

The Ethnogenic Tales of the Türks

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This article is a tour de horizon of the origin myths that were recorded in the Chinese dynastic and other historical works written during the Türk era (552–ca. 744) and in subsequent official histories (e.g., the Zhoushu, Suishu, Beishi, Jiu Tangshu and Xin Tangshu), historical handbooks (the Tongdian) and historical collections (e.g., the Youyang zazu [and the Taiping Guangji] and the recent translations of and scholarship on them). Also included is a discussion of a Uyğur-origin Tibetan ‘report’ on the ‘Northern Peoples’. The article focuses on the Ashina-Türk grouping that became the founding and ruling clan of the Türk Qağanate. The shaping of the Ashina-Türk took place in a range of areas extending from the Chinese border zones of Gansu and Xinjiang to Mongolia and Southern Siberia. The Ashina-Türks appear to have been a ‘composite’ of peoples with a variety of ethno-linguistic affiliations. A lupine ancestor figures in most of the origin accounts.

In the early 540s, a people bearing the name *Türk* came to the Chinese borders ‘for the first time’ seeking to obtain silk goods. Taizu (534–56 AD), the Northern Zhou ‘emperor’, the real power holder during the reign of the Western Wei¹ Emperor, Wendi (535–51 AD), dispatched an embassy

¹The Northern Wei (386–534), Eastern Wei (534–50) and Western Wei (535–56) were of Tabgač origin derived from the Xianbei (Serbi/Mongolic/Para-Mongolic) peoples as were also the Northern Zhou (557–81). The Northern Qi (550–77) were of mixed Chinese and Xianbei roots (Shimunek, *Languages*: 52–53, 555, n. 89).

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to them, in 545 AD, led by a Sogdian, An Nuopantuo (Nakbanda).² The notice about the embassy and the Türk reciprocal embassy sent in 546 is prefaced by an origin tale of the Türks. This and several other origin tales are reported in the Chinese accounts and one Tibetan source. They locate the (Ashina-) Türks in various parts north of the Chinese frontiers. Who were the Ashina-Türks and whence did they come?

The Türk Empire and Spread of the Ethnonym *Türk*³

The Ashina,⁴ the ruling clan of the Türks, forged a core union of 30 tribes,⁵ the *Türk bođun* ('Türk People') noted in the Türk and Uyğur inscriptions.⁶ They founded a Qağanate (empire) in Mongolia in 552, having successfully

² *Türk* refers only to the eponymous founders and rulers of the First and Second Türk Qağanates. *Türk* denotes speakers of a Turkic language. The notice is from the *Zhoushu*, 50.908 (Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 6–7, vol. 2: 490, n. 21; de la Vaissière, *Histoire*: 184–85).

³ *Türk* or *Tür^ak*/*Türük* (User, *Köktürk ve Ötügen Uyğur*: 168–71, 293, Pulleyblank, 'The Chinese Name': 124–25; Divitçioğlu, *Orta Asya Türk İmparatorluğu*: 21–22; Kafesoğlu, *Umumi Türk Tarihi*: 18–21; Aydın, *Uyğur Kağanlığı Yazıtları*: 153; Ölmez, *Orhon-Uyğur: 78–79 et passim*). *Türkü*, proffered by Clauson, 'Turks and Wolves': 4 *et passim*, has not found wide acceptance.

⁴ *Ashina* 阿史那 EMC* *ʔa ši 'na'*, LMC *ʔaʃr'na'* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 23, 283, 221) < KhotanSaka *āṣṣeina-āššena* 'blue' (Bailey, *Dictionary of Khotan Saka*: 26–27) = Turk. *kōk*, 'blue' as argued by Kljaštornyj, 'The Royal Clan': 445–48. Atwood, 'Some Early': 68–78, connects *Ashina* with Tokh. *Arši* 'holy man' (cf. Sanskrit *r̥ṣi*, ONW: *ʔa-ṣə-na*, see Coblin, *Compendium*: 124–25 [0016], 240–41 [0382], 121 [0005]). Beckwith, 'The Pronunciation': 39–46; Tokh.A: **āršilāš* 'noble kings' > Old Türk. *aršilaš*, 'an epithet or title', which the Chinese 'misunderstood' as a 'surname' or 'clan-name' (equated by Beckwith with Ἀρσίλας the 'eldest' or 'senior ruler of the Turks' mentioned by Menander, *History*: 172/173, 276, n. 222). Attempts to see **Ašinas* in the Old Türk Xöl Asgat Inscription, E1, W1, W4, Asgat Ila W4, Asgat Iib E1 (Ōsawa, 'Revisiting Khöl-Asgat Inscription': 23, 24, 26, 28, dated to 729 [or 724]) and in the Sogdian part of the Qarabalğasun inscription, 810/821 (Sogd. 6: "šn š, Yoshida, 'Some New Readings': 80–81) require further substantiation. Gumilëv, *Drevnie tjurki*: 23, mistakenly derived *ashina* from Mongolic *šono/čino* (Modern Mong. *čono*, Classical Mong. *činu-a* 'wolf'; Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*: 190).

⁵ Dobrovits, 'The Thirty Tribes': 257–62; Kljaštornyj, 'Xunny i tjurki': 420–25.

⁶ *Bođun*, collective plural of *bođ* 'clan' (Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*: 296–97, 306, "clans" [...] an organized tribal community, a people, in the sense of a community ruled by a particular ruler'); Berta, *Szavaimat*: 54 (Toñ, S17, E18), 143 (KT, E 6). The Uyğur Šine Usu inscription (N8, 9–10) dated 759, notes the *türk bođwn* and the *üč tuğtwğ türk bođwn* 'the three-bannered Türk people' living in the southern zone of the Uyğur Empire (Aydın, *Uyğur Kağanlığı Yazıtları*: 65, 66, 153–54; Berta, *Szavaimat*: 283–84).

overthrown their Rouran/Avar overlords⁷ and rapidly expanded across Eurasia, conquering lands from the borders of Manchuria to the Pontic steppes and Crimea. While retaining a nominal unity, the Qağanate divided into eastern and western halves, ca. 580–611,⁸ over which the Ashina exercised a collective sovereignty and in which the Eastern Ashina Qağans were accorded a slightly higher status. The latter, beset by natural disasters and military setbacks, succumbed to Tang China in 630. The Western Qağans submitted in 657/659. The Eastern Qağanate revived in 682 and again brought the Western Qağanate under its rule. Nonetheless, internal discord continued and the Eastern Ashina-Türk realm fell to the subject Basmil (also led by Ashina rulers) who were, in turn, toppled by their allies the Uyğurs, aided by the Qarluqs and Oğuz in a dizzying series of revolts in 742–43.

The Head of the last Eastern Ashina-Türk ruler, Ozmiš Qağan,⁹ was dispatched to the Tang. The Qarluqs, fleeing (745) their erstwhile allies, the Uyğur Qağans, supplanted the fading Western Qağanate in 766.¹⁰ The Uyğur Qağanate (744–840), largely controlling the old Eastern Türk realm, erected, like their predecessors, a series of steles with inscriptions in Turkic runiform script composed in the late 740s–late 750s, announcing themselves as the new—or restored—masters of the Turko-nomadic imperium, claiming a Qağanal status that had preceded that of the Ashina-Türks. Theirs, they implied, was the true *restauratio imperii*.¹¹

⁷ Golden, 'Some Notes': 43–66. Sinor, 'Some Components': 147, correctly views the events of 552 as an 'internal conflict', suggesting that the 'bulk' of the Rouran/Avars 'were incorporated' into the Türk realm. He ignores the evidence of further Türk conflict with elements of the Rouran (555) and the European Avar question (on the latter, see Pohl, *Die Awaren*).

⁸ Dating of the division is disputed. For the most recent discussion, Erkoç, 'Batı Göktürk': 43–72.

⁹ Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 180, 230; Uyğur Šine Usu inscription (N9–10, Berta, *Szavaimat*: 283–84) and the Tibeto-Uyğur report (Ms Pelliot Tibétain 1283: Venturi, 'An Old Tibetan': 28–29).

¹⁰ On the Türk Qağanate, see Divitçioğlu, *Orta Asya Türk İmparatorluğu*; Ercilasun, *Türk Kağanlığı*: 36–337; Golden, *An Introduction*: 115–41; Gömeç, *Kök Türk Tarihi*; Scharlipp, *Die frühen Türken*: 18–67; see also Chavannes, *Documents*; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*; Taşağıl, *Gök-Türkler*, vol. 1–3. Gumilëv, *Drevnie tjurki* has to be used with caution.

¹¹ Kamalov, *Drevnie ujgury VIII–IX vv.*: 58–95; Klyashtorny, 'The Tes Inscription of the Uighur Böğü Qaghan': 149–52. Vasjutin, 'Ujgurskoe "carstvo" VII v.': 41–65, questions whether this 'First Uyğur Qağanate' was actually a state. The Qarabalğasun inscription (810/821) in which the Turkic is largely effaced contains Chinese and Sogdian texts.

The Chinese accounts employed 突厥 *Tujue*¹² ‘Türks’ not as a generic gentile encompassing all Turkic-speaking groups but only to denote the Türks proper.¹³ In Chinese sources, only two ‘successor states’ retained the ethnonym *Türk/Tujue*: the Khazars (ca. 630s/650–965/969) in the Western Eurasian steppes, whose royal house probably derived from the Ashina: ‘Türk Khazar’ (突厥可薩 *Tujue Kesa*, 突厥曷薩 *Tujue Hesa* in the Tang dynastic annals),¹⁴ and the ‘Shatuo Türks’ 沙陀突厥 (*Shatuo Tujue*, from the seventh to the tenth century),¹⁵ who periodically figured in Chinese affairs.¹⁶ Mention is also made of the *Muma Tujue* (木馬突薩 ‘wooden-horse Türks’—a reference, in a section dealing with the Qirgiz, to some kind of Türks using skis) and the *Niuti Tujue* (牛蹄突薩 ‘ox-

¹² *Tujue*: EMC *dwət kuat* LMC *tfiut kyat* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 311, 168) represents a plural form, *Türküüt*, which came to Chinese via Sogdian intermediaries (Kafesoğlu, *Umumi Türk Tarihi*: 18–19; Kasai, ‘The Chinese Phonetic Transcriptions’: 102–10), cf. Sogd.tr *wkt*, *trwkt*, *turkt* ‘Turks’ > *trwkc trukč* ‘Turk’ (Gharib, *Sogdian Dictionary*: 389 [9635], 391 [9682]). The earliest known inscription from the First Türk Qaghanate, Bugut (ca. 582), Moriyasu and Ochir, *Provisional Report*: 123, has: (Bugut-1,1): *rty (m)[wn]’jk nwm (sn)k’ ’wst’δ’r-’nt tr-’wkt’ (’šy-n’s kwtr’it ’’χšy-wn-k—*‘Kings of the Turkish Ashinas tribe (*kwtr’it*, *kwtr’r*, *kwtr* ‘race, family, lineage’, Gharib, *Sogdian Dictionary*: 201 [5061, 5062]) have established [this] stone of law’. A rather different reading was given earlier by Klyashtorny and Livšic, ‘The Sogdian Inscription’: 85: B1: 1: (*mwh?*) [...] (*pt*)s’*kh ’ws’i δ’r’nt tr’wkt c(y)nst’n kwtr(s)’it ’šywn’k* (‘This [...] stele was erected by the Turks (under) *Kwts’it* the ruler of China’). The readings remain problematic. Tibetan records *drugu* (Venturi, ‘An Old Tibetan’: 9, 12) but terms the Eastern Türks: ‘*Bug chor*. Beckwith, ‘The Chinese Names’: 13–18 and Beckwith, ‘The Frankish Name’: 5–12, maintains that *Tujue* transcribed **türkwač*/**türkbač* ‘ruler(s) of the Türks’. Gumilëv, *Drevnie tjurki*: 22–23, considered *Türküüt* a Mongolic (plural) form. In Old Turkic, *türk* meant ‘the culminating point of maturity (of a fruit, human being, etc.)’. As an adjective it connoted ‘just fully ripe; (of a human being) in the prime of life, young and vigorous’ (Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*: 542–43). Kafesoğlu derived it from Turk. *Törü*—‘to come into existence, to be created’ (cf. Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*: 533) and rendered *Türk* as ‘developed, fully developed’, that is, ‘strong, powerful’, positing: *Törüük > Türük > Türk* (Kafesoğlu, *Umumi Türk Tarihi*: 21–23). Róna-Tas (*An Introduction to Turkology*: 10–13) conjectured a non-Turkic origin: Khotan Saka *tturakā* ‘covering’ (semantically stretched to ‘helmet’, see Wolf Tale I) that in a Turkic-speaking environment could become *Türk*, a homonym of *türk*, ‘strong’ and so on. Khotan Saka documents, however, call the Türks *ttürka* or *ttürka* (Bailey, *Indo-Scythian Studies*: 101–02).

