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Reviews


Li Gang, Matsui Dai

An Old Uighur Receipt Document Newly Discovered in the Turfan Museum

Abstract: This article introduces an Old Uighur document, which had been excavated seemingly in the Bezeklik Caves and was recently re-discovered in the Turfan Museum. It is supposed to be a receipt for the payment of the poll tax (*qupčïr*) of the Mongol period, and to be closely related to the Old Uighur administrative orders of the St. Petersburg collection (SI 6544).

Key words: Old Uighur document, Turfan, receipt, taxation, *qupchir*, Mongol Empire

Introduction

The Old Uighur texts unearthed from the Bezeklik Caves (Turfan, Xinjiang, PRC) have been the target of the academic researchers of Central Asian history and Old Turkic philology. In particular, the Turfan Bureau of Cultural Relics excavated a huge number of the texts in 1980–1981. Among them, five Old Uighur Manichaean letter correspondences from the tenth and eleventh century are considered the most noteworthy materials for the history of the religion. Also, other texts excavated simultaneously, most of which are the Buddhist fragments, are now under cataloguing through the international cooperation.

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1 TULUFAN DIQU WENWU GUANLISUO 1985.
2 TXM; YOSHIDA, MORIYASU 2000.
3 Cf. MATSUI 2009b, 42.
Besides them, six Old Uighur secular documents had been earlier brought under the preservation in the Turfan Museum: five of them are Old Uighur administrative orders of compulsory requisition for fodder;\(^4\) and another is a document concerning the transaction of Buddhist portraits.\(^5\) So far as reported, all of the six should have been excavated in front of one of the Bezeklik Caves in October 1974,\(^6\) and accordingly they should have been given inventory numbers beginning with 74TB ("[19]74, T[urfan], B[ezeklik]"). However, the precise inventory numbers for them were not informed in the previous scholarly publications, and afterward these texts got substantially inaccessible in the Turfan Museum.\(^7\)

Quite recently, the Turfan Museum has conducted reorganization of their collections and rediscovered those six Old Uighur documents. Actually they had been preserved under a single inventory number 81TB60:6, mistaken as a group. Considering the information in the former publication, the Turfan Museum has now given them new inventory numbers beginning with 74TB.\(^8\)

More notably, they are accompanied by another Old Uighur fragment thus far unpublished. It is highly plausible that the fragment should be excavated in October 1974, on the same occasion with the other six documents. Thus the Turfan Museum has given this fragment a new inventory number as 74TB60:6-2. In this paper, we would present the edition of this brand-new fragment.

The text is written on the sheet of dark yellow paper (14.7 cm in length and 11.5 cm in width) and in the so-called cursive Uighur script which may well date the text to the Mongol period. The upper part of the text is faded for any reason, and rather difficult to decipher (see Pl. 1).

\(^5\) DOLKUN, UMEMURA, MORIYASU 1990; UMEMURA 1990, 177–182.
\(^6\) GENG 1980; DOLKUN, UMEMURA, MORIYASU 1990, 13–14; UMEMURA 1990, 177; cf. KURBAN 1984, 105, for another date of excavation as early 1976.
\(^7\) Cf. MATSUI 2009a, 340, fn. 1.
\(^8\) 74TB60:6-3, 74TB60:6-4, 74TB60:6-5, 74TB60:6-6 for the four fragments of the five administrative orders, and 74TB60:6-1 for the document of the transaction of Buddhist portraits.
Text

1 [ [ ] ( .. ) L [ ] ]
2 y[ yil] bešinč ay ’W[ ]
3 b(ačaγa) (t)[a]r(qan) yuž-i[n]t(ā) (b)[olmïš? taz? ]
4 ( ) iki stïr qu[p]çïr kûmûš [ ]
5 -tä (b)[ir stï]r tâgbir s(tïr) [qupcïr? kûmûš?- ]
6 -ni s[anap] [a]lï p bo yanuð [berdimiz bo tamγa/nïšan]
7 biz-[nin]ï(g) ol män ongš(a)y [ ]
8 bit(i)(dim]

Translation

1 The [……] year, the fifth month, [on] the [……] day.
2–3 Of two stïr of the [qupcïr-silver] that Bolmïš-Taz? of Baγaγa-tarqan’s century [should pay?], one stïr has arrived (= we received).
3–5 We? counted and received (this) one [stïr of the qupcïr-silver], and we issued this receipt. 6–7 [This seal/signature] is ours. 7, Ongšay [……], wrote (this receipt).
Analytic Reconstruction of the Context

It is rather difficult to reconstruct the whole context of the document, though we would present the text and translation above, based on the analysis as follows.

