

In Which Group Do the Orkhon Inscriptions Belong from a Diplomatic Point of View?

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*The Orkhon Inscriptions were written in the period of Second Turkic Khaganate (682–745). The Inscriptions of Bilge Kagan's brother Kül Tigin and himself are from 732 and 735 respectively. Bilge Kagan personally speaks in both inscriptions. Yollugh Tigin wrote both inscriptions with his nickname "atışi". It suggested that Orkhon Inscriptions have a type of "commemorative" character and the Kagan conveyed some information regarding the history of the Turkic Kaganate and gave some advices to his "Türk People". However, I prefer the idea that both inscriptions are a kind of "order, edict, and decree" on the basis of later inscriptions, or edicts (firmans) of several Turkish states. In the Orkhon Inscriptions, the term is the word *sabim* (lit. 'my word', that is 'my command'), in the firmans of the later Turkish rulers, for instance in the letters / edicts of Uzun Hasan Beg of Akkoyunlu, *sözümüz* (lit. 'our words', that is, 'our order') and finally *buyurdum ki* (lit. 'I ordered that') in the edicts of the sultans of Ottoman Empire. Likewise, the word *üge manu* (lit. 'my word') is mentioned with the same meaning but in Mongolian in the edicts of the rulers of Chinggisid and Timurid periods.*

Introduction

The Turks gave orders and instructions to the rulers, administrators of the states, dynasties, and some tribes subjected to them throughout their history based on the nomadic state traditions they had established in Asia. These instructions were sometimes written on stone and sometimes on paper. We see this feature not only at the Turks but also in states established by the Mongols who also had nomadic origin and who became Turkicised and Islamised from the 14th century on. These written orders were called *yarlıg* in Old Turkic, *jarlig* in Written Mongolian, *ferman* in Persian in the Islamic period, and occasionally *ferman* and *berat* in the Ottoman Turkic. In diplomatic documents, the word *sav(im)* 'my word' was used in the *Narratio* or *Expositio* after the Unvans (*Intitu-*

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latio) in the Orkhon Inscriptions. The expression *sözüüm, sözüm, sözüümiz, sözüümüz* ‘my/our word’ was used in Middle-Turkic) from the 14th century on. The Mongolian equivalent is *üge manu* ‘our word’. From the 14th century onwards, the Mongols used this expression not only in their edicts but also on their coins. The Golden Horde, the Crimean Khans, the Timurids and the Akkoyunids also used the expression *sözüüm*. At the beginning, the Mongolian form *üge manu* was used by the Great Mongol khans and their successors, the Chaghataids and the Ilkhanids; Timur (Küregen) used the word *sözüüm* rather than *üge manu*. In the documents of the Ottoman Empire, this order shape became *buyurdum ki* ‘I have ordered that’ particularly in the 15th and 16th century.

In this paper, we will argue that (1) the word *sab(üm)* in the Orkhon Inscriptions is used diplomatically and (2) Bilge Kaghan’s Inscription is a diplomatic edict due to the word *sab(üm)*. We will mention similar expressions in the edicts (*yarlıg*s and *fermans*) of later Turkic and Mongolian states in order to confirm our opinion.

1. The Word *Sav(üm)* in the Orkhon Inscriptions

In addition to the Orkhon inscriptions, the word *sav* is also present in the Tonyukuk and the Küli Chor inscriptions in the forms *sav+i* ‘his/their word’, *sav+ig* ‘word+Accusative’, *sav+üm* ‘my word’ etc. The word has been translated as ‘speech, saying, news, information, message, invitation, call, notification, parole’.¹ What really interests us is the instance of the word *sav* in the beginning of the East Side of Bilge Kaghan Inscription (BK E1) and in the inscription known as ‘Tengri Kaghan’ (BKT S13), where the Kaghan addressed to the TÜR(Ü)K people and the begs.²