¹³ Clauson, ‘Turks and Wolves’: 10. Senga, ‘“Northern” Neighbors’: 68–69, opines that *Tujue* in Tang sources was not exclusively used for Turkic-speakers.

¹⁴ Shirota, ‘The Chinese Chroniclers of the Khazars’: 231–61.

¹⁵ Shatuo 沙陀 EMC: *ša i/šə:da* LMC: *ša: tša* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 273, 314).

¹⁶ See Alptekin, *Sha-t’o Türkleri*.

hoof Türks’).¹⁷ The *Baifu* (白服 ‘white clothed’) and *Huang tou* (黃頭 ‘yellow head’) *Tujue*¹⁸ are also noted, but their ethno-tribal connections are uncertain. In some situations, *Türk* became a politonym, embracing its subject peoples,¹⁹ not all of whom accepted it willingly. When Türk political power collapsed, the older names resurfaced. The Uyğurs, among others, subsequently employed the name ‘Türk’ to denote a Turkic literary *koine* (*Türkçä*). The continuity of specific forms of governance and titlature by peoples stemming from the Türk Qağanate may also points to some consciousness of ‘Türk’ political roots. In time, however, due to migrations away from the Türk core ‘holy’ lands in Mongolia and the impact of new religions (especially Islam), new genealogical dispensations appeared.²⁰ *Türk* became widely used by Muslim, Byzantine and other authors as a generic term to denote the largely Turkic-speaking Central Eurasian nomads with whom they were coming into ever-increasing contact.²¹

The Turkic world becomes more visible following the collapse of the Xiongnu polity (by the mid-second century CE). Although Xiongnu

¹⁷ These references stem from a report of Du Huan, one of the Arabs taken captive in the Battle of the Talas in 751. Fragments of it are preserved in Chapters 192, 193 of the *Tongdian*, the *Xin Tangshu* (217b.6144) and later works. The *Niuti Tujue* are also noted in the report of Hu Qiao (the mid-tenth century), who was a captive in the north, preserved in the *Qidan guozhi* (E lun-li, *Istorija*: 328), which makes reference to people(s) called *Tujue*. See also Senga, “‘Northern’ Neighbors’: 59–72; Sinor, ‘Some Components’: 154, who cites (pp. 64–65) reports from Muslim authors about the use of ox thighbones ‘as a kind of ski or skate’ in Volga Bulğaria and lands to its north. Ms PelliotTibétain 1283 (Venturi, ‘An Old Tibetan’: 31 [l. 93]) notes the Turkic tribe *Ud ha dag leg* = Turk. *Uđ ađağlığ* ‘ox [or bovine]-footed’ (Senga, ‘A T’ung-tien’: 40–43, Senga, “‘Northern’ Neighbors’: 66–69, places them near the Urals or in the basins of the upper Ural and Tobol rivers).

¹⁸ Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 388, vol. 2: 732–33, nn. 1877–78 (*Jiu Tangshu*, 194B, 196B); Mackerras, *The Uighurs*: 102–03, 164, n. 202; Sinor, ‘Some Components’: 152–53; Sinor, ‘The Establishment’: 288–89.

¹⁹ User, *Köktürk ve Ötüken Uygur*: 293; (KT, E18): *türgiř qağan türkümüz bodunumuz ärti* ‘the Türgiř Qağan was our Türk, our people’, that is, a ‘subordinate, subject people’.

²⁰ Golden, *Ethnicity and State Formation*; Golden, ‘The Turkic World in Mahmüd al-Käshgharī’: 503–55.

²¹ See Kafesoğlu, *Umumi Türk Tarihi*: 24–25. Lee, ‘The Historical Meaning’: 101–32, argues that the ethnonym *Türk* virtually disappears from non-Muslim sources after the fall of the Türk Qağanate and did not have an afterlife except as a generic in the Muslim sources. However, Τοῦρκοι in Byzantine and *Türkäyē* in Syriac sources (Dickens, *Türkäyē: Turkic Peoples*) encompassed a wide array of steppe peoples. *Ṭwrq* (Hebrew) and *Tork* (Eastern Slavic), presumably deriving from *Türk*, denoted the Oğuz in the Ḥazar and post-Ḥazar era (Golb and Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*: 37, 104, 114–15, 120–21, 132–33).

ethno-linguistic affiliations remain uncertain, it is clear that their subjects included Turkic-speaking peoples.²² Usually stateless, the clans and tribes of this nomadic world in the course of interaction with their ‘imperial’ neighbours were transformed into militarily more effective polities²³ led by a ruling clan or tribe. Scholarship is divided as to whether their political morphology was monocentric, stemming from a single large confederation termed ‘*Oğur*’ (West Old Turkic)~‘*Oğuz*’ (East Old Turkic),²⁴ or polycentric, that is, having multiple origins.²⁵

Türk Origin Tales

With these prefatory remarks, we may now turn to the ethnogenic reports about the Türks. From the Türks we have little. They began to leave

²² Sima Qian, *The Grand Scribe's Records*: 267, 271 [110.2893, 2896] (Sima Qian, 146–86? BCE, completed the *Shiji* in 91 BCE) and the *Hanshu*: 9, 14 [94A.3752,3757] (by Ban Gu et al.) presented in 96 CE (Wilkinson, *Chinese History*: 704–14, 26), report that the Xiongnu *chanyu* 冒頓/頓 Modu/Modun (ca. 234–174 BCE, OC *mək tũns*, LH **mək tuən*^c (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 113 [5-37a], 336 [34-17j]; Beckwith, *Empires*: 387, n.8 = *bağtur > *bağatur) ca. 206–202 BCE (Di Cosmo, ‘Aristocratic Elites’: 27; Pulleyblank, ‘The Chinese and Their Neighbors’: 454–56), conquered in southern Siberia the Dingling (subsequently the Tiele, see further), 堅昆 Jiankun LH *kən kuən* < *kên-kün* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 333 [34-1a]), 隔昆 Gekun OC: *krək kũn* LH: *kək kuən* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 130 [8-2f], 333 [34-1a]), *Qirgiz* < *Qirgür*, 蕤犁 Xinli OC *sin ri/ri* LH *sin lei/li* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 322 [32-33n], 281 [26-24g]: *Sir* and the 烏揭 Wujie OC *?a gat, kat* LH: *?a g iat, k iat*/呼揭 Hujie OC: *hã, hãh gat*, LH: *ha*^(c), *g iat, k iat* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 49 [1-17h], 231 [21-1n], 51 [1-28a], 231 [21-1n]); **Haga*^a = **Oğur*~*Oğuz*? The Ashina-Türk are conspicuously absent.

²³ Definitions are problematic, see Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*: 5–9: ‘imperial confederacies’; Kljaštornyj, *Runičeskie pamjatniki*: 200–02: ‘archaic empires’; Kradin, *Kočevniki Evrazii*: 36, 61–65, 111–73; Kradin, ‘Stateless Empire’: 77–96: ‘super complex chieftaincies’, ‘primitive early states’, ‘exopolities’, ‘xenocracies’ and ‘steppe empires’.

²⁴ Kljaštornyj, *Runičeskie pamjatniki*: 198–99. *Oğur*~*Oğuz*, initially appears to have denoted some kind of organised kinship grouping and later acquired a politico-ethnonymic association (Golden, ‘Oq and Oğur~Oğuz’: 180–81, 184–86). The Chinese accounts often rendered *Oğuz* as *xing* 姓 ‘surname, family’ (cf. Toquz Oğuz = *Jiu Xing* 九姓, Tibetan *drugu rus dgu* ‘Turks of the nine bones’, Venturi, ‘An Old Tibetan’: 24 [l. 25] and n. 59), thereby referencing the earlier meaning of this term (‘kin, kinship grouping’). The -r~z shift (and other phonological features that distinguish West Old Turkic from East Old Turkic) probably took place sometime after the third century BCE and most definitely before the fifth century CE (Róna-Tas, *The Hungarians and Europe*: 101–04; Róna-Tas and Berta, *West Old Turkic*, vol. 2: 1112–14).

²⁵ Saraev, ‘Diskussija o proisxoždenii’: 98–99. Lee and Kuang, ‘A Comparative Analysis’: 204, n. 26–29, concludes that the various Turkic peoples did not have a ‘single origin’ or ‘common (Turkic) identity’. Overall, they were of East Asian phenotype ‘with a number of exceptions’.

historical records in the form of steles inscribed in Sogdian during the first Türk Qağanate.²⁶ These have survived only in fragments. Writings in Turkic touching on historical matters appear in the early eighth century with the second Türk Qağanate. In the runiform inscriptions for Kōl Tegin (E, 1)/Bilgā Qağan (N, 2) we find only a formulaic statement of cosmic and human origins:

[W]hen the blue heaven/sky above and brown earth below were created, between them humankind was created and my ancestors, Bumīn Qağan and İštāmi/İstāmi Qağan having sat upon the throne (as master) over humankind, organized and set in order the Türk realm and law.²⁷

The origin tales of the Türks, which may be divided into ‘Wolf Tale I’, ‘Wolf Tale II’,²⁸ ‘the Shemo/Žama Tale’ and a ‘Historical Account’, were recorded in Chinese dynastic histories and historical compilations based on or copied from the same source(s) and repeated in later collections of historical tales.²⁹ In addition, there is a ‘Dog Tale’ reported in a Tibetan-Uyğur account.³⁰

Wolf Tale I

The earliest version of Wolf Tale I is recorded in the *Zhoushu* (50.907–08),³¹ which was written in a period in which China was in frequent, direct

²⁶ Bugut, which also has a section written in Brahmi script (still undeciphered) and Xiao Hongnahai/Mongolküre, ca. 600 (Stark, *Die Alttürkische Zeit*: 71–75; Stark, ‘Luxurious Necessities’: 477–83).

²⁷ Berta, *Szavaimat*: 139–40; Ölmez, *Orhon-Uyğur*: 80, 123.

²⁸ According to Kljaštornyj, *Runičeskie pamjatniki*: 199: both are variants of the same legend reflecting the migrations that brought the Ashina to the Altay. They also point, he opines, to the beginnings of the four major groups of ancient Turkic-speaking peoples: Türk, Qirğiz, Qipčaq and Oğuz, reflecting their ‘genealogical kinship’.

²⁹ The dynastic histories: *Weishu* (551–54), *Zhoushu* (636), *Suishu* (636), *Beishi* (659), *Jiu Tangshu* (945), *Xin Tangshu* (1060), *Qidan guozhi* (1247), the *Tongdian* (801), an ‘encyclopaedic history of institutions of government’, the *Yuyang zazu* (a miscellany from ca. 855), the *Taiping Guangji* (976–78), historical fiction, the *Cefuyuangui* (1013), a historico-literary collection and *Zizhi Tongjian* (1086), a critical compilation (Wilkinson, *Chinese History*: 615–16, 626, 631, 646, 736–37, 741, 769–77, 957).

³⁰ Ms Pelliot Tibétain 1283 (see further).