The first keyword is 3y düz-i[n]t(ӓ) “of/in the century (of).” Uig. yüz ~ yüz “hundred” can be interpreted as “a century, a unit of one hundred households” to correspond to Mong. ğaγun (>*γaγud (pl.)) and Chin. 百 bai-hu. The following locative suffix -i[n]t(ӓ) ~ -intä (= -YNT') is well restorable in comparison with other attestations of yüz-intä in the Uighur documents SI 6544 (SI Uig. 14 = USp 53(1–4)) and *U9251: the former consists of four administrative orders for compulsory requisition issued to a single person named Bolmïš-Taz, who belonged to a century of one named Bačaγa-tarqan and delivered a horse at each of the requisition orders to convert into a part of the qupčïr-tax imposed on him9; and the latter should be a fragment of the record of the grain for land tax, collected by six decuries (Uig. on ~ on-i = Chin. 十戶 shi-hu, unit of ten households) under a century headed by one named Quduqun.10

The second keyword is 6yanuḍ ~ yanut “something given in return for or in place of.” Even though it is written as if Y'PD'Z, it should be read as Y'NWD = yanut (yanuḍ): we find the similar stroke for yanuḍ in the attestations of yanuḍ bitig “a receipt document” (SUK Mi18 4 and U 5960 v6).11 Here yanuḍ alone must be interpreted as “a receipt.”12

These two keywords may well lead us to suppose that this document was a receipt (yanuḍ ~ yanut) for the payment of any tax or labor service imposed on a person/persons belonging to a century (yüz). Taking into consideration such a function of our document, we can further supplement the context.

Line 1 of our document is almost illegible except for a few strokes including -L-, and the ductus of the writing is smaller than that of the lines 2–8. Thus, we would be allowed to consider that the document substantially begins with line 2, which apparently concerns the date of the document: other ex-

9 Matsuï 2015b, 63–64.
10 Matsuï (forthcoming).
12 In an unpublished document *U9326 (T III M 253), we find another attestation of yanuḍ to stand alone for “a receipt.” This document has been lost from the Berlin Collection during the Second World War, and is now available only in the photograph taken by late Prof. Reşid Rahmeti AREF during 1933–1938. We are deeply grateful to Prof. Osman Fikri SERTKAYA (Istanbul) for his kind permission to investigate the photograph.
amples of the Old Uighur receipt document (yanuḍ bitig) mentioned above also begin with their date. The beginning of line 2 should be restored as either y[īlan yīl] “the Serpent year” or y[unt yīl] “the Horse year,” the definite date of which will be argued below. W[..] after bešinė ay “the fifth month” should be any of (ū)č~ūč “three,” o[n]~on “ten” or o[tuz]~otuz “thirty,” evidently concerning the day of issue.

The expression stādhi (past tense) < v. tāg- “to reach, to arrive at” should be interpreted as “was paid, was delivered” and suggest that the sender of this receipt (yanuḍ ~ yanut) did receive something, which should have been described in the preceding text and be related with ʿiki stīr “two stīr.” Uig. stīr was a unit of weight (ca. 40 grams) and then a currency denomination equal to the value of the silver of the same weight. And the stroke following ʿiki stīr is written as XW(.). From the context, we dare to restore it as qu(p)[čïr kümüš] “the qupčïr-silver”: Uig. qu(p)[čïr] ~ qupčïr (~Pers. qupčūr < Mong. qubčiri) is a notorious poll tax installed on the Eurasian-wide under the Mongol rule, and was to be paid in silver cash. And we may note that the combination qupčïr kümüš is also attested in several administrative orders.

The locative suffix -T’ (= -ta/-tā), however, does not allow us to interpret that ʿiki stīr qu(p)[čïr kümüš] “two stīr of the qup[čïr]-silver” wholly arrived at the sender of this receipt. Therefore, we would tentatively restore ʿbīr stīr “one stīr” in the illegible part following the locative -tā, and consider “[one stīr] of two stīr of the qupčïr-silver” as the received material: in other words, this receipt was issued at the partial payment for the qupčïr-tax, and “two stīr (ʿiki stīr)” was the annual burden on a person belonging to the century.

