Comprehensive Study on Old Uighur and Chinese Wall Inscriptions in Room B of Newly Excavated Cave 26 in Tuyuq Grottoes, Turfan

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ABSTRACT

The excavation in Tuyuq Grottoes initiated in 2010 has brought about numerous archaeological finds. In particular, those discovered in Cave 26 on the high platform in the middle of the Western Section are note-worthy. Many wall inscriptions in Old Uighur, as well as Brahmi and Chinese are preserved in the side rooms, releasing important information on the dating and the nature of this cave. They also contribute new data to the fields of history and linguistics. This paper presents an edition and study of all the 29 inscriptions preserved in Room B, most of which are written in Old Uighur, while others in Chinese.

KEYWORDS

Old Uyghur, Chinese, wall inscriptions, Tuyuq, Cave 26, Yuan dynasty, meditation cave



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0. INTRODUCTION¹

The Tuyuq grottoes are located at the Tuyuq Mazar village of Tuyuq township, in Shanshan (Pičan) county, Turfan city, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, China ($42^{\circ}51'10''$ N, $89^{\circ}33'16''$ E). They were excavated on the cliffs of the Tuyuq valley at the eastern part of the Qizil Ta γ (*Huoyan shan* 火焰山), and are divided into two sections by the Tuyuq river: the Eastern and the Western Section. Based on archaeological analysis, the grottoes in the Eastern Section can be further divided into 2 groups: the northern and southern groups, while those in the Western Section can be divided into 4 groups: the northern group, the monastery complex on the high platform in the middle, the small Old Uighur Buddhist monastery and the southern group. These groups are distant from each other and therefore, are relatively independent.

The monastery complex on the high platform in the middle of the Western Section is located close to the northern group, but relatively distant from the southern group. The small Old Uighur Buddhist monastery is located beneath it.² Two natural flooding ditches in the north and south isolated this platform from the rest of the section. Buddhist followers cut the slope and formed the platform, excavating grottoes at the cliffs on it. Since 2010, the joint team of the Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) and the Academia Turfanica has carried out archaeological excavations in the Tuyuq grottoes. In particular, 4 excavations in the high platform in the middle of the Western Section were carried out between 2013 and 2016. The excavation of Cave 26 (=b3=vii)³ took place during this period. It is located in the middle of this complex, with Cave 24 on its left and Cave 61 on its right. Judging from the archaeological data, it should be a large-scale multiple-roomed cave for the Buddhist monks to organize lectures and practice meditation. This cave comprises two areas: the outer area and the inner area. The former was excavated into the cliff, while the latter was built up with adobe in front of the cliff. Their layouts are the same: a main hall in the middle with 3 rooms paralleling it on each side to the left and right.

This cave was originally built during the Qu 麴 dynasty of the Gaochang 高昌 Kingdom (502–614 A.D.). It underwent a change in structure later in the same period. The inner area was sealed with adobes at the gateway and thus abandoned, while the outer area was enlarged into

² On the small Old Uighur Buddhist temple complex, see The Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Academia Turfanica 2019.

³ This cave was coded b3 by Albert Grünwedel, and vii by Aurel Stein, respectively. On the temporary coding of the caves and buildings of the monastery complex on the high platform in the middle as well as the archaeological findings, see The Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Academia Turfanica 2020. After the completion of the excavation, a new coding system including all the caves and buildings in Tuyuq Grottoes is to be published in the archaeological report.



¹ We are very grateful to Professor Li Yuqun, the chief director of the joint archaeological team of the Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS and the Academia Turfanica, for kindly inviting us to study these precious new materials and authorizing us to publish the data. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Professor Peter Zieme, Professor Marcel Erdal, Professor Matsui Dai and Professor Rong Xinjiang for their kind support in general and their specific remarks and suggestions during the preparation of our paper. We would like to thank Professor Christopher Beckwith and Dr. Chen Ruixuan for reviewing the paper. We are also indebted to Professor Hans Ulrich Vogel, Professor Achim Mittag and Professor Huang Fei, who have kindly hosted and supported the first author as a visiting scholar in the University of Tübingen in the winter semester 2019–20, especially during his overstay in spring 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The paper was completed during that time.

the present layout. The walls of the main hall were decorated with wall paintings of meditation scenes, indicating the function of the cave. The Buddhist monks in Tang and Uighur times inherited this cave. Numerous inscriptions in Chinese, Old Uighur and Brahmi are preserved in the 6 small side rooms of the outer area. The 3 rooms on the left side are coded A, B, C in a sequence from outside in, while the other 3 are coded D, E, F in a sequence from inside out.⁴

Although the wall inscriptions in Old Uighur and other scripts in Buddhist sites in north western China left by the Buddhist Old Uighur people have come to light ever since the beginning of the 20th century through the western expeditions in that area, systematic study of them as a major source was not carried out until long after that. The inscriptions in alliterated verses on the frescoes obtained by European expeditions were collected and edited in Zieme's monograph on Old Uighur alliterated Buddhist verses.⁵ The inscriptions in Brahmi written or carved by Old Uighurs, which were collected from Turfan and Kuča by the German expedition, were compiled and edited by Maue.⁶ In 1998, Hamilton and Niu Ruji 牛汝極 carried out a systematic study of the Old Uighur inscriptions in the Yulin 榆林 Caves.⁷ The value of the wall inscriptions as a special corpus began to attract attention. Based on in-site investigations, Matsui Dai 松井太 carried out a more comprehensive research on wall inscriptions in various Buddhist sites in the Dunhuang 敦煌 region, as well as those attested in Hohhot Baita 白塔, providing the most voluminous data on this topic so far.8 Based on the data collected till 2012, Porció attempted to generalize the features of Old Uighur Buddhist inscriptions, stressing their diversity and abundance in contents.⁹ Since the excavation in Tuyuq grottoes in 2010, new materials have come to light increasingly. Abdurishid Yakup and Li Xiao 李肖 deciphered the Old Uighur Pilgrim inscriptions on the walls of Northern Cave 10 (NK 10).¹⁰ Lately, Raschmann has introduced the information revealed by the wall inscriptions obtained from Ruin Q in Qočo city by the German expeditions.¹¹ On basis of these studies, we carry out a comprehensive study on the wall inscriptions seen in Cave 26, in the hope of adding a new set of data to the corpus. In this article, we present our edition and study on those preserved in Room B, following in sequence the right wall (I), the back wall (II, i.e., the main wall), and the left wall (III).