³¹ Chapters in the Chinese accounts generally follow those given in Erkoç, ‘Türk Mitlerindeki’. As a non-Sinologist, the renderings and paraphrases of these tales given

contact with the Türks.³² It is largely identical with the account in the *Beishi* (99.3285), which contains additional comments. It has been argued that the *Zhoushu*'s section on the Türks was lost and was replaced by the account in the *Beishi*, both, perhaps, drawing on no longer extant earlier works. Neither is the original account.³³ The *Suishu* (84.1863), compiled at virtually the same time as the *Zhoushu*, has an almost identical version, taken from the latter or derived from the same source(s).³⁴ Later versions are found in the *Tongdian* (197.5401–02) and considerably abbreviated in the *Cefuyuangui* (958, 112251b–52a)³⁵—again drawing on the same source(s). The ‘origin tale’, with its slight variations in the aforementioned sources, should be read as one account, to or from which the authors added or subtracted elements:

The ancestors of the Türks lived on the right bank of the Western Sea.³⁶ The Türks are a separate tribe of the Xiongnu. Their family name is Ashina. They formed a tribe that was independent of the Xiongnu, but later were attacked by a neighbouring state³⁷ and all were killed except for a ten-year old boy. When the enemy soldiers saw that he was so young, they did not have the heart to kill him, so they cut off his feet and threw him into a grass-covered swamp. Here, there was a she-wolf who fed the young boy meat. He grew up and had relations with the she-wolf, who became pregnant. When the king of the neighbouring state learned that the youth was still alive, he again sent men to kill him. When they saw a she-wolf beside the young man, they wanted to kill her too. The she-wolf fled to a mountain in the north in the state of Gaochang (Turfan).³⁸ There was

further are based on the translations of Liu, Sinor, Taşağıl, Erkoç, Kirilen and Kapuzoğlu and examinations of the original texts (with the help of Sylvia Wu Golden).

³² Clauson, ‘Turks and Wolves’: 11; Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 223–24, suggests that it ‘represents the tradition probably most current among the majority of the Türks themselves’.

³³ Clauson, ‘Turks and Wolves’: 11–13; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 473.

³⁴ Harmatta, ‘A türkök eredetmondája’: 386–87; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 474.

³⁵ Taşağıl, *Gök-Türkler*, vol. 1: 110–11.

³⁶ Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 495, n. 41, ‘Western Sea’ (*xi hai* 西海) has many possible meanings designating different bodies of water from the Mediterranean, Caspian and Aral Seas to Kuku-nor. In the Sui era (581–618) it was viewed as being near Byzantium (Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 226). Taşağıl, *Gök-Türkler*, vol. 1: 95, n. 553 identifies it with Etsin-Gol, which is more likely.

³⁷ Kirilen, ‘Türeyiş Destanı’nda’: 73–88, on the basis of circumstantial evidence, suggests that this state was Kucha in Xinjiang (Yıldırım, *Doğu Türkistan’ın*: 169–73).

³⁸ *Beishi*: ‘at that moment, it was as if a divine entity threw the she-wolf to the east of the Western Sea. She landed in the northwest of the Gaochang state’, see Liu, *Die chinesischen*

a cave in this mountain in which there was a broad plain with abundant grass. This plain, which stretched out for hundreds of *li* and was surrounded on all sides by mountains. The she-wolf hid in the mountains. Here, she gave birth to ten sons. When they grew up, they went out of the cave and married women from the outside. They brought many children into the world. Each of these descendants took a family name and one of them took the name Ashina.³⁹ Their children and grandchildren increased until they constituted some hundreds of families. After some generations,⁴⁰ they became subjects of the Ruru.⁴¹ In the period of the Great Yabǵu⁴² their lines/families became stronger. They settled/lived in the southern slopes of the Jinshan (Altay Mountains)⁴³ and worked as blacksmiths for the Ruru. Since the Jinshan had the appearance of a helmet (兜鍪 *doumou*); and they called a ‘helmet’ *tujue*, they called themselves *Tujue*.⁴⁴

Nachrichten, vol. 2: 488, n. 5; Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 225. Gaochang = Qočo/Qara Ҳоја/Turfan İdiqu Şähri in Xinjiang (Yıldırım, *Doğu Türkistan’ın*: 95–98, 122–24). Kucha and Gaochang/Qočo were areas of Tokharian speech that were later Turkicised (Tremblay, *Pour une histoire*: 36–46).

³⁹ *Beishi*, *Suishu*: ‘He was the cleverest among them and became their ruler. In front of the gate to the camp (the Türks) placed a standard with a wolf’s head on it, so as to show that they had not forgotten their origins’, see Clauson, ‘Turks and Wolves’: 14; Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 225. Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 9 ‘a golden wolf’s head’ (*Zhoushu*), 40 (*Suishu*).

⁴⁰ *Beishi*: the tribe or band was led out of the cave by Axian (阿賢): OC: *á yien* (Harmatta, ‘A türkök eredetmondája’: 395, suggests: Turk. *aqın* ‘flowing, jet (of water), ray, shaft of light’), EMC: *ʔa ʔen* LMC: *ʔa xfijian* (Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 6, 40 II: 490 n. 18; Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 23, 335; Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 225). Axian bore the high title *šad*, of probable Iranian origin (Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*: 866).

⁴¹ *Ruru* 茹茹: EMC *ɳi ä ɳi ä* LMC *riä/ryä riä/ryä*, variant: 蠕蠕 EMC: *ɳi ä ɳi ä* LMC: *riä/ryä* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 268, also pronounced *Ruāruān* ‘wriggling [worms, insects]’, a pejorative version of the name used by the Tabǵač/Northern Wei rulers of Northern China). These are the Asian Avars/*Rouran* 柔然, EMC *ɳuw ɳian* (*ibid.*, 267, 264), OC *nu nan*, LH *nu nan* MC *ńǰəu ńǰän* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 180 [13-48a], 258 [24-36ab]); MC: *nyuw nyen* (Kroll, *Dictionary*: 389, 383); see Golden, ‘Some Notes’: 52–53.

⁴² *Da yehu* 大葉護[護]. *Yabǵu* a high-ranking Inner Asia title (Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*: 873) going back to the Yuezhi and Kušans (Sims-Williams, de la Vaissière, Bosworth, ‘Jabǵuya’ <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jabguya>).

⁴³ Jinshan (金山), lit. ‘Golden Mountain’, cf. Turk. *altun/altın*>, Mong. *alta[n]*, Tungus-Manchuric *altan*> Manchu *aysin* ‘gold’, see Dybo, *Lingvističeskie kontakty*: 67, 125; Sevortjan, *Étimologičeskij slovar*: 142–43.

⁴⁴ Erkoç, ‘Türk Mitlerindeki’: 39–40, 46; Kırilen, *Eski Çin in Ötekisi*: 159–60; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 5, 40; Ögel, ‘Doğu Göktürkleri’: 84–86; Ögel, *Türk Mitilojisi*, I: 20–21; Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 224; Taşaǵıl, *Gök-Türkler*, vol. 1: 95. Clauson, ‘Turks and Wolves’: 13, pointed out that Old and Middle Turkic texts note a very different word for ‘helmet’: *yışiq* (subsequently *yaşik*, *yoşuq*, Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*:

The *Zhoushu*, following a discussion of Türk investiture customs titles and offices of government, adds that the Türks:

place on the tops of their standards a golden wolf's head. Also, the imperial guard corps⁴⁵ of the ruler was called *Fuli*, a word that has the meaning of 'wolf' in Chinese translation. The Türks stem from a she-wolf and do not want to forget their origins.⁴⁶

Wolf Tale I is followed by another in the *Zhoushu* (50.908), *Beishi* (99.3286), *Tongdian* (197.5402) and *Cefuyuangui* (956.11252a).⁴⁷

Wolf Tale II

Other traditions report that the ancestors of the Tujue derived from the Suo state,⁴⁸ which was located north of the Xiongnu:

977, with uncertainty regarding vocalisation; Nadeljaev et al., *Drevnetjurkskij slovar*: 269 *yīšīg*, *yīšīq*), cf. Middle Qipčaq *ašiq*, *yīšīq* (Toparlı, Vural, Karaatlı, *Kıpçak Türkçesi Sözlüğü*: 14, 322; Golden, *The King's Dictionary*: 285: قوشی *yoşuq*/Güner, *Resûlî*: 134: *yaşuq*). Ottoman: قوشی *aşiq* 'an iron helmet' (Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon*: 125). Obviously, none of these forms can be connected with *Tujue*, most probably a folk etymology from an unidentified language.

⁴⁵ Chin. 侍衛 *shi wei* 'imperial body guard(s)' (Ošanin, *Kitajsko-russkij slovar*, vol. 3: 44 [5326]); Sinor, 'Legendary Origin': 234.

⁴⁶ Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 9; Sinor, 'Legendary Origin': 234; Taşağıl, *Gök-Türkler*: 10. Chin. 附離 *fuli*: EMC: *buð^hlið/li* LMC: *ffjyð/ffiuðli* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 101, 187) = Turk. *börü/böri* 'wolf'.

⁴⁷ Erkoç, 'Türk Mitlerindeki': 40–41; Kirilen, *Eski Çin'in Ötekisi*: 160–61; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 5–6; Ögel, 'Doğu Göktürkleri': 86–88; Sinor, 'Legendary Origin': 226–27; Taşağıl, *Gök-Türkler*, vol. 1: 96. The *Hanshu* (66b.3908) mentions 附離 OC: *po/boh*, *bôhrai/raih* LH: *puo/bo^c*, *bo^c liai/liai^c* MC: *pju/bju^c*, *bau^clje^c* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 155 [10-39d], 214 [18-11f]), a Wusun king with a name that might represent *böri* (Jila, 'Myths': 167).

⁴⁸ Suo 索 OC: *sák* LH: *sak* MC: *sák* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 72 [2-33a]); EMC, LMC: *sak* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 298); *sak*, *sak*, *sag* (Coblin, *Compendium*: 383[0881]). Harmatta, 'A türkök eredetmondája': 391, identified Suo with the ethnonym *Saka* and noted the connection with Han-era Sai 塞 OC: *sák(h)* LH: *sək*, *sək^c* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 111 [5-28a]) but considered the terms representations of two different Saka groupings. Beckwith, *Empires*: 405, n. 53, also argues that Suo renders *Saka* and cites Menander, *History*: 116/117: 'the Türks, who had formerly been called the Sacae' (ὄτι τῶν Τούρκων τῶν Σακῶν καλούμενων) as evidence for the Saka connection. Vásáry, *Eski İç Asya*: 99–100, associates Suo with the Xianbei. Clauson, 'Turks and Wolves': 14 and Sinor, 'Legendary Origin': 227, were doubtful about attempts to identify Suo.

The chief of the tribe was Abangbu,⁴⁹ who had seventeen (*Beishi*: seventy) brothers.⁵⁰ One of them was called Yizhi Nishidu,⁵¹ who was born of a she-wolf. Abangbu and his brothers were stupid and slow-witted (愚癡 *yu chi*) and thus their state was, in the end, attacked and destroyed (by others). However, (Yizhi) Nishidu was touched by a spirit {had supernatural powers} and because of that he could summon forth wind and rain.⁵² He married two women. One was the daughter of the Summer-God and the other the daughter of the Winter-God.⁵³

⁴⁹ 阿誘步 OC: *ʔäi päŋh bäh* LH: *ʔa <ʔaipəŋ^cba^c* MC: *ʔä pwāŋ^c bu^c* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 211 [18-1m], 88 [3-57k¹], 60 [1-65a]); OC: *ä pwāŋ b¹uo* NWTang: *äp^w äŋ-b¹o* (Harmatta, 'A türkök eredetmondája': 393); EMC *ʔa paŋ^h b^h* LMC *ʔa paŋ^h p^hüü^h* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 23, 29, 43), ONWC: *ʔa paŋ bo* (Coblin, *Compendium*: 124 [0016], 384 [0886], 147 [0079]), MC *ʔa pwangH buH* (Kroll, *Dictionary*: 1, 10, 29). Harmatta, 'A türkök eredetmondája': 393, finds *apanpu* reminiscent of Kettic *femba*, *haŋba*, *həaŋba*, the term for 'Tungus', which can be traced back to **faŋba* or **p¹aŋba*.

