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ARTICLE

Confucius in Yenisei inscriptions

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Abstract

This article presents additional data to better understand the history of intercultural communication between the Yenisei people and the Han Chinese. Although the mysterious history and isolated culture of the ancient Kirghiz (Chinese Xiajiasi 黠戛斯) tribes at the Yenisei River Basin are little known to the world, ancient Chinese books and the artefacts with Chinese characters, unearthed in the Yenisei region, present a vivid picture of the Yenisei people's foreign exchange history. This article approaches the Yenisei–Chinese cultural interaction from the perspective of the Yenisei Turk-Runic language and the date of the E77 inscription. The research material for this study is the E77 Yenisei inscription that is engraved on a Tang Dynasty bronze mirror called the Sanlejing 三樂鏡 (Lobed Mirror of Three Delights). The authors' interpretations of the local Runic language on the E77 Yenisei inscription reveal Yenisei people's knowledge about the Chinese iconic figure of Confucius, which blends into the Tibetan Bon religion as *Kong tse* or *Kong tshe*. Therefore, this article confirms the culture contact between the Yenisei and Han Chinese people during the Tang Dynasty.

Keywords: Confucius; *künsim*; Lobed Mirror of Three Delights; Runic; Yenisei inscriptions

Introduction

The ancient Kirghiz (Chinese Xiajiasi 黠戛斯) tribes of the Yenisei River Basin lived in the interior of Eurasia and their mysterious history and culture are little known to the outside world.[1] Nonetheless, rare ancient Chinese books[2] and artefacts with Chinese characters that were unearthed in the local Yenisei region[3] show a vivid picture of the foreign exchange history of the Yenisei people. What about the local language materials in the Yenisei region?

[1] See mainly P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East* (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 176–183; M. R. Drompp, 'The Yenisei Kyrgyz from early times to the Mongol conquest', in *The Turks 1: Early Ages*, (eds.) Hasan Celâl Güzel et al. (Ankara, 2002), pp. 480–488; M. R. Drompp, 'Breaking the Orkhon tradition: Kirghiz adherence to the Yenisei region after A. D. 840′, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119.3 (1999), pp. 390–403; M. R. Drompp, 'Five notes on the Yenisei Kirghiz in the Early Middle Ages', in *Language, Society, and Religion in the World of the Turks: Festschrift for Larry Clark at Seventy-Five*, (ed.) Zsuzsanna Gulácsi (Turnhout, 2018), pp. 140–163.

[2] Drompp, 'Five notes on the Yenisei Kirghiz', pp. 140–147; for correspondence of the government of Tang Dynasty to the Khaghan of Kirghiz, see M. R. Drompp, *The Writings of Li Te-Yu as Sources for the History of T'ang Inner Asian Relations* (Ann Arbor, 1986), pp. 275–296, 301–309, 319–326.

[3] There are too many related studies to list here; see mainly Masumoto Tetsu 枡本哲, 'Minami siberia abakan kinkō hakken no gyokusakuhen ni tsuite' 南シベリアアバカン近郊発見の玉冊片について [On jade book fragments found near Abakan, South Siberia], in *Ōsakafu maisō bunkazai kyōkai kenkyū kiyō: Setsuritsu jyū syūnen kinen ronsyū* 大阪府埋葬文化財協会研究紀要—设立 10 周年記念論集— [*Osaka Prefectural Burial Culture Heritage Association Research Minutes: Festschrift for Tenth Anniversary*], (ed.) Ōsakafu maisō bunkazai kyōkai

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The purpose of this article is to better understand the Yenisei people's foreign exchange by using the Yenisei inscriptions that were unearthed from the Yenisei region and written in the local Turk-Runic language as the research material.

Over 150 Yenisei inscriptions, including steles, cliffs, and utensils engraved in Turk-Runic language, were found in the upper reaches of Yenisei River. They are historical and cultural relics of the Kyrgyz Khaghanate (about the eighth to eleventh centuries?). Compared with the significant Orkhon inscriptions, which are known for their large inscriptions of the Turkic Khaghanate and the Old Uyghur Khaghanate, Yenisei inscriptions are irregularly engraved, short, and have different expression paradigms. Also, some Turk-Runic letters differed from the conventional Turk-Runic language form, and polyphony also existed. These factors make the Yenisei inscriptions much more difficult to decipher than the Orkhon inscriptions. Specifically, this study uses the local Turk-Runic language inscription that was found in the local Yenisei area as the data.

Interpretations of the E77 Yenisei inscription

The interpretations of the E77 Yenisei inscription are based on the engravings on the left half of a fragment of a Tang-Dynasty bronze mirror called the Sanlejing 三樂鏡 (Lobed Mirror of Three Delights). The mirror, about 12.7 centimetres in diameter, was found in the Minusinsk Basin and is held by the Minusinsk Museum (holding number MKMA 5194).[4] The mirror is inscribed in relief at the upper end with three lines of nine Chinese characters: Rongqiqi 榮啟奇, wenyueda 問曰答, and Kongfuzi 孔夫子 (Rong Qiqi is questioned by and responds to Confucius). At the lower left of the Chinese inscription is a standing figure of Confucius, holding a staff. The Turk-Runic is inscribed along the circumference of the mirror from right to left—from the foot of the figure of Confucius to the Chinese character Kong 孔, including two pause signs ':', containing 18 words and signs. However, the inscription on E77 is shallowly carved and partially smoothed. On the reverse of the mirror is the inscription 'J. R. RYDBERGS. GALVANSTALT STOCKHOLM', which is probably a label from a previous owner/collector.

The rest of this research article is a detailed discussion of the Turk-Runic text that is engraved on the bronze mirror, starting with a review of earlier studies of that text. As there is no unified worldwide standard in scholarship regarding the transliteration and transcription patterns of Turk-Runic, the authors of this article abide by the table of transliteration and transcription symbols provided by Bai Yudong 白玉冬 and transliterate them from left

大阪府埋葬文化財協会 (Osaka, 1995), vol. 3, pp. 343–362; Tetsu Masumoto 枡本哲 [Тэцу Масумото], 'O fragmentah mramornyh tablichk s ieroglifami, naidennyh v okrestnostyah goroda Abakana v Yuzhnoi Sibiri', О фрагментах мраморных табличек с иероглифами, найденных в окрестностях города Абакана в Южной Сибири [Fragments of a marble inscription with hieroglyphics found near the Abakan in southern Siberia], in *antropologiya i etnografiya Sibiri(Sbornik posvyascennyi pamyati antropologa A. R. Kima)* антропология и этнография Сибири(Сборник посвященный памяти антрополога А. Р. Кима) [*Siberian Anthropology and Ethnography (Anthropologist A.P. Kima Memorial Anthology)*], (ed.) Archaeology Археология (Barnaul, 1996), pp. 207–220; Sun Hao 孫昊, 'Zongfan yuce: jiu shiji Tang yu Xiajiasi jiaotong de yige cemian' 宗蕃玉冊: 9 世紀唐與黠戛斯交通的一個側面 [The jade book of Zongfan: an aspect of the ninth century traffic between Tang and Kirghiz], in *Chunshan Kewang-Lishi Kaogu Qingnian Lunji* 春山可望—歷史考古青年論集 [*The Spring Mountains Can Be Expected: The Conference Proceeding of Historical Archaeology Young People*], (ed.) Zhao Junjie趙俊杰 (Shanghai, 2021), vol. 3, pp. 185–198.