I. THE RIGHT WALL (FIG. I)

There are fragments of ca.14 different inscriptions preserved on this wall, which can be tentatively categorized in two groups. Those preserved on the upper half are relatively complete, while those preserved on the lower half are very fragmented and difficult to understand. We discuss them in a sequence from left to right, starting with those on the upper half.

- ⁵ Zieme 1985: Text 59, 60 a-e. Text 60 d is on the fresco obtained in Tuyuq.
- ⁶ Maue 1996, Text 72–77: 201–205; Maue 2015, Text 210–213: 457–465.

- ⁸ See Matsui 2008; Matsui 2013; Matsui 2014; Bai and Matsui, 2016; Matsui and Arakawa 2017: 1–116.
- ⁹ Porció 2014.
- ¹⁰ Yakup and Li 2019.
- ¹¹ Raschmann 2020: 215–229.



⁴ The Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Academia Turfanica 2020: 444–447, fig.12.

⁷ Hamiltion and Niu 1998.

I-1

This inscription is located on the leftmost part of the upper half. It consists of 14 readable lines, while the beginning 1 line (or maybe 2 lines) is covered by mud. The handwriting is cursive, and dental confusion appears several times. Some scribbles can be seen at the end of some lines. At the end of lines 3 and 4, we can read l//, k'//, kys, and *ay*. At the end of lines 8 and 9, we can read *küčä-čik* (?).

Transcription¹²

1) [1/[1/[1 2) turmïš kiši-lär kim-lär ol 3) lüsün čanglaw padmaširi dyančī 4) [+kuyšidu]¹³ budakir-ti šila suda šila piratya 5) širi bašlap otuz sanlïy kiši-lär 6) ärdimiz bo tasi sängräm-tä üč ay-ga 7) tägi munta ädgü-lüg [+iš]¹⁴-l(ä)rdä yaratïnïp 8) turd[ï]-lar iš küč sagïš bulup enip baryu 'wd¹⁵ ödün m(ä)n išim saqïš-nï 10) bulup ilä tägindim $[+\text{ken}+]^{16}$ körgüči **eči** ini bolz**un** *y/p'n* 11) bitimiš tep qulut-nï ///dm/'n 12)17 yangï bošyutčï tisi ol tep 13) darni¹⁸ munča og ärki tezün-lär tep 14) m(ä)n qulut tolun tämür ken körgü bolzun tep 15) bitiyü tägi(n)dim

Translation¹⁹

.....(2) who are the people standing (here)? (3-6) We are 30 people under the leadership of Lüsün zhanglao, Padmaširi Dyanči, Kuyšidu, Budakir-ti Šila, Suda Šila, and Piratya Širi. (6-8) They stayed to practice at the good deeds in this ₂monastery for 3 months. (8-10) During the time when we went to practice meditation and to complete the number of ₂service, I completed the number of my service, and I ventured to write. Let there be witness [religious] ₂brothers in the future... (11-12) Considering writing...the servant...considering them to be new ₂students, (13-15) considering 'may they read the dhāraṇī correctly like this', I, Tolun Tämür, the servant, ventured to write, considering 'may there be witness in the future!'

- ¹⁶ Written in the left of line 10, while a sign of insertion '+' was marked on the right of this line.
- ¹⁷ This line seems to be added up to the blank between lines 11 and 13, with denser ink.
- ¹⁸ Written more like *črny*, but should be *drny* according to the context.
- ¹⁹ In the translation session, a subscript 2 marks a synonym pair or a hendiadys.



 $^{^{12}}$ In the transcription session, the missing or unreadable letter is represented by /. The missing part with unknown number of letters is represented by a bracket without content inside. The partly remained letters are in bold. The completely reconstructed part is in bracket. The inserted part is in bracket with + in the beginning of it. Some inserted words were marked by a sign like + on the right of the inserted line. In such cases, we add another + in the end of the inserted word within the bracket. Dental confusions are transcribed in standard forms with the letters in question underlined. Unwritten letters are added within parentheses.

 $^{^{13}}$ This word was written above the body of this inscription, in a position between lines 2 and 3.

¹⁴ Written between lines 6 and 7.

¹⁵ Should be a misspelling of the beginning part of ödün.

Commentary

3) čanglaw: title of the chief monk. A transcription of Chinese Zhanglao 長老.20

3) dyanči: written *dy'nčy*. It should derive from dyan (<<Sanskrit *dhyāna* 'meditation') with the denominal suffix +čI, meaning 'meditation practitioner'. Although its cognate form *diyanči* is well attested in Mongolian texts, it has not been attested in any Old Uighur texts before.

4) kuyšidu: written kwysydu. Matsui has found this name in several Old Uighur manuscripts housed in St. Petersburg and identified it as the transcription of Chinese *Huishi nu* 惠師奴, which appeared in the same group of manuscripts.²¹ According to his study, that Kuyšidu belonged to a Buddhist community that was active in the middle of the 13th century and probably based in Tuyuq.²² However, we do not have enough evidence to determine if they were the same person.

4) budakir-ti : Old Uyghur form of the Sanskrit Buddhist name Buddha-kīrti 'the fame of Buddha'.

