# МОНГОЛ УЛСЫН ИХ СУРГУУЛЬ ШИНЖЛЭХ УХААНЫ СУРГУУЛЬ "МОНГОЛ СУДЛАЛ"

Эрдэм шинжилгээний сэтгүүл

Боть XLIX (622) DOI: 10.22353/ms20254905

# A STUDY ON NEWLY IDENTIFIED GLYPHS AND PHONETIC VALUES IN KHITAN SMALL SCRIPT<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This paper presents three newly identified glyphs and two variant forms from the newly discovered inscription Epitaph of Yelü Yugulin Taishi in Khitan Small Script, which is now known as the earliest inscription in Khitan Small Script, dating to the Chongxi era of Emperor Xingzong of the Liao dynasty. Detailed descriptions of their positional occurrences and graphical structures are provided. Based on the deciphered Khitan scripts, Chinese loanwords and Mongolian cognates, the phonetic values of the relevant glyphs are reconstructed, aiming to promote further research on the Khitan Small Script.

Key words: Khitan Small Script; glyph forms; phonetic value reconstruction; Yelü Yugulin Taishi

In 2018, during fieldwork in Beijing, the Khitan Script Research Team of Inner Mongolia University serendipitously acquired three rubbings in Khitan Small Script. Preliminary examination confirmed the text's clarity and coherence, spanning 50 lines with over a thousand legible characters. These rubbings originate from a single epitaph which includes both sides of the cover stone and a single side of the base stone. The owner of the epitaph was identified as Taishi Yugulin, who was the descendant of the Six Courts Langjun Fang. Ulhicun (2012) reconstructed the family lineage and summarized its content previously, but the rubbings and their Khitan text have not been published yet. It has also been studied by Bai Yuanming (2024) in her doctoral dissertation *Interpretation of the Newly Discovered Epitaph of Yelü Yügulin Taishi in Khitan Small Script (Xinjin Faxian Qidan Xiaozi Yelü Yugulin Taishi Muzhiming Shidu新近发现契丹小字《耶律于骨邻太师墓志铭》释读) in 2024. The dissertation has not yet been published.* 

This paper is supported by Project of National Social Science Foundation: Interpretation of Literature of Royal Family of Liao Dynasty in Khitan Small Script and Research on the Inheritance of National Culture (No. 20BYY189) and Research Initiation Project for Young Academic Talents of Inner Mongolia University Research on the Newly Discovered *Epitaph of Yelü Yugulin Taishi* in Khitan Small Script (No. 10000-23112101/260).

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The *Epitaph of Yelü Yugulin Taishi* (hereafter Lin) was engraved in the 20th year of Chongxi (1051 A.D.), which is two years earlier than the known earliest Epitaph of the late prince of Guangling prefecture in Khitan Small Script (the 22nd year of Chongxi, 1053 A.D.), which has become the earliest inscription in Small Script, highlighting its historical significance. The time and place of its excavation remain unknown. The inscription is currently on display at the Nationality Museum of Inner Mongolia University. This article documents newly identified glyphs and variants of glyphs in the Lin and attempts to reconstruct phonetic values for certain glyphs.

#### 1. Glyph 下

Lines 7–8 of the Lin record the name of the youngest son of the owner's forth-generation ancestor as 下寸文全. The glyph 下 (image: ) is first identified in Lin. It resembles the known glyph T(002), deciphered as early as the 1930s—40s as the cardinal numeral 'twenty' according to Further Research on Khitan Small Script Qidan xiaozi zai yanjiu 契丹小字再研究 (CWJ 2017: 341). Glyph 下 occurs only once in the Lin, revealing a dot ( ) appended to the right side of the glyph T, which suggests it is a dotted form of the cardinal numeral 'twenty'.

There is a set of dotted and undotted cardinal numerals In Khitan Small Script for 1–10:

Undotted: 七、圣、包、モ、乏、太、, 足、至、黍、仓 Dotted: 七、圣、包、屯、乏、灰、, 足、至、黍、仓

Wu Yingzhe (2007: 169) proposed that an undotted set modify feminine referents' numerals, while a dotted set modifies masculine numerals. As glyph  $\tau$  is the dotted form of  $\tau$  'twenty,' it is hypothesized to function as a masculine numeral. CWJ(2017: 151) reconstructed  $\tau$ (002) as /teyr/. By extension, if is its dotted counterpart, it should share the same phonetic value teyr.

