

# *In vino veritas.* Wine and its Context in the Uyghur Society: an Insight to the Economic Life of the Silk Roads

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## ABSTRACT

This paper deals with viticulture, viniculture and their social context in the Turfan region from the West Uyghur period (9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> cc.) up to the end of the Mongol period (14<sup>th</sup> century). A comparative analysis of narrative sources alongside documents written in Old Uyghur (ca. 10<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> cc.) and Middle Mongolian (13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> cc.) sheds new light on the interplay between wine production, commerce and state interest, demonstrating that wine was already one of the most important staple products of the Turfan region in the earlier period and a commodity of primary interest to the Mongol Empire. The article illuminates Old Uyghur sources' depictions of *ortok* partners, stressing how their peculiarities differ from the better-known *ortoq* partnerships employed by the Mongol aristocracy, and highlights growing interest among the nobility in wine production and the institutionalization of vinicultural assets during the Mongol period. The author argues that these processes mirror changes in transportation and Eurasian interregional contacts under Mongol rule. Finally, despite the scattered and fragmentary nature of these sources on local economy and society, the author argues that they prompt a reevaluation of trade along the Silk Roads.

## KEYWORDS

wine, Uyghurs, Turfan, Silk Roads, Mongol Empire, business associations, joint property, *ortok* partners, institutionalization

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The Uyghur and Middle Mongolian documents unearthed in East Turkestan and in the Gansu corridor give us a unique firsthand insight into the social and economic life of the region between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. These texts, scattered worldwide across various collections, provide one of the biggest groups of local sources on the history of the Silk Roads. To give an impression of the size and composition of this source material, it is worth taking a look at the Berlin collection of Uyghur sources. The Berlin Turfan collection alone preserves around 8000 Old Uyghur fragments. Most of these (about 90%) are religious texts (Manichean, Buddhist and Christian) and the rest (around 780 fragments) are the so-called non-religious or profane texts, i.e. documents, which can be divided into two major groups: official (or administrative) and private texts.<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, at first sight this picture of daily life on the Silk Roads differs significantly from what one would expect based on most narrative sources. Some hints of caravan trading can be found, but these are mainly dated to earlier periods.<sup>3</sup> The great majority of the private documents deal with agricultural business and not with the trade in precious materials more usually associated with the Silk Roads. The official documents were mostly issued in relation to questions of taxation and state administration, and only rarely deal with commercial matters, such as the regulation of trade.

A specific commodity that our sources describe in detail is wine (*bor*). More precisely, besides cotton (*böz*) and grains, wine is the product most often attested in the Old Uyghur documents.<sup>4</sup> This paper focuses on the role of viticulture and viniculture in the Turfan region throughout the West Uyghur (9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> cc.) and Mongol periods (13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> cc.), alongside their social context, role in the economy and connection to state administration. Based on a philological analysis of Old

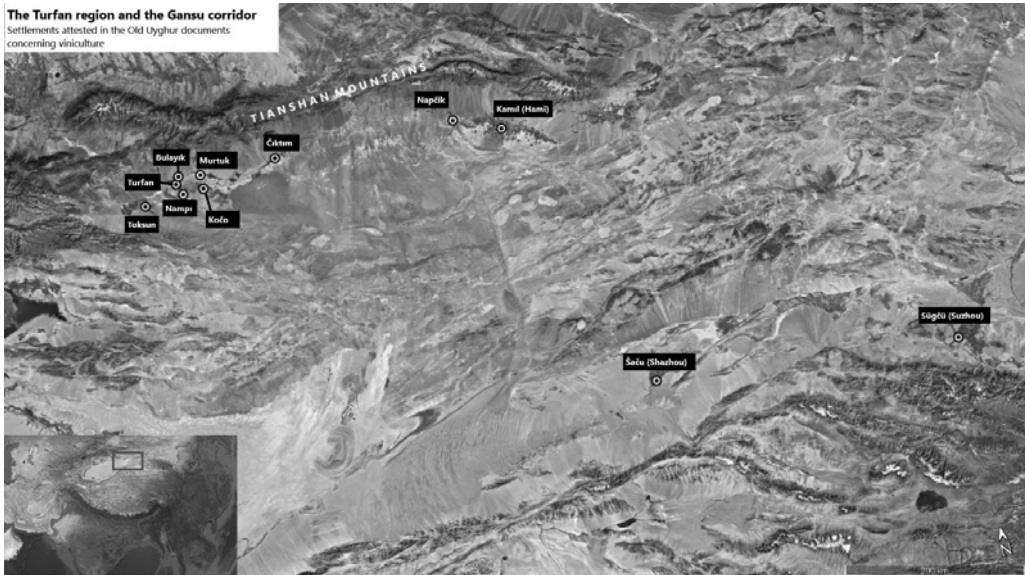
<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to both reviewers. Their criticisms and insightful comments were extremely helpful for improving this material. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the colleagues who provided comments and advice during the development of earlier drafts of this paper. I am especially grateful to Szilvia Kovács, András Róna-Tas and Christopher Atwood, and in particular to Simone-Christiane Raschmann, whose comments and advice have, as always, been an enormous help. Last, but certainly not least, I am also very thankful to Geoffrey Humble, who corrected the English of this paper. The project on which this publication is based was financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research under the funding number 01UL1704X. The responsibility for the content of this publication remains with the author.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Raschmann 2014: 523–525. On the classification of the material: VOHD 13,21: 13–16; VÉR 2019a: 22–43.

<sup>3</sup> According to Moriyasu Takao more than ten Uyghur letters include the expression *arkis* ‘caravan’ (Clauson 1972: 216–217; Röhrborn 2015: 254–255), however all of these can be dated around the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries (Moriyasu 2012: 45). In most cases the caravans are mentioned as means of transportation and/or service providers for the exchange of letters and gifts (Moriyasu 2019: Nos.: 03, 06, 08, 17, 25, 30, 54, 56, 65, 93, 112, 117, 135). One exception is a commercial letter that had been sent to family members (Or. 8212 / 123), stating that a camel had been sent with a previous caravan with rolls of raw silk and two mattocks. It also informs the recipients that a certain Baban Čor had gone to the Khitan empire of Liao due to some matters of business ( *ḡbaban čor älitmiş tavar üçün ḡbaban čor kitay-ka barrır ärmiş*) (Moriyasu 2019: 107–108, No. 81). The other exception is a commercial letter dispatched to Dunhuang (Šaču) to the sender’s younger brother (Or. 8212 / 120). This letter informed him that the sender intends to travel with a caravan to Jiuquan (Süčü) cf. Moriyasu 2019: 121–122, No. 94. For the Mongol period a loan contract can be mentioned (U 5231; SUK: Lo06), in which Būdüs Tutun, a caravan merchant (who according to Moriyasu came from Čiktum), borrowed felt (*kediz*) during his stay in Napčik in the vicinity of Hami, cf. Moriyasu 2002: 164; VOHD<sub>13,21</sub> # 80. In the case of the Old Uyghur documents from the Berlin Turfan collection readers are referred to the catalogue entries for a detailed description of the manuscripts and further information concerning their contents, earlier publications, facsimiles and citations. In citations of original sources, the number of lines is always set in lower index.

<sup>4</sup> On *böz* in the Uyghur sources see Raschmann 1995.





Settlements of the Turfan region and the Gansu corridor attested in the Old Uyghur documents concerning viniculture (Prepared by the author with the help of Google Earth)

Uyghur and Middle Mongolian documents, this article argues that wine was one of the most important products of the Turfan region. Every social group, from single commoners, through various business associations including *ortok* partners and religious communities up to the aristocracy, had an interest in viticulture. This interest grew in the Mongol period, affording wine a preeminent importance for the Mongol ruling elite and their state, leading to an institutionalization of assets in connection to viticulture that is clearly recorded in our sources.

No matter how important wine may be in the Old Uyghur and Middle Mongolian sources, the Uyghurs did not invent viniculture. Thus, in order to contextualize the topic, we must first take into account the viticulture and viniculture of the Tarim Basin before the arrival of the Uyghurs.

## VITICULTURE AND WINE IN THE TURFAN REGION BEFORE THE UYGHURS

Viticulture and winemaking were well-established and widespread in the Turfan region long before the Mongol period and even before the settlement of the Uyghurs in the region in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century. Turfan lies at the north-eastern end of the Tarim Basin, north of the Taklamakan Desert.<sup>5</sup> Due to its location Turfan played a major role in trade along the Silk Roads and thus in contact between China and Central Asia starting from the earliest times.<sup>6</sup> There is no unequivocal evi-

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed geographical description of the Turfan Depression, see Huntington 1907; Bertrand 2010: 29–31.

<sup>6</sup> General summaries of the history of the Turfan oasis have been published by Zhang and Rong (1998), Hansen (1999) and Hitch (2009, especially: 48–51).



dence concerning the beginning of viticulture and then viniculture in the Turfan region. Basically, two main interpretations of the available data can be distinguished, their common point being that the ultimate origin of viticulture was modern northern Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, where viniculture developed under strong Hellenistic influence from the later fourth century BCE. One opinion emphasizes the role of the Chinese, who obtained grapes from Dawan (Ferghana) under the rule of Han Wudi (141–87 BCE), but there is no indication that they made wine from these. The Han government later established military agricultural colonies (*tuntian* 屯田) in the Hexi corridor to maintain their military presence and to assist with supplying their army in the region. According to this hypothesis (Liu 2005) viticulture reached first Dunhuang, and later Turfan, by the first or the second centuries CE, i.e. under the later Han. Recently, another analysis (Jäger 2014) stressed the role of the Sogdians in the spread of viticulture and viniculture on the northern Silk Roads in pre-Islamic times.<sup>7</sup>

What seems certain is that by the time of the early Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) a mature viniculture had evolved in the Turfan region. According to Chinese sources from the early Tang period, Uyghurs were great grape growers and wine drinkers. In the spring of 647, the Türk chieftain (*yabgu*) sent a bunch of the so-called ‘mare’s teat’<sup>8</sup> grapes to the Chinese emperor. After the Tang army’s 640 CE conquest of the city of Kočo (also known as Karakhoja, the Chinese Gaochang 高昌) within the region, cuttings of the ‘mare’s teat’ grapevine were sent to the Chinese capital Chang’an 長安. The exact date of this is unknown, however. Moreover, different kinds of raisins and wine were demanded from Kočo as an annual tax (Schafer 1963: 142–143).<sup>9</sup>

As is clear from the evidence above, viticulture and viniculture had a well-established tradition in the Turfan region long before the mass immigration of the Uyghurs in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. According to Chinese sources, viticulture was familiar to the Uyghurs even before their settlement in the Tarim Basin. After this brief review of the cultural and historical context, we now turn our attention to the Old Uyghur sources.

<sup>7</sup> Jäger (2014: 47) also considers the possibility of an autochthonous viniculture in Kuča, where the conquering armies of general Lü Guang 呂光 found 10,000 bushels of wine in 384 CE. He also mentions the story of a Buddhist master Zhuyue 直月, who ordered his pupil to drink 15 litres of Kuchaeen wine, to make him discard wine-drinking for the rest of his life. See Liu Mau-tsai 1969: 10, 31, 66, 190.

<sup>8</sup> There is a Hungarian grape called *kecskecsöcsü*, which literally means ‘goat teat’. Moreover, we find close similarities not only between both names, but in their descriptions; the ‘mare’s teat’ grape was reportedly large and purple, with an elongated shape (Schafer 1963: 142; Jäger 2014: 48, Spengler 2019: 182–183). These similarities are especially interesting in light of the fact that the Hungarian word for grape (*szőlő*) might have had a West Old Turkic background (Róna-Tas and Berta 2011: 818–822). It must however be noted that while the ‘mare’s teat’ seemingly had a close connection with winemaking, the *kecskecsöcsü* is a grape for eating and these similar denominations could have evolved independently from one another.

<sup>9</sup> Although the aim of this section is to provide context for the article’s main topic through a survey of secondary literature, I would like to express my gratitude to Reviewer B, for suggesting a series of Classical Chinese sources concerning the history of Gaochang during the 6<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> cc., i.e. before the arrival of the Uyghurs (*Liangshu* 梁書, chap. 54, Zhonghua shuju ed.: 811; *Beishi* 北史, chap. 97, Zhonghua shuju ed.: 3212; *Tanghuiyao* 唐會要, chap. 100, Zhonghua shuju ed.: 2135). Since I am not a sinologist, a full analysis of the recommended source material is beyond my professional scope, and thus I am indebted especially to Geoffrey Humble who translated these texts, permitting me to summarise here their most important elements. A recurrent element in these accounts is reports of local rulers sending embassies to the central parts of China with presents or tax composed of local produce. According to the *Liangshu* 梁書 (*Book of the Liang*) on Gaochang (chap. 54): ‘They produce fine horses, grape wine (*putao jiu* 蒲陶酒) and rock salt. The same source mentions that during the *Datong* 大同 era (535–546 CE), they sent envoys with offerings including grapes (*putao* 蒲陶). The *Beishi* 北史 (*History of the North[ern Dynasties]*) offers another direct reference to viticulture in this region, mentioning that there was a great deal of wine (*putao jiu* 蒲陶酒).



VITICULTURAL TERMINOLOGY IN THE OLD UYGHUR SOURCES<sup>10</sup>

Numerous attestations of *bor* ('wine'), its derivatives and semantically connected terminology (e.g. vineyards and their workers), in the Old Uyghur sources suggest that inhabitants of the Turfan region already possessed an advanced viticulture in the West Uyghur period (9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> cc.). Later, in the Mongol period (13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> cc.), viniculture was one of the most important sections of agricultural production in the Turfan region. As will be shown, and especially in the earlier periods, viticulture did not necessarily always mean viniculture (i.e., wine production), but wine-making was certainly present during both periods.