4-5) pira<u>t</u>ya širi: A Buddhist personal name derived from Sanskrit Prajñāśrī. The famous Uighur Buddhist scholar *Bilanna Shili* 必蘭納識里 of Yuan 元 times has this name.²³

6) tasy: written *t*'sy. It should be the Old Uighur transcription of Chinese *Tasi* 塔寺, which literally means 'stupa monastery'. *Tasi* was used as a term for Buddhist monastery in Tang times, corresponding to the Sanskrit term *vihāra*.²⁴ However, it does not seem to have been borrowed into Old Uighur as early as the Tang period. *Ta* 塔 can be reconstructed as *t*^hap in Middle Chinese, and *t*^ha in Early Mandarin.²⁵ The form should be **tapsi* in Old Uighur, if the borrowing had happened during the period of Middle Chinese. However, it is not yet attested. The form *tasi* could only appear in Old Uighur when the final p had dropped in Chinese, at some time after the 12th century when the Jin \pm dynasty unified north China. Most likely, the borrowing happened in Yuan times.

Here, *tasy sängräm* forms a hendiadys. The same word appears on this wall again in the form of *tsy*, see the following I-6. There, it forms a hendiadys with *vrxar*. Also, the same form *tsy* appears on the left wall of Room D, see our forthcoming article on the inscriptions in Room D. In the Yulin Buddhist Caves, we see the Old Uighur forms *suburyan sümä*²⁶ and *subaryan (suburyan) vrxar*²⁷, which literally mean 'stupa monastery'. Matsui has proposed that they correspond to the Chinese concept Tasi.²⁸ His proposal can be proven by the attestation of *tasi* here.

Archaeological reconstruction shows that the buildings on this platform formed a monastic complex. Besides the meditation cave, i.e., Cave 26, there are 3 temples with a central pillar as well

- ²⁰ See Matsui and Arakawa 2017: 98–99.
- ²¹ See Matsui 2010: 697–702
- ²² Matsui 2010: 698, 703.
- ²³ For the various transcriptions of this name in different languages, see Zieme 1991: 309.
- ²⁴ See Yiqie jing Yinyi, vol. 27: 491, item 'Tasi'.
- ²⁵ Pulleyblank 1991: 299.
- ²⁶ Cave 12, see Matsui and Arakawa 2017: 84–85.
- ²⁷ Cave 41, see Matsui and Arakawa 2017: 134
- ²⁸ Matsui and Arakawa 2017: 85.



as a separate stupa, therefore, 4 stupas in total.²⁹ This strengthens our identification of *tasi* 'stupa monastery'.

6-7) üč ay-qa tägi: 'for 3 months'. This phrase reminds us of the 3-month retreat of the rainy season for Buddhist monks, which fits perfectly in the context as well as the nature of this cave complex according to archaeological finds. In the Yulin Cave No. 31, Matsui has attested the phrase *üč ay pkčan(?) qonïp* 'settling for the 3-month retreat'.³⁰

7) ädgülüg išlärdä yaratin-: 'to practice (to work hard) at good deeds'.

9-10) išim saqïš-nï bul-: 'to find the number of my deed'. We translate it as 'to complete the number of my service'.

10) il-: 'to write down the pilgrim inscription'.³¹ This indicates the group came on pilgrimage to Tuyuq Buddhist caves.

12) bošyutčī tisi: a binomial for 'student'. *tisi* should be a simplification of *titsi*, which is borrowed from Chinese *dizi* 弟子 'disciple, student'. The whole line should be interpreted as 'considering them to be new ₂students.

14) tolun: written twlwn. The final *n* is not very clear. It means 'full', but serves here as an onomastic element meaning 'full moon', short for *tolun ay*. This onomastic element is attested in U 1568.³²

I-2

This inscription is located to the right of I-1. It comprises 5 lines, 4 of which have inserted words written to the left with a sign of insertion '+' to the right. The handwriting is cursive, and dental confusions occur. The Chinese character *wo* 我 'I' is written between lines 3 and 4.

Transcription

- 1) burxan-lïγ atamïz [+ärkin+] tutγay
- 2) bodi amanuži [+y(ï)ngaq(?) lar+] täzgäy
- 3) bodi tuyun-m[aq]ta³³ tüp-[+kä y(ï)ngaq(?)+] täggäy
- 4) b**u**lunč [+suz³⁴+] čin<u>t</u>amani-ni [+ken+] bälgürgäy tep
- 5) m(ä)n budaširi täg nä ärsär bi<u>t</u>itim

Translation

1) Our Buddha father will hold his power.

²⁹ The Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Academia Turfanica 2020: 431.

- ³⁰ Matsui and Arakawa: 116–117.
- ³¹ UW, I. 2: 116.
- ³² Zieme 1978: 74, 82.
- ³³ This word was erased on purpose.
- ³⁴ written *syz*.



2) The Bodhi Amanuşyas will escape.

3) He will approach the end when acquiring the Bodhi, i.e., the enlightenment.

4) The unattainable Cintāmaņi will later appear. Considering these,

5) I, Budaširi, humbly wrote.

Commentary

2) amanuži: 'non-human, demon', written *"m'nwsy*, a loanword from Sanskrit *amanusya* via Tocharian.³⁵

2) y(ï)ngaq: 'direction'. The insertion of *y*(*ï*)*ngaq* here does not seem to fit the sentence. The plural suffix +*lar* should follow the previous *amanuži*. The same applies to Line 3, too.

2) täzgäy: written *t'sk'y*. We interpret it as the future tense of the verb *täz*- 'to escape' with dental confusion. It is also possible to render it as the future tense of the verb täš- 'to pierce'.

3) tuyun-maqta: written *twyywn m///t*'. We suggest treating the first part as a misspelling of *tuyun*- with an excessive y, but the reading is not sure.

3) tüp: 'end'. It is written like *twyk*. Since the preceding noun was erased on purpose, it is difficult to fully understand the context. The final k could be a mistake of p, and the word may thus be read *tüp* 'end'.

4) čintamani: the Old Uighur form of Sanskrit cintā-maņi 'wish-fulfilling jewel'.

5) budaširi: the Old Uighur form of the Sanskrit personal name buddhaśri.

5) täg nä ärsär: the reading and meaning of this part is not sure. We suggest understanding it as an expression of self-abasement, which may literally mean '[(I,) Budaširi] (so obscure) like nobody'. Therefore, we propose to translate Line 5 as 'I, Budaširi, humbly wrote'.