¹ H. N. Orkun, *Eski Türk Yazıtları*. [Old Turkic Inscriptions] Ankara 1987, 847; T. Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları*. [Orkhon Inscriptions] Ankara 2014, 164; *id.*, *Orhon Türkçesi Grameri*. [A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic] İstanbul 2003, 251; V. Thomsen, *Orhon Yazıtları Araştırmaları*. [Studies in Orkhon Inscriptions] Transl. by. V. Köken, Ankara 2011, 238, n. 67; H. Şirin, *Kül Tigin Yazıtı –Notlar*. [Inscription of Kül Tigin-Notes] İstanbul 2015, 356; E. Aydın, *Orhon Yazıtları (Kül Tigin, Bilge Kağan, Tonyukuk, Ongi, Küli Çor)*. [Orkhon Inscriptions] Konya 2012, 177; A. Berta, *Sözlerimi İyi Dinleyin... Türk ve Uygur Runik Yazıtlarının Karşılaştırmalı Yayını*. [Listen well my words... A Comparative Edition of the Türk and Uighur Runic Inscriptions] transl. E. Yılmaz, Ankara 2010, 190, 192; G. Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung alterer Neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeit*. Wiesbaden 1967, Vol. III: 292 (after H. N. Orkun and S. E. Malov).

² BK E1: “Tengri teg tengri yaratmış türük bilge kağan sabım kangım türük bilge kağan ... altı sir tokuz oguz eki ediz kerekülüg begleri bodumı [... tü]rük teng]ri [...]” (Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları*, 50).
BKT S13: “Tengri teg tengri yar[at]mış türük bilge [kağan] sabım kangım türük bilge kağan olurtukında türük amtı begler kisre tarduş begler küil çor başlayı ulayı şadapıt begler öngre tölis begler apa tarkan” (Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları*, 68).

According to L. Bazin,³ the Inscription of Bilge Kaghan was erected by his son and successor Tengri Kaghan, on 20th September, 735, after Bilge Kaghan's death (734). However, in most parts of the inscription, it is Bilge Kaghan himself who addresses the people and Trk begs.⁴ According to T. Tekin, the speaker is Tengri Kaghan from the 6th word in the 10th line on, in the 'Tengri Kaghan Inscription' on the South Side of the Bilge Kaghan Inscription. It is open to debate regarding whether the speaker who spoke in both the 1st line on the East Side of the Bilge Kaghan Inscription (BK E1) and in the 13th line of "Tengri Kaghan Inscription" (BKT S13) is Bilge Kaghan or, Tengri Kaghan.⁵ I think that he is the latter.⁶

Among the first researchers on the Orkhon Inscriptions, only V. Thomsen interpreted the word *sab(im)* as 'command, order' (in this respect perhaps 'edict').⁷ It is also noteworthy that the word *saw* in Maḥmd al-Kāšġari's Dictionary (*DLT*) from the 11th century was recorded with the meaning 'letter' (Ar. *risāla*)⁸, which is an addition to the meaning 'word' (Ar. *kalām*). A. Cafero-

³ L. Bazin, *Eski Trk Dnyasında Kronoloji Sistemleri*. Transl. V. Kken, Ankara 2011, 199. See also Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları*, 8.

⁴ Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları*, 8.

⁵ Chinese sources, such as the *Tangshu*, *Xin Tangshu*, the *Zizhi Tongjian* and the *Wenxian Tongkao*, which gives information about the kaghans of the Turks after Bilge Kaghan. According to them, Yiran Kehan 伊然可汗, Bilge Kaghan's second son succeeded his father. A few years later Dengli Kehan 登利可汗 (Tengri Kaghan), Bilge Kaghan's third son ascended to the throne. Thus, Tengri Kaghan must be the ruler at the time of erection of the BK Inscription. He erected the Inscription in the name of his father but the narrator is himself, see A. B. Ercilasun, *Trk Kaġanlığı ve Trk Beng Taşları*. [The Turkish Kaghanate and Turkish Eternal Inscriptions] İstanbul 2016, 318–322.