A rich terminology concerning wine and viniculture is attested in the Old Uyghur sources: *bor* 'wine', *yaŋı bor* 'new wine'<sup>11</sup>, *äski bor* 'old wine'<sup>12</sup>, *süčüg* 'sweet wine' or 'grape juice',<sup>13</sup> *bor särkäsi* 'wine vinegar'.<sup>14</sup> The units of measurement for wine attested also show a very sophisticated system: *kap*, *tämbin*,<sup>15</sup> *küp*,<sup>16</sup> *čan*,<sup>17</sup> and *kalça*.<sup>18</sup>

The Uyghurs did not always necessarily make wine from their grapes, however. For example, dried grapes, i.e. raisins (*kurug üzüm*) are attested as a present for a general (*sañun*) in a letter of the Pelliot collection from the West Uyghur period, unearthed in Dunhuang (Pelliot Ouïgour 3)<sup>19</sup> and also in a draft of a letter written on the verso side of a Chinese Buddhist sutra, unearthed in the vicinity of Turfan (\*U 9003).<sup>20</sup> In an Old Uyghur medical text (U 559), a kind of health potion made from raisins (*kurug üzüm suvı*) is used against blood flow: <sub>83</sub>*kan ödkäk çüsüm kuruk üzüm*

<sup>10</sup> On alcoholic beverages and alcohol consumption among the early Turkic people in general, see Zieme 1997; Allsen 2016. Here the discussion is restricted to viticulture and viniculture in the Old Uyghur sources. This section draws upon Raschmann 2016: 372–377.

<sup>11</sup> A fine example for this expression is attested in a loan contract from the West Uyghur period: \*U 9358 verso side (VOHD 13,28 # 229).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the attestations in a list of expenses U 5306 recto (VOHD 13,21 # 210; VOHD 13,28 # 231) and in a tax code \*U 9268 (VOHD 13,28 # 229).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. the attestation in U 5244 (VOHD 13,21 # 130; SUK II: 167, Mi21).

<sup>14</sup> It is attested in an Old Uyghur medical text (U 559; Rachmati 1930: 456, 458; VOHD 13,25 # 27).

<sup>15</sup> The original meaning of the word *kap* was 'a leather bag, water-skin, sack' and more broadly 'vessel, container' (Clauson 1972: 578). Furthermore, it was also a unit of measurement for liquids, and most occurrences in the documents bear out this secondary meaning. Yamada (1971: 493–495) pointed out that one *kap* was equal to 30 *tämbin* (Mong. *tembin*). Matsui (2004: 197) has demonstrated that one *kap* corresponded to one Chinese *dou* 斗, which was equal to ca. 8.4 litres. He also identified *tämbin* as the smallest unit of measurement for liquids, at ca. 0.28 litres (Matsui 2004: 200). Cf. the expression in a list (U 5326 r) <sub>1-2</sub>*-ka oñuz tämbin bir kap bor* 'to... 30 *tämbin* i.e. 1 *kap* wine'. See VOHD 13,21 # 215; VOHD 13,28 # 274. It is noticeable that *kap* appears as a specification of the amount of raisins provided in a letter (Pelliot Ouïgour 3), while in the fragmentary message (\*U 9003; VOHD 13,22 # 328; VOHD 13,28 # 089) the more usual *küri* is employed.

<sup>16</sup> The word *küp* originally meant 'an earthenware jar or jug' (Clauson 1972: 687) but it was also used as a unit of measurement for liquids. In the West Uyghur period, it was equivalent to Chin. *weng* 甕 and *ci* 瓷, i.e. ca. 36 litres (Matsui 2010a: 39). For examples of usage as a unit of measurement see: U 5246 (SUK II: 165–167, Mi19; VOHD 13,21 # 131 and VOHD 13,28 # 298) and \*U 9268; a draft of a rental contract U 4983 + U 5745 + U 5747 (VOHD 13,21 # 100; Zieme 1999: 333) and the wine harvest song \*U 9357 (VOHD 13,28 # 250).

<sup>17</sup> For example: <sub>122</sub>*bir çan bor* 'one goblet of wine' (Rachmati 1930: 458).

<sup>18</sup> This is a loan of Mongolian *qalja* 'écritoire faite avec de la corne de boeuf: falcon, fiole' (Kowalewski II: 802) and 'inkstand made of horn' (Lessing 1973: 922). More recently, Matsui considered it to be a measure of capacity, equal to 168 ml, which is a fifth of 1 *sheng* 升 (ca. 840 ml), (Matsui 2015a: 70–71). This measurement is widely used in a register concerning the postal system (Mainz 765 v). Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 203; Vér 2019a: 168–173 (UIReg07).

<sup>19</sup> Hamilton 1986: 147–151, 316–317 (No. 29), see Moriyasu 2019: 83–84 (No. 56) and 133.

<sup>20</sup> Raschmann 2008: 138–140; Raschmann 2016: 373–374. n. 14; Moriyasu 2019: 133–134 (No. 108); VOHD 13,28 # 328; VOHD 13,28 # 89.



*suvi tañda sayu* <sup>84</sup> *içürsär ädğü bolur* ‘When there is blood flow, pour mulberries and the water of dried grapes every morning, if (it is) drunk it will be fine.’<sup>21</sup>

Vineyards (*borluk*) are among the most frequently attested estate types among the Old Uyghur documents. Of the 121 documents published in the most extensive text edition of the Old Uyghur private documents so far prepared, the *Sammlung uigurischer Kontrakte* (SUK), *borluk* is attested in 17 documents, approximately 15% of the material. Wine is attested in a further three documents and in a further four we find the profession of *borlukçi*, i.e. a person working in a vineyard.<sup>22</sup>

## VITICULTURE IN UYGHUR SOCIETY: MEANS, ACTORS AND ROLES

Considering who had a share or interest in viticulture and viniculture in local society in the Turfan region, the following actors can be identified: commoners, business associations, religious communities, members of the aristocracy, and the state.<sup>23</sup> According to our sources vineyards and their products were integrated in various ways into economic production and exchange. Wine served as a means of payment, and could be loaned and taxed, while vineyards were subject to sale, rent, lease, mortgage, household division and various forms of possession.

A register of sales revenues (*satıg*) in official cloth money (*kuanpu*) and wine (*bor*) from the West Uyghur period (U 5832b) refers to wine as a means of payment.<sup>24</sup> Personal names (*çışug* ~ Jesus, Joshua; *mar-i ruxa k(ä)yä* ~ Mār-i Ruya-k(ä)yä) as well as the provenance of the fragment (Bulayık) suggest that the documents was jotted down in a Christian (Church of the East) environment.<sup>25</sup> Another document, namely a register from the same period (\*U 9189, USp 35) identifies wine (*bor*) as a sales object: *ᵛyañı borluk-nuñ bir küp künçi borı satıp üç yüz tokuz ᵛon kuanpu boldı lükçün-täki iki küp bor üç yüz ᵛy(e)girmi kuanpu boldı* <sup>5-7</sup>. The sale of one *küp künçi*(?) wine

<sup>21</sup> On this manuscript see the catalogue entry: VOHD 13,25 # 27. Gabdul Rashid Rachmati published a series of Old Uyghur fragments containing medical texts (Rachmati 1930, Rachmati 1932). According to this text they used wine and other products made of wine (e.g. wine vinegar) to heal a range of diseases from abdominal pain [line 16], through venereal disease [line 121] to breathing difficulties [line 162]. Cf. Rachmati 1930: 454–455, 458–459, 460–461. No direct models of these recipes have as yet been identified, but due to the numerous Sanskrit terms an Indian influence seems probable (cf. Zieme 2007: 309). Old Uyghur medical texts also handle the question of diseases caused by wine (*bordun turmiş ig, bor ig/bor igi*) (\*U 9219; Rachmati 1932: 420–421; cf. Zieme 2007: 31). In a draft letter (Ch/U 3917) which can be connected to the Manichaeism society the author warns the recipient as follows: *ᵛel bugra taşgaru barmakı yok ᵛbor üküš içür-mäzün açinu yarlıg bolzun* ‘El Bugra shall not go out! Do not let him drink too much wine. Please let someone take care of him’. Cf. Moriyasu 2019: 171–174 (No. 173).

<sup>22</sup> Another profession connected to wine is attested in the Old Uyghur and Mongolian texts; *borçi* will be discussed in detail in a later section on the state’s role in viticulture.

<sup>23</sup> In the case of pre-modern polities, it is usually problematic to differentiate between state and aristocracy since their interests, properties and duties were often not clearly divided. As will be shown later in this article, a strict division is unlikely in our case too.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,22 # 439.

<sup>25</sup> Besides Manichaeism and Buddhism, Christian communities belonging to the Church of the East (formerly Nestorians) were also present in Uyghur society, but were concentrated in several localities. Most of the Old Uyghur texts showing a Christian background, some 23 fragments, were found in Bulayık, a settlement lying ca. 10 kilometres to the northeast of Turfan. According to the find-signature (T III 99 Bul.) this fragment was also excavated in Bulayık during the third German Turfan expedition. This Christian community remained well attested into the Mongol period. On the traces of Christian communities in the Uyghur texts: Raschmann 2009. For the edition of the Old Uyghur Christian texts see Zieme 2015.



from the new vineyard achieved (a price of) 390 *kuanpu*. Two *küp* of Lükčün wine achieved (a price of) 320 *kuanpu*.<sup>26</sup> This reveals substantial differences in wine prices. A comprehensive analysis of all the available sources would be necessary to evaluate the prices found in Old Uyghur sources. Furthermore, the interpretation of *künči* is still an open question. Most recently, Peter Zieme dealt with *künči* and collected the attestations known in Old Uyghur texts. Among these, there is a further reference for ...] *küp künči süčüg* ... in Bezeklik document 80TBI:535a. Studying the available material Zieme came to the conclusion that *künči* has to be regarded as another unit of measurement.<sup>27</sup>

A document (U 5260) from the Mongol period indicates that after a loan of 0.5 *kap* (ca. 4.2 litres) of wine (*yarım kap bor*), the borrower had to repay to the lender one *kap* (ca. 8.4 litres) of sweet wine or grape juice (*bir kap süčüg*) by the beginning of autumn.<sup>28</sup> In another case (U 5262), also from the Mongol period, the loan was *bir y(a)rım böz*, i.e. 1.5 (units) of cotton cloth that had to be repaid in the form of *oțuzar tämbin* (i.e. *tämbin*) *süčügni bir kap*, i.e. one *kap* of sweet wine or grape juice, which consisted of 30 *tämbin*.<sup>29</sup> According to U 5244, *altmış tämbin süčüg*, i.e. 60 *tämbin* (equal to 2 *kaps*) of sweet wine were to be paid as rent for the usage (*ädlämiškä* literally: for the cultivation) of a vineyard accrued up to the Boar year (*toņuz yıl*).<sup>30</sup>

Sales contracts inform us about many details of the course of business in general and that of the wine business in particular. For example, a contract of sale for a vineyard from the West Uyghur Period that is preserved on several fragments (U 6112 + U 6163 + U 6166 + U 6201) shows the traditional location specification through the description of the neighbouring properties in all directions: *bu borluk sıçı-sı bar tagtn yınak sañık yer [ ] öñtün yınak kutadmış y(e)gän arslan için sañun-nuñ [ ] teginkä-tägi altın yınak mänü (...) t(ä)ñrim-niñ borluk [ ] -tägi kedin yınak kan-niñ ulug yolingatägi...* ‘The confines of this vineyard are [as follows]: on the mountain side (i.e. to the north) the land of the monastery [ ]; eastwards [up to the lands] of Kutadmiş Yegän and Arslan the inner general [ ] of the prince. Downwards (i.e. to the south) up to the vineyard of Mänü-(...)-Tängrim [ ] To the west, up to the big road of the Khan...’<sup>31</sup>

Another sale contract shows how vineyard size was measured in the Mongol period (U 5238).<sup>32</sup> According to this a person, Sada by name, sold his share of an irrigable (*suvaklıg*) vineyard that lay along a canal.<sup>33</sup> The contract expresses the size of the vineyard as is customary in Uyghur contracts, i.e. according to the manpower necessary to cultivate it. In this case six men’s work is needed (*alñı är kömär*). The price of the vineyard is indicated as *yüz iki bağlık uzun karıta böz*,

<sup>26</sup> Cf.: VOHD 13,22 # 366 and VOHD 13,28 # 085. The latter volume also provides the facsimile of the manuscript and two handwritten transcriptions by Reşid Rahmeti Arat.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Zieme 2017: 5–6; Zieme 2020: 93 (Text 11).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. SUK II: 112–113 (Lo30); VOHD 13,21 # 112 and VOHD 13,28 # 271.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. SUK II: 97 (Mi14); VOHD 13,21 # 114 and VOHD 13,28 # 280.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. SUK II: 167 (Mi21); VOHD 13,21 # 130 and VOHD 13,28 # 276. Both U 5260 above and this document belong to a group of Old Uyghur private documents connected through a person called Turi, most of which deal with viticulture. The texts of this so-called Turi group will be discussed in detail below.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 78. Edition of the full text with commentary: Matsui 2006: 43–45. In most cases such descriptions of boundaries followed an east, south, west and north order. Matsui considered this differing north, east, south west order to be a possible marker for the West Uyghur period. On the description of land boundaries in Old Uyghur contracts in general, see Zieme 1980: 210–213.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. SUK II: 23–24 (Sa10); VOHD 13,21 # 70.

