

An Example of Old Uyghur's Use of Chinese: Interpretation of a Colophon to the *Qianziwen* in the Berlin Turfan Collection

Abdurishid YAKUP^{1,2*}

¹Academy for Research on Chinese Ethnic Minority Languages of Minzu University of China, Beijing,
P. R. China

²Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Berlin, Germany

Received: March 20, 2023 • Accepted: July 4, 2023

Published Online: November 24, 2023

© 2023 Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest



ABSTRACT

Ancient Turfan was an important crossroad of languages and scripts on the Northern Silk Road where various languages and scripts coexisted simultaneously. This point is strongly supported by the diversity of languages and scripts attested in the texts discovered in the region and the complex relation between languages and scripts as well as the language use. This paper first examines a colophon to the Chinese premier *Qianziwen* 千字文 kept in the Berlin Turfan Collection with the shelf number Ch 3716 (T II Y 62) which clearly followed the syntax of Old Uyghur, and then reconstructs the text with the assumption that the text was read in Old Uyghur. After briefly discussing some aspects of Old Uyghur's use of the *Qianziwen*, this paper examines another Chinese colophon in the same manuscript. The main aim is to illustrate some aspects of Old Uyghur's use of Chinese in medieval Turfan.

KEYWORDS

Old Uyghur's use of Chinese, colophon to the *Qianziwen*, Old Uyghur-based Chinese, language contact, languages and scripts of the Northern Silk Road

* Corresponding author. E-mail: yakup@bbaw.de

INTRODUCTION

Ancient Turfan was an important crossroad of languages and scripts on the Northern Silk Road where various languages and scripts coexisted simultaneously. This point is strongly supported by the findings of the German Turfan Expeditions currently housed in the Berlin Turfan Collection. The Berlin Turfan Collection possesses circa 40,000 fragments in more than 20 languages and scripts. Amongst them, Chinese, Iranian, Old Uyghur, Sanskrit, and Tocharian texts occupy the majority (Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities ed. 2007: 8–9). The Chinese texts were written in Chinese characters and the Iranian texts in Manichaean and Sogdian scripts, whereas the Sanskrit and Tocharian texts were mainly written in Brāhmī script. The situation of Old Uyghur texts is more complicated: They were generally written in the scripts runiform Turkic, Manichaean, and Old Uyghur but also in Brāhmī and Syriac.

The relation between the languages and scripts used in the Turfan texts is significantly more complicated than the outline in the preceding passage indicates. There are Sanskrit texts written in Old Uyghur and other scripts (Zieme 1984, Hartmann *et al.* 1996), and Chinese texts written in Old Uyghur, Sogdian, and Tibetan scripts are not rare. The small booklet with the shelf number U 5335 in the Berlin Turfan Collection is an excellent example of the latter. The script used in this booklet is Old Uyghur which is also known by the name Sogdo-Uyghur script; however, the language represented by it is Chinese, which the late Japanese linguist and philologist Shōgaito Masahiro (2021; Shōgaito *et al.* 2015) calls the Inherited Uyghur Pronunciation of Chinese (IUPC).

The use of different languages and scripts in one text was common in Dunhuang and Turfan. Aside from Old Uyghur texts with inserted Brāhmī or Chinese elements,¹ there are a certain number of Chinese-Old Uyghur, Sanskrit-Old Uyghur, Sogdian-Old Uyghur bilinguals, Syriac-Old Uyghur, Syriac-Sogdian, and Tocharian B-Old Uyghur texts.² The hitherto-known earliest example of Chinese-Old Uyghur bilinguals is a set of secular documents edited by the Japanese historian Takao Moriyasu and the German Turcologist Peter Zieme. In these texts, the Chinese and Old Uyghur sentences occur in separate lines, the Chinese text first, and then the Old Uyghur one. Interestingly, the Old Uyghur text also starts from the right side just like the preceding Chinese line (Moriyasu and Zieme 1998).

In this paper, I mainly examine a colophon written in Chinese characters on the empty page of the fragment Ch 3716 (T II Y 62) in the Berlin Turfan Collection. At first, I briefly review previous research on the colophon and then discuss its characteristics. Obviously, the colophon follows the syntax of Old Uyghur and is assumed to be read in Old Uyghur. After the reconstruction of the Old Uyghur text, I will briefly discuss some aspects of the Old Uyghur's use of the *Qianziwen*. In the end, I will examine another Chinese colophon in the same manuscript. The main aim is to illustrate some aspects of the Old Uyghur's use of Chinese in medieval Turfan.

¹ See Shōgaito 1982, Shōgaito 2003, Shōgaito 2008, Laut and Zieme 1990, Kasai and Ogiyama 2017.