This interpretation aligns with Khitan naming practices, where numerals frequently occur in personal names. e.g., **&** 'two' in **& &** <jur-uh> Zhiligu只里姑; **&** 'four' in **& &** <dur°-ir2> Tulübu突吕不; **A**-**A**'seven' in **A** <dol> Dilie迪烈、**A &** <dol-én>Dinian迪辇 and **A &** <dol^o-t> Dilie迪烈. Thus, **T** 's usage in a personal name is linguistically consistent.

# 2. Glyph **油**

Glyph (image: is a newly identified form, that first appears in the Lin with four occurrences (lines 21, 24, 28, 34). Contextual analysis follows:

 <ETERNAL s-em<sub>2</sub>-e-ung i-ri-de-i jau-ul-ha-a-ar k-em<sub>2</sub> dai-ri<sub>2</sub> h-au l-iu tai?h-035.2-y-er> 久 病 治所从诀别 敕 奉 高 六?³太 医 视?

Prolonged illness from official's workplace farewell by imperial decree Gaoliu? royal physician to treat

(3) 关 流 毛包 + 矢 全及 <sup>11 ★</sup> 又及 **午** □ 同 友 **与** 夾 失 **居** 及 **3** Lin 34 < HEAVEN?ab gor ai-de s-o?-i sh-o pu 378.1-ing jï deu-úr ui MANAGE-u-ji> 重熙 十 三 年于 左 翊 率 府 承 旨 于 事 知 Chongxi thirteen year Zuoyi shuaifu chengzhi affair manage

The meaning of the sentence (1) is 'due to the prolonged illness of the owner, the emperor ordered imperial physicians Gaoliu(a person's name) to treat him'. It can be inferred that the phrase & a refers to 'imperial physician,' a loanword from Chinese 太医tài yī. In the sentence (2), it refers to the same position of 'imperial physician.' It a can be concluded that glyph a can be used to represent the Chinese loanword 医yī 'physician.' Pullyblank (1991: 364) records the pronunciations of the character 医as: Y. Ji L.?i E.?i/?i. Therefore, the phonetic value of the glyph a should be close to i.

In the sentence (3), the title **今及 增 之及 分** is similar to the title **今及 又及 分** zuoshuaifu 左率府 in Xu 3. The difference is **今及 增 之及 分** has an additional **增 光**. The first glyph **增** we reconstructed above is i, and the pronunciation of the second glyph **光** is also i, so the pronunciation of **增** should be i... Ulhicun interpreted **今及 增 之及 分** as zuoyishuaifu左翼率府. By consulting materials, we found that 左翼率府is not seen in Chinese inscriptions from the Liao Dynasty or the History of Liao, but there are some records related to shuaifu率府:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The question mark (?) indicates the Chinese meaning here is uncertain

(1) Epitaph of Ding Hong(Tianqing天庆 1st year)4:

Taizi zuoyiwei shuaifu shuai太子左翊衛率府率

(2) History of Liao Vol. 47:

Taizi zuoyouwei shuaifu太子左右衛率府

We believe that **今及 4 米 又 及 今** may be related to the *taizi zuoyiwei shuaifushuai*太子左翊衛率府率 and *taizi zuoyouwei shuaifu* 太子左右衛率府 above. The pronunciations of 翊and 右 are as follows:

yì 翊 Y. ji` L.jiăk E. jik<sup>5</sup>

yòu 右 Y. jiw` L.iw` E. wuw<sup>h6</sup>

It seems like **全及<sup>油关</sup> 又及 子**'s meaning is closer to zuoyi shuaifu左翊率府.

In sentence (4), 今キ 全非 スホ represents dajiangjun 大将军'grand general', so 万ちゑね should be a title. Ulhicun interpreted it as youyi dajiangjun右翼大将军'Right wing grand general', but did not specify the corresponding Khitan scripts.