I-3

To the right of I-2 lies another inscription of 2 lines.

Transcription 1) ït yïl bešinč ay ičintä k(ä)lip 2) bir ay mončuq tar<u>t</u>ïp törür m(ä)n

Translation

1-2) In the dog year, in the middle of the fifth month, [I] came [here]. Having counted the prayer beads [on a Buddhist rosary] [for] one month, I come into existence.

³⁵ *UW*, II. 1: 124.

187



Commentary

2) *mončuq tart*-: 'to pull the prayer beads', thus 'to count the prayer beads [on a Buddhist rosary]'. Considering the context, it probably refers to the Buddhist practice of counting the 108 beads on a Buddhist rosary by pulling each bead towards oneself.

I-4

To the right of I-3 lies the remnant of another inscription. It comprises 4 lines, but only the beginning word of each line is preserved to some extent.

Transcription 1) lükčüng³⁶tä [2) toyi**nčuq** [tutung 3) altï³⁷ y'n[4) bi<u>t</u>iy[ü

Translation 1-4) In Lükčüng...Toyi**nčuq** [Tutung]...six... writing...

Commentary

2) toyi**nčuq** [tutung]: only the beginning *twyyn* is clear. We reconstruct this name and title based on its frequent appearance in other inscriptions in this cave, see the following I-5, II-1, II-2, II-4 and II-6. A second reason is the appearance of the place name Lükčüng in the first line. At the right part of the lower half of the right wall in Room D lies an inscription, the beginning of which reads: *m(ä)n lükčüng-lüg toyinčuq tutung* 'I, Toyinčuq Tutung from Lükčüng' (see our forthcoming article on the inscriptions in Room D). This indicates the home of Toyinčuq Tutung is Lükčüng.

The transcription of *toyinčuq* is not sure; it can also be transcribed as *toyinčoy*, a compound deriving from *toyin* and *čoy*. Among the above-mentioned cases, some have a long tail at the end (I-5, II-6 as well as the one from Room D), while others have a short tail (II-1, II-2 and II-4). However, we suggest treating all of them as the same person.

This personal name and title are already attested in the colophon of the printed Buddhist sutra collection U 4791 (T M 36). The donor Buyančuq Baxšï had several sutras printed in the *Hongfa si* 弘法寺temple (*hungvasi atlïy sängräm*) in the city of Zhongdu中都 (*čungdu*) in a Wu 戊 Monkey year (*wu šipkanlïy bečin yïl*) for himself as well as his deceased parents *nomčï bilgä toyinčuq tutung bäg* 'the sutra teacher, the wise, the lord, Toyinčuq Tutung' and *oyul yitmiš*³⁸. The reference to *Zhongdu* led scholars to date the Wu-Monkey year either to 1308³⁹, one year after the Yuan dynasty had built *Zhongdu* city to the north of Beijing, or to 1188⁴⁰, when the Jin dynasty called their capital city *Zhongdu*.

³⁶ Lükčüng is written as *lwkčwnk*.

⁴⁰ Dang 1999: 110–117; see Kasai 2008: 244.



³⁷ Altï is written as '*lty*.

³⁸ Kasai 2008: Nr. 130, 244–245.

³⁹ Zieme 1996: 413–414; see Kasai 2008: 244.

Another related attestation of a very similar name and title could be the Toyunčuq tutung on Side A of III 307, a wooden board housed in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst in Berlin.⁴¹ However, the scribbles on the wooden board do not release enough information for us to be able to identify the person.

I-5

Next to I-4, at the right, we can see 3 lines probably written by the same Toyinčuq Tutung on a different occasion in a thinner handwriting.

Transcription 1) luu yïl aram ay altï otuz-qa [m(ä)n] 2) toyinčuq tutung bo tïyuq qï<u>s</u>-[ïl qa?] 3) y(i)g(i)rmi tury**alï** [k]älip [t]äginür [m(ä)n]

Translation

1-3) In the dragon year, on the 26th day of the first month, I, Toyinčuq Tutung, venture to come [to] this Tïyuq (Tuyuq) vall[ey] in order to sta[y] [for] 20 [days?].

I-6

One line follows I-5 closely to the right.

Transcription 1) bo t(a)si vrxar-ta m(ä)n inkuy t[___]

Translation 1) In this ₂monastery, I, Inkuy...

Commentary 1) t(a)si: written *tsy*, derived from Chinese *tasi*塔寺, see I-1, Line 6.

1) vrxar-ta: 'in the monastery'. written *vrq'r ty*. The final *r* of vrxar is extended. *ty* should be a mistake for the locative suffix *t*'. The word *vrxar* 'monastery' forms a hendiadys with the preceding t(a)si.

1) inkuy: written 'ynkwy. We propose to trace it back to the Chinese Buddhist name Yin hui 印慧.42

I-7

This one line inscription appears to the right of I-6, close to the following Chinese inscription.

Transcription 1) bo buqar kwy//n [

⁴¹ Raschmann 2016: 43.

⁴² For Old Uighur transcription of the two Chinese characters, see Shōgaito et. al. 2015: 176, 187.

189



Translation

1) This monastery...

Commentary

1) buqar: 'monastery', written *bwq'r*. The tail of the final *r* extends so long that it resembles a *k*. This word is recorded in *Gaochangguan zazi* 高昌館雜字, transcribed in Chinese *Buhaer* 卜哈 兒.⁴³ It is widely accepted that it is a Turkicized form of the loan word *vrxar*, which derived from Sanskrit *vihāra* 'monastery' and is borrowed into Old Turkic via the Sogdian form $\beta rxar$.⁴⁴

I-8

A colophon in Chinese was written closely to the right of I-7. It comprises 3 lines, but the end of the last 2 lines is effaced due to the shedding of the surface.