<sup>33</sup> On the importance of irrigation for agriculture in the Turfan region see Zieme 1974: 300–301 (notes to line 3) and VOHD 13,28: 73 note 1.



i.e. 100 cotton cloth (*böz*) with a precise specification that served as a currency.<sup>34</sup> Missing information about the size of a given piece of land, along with variations in soil quality and distance to irrigation channels or natural watercourses as well as unequal means of payment make it difficult to evaluate and compare these statements. For example, another contract preserved in Istanbul (Istanbul 35) inform us about the sale of a plot, half of a vineyard, which was apparently double the size of the previous example: <sup>4,5</sup>*on altı är kömär borlukta...yarım borlukumni* ‘(I sold) my half of the vineyard, that can be cultivated by 16 men.’ The price was 100 *yastuk* paper money (*yüz yastuk čao*), but due to the missing data on the other qualities of this vineyard one cannot compare its value to the previous canal-side plot.<sup>35</sup> Appraisal of the 600 *yastuk čao* price mentioned in \*U 9181 is similarly problematic, since the vineyards and other lands purchased are not specified exactly within the contract.<sup>36</sup> These texts do prove, however, that payment in instalments was possible, as in this case 100 *yastuk čao* were paid out by the time of contract and 500 were yet to be paid (<sup>5,6</sup>*altı yüz yastuk čao içindin yüz yastuk berip kalgan beş yüz yastuk čao kaldı*).

Besides loans and sales, vineyards could be the subject of tenancy transactions too. A fragment from the West Uyghur period preserved at the Ötani collection in Japan (Ot. Ry. 2728) contains two land tenancy contracts. The tenancy contract on the recto side concerns a vineyard but, regrettably, the fragment is too damaged to provide any further details (cf. Matsui 2006: 40–41).<sup>37</sup> From the Mongol period a contract (U 5272) gives us some insight into the circumstances of land tenancy.<sup>38</sup> The tenant needed land for planting (raw) cotton (<sup>2,3</sup>*käpöz tarıgu yer kärgäk bolup*) and for this purpose he rented a vineyard situated on the waterfront (<sup>4</sup>*bu suvtaki uțuru borlukın*). As rent, he had to pay 10 *tañ* of (raw) cotton (*käpöz*) by the beginning of autumn.<sup>39</sup>

In most of the above cases the interested parties were commoners. Nevertheless, from the earliest times, Manichean and Buddhist monasteries played a crucial role alongside private actors in the economic life of oasis states along the Silk Roads. Our sources demonstrate that this was the case in Uyghur society in the Turfan region as well. Even though Manichean and Buddhist teachings opposed wine consumption, there are direct proofs that cloisters of both religions owned vineyards (cf. Zieme 1980: 199).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> The whole passage is as follows: *... yüz iki bag-lık uzun karı-ta <sup>3</sup>böz alıp şüküi ögän üzä suvak-lig sury-a bilä üliş-lüg maña täğär altı kömer borl[uk]umni suldan B'M-ka togru tomlıdu <sup>5</sup>sařtım*. ‘I have sold outright and irrevocably for 100 double-baled long ells cotton cloth to Suldan B'M (my part of) the irrigable vineyard that lies along the Şükü-canal, that I jointly own with Surya.’

<sup>35</sup> Cf. SUK II: 25–26 (Sa11). The original meaning of *yastuk* was ‘something propped up’ or ‘pillow’ and the like. In these documents it refers to a pillow-shaped ingot of silver. It is the largest unit currency mentioned in the documents, and at ca. 2,000 grams, it was the equivalent of Chin. *ding* 錠, Mong. *süke* and Pers. *bālīs* (Clauson 1972: 974; Matsui 2004a: 200). As here, it was also used to describe the paper currency *čao* (< Chin. *chao* 鈔).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. SUK II: 160–162 (Mi17); VOHD 13,22 # 365 and VOHD 13,28 # 282. The text differentiates between a vineyard located within Kočo and a piece of land outside of the city (<sup>3,4</sup>*kočo-taki taysañ borluk balık borluk taştın kač bölük yer-niñ sařtıgı*), thus it seems reasonable that location also influenced the price of land.

<sup>37</sup> It is worth mentioning that parts of several personal names are of Chinese origin. Cf. the notes at Matsui 2006: 41.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. SUK II: 72–73 (RH04); VOHD 13,21 # 90 and VOHD 13,28 # 272.

<sup>39</sup> *Tañ* was a unit of measurement, used especially for raw cotton and vegetables. Earlier regarded as a borrowing from Khotanese *thaṃga*, Yoshida has suggested that it goes back to Sogdian *dnk*. Cf. Yoshida 2003: 159; Yoshida 2007: 470, see also Moriyasu 2019: 94 for further literature. On Old Uyghur tenancy contracts in general, see Zieme 1980.

<sup>40</sup> A tale of Buddhist origin preserved on a Manichean fragment in the Berlin collection (III 201 I [T II D 176]) draws a very vivid picture of the maleficent effects of excessive drinking. In this story a nobleman, due to his drunkenness, confused a dead body for his wife. He slept with the corpse and tore it apart during intercourse. On





The most important source on the economy of Uyghur Manichean cloisters in the West Uyghur period is a long (125-line) decree preserved in the Museum of Chinese History in Beijing (K 7709).<sup>41</sup> This text explicitly states that vineyards (*bag borluk*) belonged to a Manichean cloister (see especially lines 86 and 93). The first part of the compositum *bag borluk* is an Iranian loanword meaning ‘garden’ and, together with the Turkic word for vineyard, the expression most probably refers to the fact that most orchards in Turfan were vineyards.<sup>42</sup> Two West Uyghur period documents concerning the tax exemption of a Buddhist monastery in Murtuk (*murtuk ar-yadan*)<sup>43</sup> are preserved in the Berlin Turfan collection (U 5317 and U 5319).<sup>44</sup> According to these texts the leasing of arable lands and vineyards was an important source of income for Buddhist cloisters.<sup>45</sup> The rulers even expected the monasteries to increase their land ownership.<sup>46</sup> Old Uyghur documents also report the donation of land to monasteries in order to reduce or avoid taxation.<sup>47</sup> For example \*U 9194 is a document issued during the West Uyghur period about the endowment of a piece of land containing a vineyard (*yer borluk*) to a Buddhist cloister. \*U 9332 was issued during the Mongol period on a similar occasion, namely the offering of a vineyard to a monastery in Murtuk (<Murut, *murutluk v(i)rhar*).<sup>48</sup> Tenant farmers of arable lands also donated their farmlands to monasteries.<sup>49</sup> Nothing better shows the importance of vineyards to the life of the Buddhist monasteries under Mongol rule than the above-mentioned copy of a Middle Mongolian decree in the St. Petersburg collection (SI Kr IG 120). It was issued by the Chaghadaid ruler Yisün Temür (1337–1339/40) in defence of the interests of the Yōgačari monastery in Kočo, whose farmland (*yajār usun*) and vineyard (*baay borluy-i*) had been taken by force (Kara 2003: 28–30; Matsui 2010b: 61–62).

Researchers have tried to resolve the contradiction between the religious doctrines and the fact that both Manichean and Buddhist monasteries possessed vineyards in various ways. While

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the Buddhist origin of the story and its afterlife in Islamic literature, see Asmussen 1966: 16–17. For an English translation of the text: Klimkeit 1993: 314. See VOHD 13,16: 50–51 (# 21).

<sup>41</sup> The whole text is edited and published with a German translation and extensive commentaries by Moriyasu (2004a: 39–147).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Zieme 1975; Moriyasu 2004a: 54–55 and 110 with citation of further attestations in Old Uyghur texts. This composition is also attested in Middle Mongolian decrees: once in MongHT69 in the Berlin collection (*bay borluq-i*) and once in a draft or copy of a decree (SI Kr I G 120) preserved at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts at the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IOM/RAS):<sub>10</sub>*baay borluy-i*. (Kara 2003: 28–30, Cf. Matsui 2010b: 61–62).

<sup>43</sup> *Aryadan* ~ *aranyadan* < Skt. *āranyāyatana* ‘monastery, hermitage’. According to Röhrborn (2015: 223–224) the terms *v(i)rhar*, *sāngrām* and *aranyadan* were used simultaneously.

<sup>44</sup> U 5317 was dated by Zieme (1981) to 1259, however Matsui considers it to be a copy of an original issued in the West Uyghur period (2005: 70. n. 6). See Zieme 1981: 243–258; Moriyasu 2004a: 158–160; VOHD 13,21 # 26, 50 and VOHD 13,28 # 154, 332.

<sup>45</sup> Another document (\*U 9013, VOHD 13,22 # 312 and VOHD 13,28 # 079) from the West Uyghur period concerning the administration of a Buddhist monastery also attests to wine and vineyards. Due to their contents and similar orthography it is likely to be connected to the documents U 5321 (VOHD 13,21 # 57) and U 5591 + U 5304 (VOHD 13,21 # 62).

<sup>46</sup> Zieme 1981: 243–245 (text A: U 5317, lines 28–29); Matsui 2010: 61. Similarly in the Middle Mongolian decree from the Mongol period: MongHT69 line 4–6, Cerensodnom and Taube 1993: 171–172.

<sup>47</sup> On taxation in the Turfan region during the West Uyghur and Mongol periods, see Matsui 2005.

<sup>48</sup> *Virhar* < Skt. *vihāra* ‘monastery’. A detailed description of the document \*U 9332: VOHD 13,28 # 81. On the attestations of the monastery or monasteries in Murtuk, see Raschmann 2018: 81–82.

<sup>49</sup> From the Mongol period there are both Old Uyghur (U 5330) and Middle Mongolian (SI Kr I G 120, see n. 22 above) texts reporting disputes between monasteries and commoners’ collectives concerning such deals. See Matsui 2010b.



Samuel Lieu did not preclude the possibility that monks consumed grape wine themselves, he argued that the region played a key role in interregional trade between China and Central Asia, and thus surmised that the Manichean cloisters produced wine primarily for sale (Lieu 1981: 168, Lieu 1992: 241). Moriyasu Takao stressed that the vineyards did not necessarily only produce wine, calling attention to the commercial value of raisins (Moriyasu 2004a: 94–95. n. 119). A fragmentary letter draft in the St. Petersburg collection (SI 4095 verso) might affirm at least the involvement of Buddhist monasteries in the wine trade during the West Uyghur period.<sup>50</sup> Intended to be sent to a Buddhist dignitary (*šilavanti-ka*), the letter seemingly dealt with agribusiness and perhaps commercial issues. A passage (lines 5–6) might be interpreted as an inquiry about the stock of wine at a Buddhist cloister (*v(i)rhar*) and its purchase price.<sup>51</sup> For the Mongol period direct proof is at hand for alcohol production in Buddhist monasteries' vineyards. U 5288 is an official order dated to 1358 for a tribute of *araki* ('liquor') and monastic vineyards (*[ta]ysañ v(i)rharlık borluk, lišün v(i)rharlık borluk*) are also mentioned among the tributaries.<sup>52</sup> \*U 9303 is an official order for tribute in the form of wine and the total 4 *kap* of wine (ca. 33.6 litres) were meant to be paid by four 'pairs' of tax-payers, constituted in each case of a private person (all seemingly commoners) and a monastic vineyard. This interesting constellation is so far unique among our sources and thus cannot yet be explained with any certainty.<sup>53</sup> It seems conceivable, however, that joint ownership of real estate or joint responsibility for certain taxes was not limited to commoners and could involve monastic partnerships. Joint ownership of real estates and joint tenancy was an integral and important part of the Uyghurs' economic life and, as will be shown in the next section, such associations played a decisive role in wine production too.

## BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS AND VITICULTURE: JOINT POSSESSION AND DOCUMENT GROUPS

Joint ownership of vineyards was known among the Uyghurs by the West Uyghur period. From this earlier period, there is only one example of vineyard co-ownership, namely the contract of sale mentioned above and preserved as four different fragments (U 6112 + U 6163 + U 6166 + U 6201). In this contract at least four people are enumerated (lines 6 to 9) as sellers (*satači*) of the vineyard; the text does not inform us about their relations to one another. Another sale contract (Ot. Ry. 1414a; Sa02) shows that the practice of shared ownership was not uniquely practiced in viticulture, and, moreover, sheds light on partners' relationships, namely that the seller had the same share in the farm land as his brother Kančuk (*₄₋₅ičim kančuk bilä tüz ülüš-lüg üč šig yerim*).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Moriyasu 2019: 126 (No. 99). The old signature of this manuscript was SI 4b Kr 223.

<sup>51</sup> Matsui read a problematic passage as: *₅[yan]a v[irha]r-ta bor ärsär tälüm ärsär satgün* <sub>₆</sub>[ ] / [ ] // [ ] *alip idgil...* 'Moreover, if [there] are wine in the monastery and if [the wine] is plentiful, the trade [of wine] ... you shall take and send [us?]' (Matsui 2006: 39). In contrast, Moriyasu considered the first word(s) of the fifth line unreadable and read the following passage as: *bar ärsär-tälüm ärsär* 'If there is a lot of...'. (Moriyasu 2019: 126). The published facsimile (Matsui 2006: 55) is hard to read, but the reading *bor* seems to be the more likely. Cf. Raschmann 2016: 377. n. 36.

<sup>52</sup> VOHD 13,21 # 18; Matsui 2011: 158–161.

<sup>53</sup> VOHD 13,28 # 112. Edition, English translation and a detailed analysis of the text is provided in Raschmann 2018.

<sup>54</sup> Moriyasu (1997a: 4–7; 1997b: 96) has called attention to the importance of documents containing the expression *ülüšlüg* 'jointly owned' for the study of the evolution of Uyghur business partnerships.



From the Mongol period we know of an example where vineyard ownership was shared between family members (Ot. Ry. 543; Sa16).<sup>55</sup> A certain Bäg Tämür sold his share of a vineyard possessed jointly with his older and younger brothers (₃*aka ini-lär birlä*). According to the contract he owned two parts of the property (₄*borluk-ta maña tägär iki ülüš*). It was not only family members who engaged in the joint ownership of vineyards, however. In at least one further sale contract (U 5238) we have no clue to blood-relationships between the owners: ₃₄*sury-a bilä ülüšlüg...borlukumnu* ‘My vineyard... that I possess jointly with Surya’. Summing up, the joint possession of farmlands and vineyards was known in the West Uyghur period, and is well attested in sources from the Mongol period. In some cases, the owners were bound by blood, but this is not necessarily the case. Other forms of economic cooperation are less obvious in our sources. Since these business associations were also involved in viniculture, a survey of two document groups provides further insight into this aspect of Uyghur economic life.