[4] Related introduction, according to D. D. Vasilyev Д. Д. Васильев, *Korpus tyurkskih runichskih pamyatnikov basseina Eniseya* Корпус тюркских рунических памятников бассейна Енисея [*Compilation of Turkic Rune Inscriptions in the Yenisei River Basin*] (Leningrad, 1983), p. 38; TURK BITIG of Kazakhstan, https://bitig.kz/?mod=1&tid=2&oid=63&lang=e (accessed 18 May 2023); E. I. Lubo-Lesnichenko Е. И. Лубо-Лесниченко, *Privoznye zerkala Minusinskoi kotloviny* Привозные зеркала Минусинской котловины [*Exotic Mirrors Found in the Minusinsk Basin*] (Moscow, 1975), pp. 56–57.

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to right.[5] Bai's transliteration and transcription principle is commonly accepted practice and has been followed by other scholars when conducting their research.[6]

A picture of E77 was first published in 1889 in the archaeological survey report of the Archaeological Society of Finland on Yenisei inscriptions.[7] The Russian scholar W. Radloff[8] was the first researcher to provide his milestone interpretations in 1894. He transliterated it as *r ŋ Q s t ü s k: k ü z k m: ü z k* (in Old Turkic), transcribed it as *är angqas-töšäk küzküm üzüki* (in Old Turkic), and translated it into German as 'Der Mann Angkas-Töschäk, ein Stück meines Spiegels', which in English means 'The man *Angkas-Töschäk*, a mirror of mine'. Forty-three years later, the Turkish scholar H. N. Orkun[9] cited W. Radloff's interpretation in his study with no changes. Later, in 1983, in his collected works on the study of Yenisei inscriptions, the Soviet scholar D. D. Vasilyev[10] transliterated the E77 as *r t ŋ(s)t ü k m s k ü n k m: ü z k* (in Old Turkic) and provided a picture and copying of it. His transliteration differs greatly from that of W. Radloff.

In 2013, the Turkish scholar E. Aydin et al.[11] provided a copy of the text (which was transliterated as *r t ŋ t ü k m s k ü z ŋ m: ü z k* in Old Turkic by the authors of this article[12]). The text was transcribed as *er <atim> teŋ tükemiš közŋüm üzk* (in Old Turkic) and translated as 'Erkeklik adim Teng Tükemiš(tir). Aynam<...>' (in Turkish), meaning 'My adult name (is) *Teng Tükemiš*. My mirror .....'. The copy from E. Aydin et al. differs from the transliterations by W. Radloff and by D. D. Vasilyev. In 2005, the Kazakhstan Cultural Heritage, which is part of the Kazakhstan government programme, created the website TURK BITIG of Kazakhstan, which also has the recording, transliterated by the authors of this article as *.r.t.:t ü k ü m:k ü n k m:ü z ü k...* (in Old Turkic) and transcribed as *...er. ti. ŋ .. s .. tüküm künküm: özük* (in Old Turkic). The website also suggests that the writing in the mirror seems to be a personal name. However, its copying (the transliteration is *r t l s t ü k m k ü n k m ü z*, by the authors of this article) does not match the recording.[13] The Minusinsk Museum, which was mentioned above and has a good collection of stone sculptures of Yenisei peoples, also provides a recording of E77 (the transliteration is *r t ŋ t ü k m: k ü n/z k m: ü z/n k* in Old Turkic by the authors of this article). For over a century, scholars who worked on the E77 have formed different opinions on the interpretation of it and there has been no consensus so far, leaving room for further study.

To be specific, the interpretations by the authors of this article are based on the picture and the copying that were published by D. D. Vasilyev (see Figures 1 and 2) and the picture and copying on the websites of Kazakhstan (see Figures 3, 4, and 5). The authors also refer

[5] See a legend of Bai Yudong 白玉冬, *Laoshan Jianshui: luniwen Yenisai beiming yizhu* 牢山劍水: 魯尼文葉尼塞碑銘譯註 [*The Lao-Mountain and the Jian-River: The Runic Inscriptions of Yenisei in a New Translation and Commentary*] (Shanghai, 2021), pp. 2–4.

[6] Bai Yudong 白玉冬 and Che Juanjuan 車娟娟, 'Sogdian elements in Yenisei inscriptions', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 4 (2022), pp. 593–607; Che Juanjuan车娟娟, 'Tangdai xiajiasi hanguo shi yanjiu' 唐代黠戛斯汗國史研究——以葉尼塞碑銘為核心 [A Study on the History of the Kirghiz Khanate in the Tang Dynasty—Centring on Yenisei Inscriptions] (unpublished PhD dissertation, Lanzhou University, 2023).

[7] See J. R. Aspelin, *Inscriptions de l'Iénissei, Récueillies et publiées par la Société Finlandaise d'Archeologie* (Helsingfors, 1889), Fig. XXXIX.

[8] W. Radloff, 'Inschriften auf verschiedenen aus Metall gefertigten Altarthümern', *Die alttürkischen Inscriften der Mongolei* (St. Petersburg, 1895), vol. 3, p. 346.

[9] H. N. Orkun, 'Iki ayna yaziti' [Two mirror inscriptions], *Eski Türk yazîtlari* [*Old Turkic Inscriptions*] (Istanbul, 1938), vol. 3, p. 171.

[10] Vasilyev, *Korpus tyurkskih runichskih pamyatnikov basseina Eniseya*, pp. 38, 73, 115.

[11] E. Aydin et al., *Yenisey-Kırgızistan Yazıtları ve Irk Bitig* [*Yenisei, Kirghizistan Inscriptions and the Irk Bitig*] (Ankara, 2013), pp. 165–166.

[12] Due to the organisation of this article, the Runic recording has been omitted and replaced by transliteration.

[13] https://bitig.kz/?mod=1&tid=2&oid=63&lang=e (accessed 18 May 2023).

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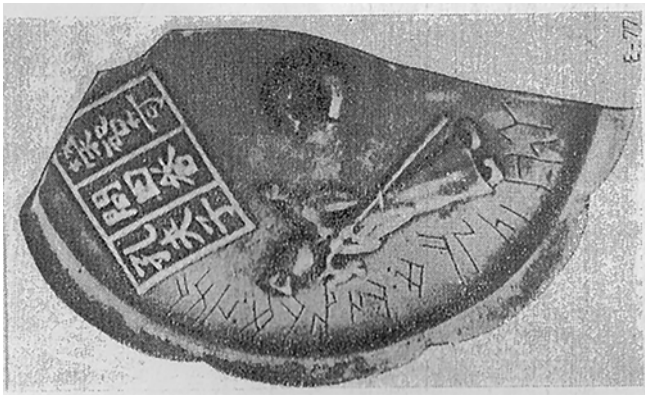


Figure 1. E77. Source: D. D. Vasilyev Д. Д. Васильев, *Korpus tyurkskih runichskih pamyatnikov basseina Eniseya Корпус тюркских рунических памятников бассейна Енисея* [*Compilation of Turkic Rune Inscriptions in the Yenisei River Basin*], p. 115.