Transcription

1) 泰定五年 2) 端午後三[日] 3) 西蜀成都甘露[寺]

Translation

1-3) (In) the fifth year of *Taiding* 泰定 (1328), on the 3rd [day] after the *Duanwu* 端午 Festival (the 5th day of the 5th month), (from) the Ganlu 甘露 [temple] in Chengdu 成都 in western Shu 蜀 ...

Commentary

1-2) 泰定五年端午後三[日] Taiding wunian duanwu hou sanri: '[in] the fifth year of Taiding, on the 3rd [day] after the Duanwu Festival'. In the 2nd month of the fifth year of Taiding (1328), the Yuan court changed the regnal name to Zhihe 致和. Since the Duanwu Festival takes place on the 5th day of the 5th month, the regnal name of this date should be the first year of Zhihe. It is very likely that the scribe who came from Chengdu or returned from Chengdu had not yet known the change of the regnal name at the time when he wrote down this inscription. Since Uighuristan including the Turfan region was officially incorporated into the Chagatay Khanate at the latest in the year 1304/1305,⁴⁵ the scribe was more likely to be a visitor who came from Chengdu, or who came from somewhere within the Yuan territory and had traveled via Chengdu.

It is also possible that Line 1 does not belong to the colophon, since the ductus looks smaller and the space between characters is closer, compared with Lines 2 and 3. If so, the date the 3rd [day] after the *Duanwu* Festival does not contradict the fifth year of *Taiding*.

⁴⁵ Allsen 1983: 258–259.



⁴³ Gaochangguan zazi: 441; See also Ligeti 1966: 146.

⁴⁴ Ligeti 1966: 146; Matsui and Arakawa 2017: 18.

I-9

In the leftmost part of the lower half, there are traces of an inscription probably consisting of Old Uyghur and Chinese. However, only several damaged words remain, which are not enough to provide any useful information.

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Transcription
1)[]////biti[]
2)[]]
1)[]我?關?心?[]
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I-10

To the right of I-9 lies another inscription of 4 lines in Old Uighur. The upper half and the end are both effaced. It is close to the next Chinese inscription I-11.

Transcription

1) []**q**a m(ä)n e[l qay-a] 2) []'k bo tay sy l[] 3) [] örip eriki**p** [] 4) [] el qay-a //[]

Translation

1-4) On ... (date), I, E[l Qaya]...this great monastery...having risen and been lazy, ...El Qaya...

Commentary

2) tay sy: written t'y sy. It could be a transcription of Chinese dasi 大寺 'great monastery'.

I-11

Closely to the right of I-10, we can see the remnants of 2 lines in Chinese. Despite the closeness in space and the similarity in ink color with I-10, we have decided to treat it as another inscription, because it was written from right to left in traditional Chinese style. Also, the personal names attested in these two inscriptions are different.

Transcription 1) 舍?□□□[聖]泉都[統] 2) □□□□□ 後記 □

Translation 1-2) ...[Sheng]quan ('holy spring') Tutung...has thus written.

Commentary

1) [聖]泉都[統]: We propose to complete the personal name and title *Shengquan dutong* 聖泉 都統. This Chinese name and title appear on a colophon of a *Qianziwen* copy from Yarkhoto in the Berlin Turfan collection (Ch 3716, T II Y 62). There, the name and title were written *Shengquan dutong* 聖泉都通. Chinese characters 都通 are obviously a transcription of the Old Uighur title Tutung, which in turn was borrowed from the Chinese title *Dutong* 都統 'the chief administrator of a Buddhist community'. Therefore, we can complete the title with the original Chinese character 統. Thilo read the word *Tianxi* 天禧 in that manuscript as the regnal name of the last emperor of Qara Khitay Yelü Zhilugu 耶律直魯古 and therefore dated the manuscript to 1211.⁴⁶ However, as Zhang Guangda 張廣達 has pointed out, *Tianxi* was not the regnal name but actually the name of the pupil who wrote this copy to practice handwriting.⁴⁷ Therefore, we are not able to date our inscription based on this name and title.

An alternate reconstruction could be [玄]泉都[統] (Xuanquan dutong). Although this Chinese name and title do not appear in any text, Zieme has proposed to relate an Old Uighur name and title Küntsün Šäli Tutung to it,⁴⁸ which is phonetically suitable.⁴⁹

I-12

To the right of I-11 lies another inscription with remnants of 3 lines. However, no words are yet readable.

I-13

To the right of I-12 can one see remnants of one line of Chinese and 2 lines of Old Uighur. Whether they all belong to one inscription is not clear.

Transcription 1) 心能口[] 2) m(ä)n twyswny[] 3) bo<u>d</u>im bo[l?]zu[n?] //wz[]

Translation 1) The heart can ... 2) I, twyswny... 3) May there be my Bodhi...

- 46 Thilo 1981.
- ⁴⁷ Cf. Rong Xinjiang 2013: 222, footnote 65.
- ⁴⁸ Zieme 1981: 241, Anm. 43.
- ⁴⁹ Shōgaito 1987: 62; cf. Kasai 2008: 140.



Commentary

2) twyswny[]: the remaining part can be read *tüzüni*, as accusative of the noun *tüzü* 'all'. However, the handwriting indicates that part of this word is missing. We suggest that it is a personal name, very likely, the scribe's.

I-14

In the rightmost end of the lower half of the wall, one can notice the remnants of 5 lines, but no significant information can be reconstructed.

 Transcription

 1) s[
]

 2) y(a)ngï [
]

 3) xayemt[u
]

 4) l'ry bo [
]

 5) m(ä)n [
]

Commentary 3) xayemt[u]: written q'yymt[], a copy of the Chinese Buddhist name huayan nu 華嚴奴.⁵⁰

II. THE BACK WALL (FIG. 2)

9 inscriptions in Old Uighur or Chinese remain on the back wall. We discuss them in an order from left to right.

II-1

This one-line inscription was written in block script in very dense ink.

Transcription 1) toyinčuq tutung turulmïš

Translation 1) Toyinčuq Tutung practiced meditation.