These groups are connected through the people attested in them and each group is named after one person present across most of its texts. Both document groups are dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. they belong to the last layer of the Old Uyghur sources. The biggest group known to us is the so-called Kayımtu group, which contains 23 documents.<sup>56</sup> The documents of this group outline a business association deeply involved in agriculture. Of the two groups this is the less connected to viticulture, but, due to its size, it better illustrates the nature of Uyghur business associations. The core of the group constitutes 16 documents, each of which mentions Kayımtu.<sup>57</sup> Nine contracts deal with loans of farm products (sesame, grain, millet and *böz*) made by Kayımtu. Seven documents deal with land tenancy issues where, with one exception, Kayımtu appears as the landlord. Eventually, according to this single contract (U 5278), Kayımtu rented a vineyard from Mısır, but the owner remained responsible for the payment of taxes related to the plot.<sup>58</sup> Due to the people attested, this transaction seems to have been conducted among close business partners. Namely, the landlord Mısır appears in 10 documents altogether in various roles: as borrower, tenant and, in two cases, scribe. Moreover, one of the witnesses (*tanuk*) is a certain Elçi, another person frequently attested in the Kayımtu group documents and perhaps the protagonist’s closest business associate. Elçi notably appears in three tenancy contracts alongside Kayımtu as joint owner.<sup>59</sup> The scribe of this contract was Kayımtu himself, as in another document (U 5252) where he lent sesame to a certain Kımır. According to a contract of exchange (\*U 9213 + U 5237) Kayımtu also possessed a vineyard (*borluk oronu*). To sum up, the documents of the Kayımtu group probably constitute a private archive belonging to the protagonist, who himself was literate. He is also mentioned as Kayımtu *bahşı* by name in two contracts (U 5253 and U 5261) and some of his associates also bear names that suggest that they belonged to a Buddhist environment, some

<sup>55</sup> Besides vineyards, joint ownership of farmlands is also attested in land tenancy contracts: U 5265 (VOHD 13,21 # 84; RH13), U 5271 (VOHD 13,21 # 89; RH05), U 5277 (VOHD 13,21 # 94; RH11). In one case the shared possession of a stubble field (*añiz yeri*) is noted: U 5257 (VOHD 13,21 # 109; Lo15).

<sup>56</sup> On the Kayımtu group, see Clark 1975: 176–178; Yamada 1976; Zieme 1980: 206–209; Moriyasu 2002: 157.

<sup>57</sup> In the other seven documents (three contracts and four lists of taxes), Kayımtu is not himself attested, but other people appear who are regular actors in the documents of the core group.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 134; SUK II: 168, Mi22.

<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, in one of these contracts (U 5271; VOHD 13,21 # 89; SUK II: RH05) Mısır is a witness and in another is attested as tenant (U 5277; VOHD 13,21 # 94; SUK II: RH11). The witness of the last contract (U 5276 VOHD 13,21 # 93; SUK II: RH10) is Sänjä, the third most often attested associate of Kayımtu, appearing mostly as a witness to contracts.



of them maybe even to the Buddhist clergy.<sup>60</sup> Kayımtu and his associates invested in agriculture, rented their lands and lent out their products. With Elçi they had several jointly owned farmlands, but also had other close business partners appearing in various roles across the contracts. Viniculture was not Kayımtu's main interest, but he possessed at least one vineyard and rented another.

A further text (U 5245)<sup>61</sup> connects the Kayımtu group to the Turı group.<sup>62</sup> This is a document (*bitig*) of a community (*el bodun*)<sup>63</sup> which mentions Turı's profession as a wine grower (*borlukçı*). This might explain why seven of the nine documents in this group are connected to viniculture. A loan contract about half a *kap* of wine given by Turı to Miñ Tämür has already been discussed (U 5260). According to a debt instrument (U 5246) a certain Taşık gave his share of a commonly owned vineyard (*₅,₆ turı birlä-ki maña tägär üç är kömār borlukumni*) to Turı. The transaction was realized due to *kalan* tax debts owed by Taşık and paid by Turı.<sup>64</sup> Were Taşık unable to pay back these debts to Turı in the course of three years, Turı would possess the whole vineyard permanently. According to a complementary document of a vineyard tenancy (U 5244) Turı also rented out some of his vineyards to tenants.<sup>65</sup> A vicarious document (U 5251), replacing the missing original, acknowledges that Turı paid back Taşık's debt (half of it in leather and half in silk) to Balak and Umar.<sup>66</sup> A business letter (U 5295) from Ara Tämür to Turı *bahşı* describes some difficulties emerging concerning the selling of a vineyard.<sup>67</sup> As becomes clear from this short survey of the 'Turı archive', Turı was a specialist in the wine business. Besides making wine himself, he was renting out some of his wine gardens to tenants, loaning wine and taking over vineyards by paying their owners' debts. Like Kayımtu, he is referred to as *bahşı* in two documents (U 5260 and U 5295), so the possibility cannot be excluded that he was a member of the Buddhist clergy. The *el bodun* mentioned in two different documents could also be some kind of business association.

<sup>60</sup> The Uyghur Buddhist title *bahşı* 'master' originates from the Chinese *boshi* 博士 (Ecsedy 1965: 90). The word was later used in Mongolian with a specialised meaning, referring to scribes who were skilled in the Uyghur-Mongol alphabet. After the 13<sup>th</sup> century this secondary usage spread to the Turkic languages, too. Later, with the spread of Islamic culture and as the Uyghur script gradually lost its importance, the word *bahşı* was used in the Turkic world for scribes in general. Cf. Vásáry 1987: 120–122.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 59; SUK II: Mi20.

<sup>62</sup> On the Turı group, see Clark 1975: 178–179; Zieme 1980: 206; Oda 1990, Oda 1991 and Moriyasu 2002: 157. Oda (1991: 39–43) supposed that four of the Turı documents (U 5244, U 5245, U 5293 and U 5295) were connected to the sale of the same vineyard.

<sup>63</sup> Both Old Turkic words *el* 'political power' and *bodun* 'people' were basic ideas in the First Turkic Khaganate, but in this context the compound can be translated as 'community'. After the naming of this compound several people are listed as members of this community and from the context it seems clear that they are involved in business as an association or the like. The same *el bodun* is mentioned in another document of the Turı group (U 5293), a letter to the *bägs* of Suvar concerning the loss of the main document of a contract (*baş bitig*) belonging to Turı. For the meaning of *el* and *bodun* in the Orkhon inscriptions, see Vásáry 1983 and Zimonyi 2003. Oda (1991) translated *el bodun* as 'Community' with capital initial letters but he did not attempt to define the exact nature of this community.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 131; SUK II: Mi19. On the *kalan* tax in the Turfan region, see Matsui 2005: 72–74, 78.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 130; SUK II: Mi21.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 154; SUK II: Mi18.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 161. According to Oda's (1991: 40–42) interpretation the letter reports that the above-mentioned 'Community' had forcibly sold a vineyard belonging to Turı to a certain Inal Koç. It seems that he based his interpretation on the attestation of *el* (without *bodun*) in the second line of the text. The last document (\*U 9369) is a list of vineyards that can be connected to both the Kayımtu and Turı groups, but due to its connection to *ortok* partners it will be discussed in the next section.



The fact that this *el bodun* could nominate him as its delegate in one case (U 5245) and plead a case on his behalf in another (U 5293), suggests that Turı was a member of this alliance to which he owed obligations and from which he received protection.

Mercantile or business associations were well-known actors in the economic life of Central Eurasia. Another form such associations took was cooperation between merchants and the aristocracy or the rulers of a polity. Such cooperation had a long tradition in Central Eurasian history, especially between nomadic rulers and their merchant partners. Probably the best known such business associations were the *ortoq* merchants in the service of the Mongol aristocracy and rulers. In this case also, Mongol rule brought an unforeseen intensity of connections, the significance of which could be felt across Eurasia. Like many other institutions of the Mongol Empire, Uyghurs played a decisive role in the evolution of the famous *ortoq* institution. Furthermore, as the next section shows, viticulture was involved too. Reassessment of the Old Uyghur documents concerning this institution is especially timely, since the last survey of available sources was made almost a quarter of a century ago.

## ORTOQS, UYGHUR ORTOK PARTNERS AND VINICULTURE<sup>68</sup>

The *ortoq* merchants and their associations (Turk.: *ortokluk*, Mong.: *orto'ut*) were well-known actors in the economic life of the Mongol Empire and they are often discussed by scholars. Despite this the number of specific studies on them is quite limited.<sup>69</sup>

The etymology of the word goes back to Old Turkic *ortok/ortuk/ortak* ‘partner’ (Clauson 1972: 205). It was an early loanword in Mongolian as *ortaq/ortoq/ortoy* and its plural form *orto'ut* is also attested (Doerfer 1975: 191, 193). In Chinese sources of the Mongol period we find *wotuo* 斡脫, and *ürtāq* in Persian (Doerfer 1965: 25–27, No. 446; Endicott-West 1989: 129–130).

<sup>68</sup> Usually the Mongolian form of the term *ortoq/ortoy* is used in the literature. As it will be discussed below, the *ortok* merchants of the Old Uyghur sources had slightly different peculiarities than those described in Persian, Chinese and Latin sources. Due to this ambiguity, throughout this article the Mongolian form (*ortoq*) is applied discussing *ortoqs* according to the conventional view and the Old Uyghur form (*ortok*) is used when the Old Uyghur sources are discussed.

<sup>69</sup> Doerfer’s summary (1965: 25–27, No. 446) gives a good overview of the history of the word and cites the most important Persian sources concerning the *ortoq* merchants in Ilkhanid Iran. Thomas Allsen and Elizabeth Endicott-West’s joint articles in *Asia Major* (1989) are the most comprehensive analyses of the *ortoq* merchants during the Mongol Period so far. Besides the chronological division of the two articles, Allsen emphasizes the Eurasian context of the *ortoq* institution; Endicott-West concentrates on its East Asian history and the etymology of the word. Christopher P. Atwood’s entry (2004: 429–430) about the *ortoqs* in his encyclopedia gives a brief but well composed overview on this phenomenon. Yokkaichi Yasuhiro’s articles (2006, 2008, 2009) provide important information about the practice of the *ortoq* merchants under Yuan rule, and their endeavours in the Southeast Asian maritime trade. Marie Favereau recently published an important article (2019) in which she argues that the circulation of goods was essential to the social hegemony of the Mongols and thus their relationship with the privileged *ortoqs* was a preeminent interest of the state. According to her the privileged status of *ortoqs* reached a level under Mongol rule previously unseen in Eurasia. For a well-edited overview of the earlier literature see Enkhbold 2019. On a special aspect of these relations, namely the role of the Mongol queens (*qatun*) in commerce and their connections with the merchants, see May 2018, Kovács 2020.



The *ortoq* merchants were partners of the Mongol aristocracy and through them often the state itself, as commercial agents in various kinds of businesses.<sup>70</sup> Usually, they offered *tajusuks* (rarities, precious things, often jewels) and in exchange received capital from the Mongol aristocracy. They invested this capital in trade activity and other kinds of business. Profits were shared with their investors, usually on an 80%:20% basis, where the higher amount went to the silent partners from the Mongol aristocracy and the lower to the *ortoqs*. In exchange for their services, the Mongol aristocracy assured privileges for their trade partners, such as exemption from taxes or access to the postal system. The *ortoq* merchants were typically involved in long distance trade, mainly with precious goods, but were also active in lending, usury and tax-farming. The *ortoq* merchants were not Mongols, but, contrary to earlier opinions, they were not necessarily Muslim Turks, rather including Buddhist Uyghurs, Chinese, and Indians (Cf. Moriyasu 2002: 164, Yokkaichi 2008 and 2009, Favereau 2019: 66). Europeans fulfilled such duties too, the Polos being the best-known such family.<sup>71</sup> These *ortoq* associations consisted mostly, but not necessarily, of family members or people bound by marriage. Very often the person described in the sources as *ortoq* was only the head of an association or in other cases just a representative of such an association, and quite a few clients were involved in these powerful organizations. Moreover, it was not only merchants who could be *ortoqs*, but partners of the aristocracy from other professions (doctors, tutors, clergymen, etc.) could reach these positions as well.

Due to the Turkic etymology of the word, it has long been surmised that the *ortoq* institution had its roots in Central Asia. Since the accounts of the narrative sources stressed the importance of the Western Asian Muslim merchants, however, the Uyghur role has been regarded as minor. The first, and so far only, analysis of the available Old Uyghur documents was conducted by Moriyasu Takao (1997a and 1997b).<sup>72</sup> According to his results there was a special *ortok* relationship in Uyghur society which should be not mixed up with the conventional picture of Mongol-era *ortoq* merchants. These Uyghur merchants can be attested in sources dating back at least to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. They were not Muslims, but predominantly Buddhists, and, in some cases, Christians from the Church of the East. In fact, before the 13<sup>th</sup> century we have no information about Muslim Turkic *ortoq* merchants. Moreover, these Uyghur *ortok* partners were involved not only in commercial but also agricultural businesses. As the following analysis will show, these statements can be complemented or reassessed based on the results of the last two decades and the newly available sources. The reassessment of our view about the Uyghur *ortok* partners is

<sup>70</sup> It must be mentioned that this kind of partnership between nomadic aristocracy and sedentary merchants was neither unique nor new to the Mongol period. Such partnerships can be detected since the First Turkic (also known as Göktürk) Khaganate at the latest: initially between the Turks and Sogdians, and later between the Uyghurs and the Sogdians, then between the Uyghur merchants of East Turkestan and the Liao dynasty. And of course, such cooperation also existed long after the Mongol Period in East and West Eurasia as well. To understand the very nature of this phenomenon, it must be examined from a holistic perspective; cf. Jagchid 1977; Barfield 1989: 1–31, Allsen 1989: 83–85, Khazanov 1994<sup>2</sup>: 68–84, 202–212; Khazanov 2019. On the Sogdians see de la Vaissière 2005, especially Chapters 3 and 4. Recently, on nomad control along the Silk Road and its implications for the caravan trade, see Arakawa 2016.