We consulted titles of *dajiangjun* 大将军'grand general' in the History of Liao, finding positions like *youwei dajiangjun*右卫大将军, *youweiwei dajiangjun*右威卫大将军, *youqianniuwei dajiangjun*右千牛卫大将军, etc., but no *youyi dajiangjun*右翼大将军. However, the *History of Liao* Vol. 87 (2016: p.1469) states:

Taiping jiunian, dayanlin ju dongjing pan, punu wei dujian, ji-ang youyijun, yu zei zhan pushui.太平九年,大延琳據東京叛,蒲奴 都監,將<u>右翼軍</u>,遇賊戰蒲水。(In the 9th year of Taiping 1029 A.D., Da Yanlin occupied Dongjing and rebelled. Punu served as Dujian, leading the右翼軍 Right Wing Army, encountering the enemy and fighting at Pushui.)

History of Liao Vol. 46 (2016: 843) states:

<u>右翼軍</u>都統所。

(Right Wing Army Commander-in-Chief Office).

Although *youyidajiangjun*右翼大将军Right Wing Grand General is not seen in the *History of Liao*, the右翼军youyijun above might be related to the **万ち**え<sup>ね</sup> here. The ancient pronunciations of 翼is:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Xiangnan 向南1995. Liaodai Shike Wenbian 辽代石刻文编 [Stone inscriptions of the Liao dynasty]. Henan jiaoyu chubanshe, Shijiazhuang 1995.p. 618.

See Pulleyblank, Edwin G. 1991. Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin. Vancouver: UCB Press. p.370.

See Pulleyblank, Edwin G. 1991. Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin. Vancouver: UCB Press. p.379.

yì 翼 Y. ji` L.jiǎk E. jik<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, the author takes the overlapping pronunciation of the three characters 医 yi, 翼 yi, and 翊 yi, and reconstructs the pronunciation of the new glyph ね as i.

## 3. Glyph あ

In line 12 of Lin, the name of the wife of the tomb owner's third-generation ancestor *Nieligun dawang* 涅里衮□大王 is recorded as �  $\hbar$   $\hbar$   $\hbar$   $\hbar$  appears for the first time in Lin (image: ). It looks similar to but distinct from known glyphs  $\hbar$ (072) and  $\hbar$ (050), and should be a new form. As the person's name  $\oint \hbar \lambda \, \hbar$  s corresponding Chinese name has not yet been deciphered, the pronunciation of this glyph cannot be determined for now.

## 4. Variant Glyph <sup>4</sup>

Glyph th appears for the first time in Lin, found only once, as the second glyph in which records the name Yalixin 牙里辛, the Empress Zhuangjing 莊敬 of Emperor Yizu 懿祖. The first glyph is 化(235), pronounced as ri, and the last glyph is 伏(222), pronounced as n, both already identified by scholars. According to the principle of vowel attachment, are read as Yalixin. Therefore, the second glyph the should contain the consonant s in its pronunciation.

Observing its form, the author believes it resembles the known glyph # (041), and is a variant of it. The pronunciation of # (041) is su<sup>8</sup>, so the pronunciation of the glyph # should be su as well.

#### 5. Variant Glyph 33

In line 7 of Lin, when recording *Niaoguzhi* 衰古直, the fourth son of Emperor Yizu and Empress Zhuangjing, it is written as ... Compared to the known writing of *Niaoguzhi* as 伏里粉, the ending glyph 粉 is written as in Lin. Through further comparison, the author found that 粉 is always written as ঙ in Lin. It can be seen that it is a variant form of 粉(153), 粉(153) and ෞ(337). CWJ reconstructed the pronunciation of these three glyphs as utf~ud3, so the pronunciation of �� should also be utf~ud3.

## 6. Reconstruction of the Phonetic Value of Glyph あ(024)

See Pulleyblank, Edwin G. 1991. Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin. Vancouver: UCB Press. p.370.

See Chinggeltei 清格尔泰, Wu Yingzhe 吴英喆, Jiruhe 吉如何 2017. Qidan Xiaozi Zai Yanjiu 契丹小字再研究[Further Study on Khitan Small Script]. Neimenggu Daxue Chubanshe, Hohhot, 2017, p. 342

In the first line of Lin, the official position of tomb owner Yugulin Taishi is recorded as 表雨 为天 关亦 全交 而 凡 <ci-in a-an h-ün s-ie 024 shi>. The pronunciation of the 5th word 而 has long been undetermined by scholars. Ulhicun interpreted it as 宸安军节度使Chen'an Jun Jiedushi, but did not specify the corresponding Khitan script.