Commentary

1) turul-: the passive form of the verb *tur*- 'to stand', but it means 'to calm down'.⁵¹ We propose to interpret it as 'to practice meditation', which suits the nature of this cave.

⁵⁰ Zieme 1994: 120.

⁵¹ Erdal 1991: 679.



193

II-2

To the right of II-1 there is a copy of it. However, the handwriting is lighter than II-1, indicating that it was copied in a different time.

Transcription 1) toyinčuq tutung turulmïš

II-3

Next to II-2 there is one line in a thiner handwriting. This line might be a copy of the first line of an alliterated colophon on this wall, with one word in different forms. See II-7 below.

Transcription 1) aryadan orun kü<u>z</u>ädči t(ä)ngri-lär a<u>t</u>ïn

Translation 1) The name of the guardian gods of the monastery place

Commentary

1) aryadan: written "*ry'd'n*, a variant form of *aranyadan*, which derives from Sanskrit *aranyāyatana* 'monastery, hermitage' via the Tocharian B form **aranyāyatam*.⁵²

1) küzädči: 'guardian'.

1) a<u>d</u>ïn: could be rendered as *at* 'name' in accusative or instrumental case, with dental confusion; or as *adïn* 'other'. We prefer the former explanation.

II-4

Next to II-3 there are two copies of II-1 in one line. The handwriting of the first copy is thicker than II-1 and II-2, indicating that it was copied on a different occasion.

At the end can one see the second copy in a smaller, lighter and more cursive handwritting. The first word is overlapped by the first copy, indicating that the second one was written earlier.

Transcription

1) toyinčuq twt53 tutung turulmïš toyinčuq tutung turulmïš

⁵³ Should be an error of *tutung*.



⁵² UW, II. 1: 223–224.

II-5

To the right there are 4 Chinese characters, which were probably written by an Old Uighur scribe, due to the ductus.

Transcription 1) 智清是也

Translation 1) This is *Zhi Qing* ('wise and pure').

Commentary 1) 智清: Zhi Qing, meaning 'wise and pure', should be a Buddhist monk name.

II-6

To the right lies an inscription of 2 lines, which was also written by Toyinčuq Tutung. It clearly indicates his purpose of staying in this cave.

Transcription
1) yunt yïl-ïn bo orun-ta m(ä)n toyin-čuq tut[ung]
2) aγ<u>t</u>ïnïp enä tägintim yetinč ay-ïn bir ay t[]

Translation

1-2) In the horse year, I, Toyinčuq Tut[ung], having climbed up [to this cave?], ventured to descend in meditation. In the 7th month, [I spent] one month...

Commentary

2) ay<u>t</u>ïnïp enä tägintim: the basic meaning of the verb 'en-' is to descend, but it also means 'to descend in meditation' in religious context.⁵⁴ Judging from the context, we translate the sentence as 'having climbed up [to this cave?], ventured to descend in meditation'. The missing part at the end of Line 1 should be the name of this cave or monastery with the dative suffix.

II-7

An alliterated colophon with 4 lines was written to the right of II-6. The first line is almost the same as II-3.

Transcription

aryadan orun kü<u>z</u>ädtäči t(ä)ngri-lär a<u>t</u>in []
 a<u>t</u>ï kötrülmiš-ning y(a)rl(ï)γ tutup munta y/[]
 arïtï ašsïz aγ<u>t</u>ïnsar biz y(e)mä ayaz-taqï '[]
 a<u>d</u>ïz-taqï qalïn-larïγ adïn-lar kälip alsar []

⁵⁴ UW, I. 2: 18–19.



Translation

1) ... the names of the gods who are guarding the monastery place,

2) keeping the order of the blessed one (i.e., the Buddha), from this...

3) If we ascend with no food at all, then...of the blue sky...

4) If others come and take the riches of the land...

Commentary

1) kü<u>z</u>ädtäči: 'watching, guarding'. Here the scribe used the nominal form of the verb küzäd-, while in II-3 the scribe used the noun küzädči 'guardian'.

2) a<u>t</u>ï kötrülmiš: 'the name exalted, the blessed one'. It corresponds to Sanskrit Bhagavān and Chinese *Shizun* 世尊, both of which refer to the Buddha.

3) arïtï: 'totally, completely'. Here it emphasizes the following negative nominal assiz⁵⁵, meaning 'with no food at all'. This reading is not sure due to the missing of lower half of the text. It can also be read as the preterite form of the verb *arï*- 'to become clean', and thus belong to the previous sentence.

II-8

This colophon consists of one line, with the date only.

Transcription 1) küskü yïl bešinč ay tört y(i)g(i)rmi-kä

Translation 1) In the mouse year, on the 14th day of the 5th month

II-9

At the upper right corner, the Old Uighur word *qulut* 'servant, slave' is written.

III. THE LEFT WALL (FIG. III)

III-1

At the upper left corner, the Old Uighur word *qulut* 'servant, slave' is written.

III-2

This colophon has 4 lines in Old Uighur, alliterated with *k*. A few words were written randomly above the text, including *küskü*, *yy* (probably for yïl), *bärü*, and *küskü yïl*.

⁵⁵ UW, II. 1: 248.



Transcription 1) küskü yïl bešinč **ay** [] 2) küsänčig ädgü bo⁵⁶ k[] 3) köni köndürü bi<u>t</u>iy[ü] 4) k//// [+ tägindimiz +] []

Translation

1-4) In the mouse year, in the fifth month, ...this pleasant, good... we ventured to write truth-fully...

Commentary 3) köni köndürü: form a binomial meaning 'truthfully'.

III-3

This colophon comprises 7 lines in Old Uighur. The first line was partly covered by mud, while the upper half of the 3rd line was erased on purpose. Another colophon consisting of 4 lines (III-4) in a thinner handwriting follows closely. Judging from the relative position of the last line, the scribe obviously tried to make use of the space left by the following colophon III-4. The words *tägir* and *män* had to be written much closer to the previous line because the space was occupied by the following III-4. This indicates that III-4 was written earlier.