⁶ Árpád Berta interpreted and translated the related text in BK E1 so: "[Nekem] *Tengrihez* hasonlatos, Tengri [á]tal] teremtetett *trk Bilge kagán* [nak a] szavam [a kvetkez]:" '[My,] Trk Bilge Kaghan[s] word, who is just like Heaven and is created [by] Heaven, [is the following]' He also interpreted the text called 'Tengri Kaghan' in BK S13, interfering clearly to the text so: "[Nekem] *Tengrihez* hasonlatos, [allítólag] Tengri teremtetette *trk Bilge* [kagánról a] szavam [a kvetkez]" '[My word (about) Trk Bilge (Kaghan), who is just like Heaven and is created by Heaven, is the following]' See Á. Berta, *Szavaimat jól halljátok... A trk és uigur rovásírásos emlékek kritikai kiadásá* [Listen well My Words... A Comparative Edition of the Trk and Uighur Runic Inscriptions]. Szeged 2004, 193, 202; Berta, *Szlerimi İyi Dinleyin...*, 192, 200. If we consider the *yarlıġs* and *fermans* of Turco-Mongol states after Turkic Kaghanate, where the expressions *ge manu*, *szm* and *szmz* are present, it is clear that Berta's did not mistranslate the text. Especially the person, who speaks in BK S13 is not Bilge Kaghan but Tengri Kaghan, the actual ruler.

⁷ In French 'mande' ('ce que je vous manse') [here is my parole to you!]. Thomsen, *Orhon Yazıtları Araştırmaları*, 178.

⁸ Kāšġarlı Mahmud, *Dīvānu Lugāti't-Trk. Giriş-Metin-Çeviri-Notlar-Dizin*. [Dīvānu Lugāti't-Trk. Introduction-Text-Translation-Notes-Edition] ed. Ahmet B. Ercilasun, Ziyat Akkoyunlu Ankara 2014, 411.

glu, the first linguist in Turkey, separated the word *sab* / *sav* from the word *söz* and interpreted the former as 'the word', but the latter as 'the word, command, order' in both 1934⁹ and in 1968.¹⁰

1.1 About the pronunciation of the word Sab(ım)

W. Radloff and V. Thomsen, who published the Orkhon Inscriptions for the first time, both interpreted the word *sab(ım)* with various meanings, and wrote it with *b*.¹¹ Even these two scholars observed that the word appeared as *sab* and *saw* (*sav*) in the subsequent Uighur period and showed that the sound *b* was converted to *v* (spelled with <w>) in the Uighur and Chagataid periods.¹² In the studies on the Old Turkic Dictionary, the word was given as *sab* in the DTS,¹³ whereas G. Clauson preferred to read it as *sav* in his various works and gave the meaning as 'a (full-length) speech'. He separated *sav* from the word *söz* 'a single word, or short utterance'.¹⁴ Clauson interpreted the word *sub* 'water' as *suv*. According to him, the letters <b¹> and <b²> in the Old Turkic Runic inscriptions met both *b* and *v* sounds.¹⁵ Many Turkish researchers and linguists, especially H. N. Orkun and T. Tekin, have transcribed such words with *b*. Recent Turkish researchers and linguists, such as C. Alyılmaz, O. Mert and H. Şirin User, have accepted this sound as *b* in their publications regarding the Orkhon and Uighur inscriptions.¹⁶

The Hungarian scholar Á. Berta noted that the phonetic value of *b*, which was rendered by the letter in *sab* was a 'labial *b*', and transcribed it as *β*. Its

⁹ See Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente*, 292; Caferoğlu Ahmet, *Uygur Sözlüğü*. [A Dictionary of Uighur] İstanbul 1934, 148, 153, 161.

¹⁰ A. Caferoğlu, *Eski Uygur Türkçesi Sözlüğü*. [A Dictionary of Old Uighur-Turkic] İstanbul 1968, 192.

¹¹ W. Radloff, *Die alttürkischen Inschriften der Mongolei* (Neue Folge) Sankt-Peterburg 1897, 130, 177; W. Radloff, *Die alttürkischen Inschriften der Mongolei* (Zweite Folge) Sankt-Petersburg 1899, 100.