<sup>71</sup> After the Polo brothers Matteo and Maffeo (Marco's father and uncle) gave *tajusuks* (precious rarities) to Berke (d. 1266), the ruler of the Golden Horde, they received goods and capital from him and travelled to Yuan China to undertake business with it as semi-official *ortoqs*. Cf. Moule and Pelliot 1938: 74–80; Atwood 2004: 438–439.

<sup>72</sup> Both articles are published in Japanese, but a brief summary of their conclusion is also available in English (2002: 164). Here I would like to express my gratitude to Yoichi Isahaya and Alisher Begmatov for their help with the Japanese articles.



especially relevant to this article, since, as will be shown, their activities were also connected to viticulture.<sup>73</sup>

Among the Old Uyghur texts from the earlier period, there are two documents attesting the word *ortok*. In a land tenancy contract preserved on the verso side of a manuscript fragment (Ot. Ry. 2728) the context is missing; it seems clear, however, that the tenants wanted to cultivate millet (<sub>2</sub>-*ka ortok ür tarıgu* [...]), and it therefore suggests that the *ortoks* were involved in agriculture.<sup>74</sup> In contrast to this, another text from this early period is preserved fully and thus the context is clear. This is a commercial letter preserved in the Paris collection (Pelliot Ouïgour 12).<sup>75</sup> The text mentions several other letters sent by the same person to various recipients. One is to a troop commander or army commander called Maha (<sub>8</sub>*bir bitig maha süü başı älgintä*)<sup>76</sup> and one to the merchant partner of the author, a certain Yakšiči (<sub>8,9</sub>*bir bitig yakšiči ortuk älgintä*). The letter mentions 117 strings of pearls (<sub>7</sub>*yüz yeti y(e)g(i)rmi salkım yinčü*). The attestation of precious goods (pearls) and a possible connection to high-ranking officers (if *süü başı* refers to an army commander), suggest that the meaning of *ortok* in this early text stands quite close to the meaning of *ortoq* in the Mongol period, while the previous text suggests that *ortoks* could already have some connection to agriculture in this early period.<sup>77</sup>

From the Mongol era there are more attestations of *ortoks*, thus one can gain a better understanding of the different aspects of its meaning and connect it directly to viticulture. The only direct attestation of *ortok* that with certainty resembles the classical description of the *ortoq* partnership is in a loan contract (U 5266) in which three *bakır* of ruby (*lal*) is borrowed by Sadı, a member of an *ortokluk*. This document might also show another classical attribute of *ortoq* merchants, namely that the name of one of the business partners is Adak Totok. The latter element of this name goes back to Chin. *du-du* 都督 ‘military governor’ (Clauson 1972: 453) and frequently forms part of the names of high-ranking Uyghur officials.<sup>78</sup> If the word *totok* refers indeed to a high-ranking military officer here, then alongside commerce in precious stones a connection to

<sup>73</sup> Two fragments that might attest *ortok* are too damaged, or the reading and interpretation of the specific passage is still uncertain: U 3907 (VOHD 13,21 # 79; VOHD 13,28 # 324; SUK II: 64–65 [Ex01]) and \*U 9370 (VOHD 13,28 # 251).

<sup>74</sup> On the recto side of this manuscript is preserved the tenancy contract for a vineyard, as discussed above. Due to their semi-square script and vocabulary, both documents are dated to the West Uyghur period, cf. Matsui 2006: 40–42, 56 (Text B).

<sup>75</sup> This letter was actually sent, i.e., unlike many preserved Old Uyghur letter fragments it is not just a draft. Cf. Hamilton 1986: 137–139 (No. 26); Moriyasu 2019: 85–86 (No. 58).

<sup>76</sup> The original meaning of *süü başı* is ‘army commander’ (Clauson 1972: 781) and Hamilton translated it accordingly. More recently, Moriyasu (2019: 86) translated it as ‘troop commander’, since he regarded it as referring to a caravan leader or a commander of troops hired to protect a caravan.

<sup>77</sup> Other letters from the West Uyghur period have no attestation of *ortok*, but they refer to similar business associations, such as the above-mentioned commercial letter attesting raisins as gift (Pelliot Ouïgour 3, Moriyasu 2019: No. 56). The addressee of this letter is a certain Tüz Yegän *sañun*. Although the latter word might be part of a personal name, in this context it seems likely to reflect its original meaning ‘army commander, general’ (Clauson 1972: 840; cf. Moriyasu 2019: 226). This same letter also deals with the cultivation of a piece of land. Another Uyghur letter from the same period (Pelliot Ouïgour 6; Moriyasu 2019: No. 93) was sent from Sügčü (Suzhou or Jiuquan) to Šaču (Dunhuang) attesting raw silk (<sub>6</sub>*yig torku*). These texts suggest the existence of business partnerships, where the partners took part in the caravan trade, dealt with precious goods and probably had connections to the elite. The former text shows also the interest of such business partners in agriculture.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Ecsedy 1965: 84–86; Doerfer 1965: 452–457 (No. 874) and Moriyasu 2001: 177 with further literature.



the elite is also attested in this contract.<sup>79</sup> A very damaged text (\*U 9361), might refer to a privilege of *ortoks* that is known from the classical descriptions of *ortoq* merchants, namely access to the imperial Mongol postal system (Turk.: *yam*, Mong.: *jam*).<sup>80</sup> Some of the words attested in the 44 preserved lines of this list (*ulag, uzun ulag, ulagĕi*), offer good reason to suppose that this register was written in connection to the postal system. The document can be regarded as a so-called *ulag*-register, i.e. a list enumerating amounts of goods, manpower and animals intended to supply the postal system.<sup>81</sup> The goods listed (wine being among them several times) are most probably to be seen in connection to the equipment of an embassy or several embassies within the frames of the postal system. The *ortoks* are attested in line 15 of the register, but this passage is unfortunately damaged. However, comparing the grammatical structure (<sub>15</sub> *ortok-lar-ka altı yarım*) with other passages of this document and with other *ulag*-registers, it seems very likely that the *ortoks* appear here as beneficiaries, i.e. they received six and a half units of something. If this assumption is correct, it might be the first document, a unique primary source, showing an interrelation between the Uyghur *ortoks* and the postal system of the Mongol Empire. In other words, this document might be the first proof that the *ortoks* of the Old Uyghur documents had access to the imperial postal system, like the *ortoq* merchants of the conventional view. In sum, it may be concluded that the two Old Uyghur documents together show a similar picture of the *ortoks* to that of the *ortoq* merchants of the narrative sources: one is a letter from the West Uyghur period, the other a contract from the Mongol period. Moreover, a list might refer to the *ortoks*' access to the postal system, a peculiarity of the *ortoq* merchants.

Looking at the other Old Uyghur sources attesting *ortoks*, the picture differs significantly from the conventional view of *ortoq* merchants. As mentioned above, one of the most characteristic peculiarities of the Old Uyghur *ortok* documents is that they are often bound to agriculture and some of them attest to joint usage or ownership of arable lands and vineyards. For example, according to a land sale contract (U 5234), Inç Kaya and Tumiçi sold their part of a farmland plot of 7 *küri* in size, that they possessed with a certain Surya.<sup>82</sup> Unfortunately, the initial part of the first four lines is missing, but from the preserved text it is clear that their partnership was called

<sup>79</sup> It is worth mentioning that some documents or groups of documents do not explicitly mention *ortoks*, but their content refers to activities that resemble the conventional description of *ortoq* merchants. Moriyasu (2002) reconstructed the business activities of a group of people connected to the city of Çiktım through an analysis of the juridical documents they left behind. According to him the protagonist of these documents, a certain Toyınçog, was joint contributor of an *ortoq* merchant, who was his family member. He based his argument on a fragment of the Mannerheim collection in Helsinki (SUS 2.49.1; Cf. SUK II: 151–152 [Mi05]). It is a contract between three business associates who were probably also members of the same clan or family: Toyınçog, Basıki and Tüšiki. According to the contract the first two partners are not responsible for the debts arising during the business activities of Tüšiki in the Tangut territories and in (Northern) China (<sub>5,6</sub> *tangutta kıtayta năgü y(ă)mă birimi bar ärsâr*), but they too will share the payment of taxes in the future (Moriyasu 2002: 162–166, especially: 163–164). Nonetheless, it must be stressed that *ortok* partnership is not explicitly mentioned in this document. The reference to a quarrel at home (<sub>2,3</sub> *ävdä çogı/// bolmıs-ka*) as the reason for the contract and that it was discussed in the presence of blood relatives (<sub>3,4</sub> *tugmıšız... üzkintä tišip*) shows that it was a family business. Anyhow, the fact that it was a family business does not exclude the possibility of an *ortok* partnership.

<sup>80</sup> VOHD 13,28 # 327.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Vér 2019a: 38–40.

<sup>82</sup> While the size of vineyards – as discussed above – was given according to the number of workers working on them, the size of farmland was usually given in dimensional units: *šig* (equal to ca. 84 litres) and *küri* (equal to ca. 8.4 litres). These measures refer to the amount of seed needed to sow the land. The sale price was five pieces of cotton cloth used as currency (*böz*). Cf. SUK II: 32–33(Sa14); VOHD 13,21 # 67; VOHD 13,28 # 159.





*ortokluk*, i.e. a composition of *ortok* and the +lXk suffix<sup>83</sup>.<sub>4-6</sub>...]Y *sury-a bilä ortok-luk yeği küri yerimiz togru tomildu s(a)ttım*. From this passage it seems clear that *ortokluk* is used here to describe the common possession of land by three owners (Inč Kaya, Tumiči and Surya), and two of them had the right to sell their shares to a fourth party.

The same principle, namely joint ownership, might provide the key to the interpretation of a fragmentary list of vineyard (*borluk*) owners (\*U 9369).<sup>84</sup> This document is especially interesting, since through the personal names attested, it seems to connect the Kayımtu and Turı groups discussed above, and furthermore might even link a third, the so-called Nom Kulı group, too.<sup>85</sup> Due to the missing first and last parts of the register, its exact nature remains unclear. The peculiarity of this document is that the vineyards mentioned are qualified as either ‘half’ or ‘one’ (*yarım borluk* and *bir borluk*). Those passages where the *ortok* context is preserved are similar to their attestations in other documents: <sub>12-13</sub>...*tük kârsin ortok-lar bilä bir borluk* ‘Tük Kârsin together with his *ortok* partners one vineyard’. The plural form of *ortok* makes it clear that more than two people could also unite in an *ortok* partnership. Another passage shows that one person could have a share in various vineyards: <sub>8-10</sub>...*muñçak ortokı bilä yarım borluk yana muñçak bir borluk* ‘Muñçak together with his *ortok* (partner) half (of a) vineyard, furthermore Muñçak (alone) one vineyard’. It is worth mentioning that the text differentiates between one *ortok* partner (*ortokı* in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> lines) and more than one (*ortok-lar* in the 13<sup>th</sup> line). If our interpretation is right, the two kinds of qualifiers (‘half’ or ‘one’) stand for the share in an estate. Consequently, *ortok* in this text refers to partners who jointly possessed either entire vineyards or shares in them.

A further Old Uyghur document attesting *ortok* and also connected to viticulture is a testament preserved in the Saint Petersburg collection (Kle-Rob. 9).<sup>86</sup> This mentions among other things a plot of farmland that the testator possessed with his *ortok* partner named Ödäkçi (<sub>27</sub>*ödäkçi bilä ortok altı şig yer*). The interesting aspect here is that the other estates that the testator shared with others, vineyards among them, are described in terms other than *ortok* partnerships. In one case the testator has split a vineyard and gave an equal half along with the winepress to Tärbiş (<sub>12</sub>...*tüz y(a)rım-nıñ taydsañ-t(a)kı kum borluk-um booš* [<sub>13</sub>*yer-i bilä*])// *yarıp öñdün yanın çırhoş-i bilä t(ä)rbiş-kä birip*),<sup>87</sup> while another vineyard was shared with a certain Bâkin or Bâgin (<sub>16</sub>...*bâKin bilä üläşip almıš borluk-um-n...*). This text shows that *ortok* partnerships and other kinds of business partnerships could exist in parallel and that these types of arrangement were distinguished from one another.

<sup>83</sup> This is a quite common suffix in Old Turkic, one that could be assigned to different semantic classes in Old Uyghur. The +lXk suffix has remained productive from the earliest periods to the modern Turkic languages. For a detailed discussion of its different meanings, see Erdal 1991: 121–131.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,28 # 249.

<sup>85</sup> A further list might connect the three groups: a register of people along with their share (*kubı*) of cotton yielded for the rent of an *ulag* (\*U 9339; VOHD 13,28 # 108). On the Nom Kulı group, see Clark 1975: 179 and Zieme 1980: 206. This document group consist of six documents. Besides \*U 9369 two others are connected to wine and were thus discussed earlier: a loan contact of half a *kap* of wine (U 5260, common with the Turı group) and a land tenancy of a vineyard (U 5272).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. SUK II: 138–141 (WP04).