It can be safely dated to the era when the Yuan dynasty took direct control of the Turfan region, for it mentions the punishment of 57 whiplashes, the number of which is typical in the criminal law of Yuan China.

Transcription 1) m(ä)n //////qay-a 2) čią̈ÿay ay bo tiyim-t[ä/in] 3) /////⁵⁷ čin+ol 4) sözüm 'äz̈üg bolsar 5) 'älig yeti qamčï 6) yep yasa-taq̈i aÿir q[ï]n 7) -qa tägir m(ä)n

Translation

1-7) I, ...Qaya, shall go out from this underground cellar! Ah! This is true. If my words are false, I will receive the severe punishment of taking ('eating') 57 whiplashes within the law.

Commentary

2) čiäÿay ay: '(I) shall go out! Ah!' This reading fits well the context. However, there should be a first person pronoun following the verb.

⁵⁶ Written like *py*.

⁵⁷ This word was erased on purpose.



The writing is more like *cyn'qy ny*, but the word *cyn'qy* is difficult to reconstruct. Otherwise, we might read it cyv'qy, and interpret it as a variation of the loanword čivake, which derives from Sanskrit jīvaka and has been borrowed into Old Turkic via Tocharian B jīvake.⁵⁸ However, this method does not fit the context well.

2) tiyim: written like *tyyym* or *tyrym*, which is not attested previously in other Old Uighur texts. In the front wall of Room F, the leftmost inscription reads: *bo tyyym-tä m(ä)n tiso* 'in this tiyim, I, Tiso'(see our forthcoming article on the inscriptions in Room F). It shows a clearer writing of *tyyym* instead of *tyrym*. Although the word is not attested elsewhere, it indicates the place where the scribe(s) was, namely, the room or the cave complex. We propose to interpret it as the transcription of a Chinese term *diyin* 地窨 'underground cellar', which should be pronounced /tfii ?im/ in middle Chinese and /ti yim/ in Yuan time.⁵⁹ The Old Uighur transcription fits the Chinese pronunciations well, especially that of Yuan time, while the meaning is also proper considering the circumstance of a cave room.

Based on the context of this inscription, we cannot rule out the possibility that the rooms, which were usually used for meditations by Buddhist monks, were for some time also used as a cell for monks or laymen who committed crimes.

5) 'älig yeti qamči: '57 whiplashes'. A similar expression has already been attested in an Old Uighur family register in the Berlin Turfan Collection.⁶⁰ The number of whipping punishment ending with 7 provides us with clear evidence to date the colophon to Yuan times.⁶¹ In the early era of the Mongols' rule in China proper, they followed the *Taihe lü* 泰和律 of the previous Jin dynasty in terms of Criminal Law. In 1271, Kublai Khan ceased using the *Taihe lv*⁶² and began to implement new criminal laws within his territory. After the West Uighurs subjected themselves to Genghis Khan in 1209, their territory was incorporated into the Mongol empire and was directly ruled by the Great Khan through the 13th century.⁶³ Therefore, it is not surprising that the criminal law of China proper would be introduced to Uighuristan. We can thus determine that the earliest date of this colophon could be some time after 1271.

After 1260, Uighuristan was involved in continuous wars between the Great Khan and the Central Asian Khans and became the frontier of the Yuan dynasty. In 1275, the Iduqqut Qočγar submitted to the Central Asian Khans after 6 months of siege. From then on, Uighuristan underwent increasing influence from them, though still under Yuan rule. At the latest in the year 1304/1305, the territory of Uighuristan was officially incorporated into the Chagatay Khanate.⁶⁴ Therefore, we can date this inscription to the time span of 1271–1305.

- 63 Allsen 1983: 250.
- ⁶⁴ Allsen 1983: 258–259.



⁵⁸ Wilkens 2016, III: 962.

⁵⁹ Pulleyblank 1991: 77, 374.

⁶⁰ Zieme 1982: 264, 266.

⁶¹ Yuanshi, vol. 102, 'Xingfa (Criminal Law) 1': 2603-2605.

⁶² Yuanshi, vol. 7, 'Biography of Shizu (Kublai Khan) 4': 138.

6) yasa: 'code of customary law', derived from Middle Monglian *jasaq*.⁶⁵ It is another piece of evidence for dating this colophon to Yuan times.

III-4

This colophon closely follows III-3. As mentioned above, it was written earlier than III-3.

Transcription 1) tonguz yïl yetinč [ay] 2) tikuy šila [q]ït(a)y t[ung?] 3) bo ïdu[q] orunta'y[] 4) tep m(ä)n qï[t](a)y tun[g?] y[]

Translation

1-4) In the pig year, in the 7th [month], ... [we], Tikuy Šila and Qït(a)y t[ung?] ...at this sacred place... I, Qït(a)y t[ung?], ...

Commentary

2) tikuy: It could be a transcription of Chinese *ding hui* 定惠, which is already attested in an Old Uighur and Chinese bilingual contract.⁶⁶ It appears there with the title *tayši* 'great master',⁶⁷ which indicates a Buddhist monk. In our text, the name is also followed by a Buddhist title *šila* 'monk'.

2) [q]it(a)yt[ung?]: Since this name and title appear again in line 4, we can suggest to reconstruct it. The first part is written *qyty*. This form for the personal name qitay is attested in an Old Uighur civil document.⁶⁸ The second part may be *tung*, which is short for the title *tutung*.

III-5

A single word was written from a distance to the right of III-4. It is written *wnd*', which could be rendered as *anta*,⁶⁹ the dative form of *o*.

III-6

To the right end of this wall, one can see traces of 7 lines in cursive Old Uighur script. From the third line onwards, the text is partly or largely covered by dried mud, which makes it difficult to read. We plan to carry out further cleaning of the wall in hopes of gaining a complete understanding of the whole text.