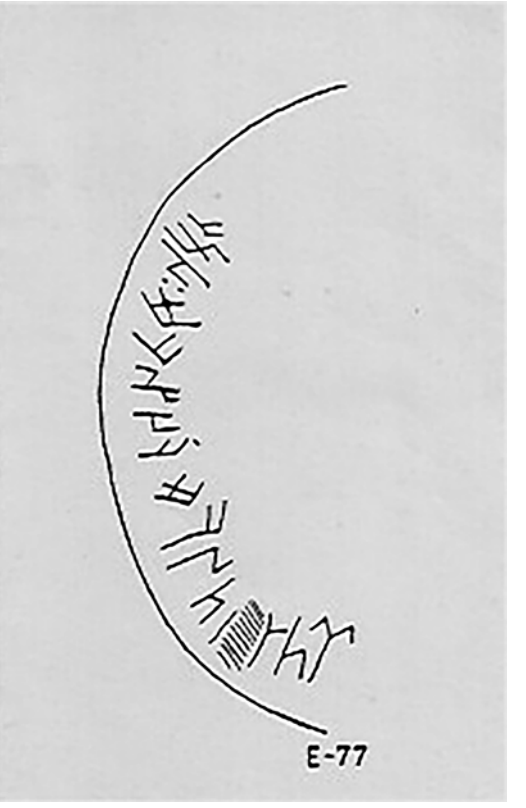


Figure 2. E77. Source: D. D. Vasilyev Д. Д. Васильев, *Korpus tyurkskih runichskih pamyatnikov basseina Eniseya Корпус тюркских рунических памятников бассейна Енисея* [*Compilation of Turkic Rune Inscriptions in the Yenisei River Basin*], p. 73.

to the pictures of the E77 that are displayed in the Minusinsk Museum, taken by Professor Li Xiao 李肖 of Renmin University of China in 2018.

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Figure 3. E77. Source: The website TURK BITIG of Kazakhstan, https://bitig.kz.

Transliteration (in Old Turkic): r t ŋ s t ü k m: k ü n S m: ü z k

Transcription (in Old Turkic): är tängäštüküm: künsim: üžük

Word-to-word translation: Man equal to each other (adjective verb affixes in the past tense of verbs + first-person affixes) Confucius (first-person affixes) character

Semantic translation: The men's talisman that belongs to me! My Confucius! The character.

In this part of the article, the authors provide a detailed critique of the above-mentioned scholars' copying, transliteration, and translation of the 16 Turk-Runic letters. The first is W. Radloff's transliteration of *ŋ Q s t ü s k* as *t ŋ s t ü k m*>*tängäštüküm* (The objects of blessing): it is at great odds with the picture, so it will not be discussed here. Second, D. D. Vasilyev and E. Aydin believe that the final letter 'm' should be followed by 's', so E. Aydin's transcription is *teŋ tükemiš* and he regards it as a personal name. However, judging from the pictures in this article, the 's' is followed by the pause sign ':' and therefore the authors of this article do not agree with E. Aydin. The second letter is also more likely to be a variant writing of 'ŋ', as seen in Yenisei inscriptions, than the 'l' recovered from the TURK BITIG website copying (see Figure 5). The verb *tängäš-* comes from the adjective *täng*, meaning 'equal', and is a reciprocal or common form of the verb *tängä-* 'to remain equal' in the sense of being equal or to be equal together.[14] Moreover, *-tük-* is a past-tense affix of the verb, acting as a termination form or adjective verb.

The construction of the word *tängäštüküm* also appears in the second stele of the Toñukuk inscription, which was found in Nalaikh, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The third line on

[14] For *täng*, see G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), p. 511; For *tängäš-*, see *ibid*, p. 526.

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Figure 4. E77. Source: The website TURK BITIG of Kazakhstan, https://bitig.kz.

the north of the second stele of the Toñukuk inscription (erected *circa* 716?) in the Second Turkic Khaghanate said that *i l r s Q G N: b i l g a T W ñ uQ uQ: Q z G nt uQ ü č n: Q p G N Q G N: t ü r ük s i r B W D N: Y W R i D uQ i B W* >*eltäriš qaγan bilgä toñuquq qazγantuq üčün qapγan qaγan türk sir bodun yorïduqï bu* 'Since the efforts of *Eltäriš Qaγan* and *Bilgä Toñuquq*, the once life of *Qapγan Qaγan*, the wonderful and kind people of Turkic, is what it was'.[15] In this Toñukuk inscription, *yorïduqï* is the past tense of the adjective verb *yorï-* 'to walk, march, live', followed by the third-person inflectional ending '-ï', which functions as a noun. Here, *tängäštüküm* is constructed in the same way as *yorïduqï* above. *Tängäštüküm* means 'what I used to keep equal to each other'. With the preceding word *r*>*är* 'man, warrior', the authors of this article regard the meaning of *är tängäštüküm* to be 'the thing that my man used to keep equal with each other', which can be extended as 'the objects of blessing (mascot) that blesses equality and justice'. Incidentally, in ancient China, mirrors were used for grooming purposes and to ward off evil spirits and illnesses, to subdue ghosts and demons, to divine good fortune, and even to act as sacred tools for Taoist priests, shamans, etc. The authors' view of *tängäštüküm* as the objects of blessing is also supported by this reference.

[15] See mainly T. Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic* (Bloomington, 1968), pp. 253, 290; Geng Shimin 耿世民, *Gudai Tujuewen Beiming Yanjiu* 古代突厥文碑銘研究 [*Study on Ancient Turkic Inscriptions*] (Beijing, 2005), p. 107. The recording is based on the picture of the topographs of the Bilge Toñukuk inscription published by the Osaka University General Academic Museum, and the picture was obtained from the authors' field trip on 8 August 2018. The translation is based on the authors' understanding, including the difficult word *sir*.