Comparing with the other examples of Old Uighur receipts (yanuḍ ~ yanut bitig), we can restore the following context, which confirms the transaction of the silver cash and issue of this receipt: ʿbīr stīr “one stīr” just after tādhi may lend support for our restoration of the preceding -tā; in the Old Uighur sale contracts we frequently find the combination sanap al- (<v. san- “to count” and al- “to take”) for transaction, and then we can restore sanap al-[a]lījp in the lacuna before bo yanuḍ [berdimiz] “[we issued] this receipt.” Even though any seal (tamγa) or signature (nišan) is not visible on the extant

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13 E.g., 3Kr 30c = USp 121, ṣ[..ūū]r bīla iki šīr tāliy tāgdi “together with [X] of millet, two šīr of wheat arrived (= was paid)”; U5960v = MATSUI 2005, 31–33 and MATSUI 2015a, 102.
14 *U9259 = MATSUI 2014, 619, C5; *U9255 = MATSUI 2014, 619, C6; *U9188(b) = VOHD 13,22, Nr. 470 = MATSUI 2014, C10.
manuscript, we may restore either of them in the end of line 6. ‘Ongš(a)y should be the name or title of the scribe: it seems derived from Chinese, but its origin remains unclear.17

Here, we consider the name of the leader of the century, which should be written before ٖی‌ی‌ئ‌ت‌. Though fading into less legible, it can be restored as \(\text{Pr}'(\text{C}'X')\ (T)[X'N] = b(ačaγa)\ (t)\[a\]r(qan). In SI 6544 mentioned earlier, we find the same name Bačaγa-tarqan, who was a leader of a century.18 And the ductus of the handwriting of our document is, even though not identical, rather similar to that of three of SI 6544 (= Matsui 2015b, B1, B2, B4). Now we can consider our document and SI 6544 as contemporary and mutually related, and Bačaγa-tarqan in these texts as one and the same person. If our identification is the case, we may furthermore restore another personal name Bolmĭš-Taz in the damaged part below ٖی‌ئ‌ت‌, as he appears in SI 6544: in fact, a part of the round stroke for \(P\)- is slightly visible, and it might belong to \((b)[olmĭš]. The “Sheep year (qoyn yîl)” of SI 6544 has been dated to the 己未 “ji-wei” “ji-Sheep” of 1259 CE.19 Consequently, we can offer two plausible date of our document from either ی‌ی‌ئ‌ل‌ “the Serpent year” or ی‌ئ‌ئ‌ئ‌ئ‌ “the Horse year”: the former would fall on the 丁巳 “ding-Serpent” of 1257 CE, and the latter on the 戊午 “wu-Horse” of 1258 CE. Even though we should take into account the possibility of dating twelve years earlier/later than those candidates, these dates may well tally with the socio-economic situation in the Old Uighur history that the qupčïr-tax was later integrated into other labor services, at the latest before the Chaghataid domination from the late 1320’s.20

**Conclusive Remark**

Through the analysis above, we can now recognize that the brand-new document should be a receipt for the partial payment of the qupčïr-tax, and that it concerns the same century (ٖی‌ئ‌) of a named Bačaγa-tarqan, which is mentioned in the four Uighur administrative orders SI 6544 of 1259 CE. Thus,

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17 It is unlikely that Uig. ongšay here should be related to Pers. \(\text{WNKSAY} = ſungšay \sim WYNKSAY = ſungšîy}, which are corrupted forms of \(\text{WANSY} = wānšay \sim WYNŠAY = wīnšîy < \text{Mong. \(\text{WYNŠ}Y = ſonsai < Chín. 元帥 yuan-shuai “ marshal.” Cf. Pelliot 1963, 858; TMEN IV, Nm. 1762, 1935; Sugiyama 1987, 32–33.}

18 Matsui 2015b, 63–64.


we have five Old Uighur documents belonging to a contemporary period of the mid-thirteenth century. These documents deserve to be further analyzed in comparison with the other secular texts, concerning the *qupčïr*-tax or other taxes and labor services.

**References**