Transcription 1) küskü yïl bešinč ay ay[aγq]a tägimlig [

- ⁶⁶ SUK 2, Mi 27.
- ⁶⁷ SUK 2: 173.
- ⁶⁸ SUK 2, Mi 03.
- ⁶⁹ As is pointed out by Matsui, aleph in inscriptions was sometimes written as waw. See Matsui 2017: 40.



⁶⁵ Clark 1975: 157–158.

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2) bo dar[m] [qï]sïl-nïng [+ičin-tä+] körüp tüzün-lär [
3) [ ]ť:: küsänčig män[g]i tägingü-kä [
4) [k]enki-lä[r] [ö]dig bolγu-qa körüp barï? [
5) [ ]/ š[ä]l[i] biṯiti[m] čïn qy-a /[
6) ///////////// ///kyt[ ]rwp //wn '[
7) [ ]
```

Translation

(1-3) [In] the mouse year, [in] the 5th month, seeing in the middle of this worship-worthy... valley of [Buddhist] law, the well-behaved in the...in order to reach the desired happiness, (4-5) in order to have memory in the future, seeing...[I], ...Šäli wrote. It is true. (5-7)

IV. CONCLUSIONS

1. The nature of Cave 26 according to the contents of the wall inscriptions

The wall inscriptions indicates that this cave was part of a Buddhist monastic complex, which is referred to as *tasi* (from early mandarin *tasi* 塔寺 'stupa monastery'), and served as a lecture and meditation cave for the monks. Inscription I-1 suggests that a group of 30 monks came to this monastery to practice meditation for 3 months, which is assumed to be the retreat of the rainy season. It is very likely that they spent most of the time in Cave 26.

Other significant information is found in the series of inscriptions written by the Old Uighur monk Toyinčuq Tutung. Judging from the title *tutung*, he may have been one of the top leaders of the Buddhist community in the Turfan region. At least 6 inscriptions in this cave can be related to him. As mentioned above, these inscriptions were very likely written on different occasions, implying his frequent visits to this cave. In particular, Inscription I-5 and II-6 give two specific dates: 'on the 26th of the first month in the dragon year' (*luu yïl aram ay altï otuz-qa*) and 'in the horse year, in the 7th month' (*yunt yïl-ta, yetinč ay-ïn*), respectively.

As for the purpose of his stay in the cave, II-6 gives the most important information. He wrote that he spent all of the 7th month in the cave and 'having climbed up [to this cave], ventured to descend in meditation' (aytinip enä tägintim). We would like to note here another inscription from Room D. It was written on the right wall by the same Toyinčuq Tutung, reading: $m(\ddot{a})n$ lükčüng-lüg toyinčuq tutung bo $\ddot{a}[uq] //// ky-\ddot{a}$ olurup altin enä tägintim'I, Toyinčuq tutung from Lükčüng, having stayed in this sacred [monastery], ventured to descend in meditation' (see our forthcoming article on the inscriptions in Room D).

In addition, we have seen the same sentence *toyinčuq tutung turulmiš* 'Toyinčuq Tutung practiced meditation' written four times, as discussed in II-1, II-2 and II-4. Judging from the handwriting, they were very likely written on different occasions. Presumably, the monk wrote down one sentence each time he came to practice meditation in this room.



2. The date of this cave

Although most of the inscriptions lack exact dating, we can still safely date some of them to the Mongol period, including I-8 and III-3. In particular, I-8 can be dated to the year 1328, while III-3 can be dated to a time span between 1271 and 1305. Judging from other features, 4 other inscriptions are highly likely to have been written during the Mongol period: I-1, I-2, II-7 and III-2. These indicate that the cave was still in use in Mongol times, or at least till the 14th century.

Tentative dating of the inscriptions

	Dating	Dental confusion	Significant personal names	Other features
I-1	Mongol period?	4 times	Lüsün Čanglaw, Padmaširi Dyanči, Kuyšidu, Budakirti Šila, Suda Šila, Piratya Širi, Tolun Tämür	tasi (ťsy)
I-2	Mongol period?	4 times	Budaširi	Alliteration
I-3	Unknown	1 time		
I-4	Unknown	1 time	Toyinčuq Tutung	
I-5	Unknown	1 time	Toyinčuq Tutung	
I-6	Mongol period?		Inkuy	t(a)si (tsy)
I-7	Unknown			
I-8	Mongol period On the 8th day of the 5th month in the fifth year of Taiding (=the first year of Zhihe, 1328)			The Ganlu [temple] in Chengdu
I-9	Unknown	1 time		
I-10	Unknown		El Qaya	
I-11	Unknown		*[Sheng] Quan Tu[tung] [聖]泉都[統]	
I-12	Unknown			
I-13	Unknown			
I-14	Unknown		Xayemt[u]	
ll-1	Unknown		Toyinčuq Tutung	
II-2	Unknown		Toyinčuq Tutung	
II-3	Unknown	2 times		
II-4	Unknown		Toyinčuq Tutung	
II-5	Unknown		Zhi Qing 智清	
II-6	Unknown	1 time	Toyinčuq Tutung	
II-7	Mongol period?	3 times		Alliteration
II-8	Unknown			
II-9	Unknown			
III-1	Unknown			
III-2	Mongol period?	1 time		Alliteration
III-3	Mongol period ca. 1271-1305	1 time		57 whiplashes; yasa; tiyim (tyyym)
III-4	Unknown		Tikuy Šila, [Q]ït(a)y Tung?	
III-5	Unknown			
III-6	Unknown			





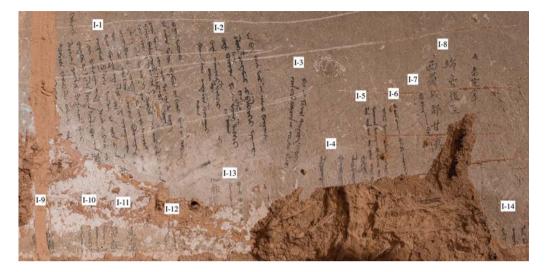


Fig. I. The Right Wall



Fig. II. The Back Wall





Fig. III. The Left Wall



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