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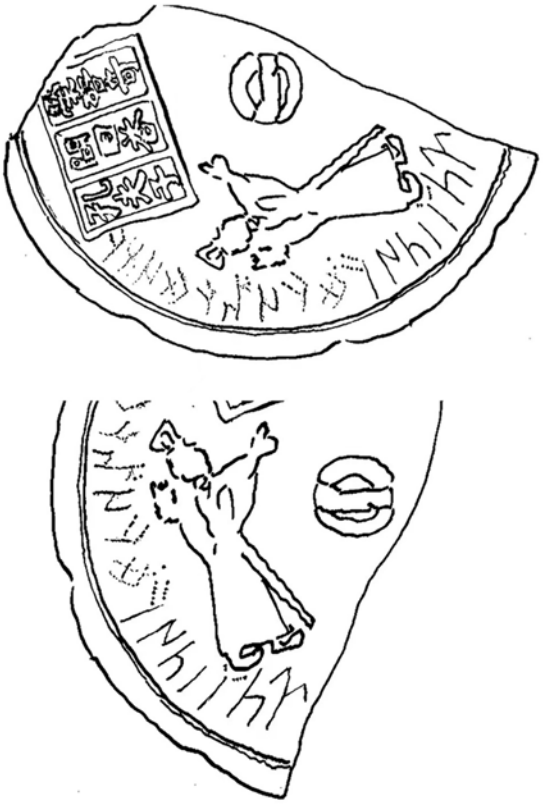


Figure 5. E77. Source: The website TURK BITIG of Kazakhstan, https://bitig.kz.

Discussion of the words k ü n S m>künsim *(my Confucius)*

Another discussion in this article is on the words *k ü n S m>künsim* (my Confucius). First, G. Clauson thinks that W. Radloff's interpretation of *k ü z k m>küzküm* 'my mirror', also quoted by H. N. Orkun, is a misreading of *közgüm* 'my mirror'.[16] Given the confusion between the writing of 'n' and 'z' (𐰽 and 𐰾) in the Turk-Runic inscriptions, and the phenomenon of Old Turkic's sonant change to unvoiced sound in Yenisei inscriptions,[17] W. Radloff's interpretation mentioned above should not be simply regarded as a misreading, as G. Clauson thinks. However, the writings of the third letter 𐰽 and the penultimate letter 𐰾 are different, and W. Radloff's reading of both as 'z' is clearly not precise. Although it is possible that the term is transcribed as *k ü z k m>küzküm* 'my mirror', the penultimate 𐰾 of the inscription would fit the text only if it were read as 'z', as the following commentary *ü z k>üzük* 'word' suggests. Therefore, the third letter 𐰽, which differs from 𐰾, is more securely read as 'n', as in the recordings and copyings published by D. D. Vasilyev and the TURK BITIG website. Second, E. Aydin et al.'s interpretation of *k ü z ŋ m > közŋüm* 'my mirror' reads the fourth letter as 'ŋ'. Judging from the picture, the 'ŋ' claimed by E. Aydin is not valid. In other words, the readings *k ü n k m* by D. D. Vasilyev and the TURK BITIG website, as well as the recordings *k ü n/z k m* by the Minusinsk Museum, fit the picture better than the recordings by W. Radloff

[16] For *közgü*, see Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*, p. 761.

[17] For a related introduction, see mainly L. Bazin 巴赞, *Tujue Lifa Yanjiu* 突厥曆法研究 [*Study on the Ancient Calendar*], (trans.) Geng Sheng 耿昇 (Beijing, 1997), p. 131; Bai Yudong, *Laoshan Jianshui*, p. 164.

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or E. Aydin et al. Third, the major difference between the above-mentioned interpretations and those of the authors lies in the fourth letter, which, according to D. D. Vasilyev's picture, can be read as 'k'. In comparison, according to the picture on the TURK BITIG website (see Figure 3), the upper end of the letter is neither straight nor angular, as in 𐰴>k. The upper end is off to the right somewhat and the diagonal line at its uppermost end is not a straight line, but an arc. The copying on the TURK BITIG website (see Figure 5) is also largely consistent with this. Based on observation, the authors of this article have read this fourth letter as 'S' and this part is transcribed as *künsim*.

The following discussion of the words *k ü n S m*>*künsim* (my Confucius) is based on the linguistic variations of the words. The authors of the article are aware that loanwords happened in Old Turkic. For example, the Chinese characters *Gongzhu* 公主 'Princess' (middle Chinese kuŋ-tɕiu[18]/kuŋ-tʂy[19]) were adopted by the Old Turkic as *qunčuy*[20] and the Chinese back-nasal '-ŋ-' could be transformed into the front-nasal '-n-' in Old Turkic. Another loanword is *sin la ingü si*, which means *Xinluo Wangzi* 新羅王子in Chinese characters 'Prince of Silla' and is transliterated as *sin la ingü si* in the book of Old Uyghur of *Wutaishan Zan* 五臺山讚 (numbered as U5335).[21] Although there is a discrepancy between *ingü* and the Chinese character *Wang* 王in the sound, *si* corresponds to the Chinese character *zi* 子. So, by analogy, it is possible to infer that the *künsi* in the above *künsim* corresponds to the Chinese characters *Kongzi* 孔子 'Confucius' (middle Chinese kʻuŋ-tsi[22]/kʰəwŋ́-tsɻ́[23]). Besides, in the Tibetan manuscripts held by P. Pelliot P.t. 987 and P.t. 988 from Dunhuang, the Chinese characters *Kongzi* 孔子 'Confucius' are respectively transliterated as *Kong tshe* and *Kong tse*.[24] Zeng Deming 曾德明and Lin Chunyu 林純瑜 also support our inference. They suggest that, from ancient to modern times, the Tibetan equivalent of the Chinese character *Kongzi* 孔子 was usually recorded as *Kong tse* (*Kongze*). Thus, this sound of *Kongzi* 孔子 'Confucius' (middle Chinese kʻuŋ-tsi/kʰəwŋ́-tsɻ́) fits well with the *künsi* that is discussed here.

Related to *Kongzi* 孔子 'Confucius' as in 'är tängäštüküm: künsim: üžük', the authors of this article also have a different interpretation of the *ü z k*>*üžük* (character): we agree to the transliterations offered by W. Radloff, D. D. Vasilyev, E. Aydin, and the Minusinsk Museum, but none gives a transcription or etymology. The word can be transcribed as *üzük* ~ *üzök*, although its meanings as 'end, interrupt', 'torn', 'decided', 'refusal', etc.[25] are incompatible with the context here. The recording on the TURK BITIG website is *ü z ü k*, suggesting that *özük* is a female pseudonym as recorded in the *Dīwān luγāt at-Turk* (*Compendium of the Turkic Dialects*) by Maḥmūd al-Kāšγarī.[26] Unfortunately, this interpretation still contradicts the context. The *Dīwān luγāt at-Turk* defines the word *üžük* with two meanings: first

[18] B. Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa: Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities 29* (Stockholm, 1957), pp. 301–302, 254.

[19] See E. G. Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin* (Vancouver, 1991), pp. 108, 414.

[20] For *qunčuy*, see Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*, p. 635.

[21] Lines 3–4 of the 5th Zan; see Masahiro Shōgaito (ed.), 'The Berlin Chinese Text U 5335 written in Uyghur script: a reconstruction of the inherited Uyghur pronunciation of Chinese', *Berliner Turfantexte* 34 (2015), pp. 71–72, the Uyghur text lines 18–19.

[22] Cf. Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa*, pp. 301–302, 254; B. Karlgren 高本漢, *Hanwen Dian* 漢文典 [*Grammata Serica, Script and Phonetics in Chinese and Sino-Japanese*], (trans.) Pan Wuyun 潘悟雲 (Shanghai, 1997), pp. 520, 430.