⁵⁰ Erkoç, 'Türk Mitlerindeki'; Kirilen, *Eski Çin'in Ötekisi*: 160, n. 160; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 489. n. 9; Sinor, 'Legendary Origin': 226: 54 points out that '70' was also the number of followers who first joined İlderiş Qağan when he revolted against the Tang and revived the Türk Qağanate, as reported in the Köl Tegin Inscription (732). His followers fell like 'wolves' (*böri tög*) on their foes (KT, E12, see Berta, *Szavaimat*: 147). The KT inscription in describing the revival of the Türk Qağanate may be harkening back to the earlier origin myth.

⁵¹ 伊質泥師都 OC: *i tšjē nei ši tuo*, NW Tang: *i tšj(ō) ni ši t¹o* (Harmatta, 'A türkök eredetmondája': 393); OC: *ʔi tət ni/nj¹?ni^h sri/OCB: srjij/ tā* LH: *ʔi tšis nei/nei^h/nei^c ši ta* MC: *ʔi 4 tšj^cnei¹/nei^h/nei^c ši tuo* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 278 [26-13a], 307 [30-10a], 281 [26-25d], 283 [26-36a], 33 [1-38e¹]); EMC **ʔji tçit ne^h ši to*, LMC **ʔji tçit nia¹ š¹ tu^h* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 365, 406, 224, 281, 81). The etymology and linguistic affiliations are problematic. Harmatta, 'A türkök eredetmondája': 393, proffers Yeniseic (Kottic) **Itšinišit¹o* 'sorcery/magic-teacher'.

⁵² A reference to the *Yada taši* 'rain-making stone' that various Turkic rulers were credited with possessing. Ibn al-Faḡīh (writing ca. 903) comments that the 'king of the Toquz Oğuz' (in Arab accounts usually denoting the Uyğurs) possessed 'little stones' (*hašan*) with which he could summon rain at will (Ibn al-Faḡīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān*: 639); Gardīzī, *Ta'riḥ*: 547, has a long tale about a holy name, which when uttered would bring rain. Noah transmitted it to his son Japheth (Yāfiṭ), who wrote it on a stone. Japheth was considered the ancestor of the Turks. The stone also had healing powers. Its possession was contested among the Oğuz, Qarluqs and Khazars and others. Gardīzī reports that it was in the possession of the Oğuz, see Golden, *An Introduction*: 119. On wind and rain-summoning shamans et al. among Siberian peoples and the *yada taši*, see also Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen*: 220–23. *Yada* is of Iranian origin: Avest. *yātu* 'magic, sorcery', Old Pers. *yātūka* 'magician, sorcerer', Class. Pers. *jādū* 'magician', etc. (Édel'man, *Étimologičeskij slovar'*, vol. 4: 133–34). Harmatta, 'A türkök eredetmondája': 390, n. 23, 391, also notes connections with Siberian shamanistic lore.

⁵³ According to Ibn Faḡlān, *Two Arabic Travel Books*: 214/215, the Bāšgird (Bashkirs) had 12 'lords' (*rabb*) including one for winter and one for summer as well as lords for rain,

One of them bore four sons. One son changed himself into a white swan.⁵⁴ Another son founded a state between the Afu⁵⁵ and Jian⁵⁶ Rivers. The state was called Qigu.⁵⁷ The third son ruled on the Chuzhe River.⁵⁸ The fourth brother

wind, trees, people, horses, water, night, day, death, the Earth and the sky. The latter was ‘the greatest but he acts consensually’; each lord ‘approves of the actions of his partners’. The lord of the sky is *Tängri*.

⁵⁴ *Zhoushu*: 白鴻 *bai hong* ‘white taiga bean goose, brenta’ (Ošanin, *Kitajsko-russkij slovar*, vol. 3: 509 [7707]); Ögel, *Türk Mitolojisi*, vol. 2: 140–41, translates *hong* as ‘stork’ (*leylek*), noting this as an example of shape-shifting.

⁵⁵ 阿輔: OC: *â b’ju*, NW Tang: *â b’i* (Harmatta, ‘A türkök eredetmondája’: 391, who relates it to Iran. *âpa* ‘water’ > *aba*; OC: *ʔâi baʔ* LH: *ʔa bua^B* < *ʔai* MC: *ʔâ bju^B* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 311 [18-1m], 60 [1-67v]; EMC: *ʔa buǎ*’ LMC: *ʔa ffjyǎʔ/fhuǎ* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 23, 100). Erkoç, ‘Türk Mitlerindeki’: 41; Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 228: Abakan River. Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 489, n. 10, identified it with the Ubsa Lake/(Ubsu/Uvs Nu[u]r) in Mongolia-Tuva.

⁵⁶ 劍: OC *kjom* (Harmatta, ‘A türkök eredetmondája’: 391); OC: *kams*, ONW: *kam* LH: *kima^c* MC: *kjəm^c* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 348 [36-6i]); EMC *kiam^B* LMC: *kiam* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 148) = the Kem River = the Yenisei/Upper Yenisei (Erkoç, ‘Türk Mitlerindeki’: 41; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 489, n. 11; Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 228; User, *Köktürk ve Ötüken*: 146; Yıldırım, *Türk Tarihi İçin*: 58: Ulukem, Tuvin. *Ulu xem* ‘big River’ = Upper Yenisei). The word *Kem/Käm* is perhaps of Samoyed origin (Vásáry, ‘Käm, an Early Samoyed Name’: 469; but Janhunen, ‘Etymological and Historical Aspects’: 70–73, questions its Samoyedic or Yeniseic origins). Kem is today the name of a tributary of the Yenisei.

⁵⁷ 契骨 EMC: *kʰejʰ kwət* / *kʰit kwət* LMC: *kʰjaj^h kut*, *kʰit kut*, (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 248 111); MC *khejH kwot* (Kroll, *Dictionary*: 140) = Qırqır (Qırqız > Mod. Turk. Qırğız). Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 228–29, cites the *Youyang zazu* that the Qırğız ‘do not belong to the race of the wolf’. Rather, Qırğız origin tales relate that they stemmed from the mating of a spirit and a cow and lived in a cave north of the Kögmän Mountains (see further); see also Ögel, *Türk Mitolojisi*, vol. 1: 21–22. In the Orxon inscriptions, the Qırqız are noted as having a Qağan (BQ, E, 20 N, 26–28, KT, E, 25, N, 13; Berta, *Szavaimat*: 155, 161, 164–65, 185). Eberhard, *Kultur und Siedlung*: 46, also reports that they lived mixed with the 丁靈 Dingling: LH *teŋ teŋ* < **tēŋ-rēŋ* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 137 [9-11a]) > 狄歷 Dili (EMC: *dej-k-lejk*) / 特勒 Tele (EMC: *dək lək*) / 勒勒 Chile (EMC: *tʰik lək*) / 直勒 Zhile (EMC: *drik-lək*) > 鐵勒 Tiele (EMC: *tʰet-lək*) = **tägräg*. The Tiele union included the Toquz Oğuz, among whom the Uyğurs were paramount (Erkoç, ‘Türk Mitlerindeki’: 63, n. 34; Pulleyblank, ‘High Carts’: 22). *Tiele* et al. may be a Tabğaç (Mongolic/Para-Mongolic) term for ‘wagon’ (Kljaštornyj, *Runičeskie pamjatniki*: 162–63, that is, ‘the people of the wagons’ denoting the Oğuz). The *Tiele* were also termed 高車 *Gaoche* ‘high carts’ (Pulleyblank, ‘The High Carts’: 22), pointing to a semantic connection with **tägräg*. Some later tales replace the cow of the Qırğız origin myth with a red dog.

⁵⁸ 處折 OC: *tš’wo tšjät* = **tšutšə* = **čöčö*; Harmatta, ‘A türkök eredetmondája’: 392, EMC: *tčʰ iǎʰ tciat* LMC: *tšʰiǎʰ tšʰyǎʰ tšiat* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 60, 400). Harmatta, Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2, n. 13; Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 228, identified it with the Yenisei, or middle Yenisei.

lived on Jiansi Chuzheshi mountain.⁵⁹ He was the eldest of the four sons. On this mountain there also lived other branches of Abangbu's tribe. It was often very cold {and damp} there and the oldest son provided fire for them so they could warm themselves and remain alive. Thus, they were saved and they chose the oldest son as their chief and gave him the name Tujue. He was NeduliuŠad.⁶⁰ He had ten wives, each of whose sons took the clan [族 *zu*] (name) of [his] mother as his family name (姓 *xing*).⁶¹ Ashina was the son of his concubine (小妻 *xiao qi*, lit. smallest/least of his wives). After the death of Neduliu, they wished to elect one of the sons of the ten mothers to succeed him. They gathered under a great tree and agreed that the one who could jump the highest up the tree would be selected as their leader.⁶² The son born of Ashina was the youngest son, but he jumped the highest. Thus, the other sons made him their chief (主 *zhu*'lord, master'). He was called Axian Šad.⁶³

This account differs from the other one (in the *Zhoushu*), but both agree that the Tujue stem from a she-wolf. The descendant (grandson) of Axian

⁵⁹ 踐斯處折施 Jian si chu zhe shi: EMC: *dzian' siə/sitə' iə' tciat ciə'ci* LMC: *tsfian' szɦiə' iə' tsiə' yə' tsiat ši* (Kirilen, *Eski Çin'in Ötekisi*: 161, n. 164: citing Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese Reconstruction*, version of 20 February 2011; Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 148, 291, 60, 400, 282). OC: *dzienX sej tsyhoH tsyet sye*. According to Harmatta, 'A türkök eredetmondája': 392. OC: *dž' iän siə tsjəwo tsjät siə' iə'*, NW Tang: *džän si tsi tsiə' ši* = Kettic: *šon šis i-iə' dži/šig, šij* 'Blue stone Mountain'/'Blue Mountain' suggesting it could be the Kögmän Mountain (< Turk. *kök* 'blue') usually identified with the western Sayan or the Tannu Ola Range (Aydm, *Eski Türk Yer Adları*: 107–10; Erkoç, 'Türk Mitlerindeki': 41; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 489–90, n. 14; User, *Köktürk ve Ötüken*: 150–51).

⁶⁰ *Zhoushu*: 訥都六 Neduliu: EMC *nwət tə luwk* LMC *nut tuə' liwk* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, 222, 81, 198, 279, 訥 has alternate pronunciations: *na* and *nuo*); see also the *Tongdian* and *Cefuyuangui* (Sinor, 'Legendary Origin': 227–28; Taşağıl, *Gök-Türkler*, vol. 1: 96, 111). The *Xin Tangshu*, 215, 2b (Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 490, n. 18): 訥都陸 Nedulu: EMC *nwət tə luwk* LMC *nut tuə' liwk* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 222, 81, 201), MC *nwət tu ljuwk* (Kroll, *Dictionary*: 320, 92, 285).

⁶¹ Ögel, 'Doğu Göktürkləri': 109, indicating a matriarchal society?

⁶² The 'great tree' is clearly a reference to the 'sacred tree'/'tree of life', a 'frequently invoked and ritually significant' element in Inner Asian belief systems (DeWeese, *Islamization*: 45).

⁶³ Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 6, 40 II: 490, n. 18). Sinor, 'Legendary Origin': 227, Axian Šad, is again noted, as in Tale I, but not as the one who led them out of the ancestral cave. While Sinor viewed him as 'a legendary figure', Harmatta ('A türkök eredetmondája': 388) considers him the 'first truly historical' figure in the ethnogenic legends, while not completely excluding the mythical or quasi-mythical Neduliu. He suggests that 訥都六 *Neduliu* could be a corruption of *譚 ('vulgar' form of 嗎) 部六 **Yüliu* = Old Northwest Tang China. **ju-l(i)-lu*, that is, Yolluğ noted among the earliest Türk qağans in the Terx inscription, E1 (*yol[l]wy*, Berta, *Szavaimat*: 248; Rybatzki, 'Titles': 211–13: *yol[l] uğ* 'lucky'). 嗎 however, is not pronounced *yu/yü*, but *shen*: EMC *cim* LMC *šin*' (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 280). My thanks to Ching-i Tu, Victor Mair and Fangyi Cheng for assistance with 譚.