¹² Thomsen, *Orhon Yazıtları Araştırmaları*, 238, note 67.

¹³ *Drevnetyurkskiy Slovar'*. Ed. V. M. Nadeljaev, D. M. Nasilov, E. R. Tenişev and A. M. Şčerbak Leningrad 1969, 478.

¹⁴ Sir G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of re-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*. Oxford 1972, 782–783.

¹⁵ Sir G. Clauson, *Turkish and Mongolian Studies*. London 1962, 77; see again H. Şirin User, *Köktürk ve Ötüken Uygur Kağanlığı Yazıtları. Söz Varlığı İncelemesi*. [Inscriptions of the Türk and Uighur Kaghanates of the Ötüken. A Study on the Vocabulary] Konya 2010, 54.

¹⁶ See for example C. Alyılmaz, *Orhun Yazıtlarının Bugünkü Durumu*. [The Present State of the Orkhon Inscriptions] Ankara 2005, 9, 10, 12; C. Alyılmaz, *İpek Yolu Kavşağının Ölümsüzlük Eserleri*. [Immortality Works of the Junction of Silk Road] Ankara 2015, 564–565; O. Mert, *Ötüken Uygur Dönemi Yazıtlarından Tes-Tariat-Şine Us*. [The Tes-Tariat-Şine Us among the Inscriptions of Ötüken Uighuric Period] Ankara 2009, 5.

pronunciation was close to *v*.¹⁷ M. Erdal interpreted word internal *-b-* and word final *-b* sounds as *-v-*, *-v*, respectively. He identified that all of them should be read as *v*.¹⁸ The Turkish linguists M. Ölmez and E. Aydın, -following by Erdal and Berta, and based on the modern pronunciation in Turkic languages, transcribed this sound directly as *v*, without explanation. Ölmez agrees with Berta' and Erdal's opinions.¹⁹

2. Relationship of the word *Sab(ım)* with emir 'order' and ferman 'edict'

As mentioned above, the word *sab* generally means 'word' in the Orkhon Inscriptions. However, when the ruler is considered, the situation changes and the ruler's word to the people is regarded as an 'order'. In fact, we see this obvious feature as 'my word, our word' in Turkic in the edicts of some Turkic states in the 15th and 16th centuries. G. Doerfer also gave a long list based on many documents in Turkic and Mongolian seen in Islamic sources regarding this subject.²⁰ In some cases, this word is mentioned in the form *sözi* '(ruler)'s order', and in the same way we see this expression in the form of *yarlıgi* '(ruler's / khan's) yarligh / order'. The expression *sab* of the Old Turkic Inscriptions is comparable with the information found in some Chinese documents dating back to the 6th and 8th centuries:

When the First Türk Kaghanate was divided into the two (582), Shabolue (Shetu / Ishbara, 581-587), in the letter sent to the Chinese Emperor of Sui Dynasty (581-618) by Kaghan of the Eastern Turks in 584, he claimed that he was equal to the Chinese and he called himself "*born in the Heaven, guarded by the Heaven, Great Turkic Tianzi* (Great Turkic Son of the God)" and said "*there is no difference between you and us*".²¹ Subsequently, Shabolue, who was pushed by Abo, Kaghan of the Western Turks and defeated Abo with the help of the Chi-

¹⁷ Berta, *Sözlerimi İyi Dinleyin...*, 13.

¹⁸ In detail, see M. Erdal, *A Grammar of Old Turkic*. Leiden 2004, 63.