<sup>87</sup> Later in the text the same vineyard is attested. This passage was taken into account by the emendation of the above passage: <sub>22</sub>*tüz y(a)rım-i tajsañ-t(a)kı kum borluk-um-nı boš yer-i bilä* [<sub>23</sub>] *öñdün yanın çırhoş-i bilä t(ä)rbiş-kä bertim...* The original meaning of *kum* is ‘sand’ (Clauson 1972: 625) but it could mean also desert. For the interpretation of *çırhoš/çırhos*, see *crxwšt* ‘winepress’ (Gharib 1995: 128; No. 3260).



The last peculiarity of *ortok* attestations discussed here is that some seem to prove the taxability of *ortoks*. An eminent example for this is an order (K 7719) from the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century preserved in the National Museum of China in Beijing (the former Historical Museum of China).<sup>88</sup> This order is an official request for flour to be sent to the khan (𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏𐰤 *han-ka idgu min-tä*) and *ortoks* appear among the taxpayers due to contribute. The *ortoks* are not mentioned by name but always together with someone else, such as 𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏𐰤...*karinpa lam-a ortoki bilä beš šin* ‘together with Karinpa lamas’ *ortok* (partner have to pay) five *šin* (ca. 4.2 litre of flour)’. The context makes it clear that these *ortoks* shared the liability with their partners, i.e. the attested people, for tax to be paid in agricultural products, in this case flour. According to the 1253 tax reforms instituted by Möngke Khan (r. 1251–1259), *ortoq* merchants were subjected to commercial tax (Uyg.: *tamga*, Mong.: *tamya*, Chin.: *shangshui* 商税) and the poll tax (Uyg.: *kupčir*, Mong.: *qubčiri*).<sup>89</sup> Ten years later Qubilai (r. 1260–1294) reinforced the law that forced *ortoq* merchants to pay taxes, but his edict was mostly ignored (Allsen 1989: 105–109). In our case, the later date and the fact that in the 1350s the Uyghur territories around Turfan were under Chaghadaid sovereignty would suggest that this is a different kind of taxation. In addition, the name of the tax (*tarıg agız*) and the means of payment make it very likely that this document refers to other kind of *ortoks* than the well-known *ortoq* merchants.<sup>90</sup> *Ortoks* paying a kind of land tax in farmland products in an Old Uyghur document seems to be a unique phenomenon in Mongol Eurasia, at least up to now, as no attestation of similar cases are known to us in the contemporary sources.<sup>91</sup> Direct evidence for taxation of *ortoks* is also missing from a fragment of a register (\*U 9298),<sup>92</sup> but the phrasing is similar to K 7719. The register consists of two texts written on the same sheet, the second enumerating various people and organizations, which are followed by different land sizes: 𐰽...*basa*

<sup>88</sup> The text is hypothetically dated to 1357. For the most recent publication of the text with a Japanese translation: Matsui 1998: 16–23 (Text 2).

<sup>89</sup> Only one attestation of commercial tax in the Old Uyghur documents is known so far (MIK III 50 [T II Čiqtim No. 6]; VOHD 13,21 # 150), it was paid in silver (𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏𐰤 *tamga kümüs*). The *kupčir* tax was also paid in silver, but one order for requisition that belongs to the so-called Toyinčog group of Old Uyghur documents (U 5331/a [T II Čiqtim 1], VOHD 13,21 # 31; Vér 2019: 129–131 [OMis01]) mentions the payment of *kupčir* tax in farm products (*kupčir tarıg*). More precisely, Toyinčog had to pay this tax, and he, according to Moriyasu, was a member of an *ortoq*-like business association (cf. Moriyasu 2002: 163–164).

<sup>90</sup> Matsui (1998: 21–22) interpreted *ortok* in this document simply as workers hired on contract, probably at a watermill. His interpretation is reasonable, but other attestations of the word with similar usage would be needed, otherwise it is hard to explain why the scribe would have chosen a word normally used with a completely different meaning.

<sup>91</sup> There is, however, an example from three centuries later that might help with this interpretation. This Eastern Turkı royal decree in the Jarring Collection (Prov. 220) was acquired from Kašgar, several hundred kilometres west of the Turfan region, and was dated to 1662. In this text, the expression *ortakči tärimči* is attested. According to the first editor of the document *ortakči* meant a tenant who cultivated someone else’s land for half of the income, while taking responsibility for the auxiliary expenses and taxes linked to that land. In contrast to this, *tärimči* cultivated the land, but the owner retained responsibility for the taxes. The expression referred to the tenants of a land in general. Cf. Raquette 1930: 23. n. 2, Kim 2010: 73, 98 (Document 6). The huge time span and the few attestations make it hard to retroject the meaning of the later decree to the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century without hesitation. However, several other technical terms of Turkic origin are known to have spread on a Eurasian scale in the Mongol period with centuries of history afterwards in several languages and in various territories. To name just one attested in another contemporary Eastern Turkı decree from the same collection (Prov. 227, Document 7 in Kim’s article): *ulag*. On the history of this word, see Vér 2019b.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,28 # 259.



*togrıl ortokı bilä iki š[ıg]* ‘...Basa Togrıl together with his *ortok*(-partner), two *šıg*’.<sup>93</sup> Despite the identical phrasing, due to the missing context it cannot be decided with any certainty that this passage concerns the taxation of farmlands possessed by *ortok* partners, or whether it is just a list of farmlands in communal possession.

As the above survey of the Old Uyghur sources has shown, the various attestations of *ortoks* can be categorized into two major groups: the first, minor group, consists of and mirrors the conventional picture of the *ortoq* merchants, while the second and major group is constituted of texts where *ortok* refers to a kind of joint ownership of agricultural estates. Each group is already represented in one of the two documents stemming from the West Uyghur period: Pelliot Ouïgour 12 stands closer to the conventional view and Ot. Ry. 2728 is seemingly connected to millet cultivation. The former group is under-represented in the later sources: only one contract (U 5266) clearly shows connection to the *ortoqs* and one register (\*U 9361) might refer to the connection between the Uyghur *ortoks* and the postal system. The documents are connected to the second group, i.e. those showing an involvement in agriculture. One compulsory order clearly, and a further list possibly, also refer to tax liability and thus form a sub-group of the *ortok* documents connected to agriculture. Of the four documents dealing with joint ownership of arable lands, two texts, both from the Mongol period, are clearly connected to viticulture (\*U 9369 and Kle-Rob. 9). Moreover, these texts might be connected to the document groups discussed earlier, where viticulture was also widely present.

It can be concluded that wine played a major role in the economic life of the Uyghurs in the Turfan region; moreover, the interest of the so-called *ortok* partners (whose profile primarily differed from the well-known *ortoq* merchants through their interest in agriculture), can be attested in the wine business in the Mongol period at the latest.<sup>94</sup> To understand this shift of interest towards viticulture in the Mongol period, the top strata of society have to be taken into account, i.e., how aristocracy and state were connected to the wine business in the Turfan region.

## WINE, ARISTOCRACY AND STATE INTEREST

Besides commoners, business associations and the clergy of the various religious communities, the highest circles of Uyghur society and later the Mongol aristocracy also took a share in viticulture and viniculture, and the state too had its interest in wine business. As will be seen, aristocratic and state interest are often hardly distinguishable but interrelated. The following section deals

<sup>93</sup> This interpretation of this passage is secured by the recurring attestation of the word *yer* ‘land’, like: *ḡbuka tāmür yeri bir šıg* ‘the land of Buka Tāmür one *šıg*’.

<sup>94</sup> Two Mongolian texts of the so-called Ardabil documents from Iran might help us to gain a better understanding of the transition between the *ortoks* interested primarily in agriculture and the privileged *ortoq* merchants of the Mongol aristocracy, trading in luxuries and farming taxes (Doerfer 1975: Texta A1 and A2). Both texts are seemingly duplicates of decrees issued under the rule of Abaqa Ilkhan (r. 1265–1282) in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (1265/66 and 1271) to protect the *ortoq* merchants of his high-ranking emirs Elege and Šıgtür, and to affirm their tax exemption. A detailed analysis of both documents would go beyond the scope of the present study, but it is the sphere of activities described in the first text that are most important to us. In this text the *ortoqs* are already partners of the aristocracy and they are exempted from taxes, but they still appear as investors in agriculture. This might have been an intermediate stage in the evolution of the *ortoq* institution. However, further evidence for this process would be needed to strengthen our understanding of this process, based at the moment on this sole attestation of a hybrid state between agrarian investors and privileged merchant partners of the aristocracy.



with three aspects of this topic to give an insight: vineyards as property of the aristocracy, the taxation of wine and finally, the analysis of a group of documents that reflects on an exceptional historical moment in which wine played a key role. Up to this point Old Uyghur private documents have been central to this analysis. Due to the switch in topic, official documents, i.e. those which were issued within the state bureaucracy, will be more present in this section. Official documents issued in the Turfan region are preserved in Old Uyghur from the West Uyghur period and both Old Uyghur and Middle Mongolian from the Mongol period. While the Old Uyghur documents were issued at the lower and regional levels of administration, Mongolian documents were issued at the highest (interregional) level and seem to have dealt with more important issues (Vér 2019a: 43–44).

Due to its unique nature, however, the first document to be mentioned is the West Uyghur period contract discussed above about the sale of a vineyard (VOHD 13,21 # 78). A passage in its description of boundaries is our only probable direct reference to noble landlords of vineyards from this period: <sup>4</sup>(...) *täñrim-niñ borluk* ‘the vineyard of Täñrim’. The latter name or title was considered for a long time as an element of females from the ruling class. Although it has been questioned whether it can be applied only to women, there is no question that it is a mark of nobility (cf. Moriyasu 2001: 166–167). Although the number of Old Uyghur texts preserved from the West Uyghur period is significantly smaller than those from the Mongol period, since this is the only clue to aristocratic vineyard possession among the sources from the West Uyghur Period, despite the risks inherent in arguing from silence, it seems reasonable to conclude that the aristocratic share in grape production was at least less prominent than that of later periods.<sup>95</sup> Old Uyghur documents from the Mongol period show that vineyards were in the possession of members of the Mongol ruling house (*enčü borluk*) and that people worked in these vineyards as wine growers (*enčü borlukçı*) as part of their labour service.<sup>96</sup> Capable people were selected for duty as *enčü borlukçı*, and this selection was recorded in writing, as is preserved in document U 5305.<sup>97</sup> This order is dated to 1353 and can be connected, through the people attested in it, to a petition (U 5282a-b) from the royal gardeners (*enčü bağçılar*) to the Chagadhid ruler Tuyluy Temür (1346–1363).<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, this document also seems to be connected to Mongolian edicts of the Berlin collection (MongHT70 and MongHT71), suggesting that issues concerning the royal vineyards were dealt with at the highest levels of the administration. Another Uyghur order (U 5296) discusses the labour services levied on the royal wine growers in an exceptional situation.<sup>99</sup>

Taxation is one of the best attested topics in the preserved Old Uyghur documents and information about the taxation of wine and wine gardens is available from the earliest periods. One of the three main categories of tax and labour services in the West Uyghur period was the so-called *irt bert*. This covered various land taxes levied on farmlands (*yer*) and vineyards (*borluk/borluk*

<sup>95</sup> To give an impression of the unequal temporal distribution of the Old Uyghur sources, we can refer to the administrative documents. Out of the 99 documents dated with some certainty, only three can be regarded as clearly stemming from the West Uyghur Period (Matsui 2014: 629–632).

<sup>96</sup> On *enčü* in this context cf. extensively Doerfer 1965: 220–225 (No. 670). The article by Masatsugu Murakami on the problematics of the *enčü* mentioned by Moriyasu could not be considered here, cf. Moriyasu 2004: 238 (with detailed bibliographical information).

<sup>97</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 60.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 51.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21 # 17; edition and translation: Vér 2019: 111–113 (Käz02).



agız) and was mainly paid in agricultural products (Matsui 2005: 71).<sup>100</sup> As discussed above, vineyards belonged to the most important properties held by Manichean and Buddhist communities. In this context we should mention the land tax, which, compulsory in connection with vineyards even for clergy, could be paid either in money or in kind. The edict discussed earlier about the economy of a Manichean cloister mention 4124 official pieces of cotton cloth (*kuanpu*) to be reserved for taxation (Moriyasu 2004: 46, lines: 34–36). Despite tax exemption for the monasteries, a Buddhist cloister in Murtuk still had to pay the so-called *kap* tax (*kap bert*) in the form of *böz*, i.e. official cotton money (U 5317). This same document is probably the earliest attestation of the so-called wine-tax (*bor*). Attestations of this *bor* tax are known from the Mongol period, and might be the local equivalent of the *putao jiu* 葡萄酒, a tribute paid in grape wine from the Turfan region and attested in the Chinese sources.<sup>101</sup> According to an *ulag* list (Ch/U 8136v + Ch/U 6039v) even principals of the Buddhist community had to present this tax: <sup>4-5</sup>...*yürünj tämür-kä šazın bäg-lär bor-ta bir kap bor kapı bilä berürm(ä)n* ‘To Yürünj Tämür from the wine-tax of the *bägs* of the Buddhist community I also gave one *kap* of wine with the container (*kapı bilä*)’.<sup>102</sup> According to an order for taxation (U 5323) dated to 1357 the wine delivered had to be taken into account as a compensation for the wine tax (*bor sanunta tutzun*).<sup>103</sup>

There was a special sub-category of tax and revenue connected to wine. Namely, in the Turfan region wine was the basic beverage included in the provisions of the postal system under Mongol rule.<sup>104</sup> Based on the comparative analysis of Chinese, Mongolian, and Uyghur sources, the daily ration has been defined as 3 *tämbin*, i.e. ca. 0,84 litre (Matsui 2004: 197).<sup>105</sup>

These settings were valid when the state apparatus worked properly. Fortunately, some sources report on an extraordinary situation, which show the importance of wine to the Mongol elite. There is a set of four provision orders, preserved in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Humanities (IOM/RAN) in St. Petersburg under the new shelf signature SI 6544 (former: SI Uig14). These four documents are joined together, they were probably written by the same hand and their contents leave no doubt that they are closely related. Since all four were recently published with transcription and a Japanese translation (Matsui 2015a: 62–63) and the author’s reading of the documents does not differ significantly, thus here only a translation of the source will be given.