[23] See Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation*, pp. 174, 420.

[24] For a related introduction, see mainly R. A. Stein, 'Tibetica Antiqua VI: Maximes confucianistes dans deux manuscrits de Touenhouang', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 79.1 (1992), pp. 9–17; Zeng Deming 曾德明 and Lin Chunyu 林純瑜, 'Xizang wenhua zhong de Kongzi xingxiang' 西藏文化中的孔子形象 [The image of Confucius in Tibetan culture], *Taiwan Dongya Wenhua Yanjiu Xuekan* 臺灣東亞文明研究學刊 4.2 (2007), pp. 172–174.

[25] For *üzük* ~ *üzök*, see J. Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen: Altuigurisch-Deutsch-Türkish* (Göttingen, 2021), p. 834.

[26] For *özük-*, see R. Dankoff (ed. and trans.), *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects*, Part II (Cambridge, MA, 1982), p. 111.

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as 'spelling' and then as 'letter of the alphabet'.[27] The word *üžük/užik* is also included in the Uyghur dictionary that was compiled by J. Wilkens, which defines it as 'script, character', derived from the Sogdian *'wj'k*.[28] Unfortunately, again, no Turk-Runic inscriptions have included the word *už-ak* (character), but the word už-ak occurs several times in the remains of Buddhist scriptures that were unearthed in Turpan as interpreted by W. Bang and A. von Gabain.[29] For example, in line 5, 'w už-ak urmïš krgäk' appears, meaning '(Dort) muß man den Buchstaben w anbringen' ((There) you have to put the letter w).[30] W. Bang and A. von Gabain pinpoint that *už-ak* is a foreign word that means 'silbe, syllable'.[31] Besides, the word *wjk'k* (pronounced *užkak*) occurs in the Manichaean cornucopia of confessional words as interpreted by W. B. Henning and its meaning is 'Buchstabe, Silbe/letter, syllable'.[32] W. B. Henning notes that the Turkic word *užak* comes from the Sogdian *wjk'k*.[33] The text 'oom uṣik-lig čakr' appears in S. Tezcan's reading of the *Insadi Sūtra* in Uyghur and the meaning is 'mit om-Silben ausgestatteten Rades' (wheel equipped with om syllables).[34] S. Tezcan also suggests that the early form of *uṣik* was *uzak*, from the Sogdian word *wjk'k* (pronounced *užkak*), and the meaning is 'letter, character'.[35] The 'ž' sound did not originally exist in Old Turkic, but only appears in the spelling of loan words. Because the Yenisei inscriptions reflect an exchange between the Sogdians and the Yenisei River Basin,[36] we regard the word *ü z k* as *üžük*, meaning 'character' or 'syllable', and it is more appropriately regarded as a word from Sogdian *'wj'k*. As *üžük* is immediately preceded by *künsim* (my Confucius!), the meaning of *üžük* here should be 'character', which is more likely than 'syllable'. Therefore, there is no doubt that this *üžük* (character) refers to *Kongzi* 孔子 (Confucius) in the Chinese inscriptions.

The image of Confucius, as well as his cultural influences on people and society, however, varies in different regions. According to Zeng Deming 曾德明 and Lin Chunyu 林純瑜,[37] there are many occurrences of transliteration of Chinese characters *Kongzi* 孔子*Kong tse* or *Kong tshe* in Old Tibetan historical sources. This indicates that Tibetans had heard of the Chinese sage Confucius since around the time of the Tubo 吐蕃 kingdom (633–842). Still, the image of *Kong tse* or *Kong tshe* in Tibetan historical sources varied from the Confucius image that is familiar in Chinese culture. The Tibetan Bon religion, which is a major Tibetan indigenous belief system, regards many documents that record the ritual of removal as being works by *Kong tse 'phrul rgyal*,[38] who was a master or king with the power to predict the future. The Tibetan *Kong tse 'phrul rgyal* also had the power of divination. The image of Confucius in the guise of Tibetan *Kong tse 'phrul rgyal* also changed with the influence of Buddhism. According to the later Buddhist documents *Baiḍūrya dkar po (White Beryl)* and *Baiḍūrya g.ya' sel (The Interpretation on White Beryl)*, the Tibetan *Kong tse* was inspired by Manjusri Bodhisattva and contributed to knowledge about the '道 Dao' (gTo) rituals. Additionally, affected by the compassion of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, *Kong tse* decided to

[27] *Ibid*.

[28] For *üžük*, see Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, p. 835; for *užik*, see *ibid*, p. 813.

[29] W. Bang and A. von Gabain, 'Aus buddhistischen Schriften', in *Türkische Turfan-Texte V, Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, W. Bang and A. von Gabain (eds.) (Berlin, 1931), pp. 324–332.

[30] *Ibid*, pp. 324, 325.

[31] *Ibid*, p. 332, note A5, *už-ak*.

[32] W. B. Henning, *Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch, Abhandlungender Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, 1937), p. 65, note 527.

[33] *Ibid*, p. 65, note 527.

[34] S. Tezcan, *Das uigurische Insadi-Sūtra, Berliner Turfantexte* (Berlin, 1974), p. 26, line 37.

[35] *Ibid*.

[36] Bai Yudong and Che Juanjuan, 'Sogdian elements in Yenisei inscriptions', pp. 593–607.

[37] Zeng Deming and Lin Chunyu, 'Xizang wenhua zhong de Kongzi xingxiang', pp. 169–207.

[38] *'phrul rgyal* is the modifier of *Kong tse*, the meaning of *rgyal* is uncertain, and the meaning of *'phrul* is 'with magical powers' or 'saint'; see *ibid*, pp. 173–178.

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introduce the '道 Dao' (gTo) rituals to Tibet.[39] Thus, according to the authors' interpretation of the E77 inscription, the Confucius, regarded by the author of the inscription as 'the objects of blessing of man', was therefore the variant icon of Confucius in Chinese culture. The Confucius on the E77 inscription functioned similarly to the Tibetan *Kong tse* in Old Tibetan historical sources.

According to the authors' interpretations of the E77 Turk-Runic inscription that is engraved on the Sanlejing 三樂鏡 (Lobed Mirror of Three Delights) and the words *k ü n S m>künsim* (my Confucius), they translated the E77 inscription as 'The men's talisman that belongs to me! My Confucius! The character'. The object of blessing, based on the semantics of the text, was associated with the image of Confucius among the northern people who lived in the ancient Chinese territories during the Tang Dynasty. The similarity between the image of *künsim* in the historical records of the Tibetan Bon religion and that in the Yenisei inscriptions is not accidental. The image of *künsim*, a master with divination ability, is considered to have derived from Confucius as the combination of a sage by Han Chinese and a divine king by the indigenous beliefs of the local Yenisei area.

The most typical feature of the Yenisei inscriptions, including E77 and the image of Confucius, is the lack of a record of the date of construction. As far as the study of E77 is concerned, it is necessary to discuss the dating of the inscription here.