¹⁹ See M. Ölmez, "Eski Türk Yazıtlarının Yeni Bir Yayımı Nasıl Olmalıdır?" [How should a New Publication of Old Turkic Inscriptions be like?] In: *I. Uluslararası Uzak Asya'dan Ön Asya'ya Eski Türkçe Bilgi Şöleni, 18-20 Kasım 2009, Afyonkarahisar*. [The First International Symposium on Ancient Turkish from the Far Eastern to the Near Eastern Asia, November, 18th-20th, 2009] Ed. C. Alyılmaz, Ö. Ay, M. Yılmaz, Afyonkarahisar 2010, 212; *id.*, *Orhon-Uygur Hanlığı Dönemi Moğolistan'daki Eski Türk Yazıtları. Metin-Çeviri-Sözlük*. [Old Turkic Inscriptions in Mongolia during the Periods of Orkhon Turkic and Uighur Kaghanates. Text-Translation-Vocabulary] Ankara 2012, 48, 123; Aydın, *Orhon Yazıtları*, 177. Aydın shows as *v* all of *b* sounds in the words just like *yabgu*, *yablak*, *ab*, *sub* in not only *Ton*. but also *BK*, *KT* and *Ongi*.

²⁰ See Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente*, 294-296.

²¹ Y. Pan, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan: Sui-Tang China and its Neighbours*. Western Washington 1997, 103.

nese, used the following expressions while introducing himself at the beginning of the long letter written to Wendi (581-605), Emperor of the Sui in 585: “I, khan of the Great Tujue, Yilijuli she Mohe Shiboluo Kehan and the vassal of the Sui (Shetu) say (my) word: Envoy Yuqingzi, who is carrying the title of Shangshu Yuyue, came to me and I accepted your order with an infinite surrender ...”.²²

In Doerfer’s opinion, the word “*sabım*” must have been used in the original Turkic language of the Chinese letter.²³ In the related passages of *Suishu*, ch. 84 about the Eastern Turks, Chinese words *shu* 書 and *shu yue* 書曰²⁴ are translated as ‘gramota (official message, document)’ into Russian.²⁵ With the expression of J. K. Skaff, Shabolue was the first Turk ruler known to use the long Turkic-Chinese honorary title and “to coin a title of simultaneous kingship”, and the expression he used in this letter was an ideological discovery.²⁶ The Turk ruler was trying to gain superiority for himself by approaching *Zhongguo* (China) and accepting its supremacy.²⁷ It is noteworthy that he used an expression in his letter in Chinese and Turkic in the meaning ‘order, edict’.

When the expressions of the introduction sections of the Mongolian, Chinese and Arabic letters / *yarlıqs* from 13th-14th centuries are compared to each other, it is seen that they were generally the same.²⁸ There is a word in all of

²² Liu Mau-tsai, *Çin Kaynaklarına Göre Doğu Türkleri*. [Die chinesische Nachrichten zur Ost-Türken] transl. E. Kayaoğlu, D. Banoglu 2006, 76.

²³ Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente*, 292.

²⁴ See Liu Mau-tsai, *Çin Kaynaklarına Göre Doğu Türkleri*, 76; A. Taşağıl, *Gök-Türkler I-II-III* [The Blue-Türks] Ankara 2012, 156.

²⁵ N. Y. Bichurin, *Sobranie Svedeniy o Narodah, obitavshih v Sredney Azii drevnie vremena*. Moskva-Leningrad 1950, 237.

²⁶ J. K. Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and Its Turko-Mongol Neighbors: Culture, Power, and Connections, 580-800*. Oxford 2012, 116.

²⁷ See P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*. Wiesbaden 1992, 132.