<sup>100</sup> Matsui (2005: 71. n. 10) also noted that this categorization is very similar to that of the Gaochang Kingdom 高昌 under the Qu 麴 dynasty (501–640 CE) in the Turfan region. The wine tax was called ‘tributary wine’ *zu jiu* 租酒.

<sup>101</sup> According to the Chinese sources, even under the direct rule of the Chaghadaid khans, Uyghur wine was still continuously sent to the Yuan imperial court as late as 1330 CE. Cf. *Yuanshi* 1976: Ch. 34, p. 755, cited by: Allsen 1983: 277, note 122; Liu 2005: 26.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21: # 200; edition and translation of the text: Vér 2019: 165–168 (UlReg06).

<sup>103</sup> Cf. VOHD 13,21: # 27.

<sup>104</sup> Wine is attested in a document (\*U 9231 II) from the West Uyghur period composed in a way similar to the provision orders providing supplies for travellers of the postal system in the Mongol period. The amount of flour (*min*) and wine to be delivered is defined in this text according to the value of the official cotton cloth (*bir kuanpuluk min bir kuanpuluk bor birlä*). Cf. VOHD 13,28: # 009. For transcription of the text with Japanese translation and the facsimile: Matsui 2010: 30–33.

<sup>105</sup> For a comprehensive list of orders and registers attesting wine in connection to the postal system of the Mongol Empire, see Vér 2019: 206.



**A**

<sup>1</sup> Sheep year, seventh month, <sup>2-6</sup> on the 20<sup>th</sup> day.

From the two horses for riding in the city, to Atay Togrıl and Koşan, who are coming from the vanguard in order to take horses, <sup>6-7</sup> Bolmiş Taz of the Baçak-a Tarkan's hundred-household-unit <sup>8-11</sup> shall deliver one horse-*ulag*, shall give it for two days and shall regard it as three *bakır* of silver of the *kupçir* (tax).

**B**

<sup>1</sup> Sheep year, eighth month, on the seventh new day.

<sup>2-5</sup> From the two horses for Yägänçük and Turmiş-a, who are going to Nampı in order to take the bundle of the seven year (*yeti yılku bag*) cotton (tax), (located) in Toksın, <sup>6-8</sup> Bolmiş Taz of the Baçak-a Tarkan's hundred-household-unit shall deliver one horse-*ulag* <sup>8-9</sup> and regard it as three *bakır* of silver of the *kupçir* (tax).

**C**

<sup>1</sup> Arıg Bökä's (order):

<sup>2-3</sup> Sheep year, tenth month, on the 11<sup>th</sup> day.

<sup>3-7</sup> From the six horse-*ulag*(s) for riding in the city for Korla *elçi*, Kara *elçi* and Sogdı *elçi*, for them who came to (organize) the wine pressing, <sup>7-10</sup> Bolmiş Taz of the Baçak-a Tarkan's hundred-household-unit shall deliver one horse (for) two day(s) <sup>10-11</sup> and regard it as three *bakır* of silver of the *kupçir* (tax).

**D**

<sup>1</sup> Prince Kurumçı's (order):

<sup>2-3</sup> Sheep year, 11<sup>th</sup> month, on the 21<sup>th</sup> day.

<sup>3-8</sup> Bolmiş Taz of the Baçak-a Tarkan's hundred-household-unit shall give to Salgar, the *borçı*, to ride into the city for dispersing the wine one horse-*ulag* <sup>8-10</sup> and regard it as one and a half *bakır* of silver of the *kupçir* (tax).

At first sight, it is clear that these were issued according to different principles, even though the four documents are tightly connected. The first two documents follow the normal structures of Old Uyghur provision orders, starting with the date. Meanwhile the latter two start with personal names (Arıg Bökä and prince Kurumçı), somewhat atypical for Old Uyghur orders but normal for the structure of Mongolian decrees.<sup>106</sup> All four orders were recently dated to 1259, which is crucial to their interpretation because it allows reconstruction of their historical background (Matsui 2014: 617–618). According to its first line, document C was issued in the name of Arıg Bökä, who can be identified with Ariq Böke of the Chinggisid family, youngest son of Tolui (1191?–1232, himself the youngest son of the founder of the Mongol Empire, Chinggis Khan) and younger brother to two great khans, namely Möngke (r. 1251–1259) and Qubilai (1260–1294). His mother Sorqaqtani Beki died in 1252, and Ariq Böke inherited her appanage in between the Altai Range and the Ürüngü River. In August 1259 Möngke Khan died on campaign in Sichuan. In the following year both proclaimed themselves khan (Qubilai in April 1260, in China and Ariq Böke in

<sup>106</sup> For the comparative analysis of the formal structures of the Old Uyghur and Middle Mongolian documents, see Vér 2019a: 22–44.



July 1260, near Qaraqorum) and engaged in a civil war over several years. In order to ensure the support of the Central Asian territories both brothers appointed their own protégés to the throne of the Chaghadaid realm. Ariq Böke's candidate Alyu finally sat on the throne but switched sides soon after to support Qubilai. Since Qubilai could block shipments of provisions from China to Mongolia proper and after Alyu's defection Central Asian supply routes were blocked too, Ariq Böke faced serious difficulties. In the end he surrendered to Qubilai on August 21, 1264 (Jackson 1978: 227 ff; Atwood 2004: 21–22; Biran 2009: 49; May 2019: 346–348).

From our point of view this historical context is important because it makes it possible to date the four documents accurately. Ariq Böke could issue orders in East Turkestan either under the reign of Möngke Khan or during those years of civil war when Alyu was on his side, i.e. between 1251 and the first years of the 1260s. Since all four documents are dated to a 'sheep year' (*koyın yıl*) and in the given period there was only one such year, it can be stated that the documents were issued in 1259 (Matsui 2014: 617–618).

Document D was issued in the name of a certain prince Kurumçi, which is most probably the Turkicized form of the Mongolian term Qurumši, meaning 'Khwārazmian' (Boyle 1975: 42; Rybatzki 2006: 525–526).<sup>107</sup> For the identification of this person two factors have to be taken into account: first, since these documents belong together and were probably contemporary, it can be assumed that the Qurumši who issued this document lived in the same period as Ariq Böke, the issuer of document C. The other factor is that it must be a prince from the Chinggisid lineage. According to these criteria this Prince Qurumši can be identified with the fifth son of Ögödei khan's sixth son Qadan (Boyle 1971: 28). According to Matsui (2015a: 65–66), Qurumši's father Qadan received appanages in the vicinity of Bešbalık (Chin. Beiting 北庭) after refusing to participate in the coup against Möngke great khan in 1252. Had these appanages been inherited by his son Qurumši, it would explain how he could send officers to collect wine in the Turfan region.

Based on this dating a possible explanation can be given for the differences in their structure, namely that only the last two orders (C and D) contain the name of the issuer but the first two do not. As is mentioned above, the great khan Möngke died in August 1259. Document A is dated to the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month in the same year, while document B can be dated to the seventh day of the eighth month. It is obvious that document A was issued before Möngke's death, and even the second could have been issued before his passing away or, if not, conceivably before news of the ruler's death had arrived in the Turfan region from Sichuan. In contrast to this, document C was issued on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the tenth month, and document D on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month. By this time news about the death of Möngke must surely have reached East Turkestan, but the succession had not yet been resolved. Presumably in this situation authorization of orders was no longer obvious, so this could be why the issuers of the orders are mentioned in these two documents. Another sign of this unstable situation might be that the traditional closing formulas of the authorization are missing. Usually, *sözüm* 'My Word' (i.e. order) in the case of officers and minor rulers or *yarlıgı* 'his edict' in the case of great khans would be expected. It can be assumed that the issuer was not sure about the actual situation, so he mentioned in whose name the docu-

<sup>107</sup> In the *Onomasticon Turcicum* the name is linked to the Turkic meaning 'Worker on landslide/rock-fall', based on a work by Blagova (1997: 711; Rásonyi and Baski 2007: 475). For the interpretation of the word *ogul* as 'prince of the Chinggisid lineage', see Doerfer 1965: 81–82, No. 502.



ment was issued but excluded any expressions which could refer to his status.<sup>108</sup> To sum up, it can be surmised that while the first documents mirror the normal functioning of the administration in East Turkestan, the last two documents show a state of interregnum, where the authorization of orders was not clear.

After the reconstruction of their historical setting, the contents of the last two orders must be analysed in order to answer the question: what was important to the issuers in this extraordinary situation? In document C Ariq Böke's three deputies (*elči*)<sup>109</sup> arrived in the Turfan region in order to organize the wine-pressing (*bor sikturgalı kalgüči*),<sup>110</sup> i.e. to secure the wine supply. In document D, Qurumši's deputy Salgar has arrived to organise the dispensing of wine (*bor targalı*). In sum, it can be stated that during an interregnum, in a very acute situation when both sides were preparing for civil war between Ariq Böke and Qubilai, two members of the Chinggisid family (one of them Ariq Böke himself) thought it important to send their agents to the Turfan region in order to secure the wine supply. From our sources it is not clear what the purpose of this wine was: was it to supply the armies? Or for consumption by the aristocracy in the *ordu*?<sup>111</sup> However, even if there is no clear answer to these questions now, it seems clear that the wine of Turfan had a preeminent importance in an extraordinary and very important historical moment in the life of the Mongol Empire. There are direct proofs in the Old Uyghur official documents that in a moment of interregnum in 1259, decision makers of the highest levels ascribed priority to securing wine in the Turfan region.

Another interesting peculiarity of document D is the expression used to describe Salgar's duty. He is called *borči* in the text. This word is constituted from the noun *bor* 'wine' and the *nomen actoris* +čl. According to Clauson (1972: 357) it can be translated here as: 'wine merchant (or wine grower?)'. Comparing this passage to other attestations of *borči* even these interpretations appear to be questionable here. Namely, the word is attested in Mongolian texts also (MongHT73 and MongHT74), i.e. in orders (*jarliq*) from the highest level of administration in the Turfan region. In the edition of Cerensodnom and Taube (1993: 180–181) it was translated as 'der Einsammler der Weinabgaben'. MongHT73 was issued in the name of the khan (*qan-u jarliq-i' [ya]r*) and can most probably be dated to 1331, while MongHT74 is a decree of Yisün Temür (1337–1339/40), khan of the Chaghadaid *ulus* (*yisüntemür -ün j(a)rliq-iyar*) and can be dated to 1338. In former publications Weiers (1967) and Franke (1968) called these decrees 'Reisebegleitschreiben' in accordance with the purpose of their issue. From our point of view, the most important aspect is that in the 1330s two decrees were issued on the highest levels of the administration in order to

<sup>108</sup> Matsui (2015a: 72–74) surmised that the Uyghur officials issuing both documents wanted to avoid the usage of *söz* 'word' (Mong.: *üge*) for a decree written in the name of the members of the Chinggisid family, but, not daring to use the *yarliq* 'edict' (Mong. *jarliq*) terminology reserved for the great khan, they thus left a blank space after the attestation of the names.

<sup>109</sup> In this case the Turkic word *elči* most probably means 'state deputy' and not 'envoy, ambassador'. For the various meanings of *elči*, see Erdal 1993: 94–99.

<sup>110</sup> Similar expressions are attested in document B: *2,5 toksintaki yeti yılki bağ kápáz algalı bargučı yägänčük-kä turmuş-a-ka nampıka bargu iki at-ta* 'From the two horses for Yägänčük and Turmuş-a, who are going to Nampı in order to take the bundle of the seven year cotton (tax), (located) in Toksin'; and in SI 4820/a (former: SI/O 39a) of the St. Petersburg collection: *7,8 bor başlap bargučı işiräkä* 'for İşirä, who conducts the transportation of wine.'

<sup>111</sup> Matsui (2015a: 65) surmised that the wine could be collected for the funeral feast of the deceased great khan Möngke or perhaps for the *quriltai* for the enthronement of Ariq Böke. Due to the well-known importance of wine at the Mongol court, both assumptions seem feasible, but confirmation of further sources concerning this specific issue in 1259 would be desirable before either can be accepted.





provide safe and fast travel for *borčis*. In MongHT73: ‘Sevinč Buqa *borči* went to secure the yearly [production of] wine beverage’ (<sub>5,7</sub> *sevinč buq-a borči nasu bor [ara]kiyi qadaylaju yabuqu-yin*).<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, other officers (*elčis*) were also sent alongside the *borči*, led by a certain Industan. The duty of these *elčis* was to collect and preserve the wine. In MongHT74 several *borčis* led by a certain Kök Buqa were travelling to Qočo (Uyg.: Kočo) and the royal decree was intended to take care of their supplies and mount animals.<sup>113</sup> Considering these attestations in the Uyghur and Mongolian sources, *borčis* always went on official duty by the order of a prince or the khan himself. When information is provided about their duties it was always the collection and or securing of wine production. In document C of the above-mentioned Old Uyghur sources from 1259 we find *elčis*, while in document D a *borči* is sent. In the Mongolian decree from 1331 *borči* and *elčis* are distinguished. To sum up, it seems that the Uyghur word *borči*, originally meaning ‘wine merchant’ (or wine grower?), was used in an official decree in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century in the meaning of wine (tax) collector (Document D) but officers with similar duties could be *elčis* in a contemporary decree (Document C). According to our Mongolian sources, in the 1330s the meaning of *borči* in Mongolian was distinguished from *elči*, probably with a more specific meaning, like an officer responsible for the collection of the wine tax.