Šad was Tumen⁶⁴ (i.e., Bumīn, first Qaġan of the Türks). (*Xin Tangshu* 215, 2b: the ancestor of the Western Türks was Tuwu,⁶⁵ a grandson of Nedulu. He was called a Great Yabġu. Tumen (Bumīn) was the oldest son of Tuwu and grandson of Nedulu.)⁶⁶ When Tumen's tribe became somewhat stronger, they came to the border to trade for silk fabrics.

Historical Account

The 'historical account' precedes 'Wolf Tale I' in the *Suishu* (84.1863). It is repeated in the *Beishi* (99.3285), *Tongdian*, 197.5401) (159), *Cefuyuangui* (956.11251b)⁶⁷ and *Zizhi Tongjian* (159.4926).⁶⁸

⁶⁴ 土門 EMC: *tʰuǎ* *mǎn* LMC: *tʰuǎ* *min* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 312, 211); MC: *tʰuo*⁸ *mwǎn* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 53, 332 [1-36a], [33-35a]); MC *thuH mwǎn* (Kroll, *Dictionary*: 460–61), 300 meaning 'earth, soil, land, ground, god of the soil–gate/door', 'gateway, portal, family, group, faction, sect, community'± has the alternate literary pronunciations *du* and *cha*. Kljaštornyj and Livšič, 'The Sogdian Inscription': 85–86; Dobrovits, 'Silziboulos': 67, n. 1, read Bugut (B2: 8–9): **by*[y] *bwmy*n γ'γ'n, but Moriyasu and Ochir, *Provisional Report*: 123–24 and Ölmez, *Orhon-Uyğur*: 67–68 lack **Bumyn*. If **by* *bwmy*n γ'γ'n is correct, it could denote 'Lord of the Earth Qaġan': Bumīn < Iran. *būmī* 'land, country', Middle Pers. *būm*, Sogd. *βwmh*, *βwm* [vūm] (Rastorgueva and Édél'man, *Étimologičeskij slovar*', vol. 2: 134–35; Rybatzki, 'Titles': 206–08, 217–19). Lurje, *Personal Names*: 238 [663] notes *Bwmy*n [Būmēn] recorded on a post-Sāsānid seal. 伊利可汗 *Yili Kehan* EMC: *ʒji li^h k'a^h γan* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 364, 188, 173, 118), a title, which Bumīn bears in the *Zhoushu* (50). *Suishu* (84, Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 7, 41) may render Turk. *ellig Qaġan* 'the Qaġan possessing land/a polity', that is, the 'lord of the Earth Qaġan', but other readings (e.g., *İri Qaġan*) are possible (Atwood, 'Some Early': 50–53). See also Erkoç, 'Batı Göktürk': 44, n. 1, 45, n. 2.

⁶⁵ Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 490, n. 18; Chavannes, *Documents*: 47: 'the ancestor of the western Türks is Tuwu, grandson of Nadulu'. 吐務/吐务 Tuwu: OC: *t'uo-miu*, NW Tang: *t'om'u* from **uβu*, which could stem from Kamasin Samoyed *t'ibi*, *t'ibi* 'man' (Harmatta, 'A türkök eredetmondája': 396), EMC: *tʰuǎ* *muǎ*^h LMC: *tʰuǎ* 'ujyǎ'^h *ouǎ*' (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 312, 327).

⁶⁶ Kljaštornyj, *Runičeskie pamjatniki*: 199–200, views this 'genealogical legend' as containing elements of the stages of the ethnogenesis of the Qirġiz, Qipčaq ('white swan') and Tiele (Oġuz), confirmed, in his view, by archaeological finds in the Sayan-Altay zone from the third to the fifth century. The claim to the lofty titles *Šad* and *Yabġu* implying ties with the Rouran Qaġanal house is probably a fiction invented by the Ashina-Türks after they took the Qaġanate. Bumīn's revolt in 552 was sparked by the Rouran Qaġan's disdainful rejection of his request for a Rouran princess-bride (Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 7), calling him 我鐵奴 'my iron-working slave'.

⁶⁷ Erkoç, 'Türk Mitlerindeki': 40, n. 7; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 40; Ögel, 'Doġu Göktürkleri': 85; Ögel, *Türk Mitolojisi*, vol. 1: 84; Taşaġıl, *Gök-Türkler*, vol. 1: 12, 95, 110–11.

⁶⁸ Cited in Kljaštornyj, *Drevnetjurkskie runičeskie pamjatniki*: 106, n. 142.

The ancestors of the Tujue were mixed Hu⁶⁹ from Pingliang.⁷⁰ They had the family name Ashina. When the Emperor Taiwu (r. 424–52) of the Northern/Later Wei destroyed Mujian⁷¹ ruler of the Xiongnu state of Northern Liang (397–439) in the Gansu Corridor led by the Juqu clan,⁷² the Ashina fled with 500 families to the Ruru.⁷³ They lived for generations on the Jinshan (Altay) Mountains, where they worked as makers of iron implements.⁷⁴ Since⁷⁵ the Jinshan looked like a helmet and people call a ‘helmet’ *tujue*, for this reason they called themselves by this name. According to another legend, their ancestors reigned above the Western Sea...

⁶⁹ Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 519, n. 207: 雜胡 *za hu* ‘Barbaren, die rassenmässig mit anderen Barbaren vermischt waren’; *za hu* ‘mixed, not homogeneous, not of one kind, heterogeneous’. ‘Northern foreign tribesmen (Xiongnu, Mongols, Turks), foreigner, northern barbarian’ (Ošanin, *Kitajsko-russkij slovar*’, vol. 2: 351 [1462], vol. 3: 159). Kljaštornyj, *Drevnetjurkskie runičeskie pamjatniki*: 106–07, defines: *za hu* as Xiongnu ‘mixed with the local population of this part of Gansu’. *Hu* ‘Steppe nomads’, a term of unknown etymology (Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*: 281), in Han times (206 BC–221 CE), was usually associated with the Xiongnu (Di Cosmo, *Ancient China*: 127–30; Pulleyblank, ‘The Chinese and their Neighbors’: 449–50). In the Sui era (581–618) *hu* denoted Central Asian Iranians, especially the Sogdians (Abramson, *Ethnic Identity*: viii, 19–20, 87; de la Vaissière, *Histoire des marchands sogdiens*: 56, 58, 61, 65, 120–21 *et passim*; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 490–91, n. 22, 584, n. 786).

⁷⁰ In Gansu, see Erkoç, ‘Türk Mitlerindeki’: 46; Harmatta, ‘A türkök eredetmondája’: 386; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 519, n. 207; Taşağıl, *Gök-Türkler*, vol. 1: 12.

⁷¹ 敕捷 LH: *muk k ian* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 113 [5-39a], 253 [24-8c]).

⁷² Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 519, n. 209. 沮渠 Juqu: EMC *dz iä*’ *g iä* LMC: *tsfiiä*’*tsfiiä*’*kfiä*’*kfiä*’ (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 164, 260). In the *Tongdian* (197, 1067/1c, Taşağıl, *Gök-Türkler*, vol. 1: 95 (Chinese text in appendix), the clan name is written as: Qiequ 且渠 EMC: *ts^hia*’*g iä* LMC: *ts^hia*’*g iä*’ (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 253, 260). 且 also pronounced *ju* EMC: *tsiä* LMC: *tsiä*’*tsyä*’ (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 162) = EMC: *tsiä*’*g iä* LMC: *tsiä*’*tsyä*’ *g iä*’.

⁷³ In 439, a period of drought and political uncertainty prevailed (Xudjakov, *Zolotaja volč’ja golova*: 22–23). Survivors of the Northern Liang/Hexi state (Borovkova, *Gaočan*: 45–48, 50–59) continued on in Gaochang until the Rouran took it in 460 (Kim, *Huns*: 30–31).

⁷⁴ Borovkova, *Gaočan*: 92–94, suggests that they acquired their metallurgical skills in Pingliang, where they were weapons makers for the Rouran, and expresses doubts that the Jinshan (‘Golden Mountain’) noted here is necessarily the Altay, which is at some distance from Pingliang. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Ashina brought with them from Gaochang and Gansu a variety of bows and swords superior to those of other groupings in the Altay assuring their domination of local tribes (Xudjakov, *Zolotaja volč’ja golova*: 19–30). Whether they were masters of weapon making or had become masters of local weapon makers is unclear. Access to iron was one of their sources of power (Stark, ‘Luxurious Necessities’: 465–77).

⁷⁵ Clauson, ‘Turks and Wolves’: 13, labels this part of an otherwise ‘plausible story’, a lapse ‘into phantasy’.

This passage sums up a concluding phase in the pre-history of the Ashina. Following the fall of the Han dynasty in 220, there was an influx of Xiongnu, Xianbei and other tribes into Northern China, where they created ephemeral polities (the ‘Sixteen States’, 304–429). The forebears of the Ashina, a ‘Xiongnu’ grouping,⁷⁶ came to Gansu after 265. Here, they absorbed local elements becoming the ‘mixed Hu’ of Pingliang, the later Ashina-Türks. The Ashina, together with the Northern Liang princes, Wuhui (d. 444) and Anzhou (d. 460),⁷⁷ fled to Gaochang, which came under Rouran rule in 460. The Ashina were subsequently resettled on the Altay probably ca. 439 and most certainly before 487 or 492, other dates that have been suggested.⁷⁸

Wolf Motif

In the Orkhon inscriptions, the Ashina-Türk Qağans repeatedly proclaimed their heavenly mandate to rule, addressing often recalcitrant, newly subdued core and subject peoples. The tale of a numinous wolf ancestress had an ideological–spiritual resonance among many of their northern subjects.⁷⁹ Implicit in this were hints at shaman-like connections to the spirit world exemplified by the ceremonial ritual strangulation of the Qağan at his investiture, which brought him into contact with the supernatural and allowed him to predict the length of his reign.⁸⁰ Wolf Tales I and II share a highly significant theme beyond lupine ancestry: Ashina is one of 10 siblings. In reality, the Ashina were the leading clan of a grouping of 10 clans (or tribes), the inner core of the Türk union.⁸¹ The decimal

⁷⁶ Pulleyblank, ‘The Chinese and Their Neighbors’: 454–55, suggests that the Ashina derived from ‘the debris of the Southern Hsiungnu who settled along the northern Chinese frontier’.

⁷⁷ 無諱 Wuhui LH: *mua*^B/*mua hui*^C (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 62 [1-69agh], 292 [28-5s]), 安周 Anzhou (LH: *ʔan tʂu* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 253 [24-11a], 174 [13-26ahi]).

⁷⁸ Borovkova, *Gaočan*: 52–60 (on the Northern Liang); Kim, *Huns*: 30–31; Kljaštornyj, ‘Xunni i tjurki’: 121–25; Kljaštornyj, *Drevnetjurkskie runičeskie pamjatniki*: 106–11; Mair and Cheng, ‘The Relationship’: 236.

⁷⁹ Drompp, ‘Lone Wolf’: 525–26.

⁸⁰ Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 8.