²⁸ In Chinese: “Chángshēng tiān qì lì dàfú yínhù zhùli huángdì shèngzhǐ” 長生天氣力裏。大福應護助裏。皇帝。聖旨。 (For this diplomatical formula see Chavannes (Ed.), “Inscriptions et pièces de chancellerie chinoises de l’époque mongole”, *T’oung Pao*, 5:4 (1904), 395-396; Chavannes (Ed.), “Inscriptions et pièces de Chancellerie chinoises de l’époque mongole”, *T’oung Pao*, 9:3 (1908), 386-389, 390-395; Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente*, 293. In Mongolian: *Möngke tengri-yin kücündür. Yeke su cali-yin iken-dur. Ka’an carlıg manu; Mongke tengri-yin kücündür. hagan-u sudur. Argun. üge manu* (Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente*, 292-293; Chavannes, *Inscriptions et pièces...* (1904), 395-396). In Arabic: *bi-kuvvati’llâhi taâlâ bi-ikbâli kâ’ân. Farmânu Ahmeda ilâ sultâni Mısır; Bi-smillâhi er-rahmâni er-rahîm bi-kuvvati llâhi taâlâ. kelâmu Kalâvun ilâ es-sultâni Ahmed* (Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente*, 293-294); In Old Turkic (BK and so-called “Tengri Kagan”): *tengri teg tengri yaratmış Tür(ü)k bilge kağan. Sabım* (Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları*, 50-51, 68-69; Thomsen, *Orhon Yazıtları Araştırmaları*, 178-179, 194-195; Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları*, 50-51, 68-69; Berta, *Sözlerimi İyi Dinleyin...*, 139, 176; Aydın, *Orhon Yazıtları*, 77, 99; Ölmez, *Orhon-Uygur Hanlığı Dönemi*, 123, 132).

them with the meaning of 'ruler's word, order'. These expressions are identical with the Turkic word *sab(im)*, the statement of Bilge Kaghan himself.

3. The Words *Üge manu* and *Sözümüz* used in the Edicts during the Periods of the Golden Horde, Ilkhanids, Timurids and Akkoyunlu States

Among the rulers of the Ilkhanid State, who usually use the introductory expressions in Mongolian in the edicts and letters, Keykhatu,²⁹ Abaka, Argun, Oljaito and Gazan Khans' samples of letter are available. In these *yarlıgs*, the expressions *üge manu* 'our word', and sometimes '*yarlıg manu* 'our order, command', can be seen in the *Intitulatio*.³⁰ This is understood to be the same with "*sab(im)*" in the Orkhon Inscriptions. The *fermans* / edicts of the Djalayirids and the Timurids, which sustained the tradition of the same Mongol diplomatic formula also involve the expression *üge manu*.³¹ In one or two example(s), the statement of *sözüm* 'my word' is present, for example, in a letter by Timur Küregen (H. 804 / M. 1401), *sözüm* and *sözümüz* in the letters by Jehanshah (857/1453) and Sultan Abû Sa'îd Küregen (1468).³² The rulers of the Golden-Horde, who used Turkic language more frequently in the diplomacy and who were under the influence of the Kipchak Turks, directly included the words *sözüm* 'my word' and *sözümüz* 'our word'.³³ The Crimean Khans, who continued the tradition, also used the expressions *sözüm*, *sözümüz* in many edicts and letters.³⁴ In the Turkmen States established in the 15th century in the territory of Eastern Anatolia and Iran, Uzun Hasan Pādshāh and Ya'qūb, the Akkoyu-

²⁹ The first Ilkhanid *ferman* in Persian is belonged to Keikhatu and dated to H. 692 (1293). The *ferman* is in Persian, but the first three lines in which the *elkāb* is, are written in Turkic. See A. Soudavar, "İlk Farsça İlhanlı Fermanı," [The First Ilkhanid Firman] *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 6 (2002), 182.

³⁰ Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente*, 293.

³¹ For the Djalayirid examples, see G. Doerfer, "Ein Persisch-Mongolischer Erlass des Ğalayiriden Şeyh Oveys. II. Die Mongolische Fassung," *Central Asiatic Journal*, XIX:1-2 (1975), 58, 70; G. Doerfer, "Ein Persisch-Mongolischer Erlass des Ğalayiriden Şeyh Oveys. II. Die Mongolische Fassung," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 125:2 (1975), 341.

³² See L. Fekete, "Arbeiten der Grusinischen Orientalistik auf dem Gebiete der Türkischen und Persischen Paläographie und die Frage der Formel *Sözümüz*," *Acta Orientalia Scientiarum Hungaricae*, VII:1 (1957), 14; L. Fekete, *Einführung in die Persische Paläographie*. 101 Persische Dokumente. Budapest 1977, 72-73.

