Secret History of the Mongols*). 13th century (Kuribayashi 2009).

## **General Abbreviations and Transcription Conventions**

COM	comitative
CP	causative-passive
CSM	Common Serbi-Mongolic
CVB	converb
DL	dative-locative
GEN	genitive
Kow.	Kowalewski (1964)
LKit	Late Kitan
LOC	locative
MKit	Middle Kitan
MMgl	Middle Mongol
NEG	negative
OMan.	Old Mandarin
PERS.N	personal name
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PMgl	Proto-Mongolic
PST	past
SUBJ	subject
SUFF	suffix (of unknown semantic value)
VN	verbal noun
♂	masculine
♀	feminine
<	language-internal change
←	borrowing between different languages or dialects
*	linguistic reconstruction
< >	graphemic transcription
-	morpheme boundary
.	grapheme boundary

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