From the deciphered Khitan words, 为来 Kホ <a-an h-ün> corresponding an jun 安军is indisputable. Therefore, the key issue is to determine which Chinese character corresponds to the first word 本雨 <ci-in>. Apart from the History of Song, the author consulted the History of Liao and Chinese inscriptions from the Liao Dynasty, although Chen'an Jun 宸安军 was not found, this possibility cannot be ruled out entirely. There are many army names containing an jun安军in History of Liao, such as Tian'an Jun天安军, Wu'an Jun 武安军, Jian'an Jun 建安军, Bao'an Jun 保安军, Zhen'an Jun 镇安军, Qing'an Jun 清安军, Yong'an Jun永安军, Jing'an Jun 静安军, Sheng'an Jun 胜安军, Long'an Jun 隆安军, etc. Among these, Zhen'an Jun 镇安军 is phonetically closest to the 本雨为天 六本 <ci-in a-an h-ün>.

The History of Liao (2016: p.531) records regarding 镇安军:

Tongzhou, Zhen'an Jun. xia, Jiedushi.同州,鎮安軍。下,節度。(Tongzhou, Zhen'an Jun army. Subordinate, Jiedu)

This indicates that the military governor of Tongzhou held the position of Jiedushi. Therefore, 表面 为关 六亦 全交 而 凡 can be interpreted as Zhen'an Jun Jiedushi镇安军节度使. Consequently, the following three words 全文 而 凡 indicate Jiedushi节度使 is indisputable. Jiedushi节度使 appears multiple times in published Khitan Small Script inscriptions, usually written as 全文 门 凡 <s-ie du shi〉 or 全文 门 凡 <z-ie du shi〉. It can be seen that the used here for du度而 in 全文 而 凡 can be used interchangeably with glyph 门 <du>. Therefore, it can be inferred that the pronunciation of 而 should be du.

Furthermore, in another official title appearing in line 22 of Lin, in タキ 今用令和 高 メンタ <uk-ul t-il-t-en 024 h-ia-em>, which indicates Wugudilie zhi dujian 乌古 敌烈之都监, the du都in dujian都监 is also recorded as 高. The same position dujian 都监is generally recorded in extant literature as つ カンタ <du g-ia-em>. From this, it is evident that glyph 高 is indeed used interchangeably with glyph つ, and their pronunciations should be similar or identical.

Glyph **雨** and **汀** can both transcribe the Chinese characters du都 and du度.

The ancient pronunciations are as follows:

dū 都 Y. tu L.tuə E. to9

dù 度 Y. tu`L.tfið`E. do<sup>h10</sup>

Taking the intersection, the pronunciation of the glyph ₹ should be du.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See Pulleyblank, Edwin G. 1991. Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin. Vancouver: UCB Press. p. 81.

See Pulleyblank, Edwin G. 1991. Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin. Vancouver: UCB Press. p. 83.

#### 7. Reconstruction of the Phonetic Value of Glyph H(188)

In line 6 of Lin, the name of Empress Zhaolie of Suzu is recorded as 公本为表分析状. The second word 本分析状 corresponds phonetically to the name Zhuozhen 卓真recorded in historical sources. Based on previous research, the first glyph 本 is known to be f'~f, the second glyph 分 is o, and the last glyph 伏 is n. Regarding the pronunciation of the third glyph 州, scholars hold different opinions. Wang Hongli (1986: 62) reconstructed 州久 as əbug; Jishi (1994: 70) believed that the 州久 corresponds to xiao小or shao少 'young' in xiao wengzhang 小翁帐or shaofuzhang 少父帐 'of the lineage of the junior', so he reconstructed 州 as [ɔt'], based on Mongolian word [ɔt'kən] meaning 'youngest'; Synthesizing the above arguments, Chinggeltei (2002: 66) suggested 州久 represents 'small', assumed its pronunciation as bay (bag), and proposed glyph 州 as ba.