³³ For example, see A. O. Hasan, "Temir Kutluğ Yarlıgı," [Yarlıg of Temir-Qutluğ] *Türkiyat Mecmuası* (1926-33), 212.

³⁴ See Fekete, *Arbeiten der Grusinischen Orientalistik*, 13; V. V. Veljaminov-Zernov, *Kırım Yurtına ve Ol Taraflarına Dair Bolgan Yarlıglar ve Hatlar. Kırım Hanlığı Tarihine Dair Kaynaklar. Giriş-Tıpkıbasım*. [Yarlıgs and Letters belonged to the Crimea and its environment. Sources to the History of the Crimean Khanate. Introduction-Facsimile] ed. M. Ozyetkin, I. Kamalov, Ankara 2009, 3, 5, 8, 9, 13, 18, 19, etc.

nid rulers,³⁵ and some rulers of the Karakoyunlu State, used the words *sözüm* 'my word' and *sözümüz* 'our word'. Some rulers of the Safavid Empire, which was established in the same region in the 16th century after the Akkoyunlu, also used the words *sözüm* and *sözümüz* in their letters, as well as Shah Ismail Safavi, the founder of the Safavid dynasty.³⁶ Fekete, Jahangir Qaim-Makami and Doerfer collected many examples of these subjects.³⁷

4. The expression ... buyurdum ki 'I ordered that' in the Ottoman Empire Documents

The Ottoman Empire was originally established as a Turkmen state and generally followed the practice of the Ilkhanids in diplomacy and correspondence. In numerous Ottoman edicts, correspondences and decrees (*fermans*, *berats* and *hükms*), the expressions *buyurdum ki...* 'I ordered that', *hük-m-i şerîfîmile buyurdum ki...* 'I ordered with my edict that' or *hük-m oldur ki* 'the order is that', *malum ola ki* 'being premonition, 'one should know that', *gerekdir ki...* 'it is required that' are present after the *Intitulatio* (Unvan), at the end of *Narratio* / *Expositio* (Nakil/Iblağ), in the beginning of *Dispositio* (*emr* / *hük-m* 'given order').³⁸ It is interesting that after winning the battle of Otlukbeli against Uzun Hasan of the Akkoyunlu in 1473, Mehmed, the Conqueror, the Ottoman ruler used the word *sözüm* in his *fetihname*, written to a Turkic ruler in the East in Uighur and Arabic alphabets. This valuable document was found in the *Library of Topkapı Sarayı* in Istanbul and published by R. Rachmati Arat.³⁹ and the document has the word *sözüm*, and is named as *yarlığ* 'edict', i.e. *ferman* both in

³⁵ "Ebu'n-Nasr Hasan Bahadır, sözümüz" (Fekete, *Einführung in die Persische Paläographie*, 187–200), "Abu'l-Muzafer Ismail Bahadır, sözümüz" (id., *Arbeiten der Grusinischen Orientalistik*, 14; id., *Einführung in die Persische Paläographie*, 308–309, 316–317).

³⁶ Id., *Arbeiten der Grusinischen Orientalistik*, 14. See also *ibid.*, 16, Abb. 3; 18, Abb.5.

³⁷ See on this matter, for example, Fekete, *Arbeiten der Grusinischen Orientalistik*, 13–20; id., *Einführung in die Persische Paläographie*; Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente*, 294–296; Bert G. Fragner, "FARMÂN," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2016, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/farman> (accessed on 07 June 2016) and Pl. IIa, IIb.

³⁸ Fekete, *Einführung in die osmanisch-türkische Diplomatie der türkischen Botmassigkeit in Ungarn*. Budapest 1926, xxxvii–xxxviii, 25; M. T. Gökbilgin, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Medeniyet Tarihi Çerçevesinde Osmanlı Paleografya ve Diplomatie İlmî*. [Ottoman Palaeography and Diplomats in the frame of the Civilization of Ottoman Empire] İstanbul 1992, 70; M. S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)*. [The Language of Ottoman Documents. Diplomats] İstanbul 1994, 109–110, 121, 129.