Dating of the E77 Yenisei inscription

Research on the interpretations of the Confucius image on the E77 Yenisei inscription without tracing its exact date is not complete. In this part of the article, the authors would like to pinpoint the date of the Sanlejing 三樂鏡 (Lobed Mirror of Three Delights). It is well known that the Sanlejing belongs to the Tang-Dynasty period (618–907), although others believe that it was cast in the eighth century. The mirror has the features of an octagonal arc-shaped sunflower form, with a rounded knob (see Figure 6). The figure to the left of the knob is Confucius, who wears a crown and a long robe with wide sleeves, holding a staff in his right hand and raising his left hand in front of him. The figure to the right of the knob, wearing a crown and deer fur, is Rong Qiqi 榮啟奇, who plays a guqin (an ancient Chinese instrument) while singing and dancing. The nine Chinese characters of this inscription, which were written downwards and from left to right, are Rongqiqi wenyue da Kongfuzi 榮啟奇問曰答孔夫子 'Rong Qiqi is questioned by and responds to Confucius'. The classic version of the story of Rong Qiqi and Confucius appears in *Tianrui* 天瑞 (Heaven's gifts)—a chapter of the third-century Daoist classic known as the *Liezi* 列子.[40] Regarding the inscription of the E77, the Soviet scholars L. A. Evtjuhova (Л. А. Евтюхова) and E. R. Rygdylon (Э. Р. Рыгдылон), respectively, give a copying of the image of the bronze mirror[41] and its design follows that of the Lobed Mirror of Three Delights that was excavated in China. Another Soviet scholar, E. I. Lubo-Lesnichenko (Е. И. Лубо-Лесниченко), in his study of exotic mirrors that were excavated in the Minusinsk Basin, presents an analysis

[39] See *ibid*, pp. 193–198.

[40] Yang Guirong 楊桂榮, 'Guancang tongjing xianji (5)' 館藏銅鏡選輯 (五)[Selection and compilation of Bronze Mirrors in the Collection (5)], *Zhongguo Lishi Bowuguan Guankan* 中國歷史博物館館刊 1(1994), pp. 117–118; S. E. Cahill, 'The Moon stopping in the void: Daoism and the literati ideal in Mirrors of the Tang Dynasty', *Cleveland Studies in the History of Art* 9 (2005), pp. 33–34.

[41] L. A. Evtyuhova Л. А. Евтюхова, *Arheologicheskie pamyatniki Eniseiskih kyrgyzov* Археологические памятники Енисейских кыргызов [*Archaeological Sites of Yenisei Kyrgyz People*] (Abakan,1948), pp. 107, 108, plate 197; E. R. Rygdylon Э. Р. Рыгдылон, 'Kitaiskie znaki i nadpisi na arheologicheskih predmetah s Eniseya', Китайские знаки и надписи на археологических предметах с Енисея [Chinese characters and Chinese inscriptions on cultural relics unearthed by Yenisei], *Epigrafika Vactoka Эпиграфика Востока* [*Oriental Goldstone*] 5 (1951), plate 7.

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Figure 6. The Sanlejing 三樂鏡 (Lobed Mirror of Three Delights) found in China, collected by Baoji Bronze Ware Museum, Shaanxi Province, P. R. China. Source: http://www.bjqtm.com/xcjy/dwxc/2022-02-26/735.html (accessed 18 May 2023).

of another Lobed Mirror of Three Delights that was excavated in Abakan.[42] Based on the research of E. I. Lubo-Lesnichenko, P. Pelliot infers that the third character of Rongqiqi 榮啟奇 is not the 'Qi 期' as written in the *Liezi* 列子, which may be related to an ancient Chinese taboo tradition. To avoid repeating the name of an emperor whose name was 'qi 期', the second 'qi' in Rongqiqi was replaced by the homophone character 奇. Use of the taboo word *qi* 奇 instead of *qi* 期 indicated that the E77 existed between 712 and 756, which was the period during which Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 of the Tang Dynasty was in power. Based on the lifespan of Emperor Xuanzong, the authors of this article believe that, although it is impossible to determine how the Lobed Mirror of Three Delights came to the Yenisei area, the dating of the E77 inscription would not be beyond the eighth century.

As for the specific dating of the E77, we need to refer to the context of the dealings of the historical Yenisei region with the Tang Dynasty. The history of the Kirghiz was recorded in classical Chinese books and M. R. Drompp's related research can also give us references and information.[43] Regarding the relationship between the Kirghiz and the Tang Dynasty, Bai

[42] Lubo-Lesnichenko, *Privoznye zerkala Minusinskoi kotloviny*, pp. 56–57, plate 71.

[43] Drompp, *Writings of Li Te-Yu*, pp. 275–296, 301–09, 319–326; Drompp, 'Five notes on the Yenisei Kirghiz', pp. 140–147.

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Yudong 白玉冬 has given a summary.[44] Bai provided the chronology of the Kirghiz tribute to the Tang Dynasty and it is discussed below.

Table 1. Records of the Kirghiz sending envoys to the Tang Dynasty in classical Chinese books

No.	Chronology	Reign title	Historical sources
1	643	Seventeenth year of *Zhenguan* 貞觀	*Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記 [*Universal Geography of the Taiping Era*] (Taibei, 1963), 199, p. 3820
2	648	Twenty-second year of *Zhenguan* 貞觀	*Ibid*
3	653	Fourth year of *Yonghui* 永徽	*Ibid*
4	675	Second year of *Shangyuan* 上元	*Songben cefu yuangui* 宋本冊府元龜 [*Primary Divination Tortoise of the Records Office of Song Edition*] (Beijing, 1989), 970, p. 3846
5	708	Second year of *Jinglong* 景龍	*Ibid*, p. 3847
6	722	Tenth year of *Kaiyuan* 開元	*Songben cefu yuangui*, 975, p. 3875
7	723	Eleventh year of *Kaiyuan* 開元	*Ibid*
8	724	Twelfth year of *Kaiyuan* 開元	*Songben cefu yuangui*, 970, p. 3849
9	747	Sixth year of *Tianbao* 天寶	*Ibid*, p. 3852
10	842	Second year of *Huichang* 會昌	*Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑒 [*Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*] (Beijing 1956), 246, p. 7968
11	843	Third year of *Huichang* 會昌	*Songben cefu yuangui*, 972, p. 3857
12	844	Fourth year of *Huichang* 會昌	*Quantangwen* 全唐文 [*Complete Collection of Tang Prose*] (Beijing, 1987), 700, pp. 8187–8188
13	845	Fifth year of *Huichang* 會昌	*Ibid*
14	856	Tenth year of *Dazhong* 大中	*Tang da zhaoling ji* 唐大詔令集 [*Collected Grand Edicts and Decrees of the Tang Dynasty*] (Beijing, 1959), 128, pp. 692–693
15	863	Fourth year of *Xiantong* 咸通	*Zizhi tongjian*, 250, p. 8107
16	866	Seventh year of *Xiantong* 咸通	*Ibid*, p. 8117

Table 1 shows that the closest relationship between the Kirghiz Khaghanate and the Tang Dynasty was between 842 and 866. This period was when Kirghiz defeated the Uighur Khaghanate and then unified the then Mongolia, and it was also the period during which

[44] Bai Yudong 白玉冬, 'Jyū seiki kara jyūichi seiki ni okeru kyūsei tataru koku 10′ 世紀から11世紀における九姓タタル国 [The nomadic kingdom of nine Tatars from the tenth to the eleventh century], *Tōyō gakuhō* 東洋学報 93.1 (2011), pp. 1–27; Bai Yudong 白玉冬, *Jiuxing Dada youmu wangguoshi yanjiu (8-11shiji)* 九姓達靼遊牧王國史研究 (8–11世紀) [*Study on the History of Nomadic Kingdom of Nine Tatars (from the Eighth to the Eleventh Century)*] (Beijing, 2017), pp. 83–84.