⁸¹ Czeglédy, ‘On the Numerical Composition’: 275–81. Dobrovits, ‘The Thirty Tribes’: 257–62, argues that the 30 tribes of the Türks consisted of the 10 tribes of the Eastern Türks (Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 453–54, with their *tamğas*, citing the *Tang huiyao*, Wilkinson, *Chinese History*: 645, compiled by Wang Pu, 922–82) plus the Ashina = 11, the 10 tribes of the Western Türks (On Oq) and the nine tribes of the Toquz Oğuz.

system of socio-military organisation, well known in Eurasia, probably existed in the Ashina-Türk pre-polity.⁸² The wolf motif found physical expression in the relief on the Bugut stele in which a child appears to be under a wolf's belly.⁸³

The Wusun and Uyğurs shared the wolf motif in different forms. The Wusun⁸⁴ (from the second century BCE to the early sixth century CE) are first noted as neighbours of the Yuezhi⁸⁵ in the Qilian-Dunhuang region and west of the Xiongnu. Both were driven westward by the Xiongnu in the second century BCE. Their ethno-linguistic affiliations—Indo-European (perhaps Indo-Iranian or Tokharian)—remain disputed.⁸⁶ The Wusun have a tale in which the *Kunmo/Kunmi*,⁸⁷ orphaned heir of their vanquished tribal leader, Nan doumi 難兜靡⁸⁸ (defeated by the Xiongnu), is nourished

Clauson, 'Turks and Wolves': 15, mistakenly identified the 10 tribes of the Türks with the Western Türks and maintained that the origin tale legends referred only to the latter. He also suggested (with caveats) that the tales were not from the Türks but from others, quite possibly foes, who wished to spread derogatory tales about their ancestry. The usually perceptive Clauson completely missed the wolf motif so common in ethnogenic tales across Eurasia.

⁸² Stark, 'On Oq Bodun': 163.

⁸³ Kljaštornyj and Livšic, 'The Sogdian Inscription': 71, 96. Drompp, 'Lone Wolf': 519–24, considers the Bugut image 'our most important piece of evidence' for the wolf ancestral theme 'beyond the Chinese sources'. This interpretation of the images has been challenged by Stark, 'Luxurious Necessities': 478–81, who sees a dragon, and Hayashi, 'Illig Qaγan': 49, 'a pair of dragons' heads' and no baby's body.

⁸⁴ 烏孫 Wusun: OC *ʔā sūn*, LH *ʔa suən* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 333 [34-1a51 [1-28a], 339 [34-28E]], perhaps *Ašwin = Ašvin 'the Cavaliers', see Beckwith, *Empires*: 376–77, who suggests that they 'could well have been Old Indic speakers'. Cf. discussion in Hill, *Through the Jade Gate*, vol. 2: 91–105. Jila, 'Myths': 162–63, on arguments for their Turkic speech.

⁸⁵ 月氏 (old form: 月支) OC: **ɲʷjat/ɲwat geʔ* /ke LH: *ɲyat*, S *ɲ iotdže^β<gie^β/tše<kie* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 241[22-8ag], [alt. pronunciation *shi*] 121 120 [7-3a]). Beckwith, *Empires*: 5–7, 83, 380–83. Early OC **nokwet* in a 'highly archaic border dialect' of OC: **Tok^war* = Tokharians. The literature on the Yuezhi question is too extensive to cite here.

⁸⁶ Mair and Cheng, 'The Relationship': 239, n. 15. Wusun represented 'a country or a mixed group, rather than a single ethnic group', including Iranian (Saka) and Yuezhi.

⁸⁷ 昆莫 OC *kūn māk*, LH *kuən mɑː* MC *kwən muo^c* 昆彌, *kunmi* OC *kūn meʔ*, LH *kuən mie^β* MC *kwən mjie kwən mjie^β 4* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 333[34-174], 74 [2-40ad 彌 = 彌 125 [7-20o]). Beckwith, *Empires*: 376–77, prefers the *Hanshu* form: 昆彌, *kunmi* MC **kwənmji* and suggests that this represents **kin*/**kēnmē/bē*, perhaps Old Indic.

⁸⁸ *Hanshu*, 61.4216 (Hill, *Through the Jade Gate*: 93; Pulleyblank, 'The Wu-sun': 156–57) OC: *nān tō maiʔ* LH: *nanto mi*ai*^β* MC: *nān təu mjie^β 3* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 258 [24-35dg], 148 [10-12a], 218[18-18h]).

by a she-wolf (or wolves) and ravens in the steppe.⁸⁹ The similarities between the Wusun and Türk wolf tales as well as a posited connection between Ashina and **Ašvin* have suggested a relationship between the two⁹⁰—although this is far from certain. Interestingly, in the Ashina tale, lupine descent is maternal. In contrast, the Gaoche (Dingling/Dili/Tiele)⁹¹ ~Toquz Oğuz (subsequently Uyğurs-led) union, claimed a lupine male ancestor. In the *Weishu* (103.2307) and *Beishi* (98.3270), they are presented as the fruit of the union of a daughter of the Xiongnu *chanyu* and a wolf.⁹² Like the Türks, the Uyğurs also had wolf-head banners.⁹³ However, the Uyğurs (and Tiele union) are presented as distinct from the Ashina-Türks, although both shared ‘Xiongnu’ connections. The Ashina-Türk-Uyğur enmity antedated the rise of the Türk state.⁹⁴

The wolf theme is ancient and widespread across Eurasia, from Rome to Inner Asia.⁹⁵ Whether it came to the Ashina from neighbouring ‘Scythian’ peoples⁹⁶ or was part of a possible ancient Iranian patrimony remains an open question. ‘Wolf-men’ figure prominently in the warrior cults and foundation tales of a number of states of Indo-European origin.⁹⁷ Among

⁸⁹ Cf. *Hanshu*, 61.4A-B: Beckwith, *Empires*: 6–7; Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*: 214–15; Jila, ‘Myths’: 163–65; Yu, *A Study of Saka History*: 131–45.

⁹⁰ Dromp, ‘Lone Wolf’: 517; Mair and Cheng, ‘The Relationship’: 235–44; Zuev, *K étničeskoj istorii usunej*: 14.

⁹¹ Kljaštornyj, *Runičeskie pamjatniki ujgurskogo kaganata*: 164–65. Lee and Kuang, ‘A Comparative Analysis’: 200–01. The Tiele (see earlier) were largely, but not universally, Turkic speaking and appear well before the Ashina-Türk are first recorded in the sources.

⁹² Bičurin, *Sobranie*, vol. 1: 213–15; Erkoç, ‘Türk Mitlerindeki’: 63–64; Ögel, ‘Doğru Göktürkleri’: 96–97; Ögel, *Türk Mitolojisi*, vol. 1: 17–18; Roux, *La religion*: 188–89.

⁹³ *Xin Tangshu* (217A.3b) in Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire*: 57.

⁹⁴ Lee and Kuang, ‘A Comparative Analysis’: 203. The Türks defeated a Tiele (Toquz Oğuz-Uyğur) attack on their Rouran overlords in 546 (Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 7). The Terx inscription (E, 16-19) references the fall of the Türk Qağanate, the disorders among the (Toquz) Oğuz and the earlier Uyğur Qağanates (Kljaštornyj, *Runičeskie pamjatniki*: 36, 39, 176–78).

⁹⁵ Drompp, ‘Lone Wolf’: 517–18; Jila, ‘Myths’: 166–75.

⁹⁶ Roux, *Le sang*: 42–43, 52. Pole-axes of chieftains decorated with a wolf’s head are found in the Kama region and date from the sixth to the fourth century BC, see Goldina and Chernykh, ‘Forest and Steppe’: 42.

⁹⁷ Kershaw, *The One-eyed God*: 27, 59, 60–61, 118–19, 134–42; Roux, *La religion*: 188; White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*: 28. Vedic powers were associated with them as were warrior cults, whose members were caught up in ‘wolfish rage’ (Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice*: 131–37; Speidel, ‘Berserks’: 280–81, 85; West, *Indo-European*: 450–51). Berserkers (Norse *úlfhednar* ‘wolf-skinned’) mimicked wolfish ways and donned wolf skins.

the Türks (and later the Činggisid Mongols) the wolf was worshipped as an ancestor, whereas in other wolf tales (e.g., Roman, Sāsānid), it is a ‘divinely guided nurse’.⁹⁸

The wolf motif and the cavern motifs, whatever their origins, played an important role in the symbolic life of the Türks.⁹⁹ ‘Holy caves’ were a means to enter the ‘underground world’, which was much like the one previously mentioned. These notions were well known in Siberian shamanism.¹⁰⁰

A wolf-headed man is noted in a tale in the *Taiping Guanji*¹⁰¹ (292.128) and *Xin Tangshu* (6139), appearing as a ‘guest’ (or mendicant) seeking the leader of the Xueyantuo union¹⁰² (which briefly rose to power after the fall [630] of the First Türk Qağanate in the east). The wolf-headed guest was fed by his Xueyantuo host and then left. The Xueyantuo followed this curious being to the Ötüken. There, they were frightened off by two men they encountered who said: ‘We are supernatural (神 *shen*) beings. The Xueyantuo will be destroyed. We have come to take the head of your leader.’¹⁰³

Ġardīzi in his section on the Turkic peoples recounts a tale in which the ‘sparseness’ of the facial hair of the Turks and their ‘canine disposition’ are attributed to the wolf’s milk (along with ant’s eggs) that was given

⁹⁸ See Drompp, ‘Lone Wolf’: 518.

⁹⁹ *Zhoushu* (Pelliot, ‘Neuf notes’: 213–14): ‘The Qağan resides continually on the Ötüken mountain. Every year he leads the nobles to perform sacrifices at the ancestral cavern.’ *Suishu* (Chavannes, *Documents*: 15): ‘Every fifth month, on the eighth day, they (the Western Türks) gather to offer sacrifices to the spirits. Every year they send a high functionary to the cavern where their ancestors resided to offer sacrifices to them.’

¹⁰⁰ Tatár, ‘Mythology as an Areal Problem’: 269–70.

¹⁰¹ A collection of fiction/literary works of the Song era (it appeared in 978), it was copied from the *Youyang zazu* (Kapusuzoğlu, *Taping Derlemesinde Türkler*: 9–11; Wilkinson, *Chinese History*: 651–52).

¹⁰² Chin. 薛延陀 EMC: *siat jian da* LMC: *siat jian tfa*, Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 351, 356, 314). Kljaštornyj, *Istorija Central’noj Azii*: 305 saw in the Xueyantuo a possible rendering of *Sir Yamtar. While the *Sir* constituted an important Turkic confederation, *Yamtar* is noted only as a personal name (cf. KT, E33, ißbara Yamtar/YamDar, Berta, *Szavaimat*: 159). On the Ashina-Türk-Xueyantuo rivalry and relations with China, see Pan, *Son of Heaven*: 140–43, 176–78, 189–94, 200, 214; Taşağıl, *Çin Kaynaklarına Göre*: 102–11 (his identification of the Xueyantuo as the Sir Tarđuş, often made, is questionable).

¹⁰³ Kapusuzoğlu, *Taping Derlemesinde Türkler*: 14, 82 (Chinese text); Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 460, with a variant of this tale.

to Japheth, the ancestor of the Turks, during a childhood illness.¹⁰⁴ The evocation of wolf's milk points to what may be a reflection of the Ashina tale. Al-Birūnī (973–1048) in his comments on the origins of the Turkišāhī dynasty of Kabul mentions that they derived from the Turks and the first of their kings was 'Burha Tegin' (or Baraha Tegin) who entered a cave in Kabul and several days later a person 'emerged as though being born from his mother's belly', attired in Turkic clothing. He was designated king with the title 'Shah of Kabul'. Kljaštornyj connected Baraha with Turk. *Baraq* is 'a long-haired dog',¹⁰⁵ which was perhaps a taboo name for the lupine ancestor and with the importance of a cave in the Ashina legend.¹⁰⁶

The wolf continued as a potent symbol in Qıpçaq religious beliefs,¹⁰⁷ before their conversion to Islam in the Činggisid era. Relics of it remained among the Qaračay-Balqars of the North Caucasus.¹⁰⁸ In the southwestern/Oğuz Turkic languages, *bōri* is regularly replaced with Osm. *qurt/ḳurt*, Azeri *gurd* and Türkmän *ḡurt*, a word originally (and still) denoting 'worm' in other Turkic languages (including Oğuz).¹⁰⁹ *Bōri* was probably tabooed in Oğuz, as it denoted a magical, holy totem/ancestor,¹¹⁰ but its continuation in the other Turkic languages was not affected. A satisfactory explanation is still lacking. Interestingly, in the version of the *Oğuznāma* recorded in Uyğur script and composed in old Oğuz-Qarluq mixed Turkic sometime in the fourteenth century,¹¹¹ Oğuz Ḥan, the eponymous founder of the Oğuz polities who bestows names on other Turkic peoples, declared that *kök bōri* ('blue wolf') will be the battle cry (*uran*) of his people.¹¹²

¹⁰⁴ Drompp, 'Lone Wolf': 518–19; Gardīzī, *Ta'riḥ-i Gardīzī*: 547; Martinez, 'Gardīzī's Two Chapters': 118. The Japhetic origin of the Turks is a commonplace in many medieval Muslim and Jewish genealogies of the nations.