The distinction between *elči* and *borči* is not always clear, however, a royal decree (MongHT72) from 1353 was issued by Tuyluq Temür khan (1347–1363) in order to grant safe travel and provisions to some *elčis* carrying 200 leather bags of wine as tax (<sub>5,6</sub> *qoyar jayun tulum bor-un ujub*). Earlier the last word of this passage was read as *üjüb* ‘grape’, but it has lately been modified to *ujub* (< Pers. *wūjub*) ‘necessity, obligation, duty’.<sup>114</sup> This *borun ujub* might be the equivalent of the *bor* tax of the Uyghur sources. Maybe the *borči/borči* was responsible for the collection and *elčis*, state officials, dealt with the transportation and preservation of this tax.

Summarizing the results of this section, an ever-growing interest in viticulture among the aristocracy and the state can be detected in our sources. Nobles might already have had their share of vineyards in the West Uyghur period but under Mongol rule members of the royal family surely owned vineyards (*enčü borluk*) and these lands were cultivated by labour workers (*enčü borlukči*). Taxation was connected to viticulture in many other ways too. Wine was taxed from the earliest times, but in the Mongol period a complex system of taxes and labour services can be reconstructed concerning viticulture, and even involved a specialized officer called a *borči*. These officers were seemingly responsible for handling issues concerning the wine tax. The incidents during the interregnum of 1259 demonstrate the importance of Uyghur wine (SI 6544) and from the 14<sup>th</sup> century a series of Middle Mongolian royal decrees were issued at the highest administrative level settling issues concerning wine. In other words, sources stemming from the Turfan region suggest that the interest of the nobility and the state in viticulture was very significant in the Mongol period and a substantial growth of this interest compared to the earlier West Uyghur

<sup>112</sup> The amendment of the lacuna in line 6 (*bor [ara]ki-*) is based on the parallel attestations in line 9 and 12. However, the original meaning of *araki(n)* is ‘alcoholic liquor made of airay (q.v.) through distillation; any alcoholic beverage: brandy, wine, etc.’ (Lessing 1973: 48), Franke (1968: 9, 11) found it unlikely that the Mongols had some kind of brandy made of grape wine (‘Branntwein aus Traubenwein’) at that time, so translated the expression as ‘Traubenwein’ and the editors of the BT XVI followed him (Cerensodnom and Taube 1993: 180). I would consider *bor araki* as an apposition where *araki* means ‘alcoholic beverage’ in general and the *bor* specifies it as ‘grape wine’.

<sup>113</sup> There might be another attestation of this person in a *jarliy* that was issued in 1326 (MongHT76) by Kebeg khan (1318–1326) ordering the payment of compensation for a loss caused in connection to wine (*bor qayaluysanu*). The context is unclear, but the decree’s connection to viticulture seems certain. Cf. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993: 183.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993: 178–179, 183; Şayh al-Ḥukamā’i and Watabe and Matsui 2017: 73–74.



period might rightly be surmised. In order to gain a better understanding of this process it is worth looking at contemporary Persian, Latin and Chinese sources concerning wine from the Turfan region.

## TURFAN WINE IN THE EYES OF CONTEMPORARY OBSERVERS

Although numerous contemporary written sources are available concerning alcohol at the Mongol courts in general, the number of records concerning wine from the Turfan region is unfortunately very limited.<sup>115</sup> Despite this, they originate from different cultures and are generally considered to be trustworthy. The contemporary Persian historiographer Rashīd al-Dīn writes very briefly about the region but he does not omit mention of the wine:

‘Next to him the frontier of Qara-Kohocho, which is a town of the Uighurs. There is good wine there. It is between the frontiers of the Qa’an and Qaidu, and the people are on good terms with them both and render service to both sides.’ (Boyle 1971: 286)

One of the best-known figures of the Mongol period is the Venetian traveller Marco Polo, who also commemorated the land of the Uyghurs:

‘Iuguristan is a certain large province and is subject to the rule of the great Kaan. In it are cities and many villages but the chiefest city is called Carachoço. This city holds many other cities and villages subject under itself, whose people worship idols. But there are many Christians following the Nestorian rule. There are also some Saracens. The Christians are very often joined with idolaters in marriage. But they say that king whom they first had did not take his beginning from human generation, but was sprung from a certain fungus which is made up from the sap of trees, what indeed [is accustomed] among us to be called esca; and from him all the others descended. The idolatrous people are very learned according to their rules and customs and are always studying in the liberal arts. In that land grow corn and very good wine, but in winter the cold there is more severe than is known in any part of the world.’ (Moule and Pelliot 1938: 156)

It is worth mentioning that Polo’s very general description is quite accurate, summarizing the most important information for foreigners about the Uyghur territories and the people there. He mentions accurately that the majority was Buddhist (‘idolaters’ in his usage), but there were some believers of the Church of the East (Nestorians) too, and indeed in our Old Uyghur sources some probable Muslim names are attested too.<sup>116</sup> His hint concerning the high education of the

<sup>115</sup> Here the discussion is limited to mentions of wine from the Turfan region in contemporary sources, but there is a rich literature on Mongol alcohol consumption and the role of alcohol in the royal household. From the most recent literature I would refer to: Smith 2000, Allsen 2007, Rossabi 2014; Bayarsaikhan 2016, Allsen 2016, Allsen 2018.

<sup>116</sup> See, for example, the envoy Ahmat (< Ar. and Pers. Aḥmad) in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> lines of Mainz 765 or Mahmad (< Ar. and Pers. Muḥammad) in the first line of Ch/U 7368 verso. A certain Kiyasudīn (Pers. < Ghīyās al-Dīn) is attested in the sale contract for a vineyard discussed above (Ot. Ry. 543). A certain Umar is mentioned as a credit guarantor who reclaimed his assets according to the vicarious document (U 5251) of the Turī group discussed previously.



Buddhist Uyghurs is also correct in the light of the importance of the Uyghur literati to the Mongol administration, especially in the formative period of the empire when many Uyghurs entered Mongol service.<sup>117</sup> Even his description of the extremely continental climate of the region is accurate. Therefore, his judgment on the Uyghurs' wine can be considered reliable and it most probably mirrors the opinion of the Great Khan, i.e. the Yuan ruler's *ordu*, at that time too.

Finally, a dietary manual from the Yuan court deserves mention. This was presented to the emperor in 1330, i.e. in a period when the Turfan region was under the sovereignty of the Chaghatayid khans. The author of the work, Hu Sihui 忽思慧, was descended from a mixed Chinese and Turkic family stemming from the former Tangut (Xixia) domains (Buell and Anderson 2010<sup>2</sup>: 3–4). The *Yinshan Zhengyao* 饮膳正要 describes grape wines as follows:

‘Grape Wine: It augments *qi*, accords the center, [makes one] able to bear hunger, and energizes the will. There are several kinds of wine: there is Tibetan Wine, there is Qarqojha [sic!] Wine, there is Wine of Pingyang and of Taiyuan. Their flavour is not as good as that of the Qarakhoja Wine \*Tngri Wine is the best [Qarakhoja Wine].’ (Buell and Anderson 2010<sup>2</sup>: 498)

To sum it up, these are three reliable sources from three authors of different cultural spheres within the huge Mongol Empire and from three different periods of Mongol rule. Rashīd al-Dīn and Marco Polo give brief descriptions of the Uyghur lands, the latter being a bit longer and quite accurate, and both considered it important to note that the wine of the Uyghurs was ‘good’ or even ‘very good’. The *Yinshan Zhengyao* mirrors the attitude of the Yuan court. Its account is indirect evidence for the involvement of Uyghur wine in international trade, since despite the Uyghur territories belonging to the Chagataid *ulus* at the time of its composition, it seems certain that their wine was available at the Yuan court. The Chinese work enumerates and compares different types of grape wine from the empire and states that the Uyghurs' wine is the best. From these sources it can be stated that the wine of the Uyghurs' was acknowledged as an outstanding product of the empire and perhaps even the best grape wine, placing Turfan wine among those precious goods produced in the empire.

## CONCLUSION

Most of the results of the above analysis of the Old Uyghur and Middle Mongolian documents are rather specific, concerning as they do the agriculture, viticulture and viniculture of the Turfan region from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the meantime, some of our observations allow us to draw more general conclusions concerning our understanding of the Silk Roads and their economies. These concluding remarks will start with the more specific issues and move to their general consequences.

Viticulture and viniculture were present in the Turfan region before the arrival of the Uyghurs, but the Uyghurs themselves might also have known winemaking before their settlement there. Moreover, the viticulture and viniculture of the Turfan (Gaochang) region was known in Central

<sup>117</sup> On Turks and other Central Asians in Mongol service in general, see de Rachewiltz 1983; Brose 2002. On the Uyghurs in Mongol service, see Brose 2005; Brose 2007.



China since the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century at the latest. A sophisticated Old Uyghur terminology of viticulture shows the advanced wine making of the Uyghurs, while the presence of a significant proportion of texts concerning viticulture among the documents show its importance to the economy.

It is apparent that every layer of society was involved somehow in viticulture, from commoners through the religious communities to the elite. According to our sources vineyards and their products were involved in various ways in economic production and exchange. Wine served as a means of payment, could be loaned and taxed, while vineyards were subject to sale, rent, lease, mortgage, and household division, and their possession took various forms. Private actors and monasteries already played a key role in viticulture in the West Uyghur period, while the direct involvement of the aristocracy is more widely attested in the Mongol era.

An important peculiarity of Uyghur agriculture in general, and viticulture in particular, are the various forms of business associations. Joint possession of farmlands and vineyards was already known in the West Uyghur period, with owners sometimes, but not necessarily, being blood relatives. Analysis of the Kayımtu and Turı document groups shows that in the Mongol period these business associations could be connected tightly to religious communities and that some of the entrepreneurs specialized in viticulture.

A special form of the Uyghur business association was the so-called *ortok* partnership. Based on its attestations in these documents, at least two different kinds of *ortok* partnerships can already be identified in the West Uyghur period and are also present later in the Mongol period. A minor group refers to *ortoks* with attributes closer to the conventional view of the *ortoq* merchants, the privileged merchant partners of the Mongol aristocracy. The other, and the bigger, group attests *ortok* partners involved in agriculture in general and in the Mongol period in viticulture in particular. A third peculiarity of *ortoks* in Old Uyghur documents is their liability for taxation, but these documents might form a sub-category of the latter group.

Besides *ortoks*, the emerging interest of aristocracy and state in the Mongol period are detectable too. More precisely, in the West Uyghur period taxation had already given the state its share of viticulture, and indirect evidence hints at the involvement of aristocracy in vineyards at that time. However, documents from the Mongol period suggest that the interest of the elite and state had increased: growing efforts were made to take control of the production, collection and transportation of wine. Vineyard possession among the Chinggisid aristocracy (*enčü borluk*) and the labour work ensuring its cultivation (*enčü borlukči*) are well-attested. Moreover, various taxes and revenues were connected to viticulture and viniculture. Wine was the most important beverage among the supplies guaranteed to travellers in the region by the imperial Mongol postal system, the largest such institution of pre-modern history. The postal system was also used for the transportation of large quantities of wine. A series of Middle Mongolian documents, stemming from the highest levels of administration, are dealing with various issues connected to the production, collection or transportation of wine, and clearly show the importance accorded to viniculture. Analysis of the four documents of the St. Petersburg collection (SI 6544a-d) showed that during the interregnum of 1259 securing the wine supply from the Turfan region was a primary interest of the decision-makers. Comparative analysis of the Uyghur and Middle Mongolian documents detected the evolution of a state officer dedicated to wine production (*borči*). While most of these facts are prove the importance of wine to the economy of the Turfan region and that high quantities were produced, the high quality of the Turfan wine is acknowledged by various contemporary sources, written in distant literary cultures such as Chinese, Persian and Latin.



The growing interest in wine during the Mongol period and the fact that most of the documents attesting to interregional or long-distance connections are dated to the Mongol period might be explained as a result of the changing macro structures, i.e. the rule of the Mongols over most of Central Eurasia, the unified systems of weights, measures and currencies, as well as the development and expansion of the postal system infrastructure, which greatly facilitated interregional connections. These changes and especially the growing state interest surely contributed to the lucrativeness of the wine business and presumably made it much more profitable.

Generally speaking, these local sources on Silk Road communities seem to contradict or at least moderate our conventional picture of the Silk Roads, as well as the economic and commercial activity along it. However, despite the picture provided by the Old Uyghur and Middle Mongolian documents being somewhat scattered, some general consequences can be drawn. First, agriculture seems to be much more important in the entire period covered by these sources than is usually assumed. Second is the almost complete lack of a trade in luxuries, unless we count the Turfan wine as such. Moreover, only a significantly smaller part of the sources deals with the actual trade in portable goods, while most of the economic documents recorded business connected to farmlands and real estates. This latter peculiarity of our sources might be explained by considering the value of transactions, in the way that most people do not preserve and archive all bills of minor purchases but do preserve contracts relating to more valuable real estate. In general, the possibility cannot be excluded that many minor transactions were simply not recorded. In the meantime, official sources provide a wide range of examples of how various products were collected, transported and redistributed, suggesting that it is time to reconsider whether trade was the only or main means of exchange. An eminent example for this is Turfan wine. There are no direct references to actual long-distance trade or commerce with wine, but through a comparative analysis of the Old Uyghur and Middle Mongolian documents and contemporary narrative sources, it can be proved that it was a well-known and precious product even in distant parts of the empire, especially Yuan China. In order to confirm these general and preliminary observations, those Old Uyghur and Middle Mongolian documents which are not connected to viticulture must be involved in the analysis and the results compared to other local source materials from the Silk Roads.

## ABBREVIATIONS

SUK I–III = Juten ODA *et al.* (eds.) 1993. *Sammlung uigurischer Kontrakte. Band 1: Gesammelte Arbeiten über die uigurischen Dokumente von N. Yamada. Band 2: Textband. Band 3: Faksimileband.* Osaka: Osaka University Press.

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