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Kirghiz paid frequent tributes to the Tang Dynasty and asked for a Tang authorised title.[45] Through these frequent ambassadors, the Tang Dynasty learned that, after 747, the real intention of the long-absent Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 was to gain authorised titles from the Tang Dynasty.[46] The Tang Dynasty also learned that the Xiajiasi, with these titles, would increase its influence on the northern grasslands. Coincidentally, one of the authorised titles that were sought by Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 was Dengli Kehan 登利可汗 (Tängri qaγan) but it was the same title as Tian Kehan 天可汗 (Tängri qaγan) given by the nomads to the second emperor of the Tang Dynasty, Taizong 太宗 (599–649), in Old Turkic phonology. The Tang Dynasty rejected this request from Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 because the title of 登利可汗 (Tängri qaγan) was also a title that the Tang Dynasty had given to the Uighur Khan, whose country had been destroyed, so confusion had to be avoided. The Tang Dynasty not only refused the request from the Xiajiasi ruler for the ancient Turkic title of Tängri qaγan, but also proposed to grant the title 'General of the Left Cantonment Guards and Jiankun governor-general (左衛將軍堅昆都督)' to the Kirghiz ruler following what the second Emperor Tang Taizong did in the twenty-second year of Zhenguan 貞觀, 648: 'Thus, we will make you the Chien-k'un nation, and will include this [term] in the [imperial] appointment, adding this fine title to show our admiration and affection [for you] (以堅昆为國, 施於册命, 更加美号, 以表懿亲。).'[47] Unexpectedly, due to the death of the sixteenth Tang Emperor Wuzong 武宗in 846, this friendly proposal could not be realised. Incidentally, most of the Uighurs who had lost their country moved to Xinjiang 新疆 in the eastern section of the Tianshan Mountains.

Despite the unexpected death of Tang Emperor Wuzong 武宗 in 846, Xiajiasi continued to send envoys to the Tang Dynasty. According to the historical material in Item 14 of Table 1, in 856, the Kirghiz envoy Li Jian 李兼 arrived in Chang'an 长安, the capital of the Tang Dynasty. Although Li Jian's purpose was not clearly stated in the relevant historical materials, it was simply to strengthen the friendly relations between the Kirghiz and the Tang Dynasty. Item 15 in Table 1 also reveals that the tribute in the fourth year of *Xiantong* 咸通 (863) is:

> Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 sent an envoy, Alp Inančï (Heyinanzhi 合伊难支), to request the scriptures, and an envoy be sent to and from the Tang Dynasty every year and the (Tang) official calendar. Xiajiasi also wanted to attack the Uyghur, so that the areas within Anxi安西 would be subordinated to the Tang Dynasty, but was not allowed (黠戛斯遣其臣合伊難支表求經籍及每年遣使走馬請曆, 又欲討回鶻, 使安西以來悉歸唐, 不許。).[48]

[45] Golden, *Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, pp. 180–181; Drompp, 'Yenisei Kyrgyz', pp. 482–483; Drompp, 'Five notes on the Yenisei Kirghiz', pp. 145–146.

[46] Drompp, 'Yenisei Kyrgyz', p. 483.

[47] Drompp, 'Five notes on the Yenisei Kirghiz', p. 149; Drompp, *Writings of Li Te-Yu*, pp. 305–306; for historical data, see Li Deyu's 'Yu Xiajiasi Kehan shu' 與黠戛斯可汗書 [Letter to Kirghiz khan], written in the summer of the fourth year of Huichang 會昌 (844); quoted from Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮 and Zhou Jianguo 周建國 (eds. and comm.), *Li Deyu Wenji Jiaojian* 李德裕文集校笺 [*The Proofreading and Commentary of the Corpus of Li Deyu*] (Beijing, 2018), pp. 100–102.

[48] *Zizhi Tongjian* 資治通鑒 [*Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*] (Beijing, 1956), 250, p. 8107; for personal names Alp Inančï and Ičränki, see V. V. Tishin B. B. Тишин, 'Lichnaya onomastika eniseiskih kyrkyzov IX v. (po kitaiskim istochnikam i pamyatnikam drevnetyurkskoi runicheskoi pismennosti eniseiskogo basseina)', Личная ономастика енисейских кыркызов IX в. (по китайским источникам и памятникам древнетюркской рунической письменности енисейского бассейна) [Personal onomastics of the Yenisei Qïrqïz of the 9th Century A.D. (based on Chinese sources and Old Turkic Runic writing monuments of the Yenisei River Basin)], *Vaprosy onomastiki* Вопросы ономастики [*The Problem of Onomastics*] 15.3 (2018), pp. 180–181.

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In the above text, 'request for the (Tang) official calendar 請曆' shows that they were keen to strengthen their tributary relationship with the Tang Dynasty at that time. The part of the text 'wanted to attack Uyghur' also shows that the Kirghiz still had the awareness of continuing to strengthen their influences on northern China. Then, regarding the last sixteenth tribute in the seventh year of *Xiantong* 咸通 (866), the historical records say:

> Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 sent its general Ičränki (Yizhilianji 乙支連幾)to pay tribute, and reported that they will send horseman to welcome to the imperial title-conferring envoy, and made a request for the official calendar of the year of the Hai 亥(pig) year (黠戛斯遣將軍乙支連幾入貢, 奏遣鞍馬迎冊立使及請亥年曆日。).[49]

Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing whether the Tang Dynasty conferred to the ruler of the Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 or not, based only on the Chinese document. Still, materials that were found in the local Yenisei area proper could fill this gap. In around 1990, five marble fragments inscribed with Chinese characters were found in the village of Raykovo (Райково), south of Abakan, the capital of the Republic of Khakassia. The five unearthed fragments had the texts of Gong 貢 (contribute), Fengjiang 封疆 (border region), and Datang Xiantong Qinian 大唐咸通七年 (the seventh year of *Xiantong* 咸通 of the Great Tang Dynasty (866)). They are now displayed in the Khakas Museum of Ethnography.[50] In the 1990s, Japanese scholar Masumoto Tetsu 枡本哲 researched these artefacts and found that they belonged to a jade book, reflecting the enthroning system of the Tang Dynasty, but he also believed that the individual who received the jade book from the Tang Dynasty was a Chinese person who was working in the Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 Khaghanate.[51] However, the prevailing scholarly opinion is that the person who was given the jade book by the Tang Dynasty should be identified as the Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 Khan of the time.[52] Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 maintained direct contact with the Tang Dynasty between 842 and 866, as shown in Table 1, and was eventually enthroned by the Tang Dynasty. The five fragments show clearly that there were exchanges between the Tang Dynasty and the Kirghiz.

