With a few exceptions, the rulers of the Uyghurs had been Manichaeans since the middle of the 8th century when Sogdian Manichaeans converted Bügü Khan (759–770) who, after his accession in 759 proclaimed it to be the official religion of the Uygur Steppe Empire. Already by 755, the Uyghurs began to incorporate the Tienshan-Tarim region into their realm, so that they had direct access to the sources of eastern Manichaeism in the northern Tarim cities and the church, in turn, could enjoy more intimate contact with its Uygur patrons.\footnote{I dealt with the conversion of this ruler extensively in my article “The Conversion of Bügü Khan to Manichaeism,” \textit{Studia Manichaica. IV. Internationaler Kongreß zum Manichäismus, Berlin, 14.–18. Juli 1997}, R. E. Emmerick, W. Sundermann, P. Zieme, eds. (Berlin, 2000), 83–123. The present paper takes up the problem of U 01 which I broached but did not treat on 114–115 of that article.}

The extent to which Bügü Khan sponsored the church’s proselytization efforts in those initial years of 755 and later depends very much on how one interprets the following passage in U 01a, I verso, lines 01–07, which is an Uygur text written in Uygur script (US):\footnote{A. von Le Coq, “Ein manichäisches Buch-Fragment aus Chotscho,” \textit{Festschrift Wilhelm Thomsen zur Vollendung des siebzigsten Lebensjahres an 25. Januar 1912} (Leipzig, 1912), 145–154.}

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
\{a\}m\{'u\} täyrikān uyğur bokug xan koçogaru kālīpān koŋ yilka üč mahistāg olurmak üčün možakka kejäti
\end{center}
\end{quote}

\{Now\}, the Devout One, the Uygur Khan of the Bokug (clan), came to Kocho and arranged with the Teacher for the settling of three Presbyters (in the steppe) in the Sheep year.

This and the other remaining fragments of text U 01 contain material belonging to a history of the Uyghurs from the Manichaean perspective. In the passage quoted above, there is a clear reference to an Uygur ruler who went to the city of Kocho in the Turfan basin to arrange for three Manichaean Presbyters to establish a mission in the steppe. The
inference that the mission is to be carried out in the steppe is based on the assumption that there would be no reason to state that an Uygur ruler from the Western Uygur Empire after 840 would travel to Kocho to arrange for such a mission. Nonetheless, two important questions remain in the interpretation of this passage. First, who was the uygur bokug xan? Second, which Sheep year is mentioned in the passage?

It is tempting to assume that uygur pwqwγxan of this passage refers to the Uygur ruler Bügü Khan who first was drawn to Manichaeism around 755 and who established it as a state religion in 759 or so. However, the spelling pwqwγ has bothered all commentators and has given rise to alternative interpretations of the identity of this figure.3 There are two unrelated issues in contention: (1) Could the spelling pwqwγ ever be shown to be an aberrant writing of pwykwe = bügü, and thus a means of identifying the two as the same person? (2) Could the person called pwqwγxan in this text ever be shown to be the same person as the familiar pwykwe xan = bügü xan of other texts, regardless of the clear difference in the two names? With respect to the first issue, it is dubious that any amount of linguistic legerdermain can equate pwqwγ and pwykwe, not only because the first is a back-vowel word and ends in —γ in US, but because the first potentially could be interpreted either as bokug, ‘withdrawn; secluded,’ or—even unlikely, as we shall see—as boguk, ‘crop (of a bird); gnarl (of a tree); swelling,’ and therefore is different in form and meaning from bügü, ‘sage, wizard.’ Before turning to issue (2), it is important to understand what the word written pwqwγ actually might refer to.

At first glance, one might attempt to identify the word spelled pwqwγ in this spot as the noun boguk, ‘crop of a bird, craw; swelling, goiter; bud of a flower,’ that is derived from bog-, ‘to choke; to restrict,’ as a subject noun meaning ‘what chokes’ or ‘what restricts’ the air in a throat or the growth of something. The form boguk originally might have been bogak with -a-, as attested in Ottoman, Chagatay, Kazak bogak, Kirgiz bokok, Teleut, Altay, Kirgiz pogök, Lebed pôk, ETurki pukak, Shor

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3 While Le Coq and others thought that pwqwγ xan, despite the linguistic difficulty, was a reference to Bügü Khan, Abe contended that pwqwγ xan was an epithet for Täňtä ulüg bulmuş alp kutlug ulug bïlgä xagan (r. 795–808), who was called “Huaihsin”; for a summary of Abe’s views on the Uyghurs, see “Where was the Capital of the West Uighurs,” Silver Jubilee Volume of the Zinbun-Kagaku-Kenkyusyo Kyoto University (Kyoto, 1954), 435–450. An excellent survey of this question may be found in Y. Kasai, “Ein Kolophon um die Legende von Bokug Kagan,” Studies on the Inner Asian Languages 19 (2004): 9–17.