¹⁰⁵ Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*: 360.

¹⁰⁶ Kljaštornyj, 'Al-Birūnī's Version': 248–51. For the reading *burha* see Rezakhani, *Reorienting the Sasanians*: 168.

¹⁰⁷ Golden, 'Wolves, Dogs and Qıpçaq Religion': 97–98.

¹⁰⁸ Golden, 'Qaračay Nart Tale': 160–63.

¹⁰⁹ In Turkish dialects, *bōri* can denote 'worm, insect, scorpion, spider' (Blagova, *Étimologičeskij slovar'...na bukvu 'K'*: 167–68; Sevortjan, *Étimologičeskij slovar'...na bukvu 'B'*: 219–21).

¹¹⁰ İnan, *Makaleler*: 625–27; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 1: 461.

¹¹¹ Bayat, *Mitten Tarihe*: 37–40.

¹¹² Bang and Rachmati, 'Die Legende': 690 [l. 99], 696 [ll. 217–18] (the *kök bōri* speaks to Oğuz Ḥan); Drompp, 'Lone Wolf': 519; Bayat, *Oğuz Destanı*: 64–75 (equating the *boz qurt* ['gray wolf'] of Oğuz tradition with the *kök bōri* and repeating the inaccurate identification of Ashina with Mong. *čino* 'wolf').

Shemo (Žama) and the Deer Tale

The ‘Shemo/Žama Tale’ is recorded in the *Youyang zazu* (4.44–45) and the *Taiping Guangji* (480.3957).¹¹³

The ancestor of the Tujue bore the name Shemo,¹¹⁴ the god of the *Šar Sea.¹¹⁵ This sea was west of the cave of the Ashide tribe.¹¹⁶ Shemo had a divine power. Every day at sunset, the daughter of the Sea-God mounted a white deer¹¹⁷ and met with Shemo. Together with him she went into the sea and the next day, emerged from it and saw him off. This went on for years. Later, when a great hunt drew near, at midnight the daughter of the Sea-God said to Shemo: ‘Tomorrow when you are going to hunt, a white deer with golden antlers will come out of the cave where your ancestors were born and it will try to run

¹¹³ Erkoç, ‘Türk Mitlerindeki’: 41–43 (*Youyang zazu-Taiping Guangji*); Kapusuzoğlu, *Tapiing Derlemesinde Türkler*: 12–13 (*Taiping Guangji*); Ōsawa, ‘The Cultural Relationship’: 401–03 (*Youyang zazu*); Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 230–31 (*Youyang zazu*).

¹¹⁴ Chin. 射摩 *Shemo* EMC: *zia^h ma*, LMC: *šfiā^h mua* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 279, 217), alternate pronunciation *shi mo /ye mo /yi mo*: EMC: *ziajk ma /jia^h ma /jiajk ma* LMC: *šfiājk mua /jia^h mua /jiajk mua* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 283, 364, 370, 217). Erkoç, ‘Türk Mitlerindeki’: 42, 60 reads it as *Yama*, following Ōsawa, ‘Revisiting the Ongi Inscription’: 168; Ōsawa, ‘The Cultural Relationship’: 401, n. 2, (dated 732?, Ongi, W-1): *ačūmiz apamiz *yama Qağan* (‘Our ancestor Yama Qağan’), but most readings of the inscription have: **yamī Qağan* (cf. Ölmez, *Orhon-Uygur*: 190). We find the name (title?) in Tibet Ms Pelliot Tibétain 1283: *Zha-ma Kha-gan* (Venturi, ‘An Old Tibetan’: 20–21, 27, 29). Atwood, ‘Some Early Inner Asian Terms’: 78–79, n. 157, argues that Tibet. *zha-ma* is from EMC *zia^h ma* (see also Erkoç, ‘Türk Mitlerindeki’: 42–43, n. 10). Rybatzki, ‘Titles’: 209, finds the Zhama-Yamī identification unconvincing. A later, LMC (Tang-era) form, Atwood avers, would have produced in Tibetan *sha-’ba*. This would imply Chinese intermediation in the Uyğuro-Tibetan text, for which we have no evidence. Overlooked in these discussions is the still unidentified ‘Šāba [هباش] Ḥāqān’ a great ‘king’ of the Türks defeated at Herat in 588/589 by Bahrām Čōbīn. His name (or more probably title) is strikingly similar (Golden, ‘The Great King’: 26–43). The *m-b* alternation is well known in Turkic.

¹¹⁵ Chin. 射摩舍利海神 *shemo sheli hai shen*. *Sheli* 舍利: EMC *cia^h li^h* LMC *šia^h li^h* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 278, 279, 188). *Sheli* = *Šar (unidentified). Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 230, translates it as ‘Shê-mo-shê-li, a lake spirit’.

¹¹⁶ 阿史德 Ashide: EMC *pašitak* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, pp. 23, 283, 74) = *Aštaq? This is the name of the consort or ‘in-law’ clan of the Ashina (Zuev, *Rannie tjurki*: 33, 34, 86–88, 168). Bailey, *Indo-Scythian Studies*: 104–05, suggested a resemblance to Iranian **xšaita* ‘ruler’, cf. Sogd. *xšēd*, *axšēd* ‘ruler’. Atwood, ‘Some Early Inner Asian Terms’: 57, 73–75, proffers *A-she-tig* or *A-shi-teg*. Ms Pelliot Tibétain 1283: *a-sha-sde* = *Ashide* (Venturi, ‘An Old Tibetan’: 21).

¹¹⁷ On the deer and white-coloured sea-goddess motifs in Turkic and Turko-Mongolian tradition, see Ögel, *Türk Mitolojisi*, vol. 1: 569–83, vol. 2: 101–09.

away from there. If you shoot an arrow and hit it, you will be able to continue to maintain a close relationship with me. If you shoot at it and cannot hit it, we will part forever'. The next day when he surrounded the cave where his ancestors were born, the white deer with golden horns appeared at the mouth of the cave. Shemo sent his attendants left and right to surround [the area] and when the white deer was going to jump out, one of his men hit it [with an arrow]. Shemo was extremely angry and with his own hands he killed the leader A'er¹¹⁸ and swore an oath: 'After this we will have to offer human sacrifices to Heaven (天 *tian*)'. The majority of the sacrifices will come from A'er's tribe (部落 *buluo*). Thereafter, they will kill and sacrifice the sons and grandsons of this tribe to Heaven. Up to our day, the Türks (Tujue), offer human sacrifices in accordance with this tradition to a banner (纛 *du/dao*) and the group uses this banner. Shemo after having killed A'er, when evening came, the daughter of the Sea-God came returned to him, however the daughter of the Sea-God seized Shemo and said 'you have killed someone with your own hands and stink of foul blood, we have no shared future [together]' and ended their relationship.

Tibetan Dog Myth

The Ms Pelliot Tibétain 1283 includes a report of a mission of five Uyğur envoys to the Inner Asian Turkic world.¹¹⁹ It contains a version of a legend that would appear to reflect points of contact with the Wolf Tale. The report breaks off with fragments of yet another legend regarding the 'savage Türks', which is too incomplete to be intelligible. The 'report' has been discussed by a number of scholars and still poses many problems¹²⁰:

To the north of these, beyond the great mountain chain of sandy desert (l. 69) there are two tribes of the king of heaven.¹²¹ At the time when the rule of Zha

¹¹⁸ 阿兒 *A'er* (Ošanin, *Kitajsko-russkij slovar'*, vol. 4: 439 [12656]: *ēr/wa*): LH: *ʔa <ʔaiñe* MC: *ʔāñže* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 211 [18-1m], 123 [7-11e]), MC 'anye (Kroll, *Dictionary*: 1, 101).

¹¹⁹ Most probably from an oral source and then written in Tibetan (hence the various renderings of foreign names) composed sometime between 744 and the end of the eighth century (Venturi, 'An Old Tibetan': 1–8: Tibetan text: 15–18, trans.: 19–32, in particular 29–30, ll. 68–84).

¹²⁰ See bibliography in Erkoç, 'Türk Mitlerindeki': 44–46 and Venturi, 'An Old Tibetan': 33–35.

¹²¹ Venturi, 'An Old Tibetan': Tängri Qağan?

ma qaghan, the king of the 'Bug chor,¹²² was peaceful, when [he] led the army in this direction, the army could not pass and (l. 71) two men went wandering about. Having run into the tracks of a female camel, as the tracks went towards pure water, near a herd of female camels (l. 73), they ran into a pure woman, and, speaking in Turkic, the woman led [them] and they followed [her] into hiding. A pack of dogs¹²³ (l. 75) that was chasing game came back, so the dogs perceived them with their nose and [they] prostrated to the dogs. Then, the dogs loaded on ten female camels whatever they needed and water to cross over the sandy desert (l. 77), and having sent [them] back, they arrived (i.e., returned) to the country of the Turks. [p. 30] The first dog descended from heaven. It emanated into two, a red dog and a black dog, and as a consort, (l. 79) whilst [they] found a she wolf and mated [with her], she was not suitable for children. Then, [they] abducted a maiden from the wing of a Turkic household and united with that girl. As for the male children, [they] came out as dogs. Concerning the daughters, (l. 81) [they] came out as human and appeared as pure women (i.e., genuine women). Concerning the tribe of the red dog, it is called Ge zir gu shu.¹²⁴ Concerning the tribe of the black dog, it is called Ga ra gu shu¹²⁵ and the dogs and (l. 83) the women speak in Turkic. As for [their] wealth and food, such as cattle, (l. 83) the women put it together and use it. Beyond that, none have heard tell that there are men.

Conclusions

There are no direct references to the Ashina-Türks as necessarily a nomadic people in the origin tales. The references to *Hu* components and Xiongnu antecedents are open to several interpretations. *Hu*, by this time, denoted not only 'Northern steppe nomads' but included other groupings,

¹²² Cf. Chin. 默啜 Mochuo EMC: *mək tɕ^hwiat* LMC: *muək ts^hyat* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 218, 63); MC *mjuk ts^hiwät* (Schuessler, *Minimal*: 113 [5-38de], 241 [22-10c]) = Beg čor? Bögü čor? This is Qap[a]ğan Qağan killed by the Bayırcu (716), following a campaign. Venturi, 'An Old Tibetan': 20–21: 'twelve tribes of the 'Bug chor Turks: the king Zha ma Qaghan (...) [among the tribes are the] A sha sde' (= Ashide), 24: 'the 'Bug chor the great chief of the nine tribes, which are called in Tibetan the nine bones'. Sinor, 'Some Components': 152–53 (citing Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, vol. 2: 733, n. 1876), 156, notes the *mochuo* 默啜 *tujue* mentioned by the Tang official Zhang Jiuling (648–740) and equates them with 'Bug chor, which he views as a 'political' term denoting 'a real people'.

¹²³ Erkoç, 'Türk Mitlerindeki': 61–63, viewing this 'report' as a variant of the wolf tale, suggests that the Tibetans in their translation of the Uyğur report rendered 'wolf' as 'dog'.

¹²⁴ Venturi, 'An Old Tibetan': 'red snouts' Turk. *qizil küšü* (Ligeti, 'A propos du "Rapport"': 186).