³⁹ R. R. Arat, "Fatih Sultan Mehmed'in Yarlığı" [Yarlığ of Fatih Sultan Mehmed], *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, vol. VI (1936–39), 285–322; id., "Fatih Sultan Mehmed'in Yarlığı", *Makaleler* [Articles], Vol. I, ed. Osman Fikri Sertkaya, Ankara 1987, 783–820; id., «Un yarlık de Mehmed II, le Conquerant», *Makaleler*, 821–885 and Pl. I–XX.

itself and by Arat.⁴⁰ Thus, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire seems to have maintained the Old Turkic correspondence and diplomacy tradition by using the expressions *sözüm* and *buyurdum ki...* in the *fermans*.

We must note an important matter: J. Reychman thought that the expression (*sözümüz*) was used by the Muslim Turkmen states in the 15th and 16th centuries as a standard formula in the documents issued by rulers under Persian cultural influence.⁴¹ L. Fekete's opinion was that (according to J. Reychman and A. Zajackowski) "the occurrence of the formula (*sözümüz*) in those documents had the character of a graphic symbol corresponding to the *tuğra* in Ottoman documents".⁴² We think that these proposals are incorrect, since all of the Turkmen states mentioned used this word *sözüm* or *sözümüz*, continuing a native Turkic tradition maintained by Uighur scribes, and not because of Persian influence. Furthermore, the Ottoman *tughra* and the expressions *sözüm* and *sabim* are not graphic symbols: Mahmud al-Kashgari, explained the word *tugrag* in the *DLT*, clearly stated that it is a word belonging to the Oghuz, but the Turks who use *tamga* do not know it.⁴³

In conclusion, we believe that the expression *sab(ım)* in the Bilge Kaghan inscription, and in the documents belonging to the later periods, means 'order, edict, command'. As it is expressed clearly in the inscription, Bilge Kaghan or Tengri Kaghan call out his people, the *begs* of the subjected tribes, and briefly gives instructions and orders to them. While Bilge Kaghan's orders were written on stones in the 8th century, the orders of the later Turkic and Mongolian rulers were written on paper. Unfortunately, there are no written monuments belonging to earlier times in which the corresponding expressions would be interpreted as 'order, decree'. However, let us remember that even in the period of the Ilkhānids in the 14th century, some edicts called *yarliğ* were also written on stones, and hung on the city's gates and they were also called "*yarliğ*".

⁴⁰ Stroke 197: "*mühürlü yarliğ yiberildi*" ('a sealed *yarliğ* was sent'); strokes 1-3: "*(h)uvel-ğan-i all-a ta'al-a iney(e)t-i-tin sultan Mehmet han söz-üm...*" (id., *Fatih Sultan Mehmed'in Yarlığı*, 287; id., *ibid.*, *Makaleler*, 785; id., *Un yarlık de Mehmed II, le Conquerant*, *ibid.*, 825, 837. Again, see Gök, *An Analysis and Comparison of Fermân and Berât in Ottoman Diplomats*, 10.

⁴¹ J. Reychman-A. Zajackowski, *Handbook of Ottoman-Turkish Diplomats*. Paris 1968, 154; trad. in Turkish: J. Reychman-A. Zajackowski, *Osmanlı - Türk Diplomatikası El Kitabı (Handbook of Ottoman-Turkish Diplomats)*. İstanbul 1993, 179.

⁴² Reychman & Zajackowski, *Handbook of Ottoman-Turkish Diplomats*, 156; id., *Osmanlı - Türk Diplomatikası El Kitabı*, 179.

⁴³ Kâşgarlı Mahmud, *Dîvânü Lügât i't-Türk*, 202; Maḥmūd al-Kāşğarī, *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dîwān Luġāt at-Turk)*. Edited and Translated with Introduction and Indices by R. Dankoff in collaboration with J. Kelly, Part III, Washington, D.C. 1985, 199: "*tuğrāğ* "royal seal" "Oğuz not Türk."