The frequent contact between the Xiajiasi and the Tang Dynasty was also revealed in other Yenisei inscriptions that were written in the local language (i.e. the Old Turkic) of the Kirghiz. For example, E11, a tombstone, which was one of the Yenisei inscriptions discovered in the Mungash Chirik area north of the confluence of the Begre River and the Daye River in present-day Tuva Republic, preserves the record of exchanges between the Tang Dynasty and the Kirghiz. E11 is housed in the Minusinsko Museum (collection number 40) and its ninth line exposes a highlight in the life of the tomb's owner:[53]

[49] *Zizhi Tongjian*, p. 8117.

[50] For the most up-to-date and detailed research on the artefact, see Sun Hao, 'Zongfan yuce', pp. 185–198.

[51] Masumoto Tetsu, 'Minami siberia abakan kinkō hakken no gyokusakuhen ni tsuite', pp. 347–348, 359.

[52] V. YA. Butanaev and YU. S. Hudyakov В. Я. Бутанаев и Ю. С. Худяков, *Istoriya eniseiskih kyrgyzov*, История енисейских кыргызов [*History of the Yenisei Kyrgyz People*] (Abakan, 2000), p. 90; Liu Fengzhu 劉鳳翥 'Eguo Abakan Bowuguan Suocun De Tangdai Yuce Canjian' 俄國阿巴坎博物館所存的唐代玉册殘簡 [Remains of a jade book from the Tang Dynasty in the Abakan Museum in Russia], in *Sui Tang Liao Song Jin Yuan shi luncong* 隋唐遼宋金元史論叢 [*Status and Features of the History of Sui, Tang, Liao, Jin and Yuan Dynasty*], (ed.) Huang Zhengjian 黃正建 (Beijing, 2011), vol. 1, pp. 11–12; Wang Jie 王洁, 'Tang xiantong nianjian shoufeng Xiajiasi kao' 唐咸通年間授封黠戛斯考 [Study on the Kirghiz enthroned by Tang during the Xianfeng period], *Neimenggu Shehui Kexue* 內蒙古社會科學 2(2014), pp. 57–59; Bai Yudong, *Jiuxing Dada Youmu Wangguoshi Yanjiu*, p. 217; Sun Hao, 'Zongfan yuce', pp. 185–189.

[53] Bai Yudong 白玉冬, 'Shi Zhi Shiyi Shiji Mobei Youmu Zhengquan De Chuxian-Yenisai Beiming Jilu De Jiuxing Dada Wangguo' 十至十一世紀漠北游牧政權的出現—葉尼塞碑銘記錄的九姓達靼王國 [The emergence

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Transcription (*in Old Turkic*): biš yegirmi: yašïmda: tabγač qanγa: bardïm-a är ärdimim üčün alïpan: altun: kümüšig: ägri täbä eldä: küči: qazγandïm-a[54]

Translation: When I was 15 years old, I went to the place where the Khan of China (i.e. the Emperor of China) was! Since I use my talents as a male, I acquired gold and silver, a dromedary, from (its) country (i.e. China)! And I got their power!

D. D. Vasilyev claims that this inscription provides an example of a Kirghiz nobleman who went to China to learn Chinese and marry a Chinese wife.[55] However, according to the authors' interpretation, this inscription contains none of these elements. However, it is plausible that this inscription indicates that the tomb owner travelled to China in the late Tang period.[56] Li Jinxiu 李錦绣 also confirmed that there was a trade of silk and horses between the Kirghiz and the Tang Dynasty, and the Kirghiz sent envoys to Tang during the Huichang 會昌 period (841–846), replacing the Uighur as the main trade partner in silk and horses with the Tang.[57]

Because of the above findings, it is reasonable to infer that E77, the Sanlejing 三樂鏡 (Lobed Mirror of Three Delights) that was discovered in the Yenisei region, should be dated back to between 842 and 866, when the Kirghiz was in direct contact with the Tang Dynasty. As for the inscription on it, it is reasonable to assume that it was inscribed during this period or shortly thereafter. It is reasonable to regard the image of Confucius that is recorded in the E77 inscription as having been known to the people of the Yenisei Valley between 842 and 866, or shortly thereafter.

Conclusion

The name of Confucius in Yenisei inscriptions is explained above, and it is clear that it was known to the native Kirghizs of Yenisei at Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 Khaghanate from between 842 and 866, or shortly thereafter. Xiajiasi ambassadors' frequent visit to the Tang Dynasty confirmed that the image of Confucius on the E77 inscription was not foreign to the local Yenisei people. Also, the ancient trades between Xiajiasi and the Tang Dynasty across rough wilderness in deserts may have required the holy divine power of *künsim* '我的孔子啊!' as a blessing for protection, so it is no coincidence that Confucius in the Yenisei E77 inscription should be interpreted based on both the Tibetan Bon religion and Chinese tradition.

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of nomadic regimes in the desert north in the 10th and 11th centuries-the kingdom of nine Tatars as recorded in Yenisei inscriptions], *Minzu Yanjiu* 民族研究 1 (2013), p. 77; Bai Yudong, *Laoshan Jianshui*, p. 39. In the latter, all punctuation marks were lost in the original transcription and are hereby added.

[54] Vasilyev, *Korpus tyurkskih runichskih pamyatnikov basseina Eniseya*, pp. 20, 61, 92.

[55] D. D. Vasilyev, 'New finds of Old Turkic inscriptions in Southern Siberia', in *Rulers from the Steppe: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery*, (eds.) G. Seaman and D. Marks (Los Angeles, 1989), p. 124.

[56] For research on the date, see Bai Yudong, 'Shi Zhi Shiyi Shiji Mobei Youmu Zhengquan De Chuxian-Yenisai Beiming Jilu De Jiuxing Dada Wangguo', pp. 79–80.

[57] Li Jinxiu 李錦绣, 'Tang yu xiajiasi de juanma maoyi' 唐與黠戛斯的絹馬貿易 [The trade in silk and horses of Kirghiz and Tang], *Jinyang Xuekan* 晉陽學刊 1 (2022), pp. 72–80.

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jiaowang jiaorong shi yanjiu' 隋唐至北宋古突厥語族群與華夏中央王朝之間的交往交流交融史研究 [A study on the history of exchanges, interactions and integration between the ancient Turkic-speaking ethnic groups and the central dynasty of China from the Sui and Tang Dynasties to the Northern Song Dynasty, 2023jbkyzx011]).

Conflicts of interest. None.

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