¹²⁵ Venturi, 'An Old Tibetan': 'black snouts' Turk. *qara küšü* (Ligeti, 'A propos du "Rapport"': 186).

in particular Central Asian Iranians, especially the Iranian-Sogdian mercantile diaspora. The Xiongnu, while predominantly pastoral nomads, also practised ‘small-scale farming’ and controlled subject agrarian populations.¹²⁶ ‘Nomads’ in Central Eurasia and the Middle East have often moved along a sliding scale, from a ‘pure nomad’ (a relative rarity) to a settled agriculturalist with a strong pastoralist component. Economic strategies were flexible.¹²⁷ The culture of the later imperial-age Türks was ‘complex’ but pastoralism predominated.¹²⁸

The themes of ‘enclosure and emergence’, which figure in the origin accounts, were part of a complex web of themes in which ‘a Mountain, a Tree, a Cave, Water and a Female Spirit’ all figure prominently.¹²⁹ The cave/ancestral cavern theme appears in the legends and historical accounts.¹³⁰ It should be underscored that the she-wolf tales focus on the Ashina, not on other Turkic peoples who have their own origin accounts (lupine and non-lupine), while the Ashide/*Aštaq appear indirectly in the Tibetan Dog Tale. The tales, as Sinor noted, clearly represent different traditions, albeit with more points of intersection than he accepted. Nonetheless, one can agree with his conclusion regarding ‘the composite ethnic character of the Türks’, comprising non-Turkic elements as well.¹³¹ The eastward orientation of the Türks (not typical of the Turkic peoples), and their peculiar numerical system, Sinor argues, further underscores their non-Turkic origins.¹³² Some DNA tests point to the Iranian connections of the Ashina and Ashide,¹³³ highlighting further that the Türks as a whole ‘were made up of heterogeneous and somatically dissimilar populations’.¹³⁴ Geographically,

¹²⁶ Di Cosmo, ‘Ancient Inner Asian’: 1094–195.

¹²⁷ Honeychurch, *Inner Asia*; Khazanov, *Nomads*.

¹²⁸ Kubarev, *Kul'tura*: 149.

¹²⁹ DeWeese, *Islamization*: 11, 43–48, 273.

¹³⁰ Sinor, ‘Legendary Origin’: 235–36; Sinor, ‘Some Components’: 147–49; Sinor and Kljaštornyj, ‘The Türk Empire’: 329–30.

¹³¹ Sinor, ‘Some Components’: 146–47, 152; Sinor and Kljaštornyj, ‘The Türk Empire’: 328–30.

¹³² Sinor and Kljaštornyj, ‘The Türk Empire’: 330. Mair and Cheng, ‘The Relationship’: 241–43 present a more complicated picture, based on Türk-era burials, indicating a variety of practices. Moreover, the early Uyğur inscriptions employed the same numerical system (Erdal, *Grammar*: 220) and elements akin to it are partially preserved in Sariğ Uyğur (Šera Yoğur). Tenišev, *Sravnitel'no-istoričeskaja Grammatika[...]/Morfologija*: 179–80, viewed this system, which evolved over time, as part of ‘Proto-Turkic’.

¹³³ Wen, Muratov and Suyunov, ‘The Haplogroups’: 154–57.

¹³⁴ Lee and Kuang, ‘A Comparative Analysis’: 198, 211–30.

the accounts cover the regions of Inner Mongolia, Gansu, Xinjiang, the Yenisei zone and the Altay, regions with Turkic, Indo-European (Iranian [Saka] and Tokharian), Yeniseic, Uralic and other populations. Wusun elements, like most steppe polities of an ethno-linguistic mix, may have also played a substratal role.

The history of the Turkic peoples and their languages are marked by fluidity and migrations. Languages are often spread by groups that are themselves composite in origin but have adopted the ethnonym and language of one of their components.¹³⁵ Turkic, an imperial language since the Türk era, spread across Eurasia and the Middle East in such a process that it absorbed new elements as it moved.

As a consequence of their mobility, ethnogenetic processes were dynamic, taking place in multiple territories.¹³⁶ Attempts to locate a Turkic *Urheimat* have ranged across Eurasia, from the Northern Caspian steppe zone to Southern Siberia and Mongolia, regions in which there was contact with Indo-European, Uralic, Yeniseic¹³⁷ or other Palaeo-Siberian languages. As the other ‘Altaic’/transeurasian languages (whatever their ultimate relationship, genetic, melded, completely unrelated) appear to have been located in Manchuria,¹³⁸ the Turkic *Urheimat*, a culminating point in Turkic ethno- and glottogenesis, can be placed on its Western border in Mongolia, South Siberia,¹³⁹ most probably in the ethno-linguistically complex Sayano-Altay, Xing’an region.¹⁴⁰ The argument for such a location is buttressed by the vocabulary for natural surroundings, flora and fauna in Turkic.¹⁴¹ The Türk origin tales appear to place them,

¹³⁵ D’jakonov, *Puti istorii*: 25; Lee and Kuang, ‘A Comparative Analysis’: 229–30.

¹³⁶ Kljaštornyj, *Runičeskie pamjatniki*: 198.

¹³⁷ Attempts to connect Yeniseic to other language families of Eurasia have been unsuccessful. It appears to be an isolate (Georg, ‘Yeniseic Languages’: 151–68).

¹³⁸ Janhunen, *Manchuria*: 238.

¹³⁹ Genetic studies are also suggestive of this region as ‘a point of origin’ (Yunusbayev et al., ‘The Genetic Legacy’: 1–24).

¹⁴⁰ Bobrov, Vasjutin and Vasjutin, *Vostočnyj Altaj*: 84–86. This was already an area of admixture during the Bronze Age (Hollard et al., ‘Strong Genetic Admixture’: 199–207). Lee and Kuang, ‘A Comparative Analysis’: 229, on the basis of DNA, argue for an *Urheimat* in ‘northern and western Mongolia and Tuva’ and hypothesise that ‘Turkic’ was the result of the fusion of Uralic, Mongolic, Yeniseic and Indo-European. The overwhelming majority of scholars of Turkic do not consider it a ‘fusion language’.

¹⁴¹ Briefly discussed in Golden, ‘Ethnogenesis in the Tribal Zone’: 75, 87–94. In detail, see Tenišev, *Sravnitel’no-istoričeskaja Grammatika: Leksika* and Tenišev and Dybo, *Sravnitel’no-istoričeskaja Grammatika. Kartina mira pradžurkskogo étnosa*.

at different stages, in and around the probable Turkic *Urheimat* and the areas of Gansu and Xinjiang.

The anthroponyms noted in the ethnogenetic accounts cannot be explained on the basis of Turkic. Yeniseic, Palaeo-Siberian and Iranian etymologies have been suggested but require further confirmation. The Old Türk inscriptions contain words of Uralic (Samoyed and Ugric) provenance, pointing to early contacts or to constituent elements.¹⁴² Iranian and Yeniseic connections cannot be ignored. If the Ashina-Türk were originally non-Turkic linguistically, the question arises, when did they become Turkic-speakers? Their ‘Xiongnu’ connections, real or a literary topos, do not provide an answer, as the ethno-linguistic affiliations of the actual Xiongnu remain uncertain. By the time of the Second Türk Qağanate, the Ashina-Türks are definitely Turkic in speech, employing a sophisticated and polished Turkic in their Orkhon inscriptions. Famed as equestrian, pastoral-nomadic warriors, were they earlier a semi-settled people with livestock-breeding and metal-working components in their economy? Interestingly, aside from Wolf Tale I, no further mention is made of metallurgy, which was important to the Ashina-Türks. Indeed, after establishing relations with Constantinople, one of the products they offered to the East Romans was iron.¹⁴³ The ancient ties with the Qırqız implied in Wolf Tale II, a people led by their own Qağan and frequent foes of the Ashina-Türks, require further exploration. Chinese and other accounts note a population (or at least part of it) that was Europoid, leading to speculation that the Qırqız were a Turkicised people. The evidence is ambiguous at best.¹⁴⁴ They were clearly Turkic speaking at the time of the Türk Qağanate.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Sinor and Kljaštorynj, ‘The Türk Empire’: 330.

¹⁴³ Menander, *The History*: 116–19; Sinor, ‘The Establishment’: 313 notes that metallurgy, in this early stage, was ‘the basis of Türk political power’. Whether this was based on their own skills or political domination of peoples possessing metallurgical skills is unclear (Golden, *Introduction*: 126; Stark, ‘Luxurious Necessities’: 476).

¹⁴⁴ Drompp, ‘The Yenisei Kyrgyz’: 480–88. The Qırqız title *are* 阿熬 EMC: *ʔa ɣiat* LMC: *ʔa riat* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*: 23, 265), recorded in the *Xin Tangshu* and elsewhere and long suspected to be a non-Turkic term, is now read as rendering Turk. **änäl*, a variant of *inäl* (usually a qualifying adjective, ‘reliable’ trustworthy’, User, *Köktürk ve Ötüken*: 175, 276). Other terms remain problematic.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. the Qırqız runiform Turkic inscriptions from the eighth to ninth century (Aydn et al., *Yenisey–Kırgızistan Yazıtları*; Kormuşin, *Tjurkskie enisejskie épitafii. Teksty*; Kormuşin,

Knowledge of Türk origins had faded—or were suppressed—by the time of Maḥmūd Kāšġarī (writing in the 1070s), replaced with Islamic and Judaic (the Khazars) genealogies and fleeting references to Alp  r Toņa, a mythical Turkic hero noted in Qarakhanid-era works, often equated with Afr siy b of the Iranian tradition.¹⁴⁶ In the conversion tales of the various Turkic peoples under  nggisid rule, there is the familiar ‘mythic complex’ of holy mountain, tree (of life), cave (ancestral or otherwise), water and female deity that are adumbrated in one form or another in the Ashina-T rk origin tales.¹⁴⁷ In the aftermath of the Mongol invasions, a new genealogical dispensation in which Oġuz  an¹⁴⁸ or Ulu  an Ata (and tales of the ‘primal man’, popular among the Qıp aq and Mongols) played a central role also incorporated these symbols.¹⁴⁹ The ‘primal man’, Ay Atam and his wife Ay Wa, bore names suspiciously like Adam and Eve (cf. Arab.  aww , Heb.  awa) and their grandson was K c k/Ki ik  ri B l agi (‘the wolf cub’ of K c k  ri),¹⁵⁰ a memory of the lupine theme.

Abbreviations

- OC = Old Chinese
ONW = Old Northwest Chinese
LH = Late Han
EMC = Early Middle Chinese
LMC = Late Middle Chinese
MC = Middle Chinese
Tokh. = Tokharian

Tjurkskie enisejskie  pitaġii: Grammatika). KormuŐin, *Tjurkskie enisejskie  pitaġii: Grammatika*: 310–11, suggests that *qirġiz* was an ‘exoethnonym’.

¹⁴⁶ Golden, ‘The Turkic World’: 520.

¹⁴⁷ Similar elements are found in the Khazar accounts in Hebrew of their conversion to Judaism, DeWeese, *Islamization*: 273–78, 300–07.

¹⁴⁸ BinbaŐ, ‘Oġuz Khan Narratives’; Kamola, ‘History and Legend’: 561–74. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/oguz-khan-narratives>, Jahn, *Die Geschichte der Oġuzen*; Demir and Aydoġdu, *Oġuzname (Kazan N shası)*; Demir, *Oġuzname (İngiltere N shası)*.

¹⁴⁹ Demir, *Ulu Han*; DeWeese, *Islamization*: 278–82; Golden, ‘Religion among the Qıp aq’: 196–200.

¹⁵⁰ Misread as K cikeri Beljegi by Demir, *Ulu Han*: 90. The Arab accounts (noted in Golden, ‘Religion among the Qıp aq’: 199–200) term him the *farġ* (‘animal young’) of K c k  ri, cf. Qıp aq *b l k* ‘young of a wolf’, Toparlı, Vural, Karaatlı, *Kıp ak T rk si S zl ġ *: 40.

Turkic Inscriptions

BQ = Bilgä Qağan Inscription (734/735)

KT = Kül Tegin Inscription (732)

Toñ = Toñuquq Inscription (726)

In references to the inscriptions, N = North, S = South, E = East,
W = West

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