Spell out the confirmed glyph of 本 今 州 伏 and compare them with the pronunciation of *Zhuozhen* 卓真, the first two glyphs 本 介 - 贞-v corresponding to *zhuo* 卓 is undisputed. The last two glyphs should correspond to *zhen*真. The pronunciations of 真 are:

When transcribing the Chinese character *zhen*真, the final glyph 伏 represents the consonant n. Therefore, glyph 州 should contain the sound  $\mathfrak{g}^{\kappa}$ ~ $\mathfrak{g}$ . The author observes that in the Khitan words starting with  $\mathbf{a}$  朱 州 meaning 'order, repair', the third glyph 州 and glyph  $\mathbf{a}$  < $\mathbf{b}$  < $\mathbf{c}$  ii> seem to be used interchangeably. Example sentences are as follows:

Much repair

Affairs repair

Affairs repair

In sentences (1)(2), 全欠州中立中 and 全欠羽中立中 represent the same grammatical meaning. In sentences (2)(3), 全欠羽中立中 and 全欠州中立中 represent the same lexical meaning. The words 全欠州中立中、全欠羽中立中、全欠州中立中 in the sentences above, the 中立 in the stem is the causative suffix, the 中 is the converb suffix, and 中 indicates the past tense. The root of these three words should be 全欠州

See Pulleyblank, Edwin G. 1991. Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin. Vancouver: UCB Press. p. 401.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> The Chinese translations of the example sentences quoted from the Khitan inscriptions in this paper referred to CWJ.

or 全 欠 弱. It can be seen that their third glyphs 州 and glyph 弱 have an alternating relationship. Another group of Khitan words, 全 男 州、 全 男 筠、 全 男 筠、 全 男 筠、 also shows the same pattern, where the final 州、 药、 药 are used interchangeably. CWJ (2017: 225) proposed that the three glyphs 弱、 药 。 內 are variants of each other, and reconstructed the pronunciation of all three as uffauds. This again verifies that glyph contains the sound factor of the author reconstructs the pronunciation of 州 as factor of H as factor of

Among the Khitan words containing glyph 州, those deciphered by scholars include 州久 r 州余, appearing in xiao wengzhang小翁帐 or shaofufang少父房, meaning 'young or 'small', which has been figured by scholars. Regarding the etymology of the Khitan words 州久 r 州余, now that the first glyph 州 is known to be pronounced 忧~贞, the final glyphs 久 r 余 are pronounced the same, g~gu. The pronunciation of 州久 r 州余 might be ʧegu or ʧugu. The author believes its pronunciation is close to the Mongolian words ﴿ jiyaxan or › jiyaxan

#### Conclusion

This paper introduces and summarizes the latest research results of the newly discovered inscription *Epitaph of Yelü Yugulin Taishi* in Khitan Small Script. Identified three new forms  $\mathbf{T}$ ,  $\mathbf{A}$ ,  $\mathbf{A}$ , and two variant glyphs  $\mathbf{B}$ ,  $\mathbf{B}$ , reconstructed the pronunciations of six glyphs  $\mathbf{T}$ ,  $\mathbf{A}$ ,  $\mathbf{B}$ ,  $\mathbf{B}$ , and  $\mathbf{B}$ . See the table below.

Glyph	Image	Glyph Sequence	Reconstructed Value	Vrient form
下	"T:	Lin 7	teyr	
<b>2</b> 4	-	Lin 21,24,28,34	i	
市	5	Lin 12		
巿	5	Lin 6	su	*
99	35	Lin 13	uʧ~udʒ	鸦,豹,礿
而		Lin 1	du	
Ж		Lin 5	y~y	

#### The abbreviation and the full names of the epitaphs appeared in the paper

- Lin 邻: Yelü Yugulin Taishi Muzhiming 耶律于骨邻太师墓志铭Epitaph of Yelü Yügulin Taishi
- Zhong 仲: Xiao Zhonggong Muzhi 萧仲恭墓志Epitaph of Xiao Zhonggong
- Yu 于: Daliao Guo Shangfu Yuyue Song Wang Muzhiming 大辽国尚父于越宋王墓志铭 Epitaph of Prince Song Shangfu Yuyue of Great Liao

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