² For Chinese-Old Uyghur documents, see Moriyasu and Zieme 1998; for an outline of Chinese-inserted texts, see Shōgaito 2021; for Sanskrit-Old Uyghur bilinguals, see Maue 1996: 1–13 and Maue 2015: 1–259; for Sogdian-Old Uyghur bilinguals, see Sundermann and Zieme 1981 and Matsui 2012; for Syriac-Old Uyghur and Syriac-Sogdian bilinguals, see Dickens 2020, 96–119; for Tocharian B-Old Uyghur bilinguals, see Gabain and Winter 1958, Maue 2015: 499–510.



1. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE COLOPHON

The Chinese fragment Ch 3716 (T II Y 62) is the colophon to the manuscript of the *Qianziwen* 千字文 ‘Thousand Characters Essay’, which is known from the booklet Ch/U 8152 (TII Y 23: 15, MIK 030495). The booklet was made by enfolding the manuscript of the Chinese Buddhist text *Da faju tuoluoni jing* 大法炬陀羅尼經, namely *The Great Dharma Torch Dhāraṇī* (T.21n1340p726a11–18) (Nishiwaki 2002: 70). According to the Japanese Sinologist Nishiwaki Tsuneki, Ch 3716 and Ch/U 8152 come from the same manuscript and were discovered in Yarkhoto during the Second German Expedition. Someone with insufficient knowledge of Chinese characters did not notice that they are from the same manuscript and gave them separate shelf numbers while sorting the fragments (Nishiwaki 2002: 70–71). The colophon is written on the first page of the booklet, and pages 2 to 8 represent the beginning lines of the *Qianziwen*.

The colophon comprises three lines. On its right side at the bottom, there are five lines of text written from the opposite direction. They present the numbers one to five: they were first written in ciphers; then, the corresponding Old Uyghur numbers in Old Uyghur script were placed under the ciphers. Only the last word for line five was first written as *pnc*, the Sogdian word for five, and then in Old Uyghur, *beš* ‘five’. The text was considered a Sogdian-Turkic word list and published by the late German Iranist Werner Sundermann and P. Zieme (1981). The Chinese colophon was first investigated by the late German Sinologist Thomas Thilo, and later by Nishiwaki T.³

The colophon was restored by Nishiwaki T. as follows:

1. 天禧垂十三歲次辛未冬罔之伴分
2. 廿三罔交河勝泉都統慈无頭千字
3. 文有頭寶将来學習敬口執誦不[有]禍咎

As T. Thilo and Nishiwaki T. pointed out, the text has three Chinese characters of Empress Wu or the Zetian characters introduced by Empress Wu Zetian 武则天 (624–705): 垂 stands for *nian* 年 ‘year’, 罔 for *yue* 月 ‘month’ and 日 for *ri* 日 ‘day’. It is unclear why these characters were still in use in Qocho during the Qitan period (Nishiwaki 2002: 75–76).

T. Thilo translates the text into German in the following way:⁴

13. Jahr [der Periode] Tianxi, nach der Jahresfolge *xinwei*, 23. Tag der Mitte des Winters (oder: des 11. Monats) Shengquan Dutong von Jiaohe. Dieses kopflose (was immer damit gemeint sein mag) Qianziwen hat einen Anfang. [Ich] lege es nieder für zukünftiges Studium, mit ehrerbietigem Munde zu halten und zu rezitieren, ohne Unglück und Übel. [13th year [of the period] Tianxi, according to the year sequence *Xinwei*, 23rd day of mid-winter (or: 11th month) Shengquan Dutong of Jiaohe. This headless (whatever that may mean) *Qianziwen* has a beginning. [I] put it down for future study, to hold and recite with a rather bidding mouth, without misfortune and evil.]

Both T. Thilo and Nishiwaki T. consider *shisan* 十三 ‘thirteen’ in the first line as an error of *sanshi si* 三十四 ‘thirty-four’ because the year sequence of the thirteenth is not *xinwei* 辛未 ‘Metal Sheep’ but *gengxu* 庚戌 ‘Metal Dog’. They identify the year as the 34th year of Tianxi 天禧, namely 1211 AD.

³ See Thilo 1981, Nishiwaki 2002: 75–86. The character [有] in line 3 is an addition by T. Nishiwaki (2022: 75).

⁴ Cited from Thilo 1981: 205.



Based on the fact that Dutong 都統 occurs as Tutung or Tutong as part of personal names, T. Thilo considers Shengquan Dutong 勝泉都統 an Uyghur personal name and reconstructs it as *Šingtsün Tutung. With the help of P. Zieme, he identifies the person as Šingtsün Tutung, the donor of Chapter 39 of the well-known Old Uyghur Buddhist text *Kšanti qilyuluq nom bitig*, the Old Uyghur translation of the Chinese Buddhist text *Cibei daochang chanfa* 慈悲道場懺法 ‘Repentance Rituals of Compassion Altar’ (T.45n1909).⁵

The first line and the first three characters in line 2 of the colophon present a temporal adverbial clause expressing the definite time when the event occurred, the “13th year of the Tianxi 天禧 [era], Year cycle Metal Sheep (Xinwei), 23rd day of 11th month, mid-winter”, followed by the personal name Shengquan Dutong 勝泉都統 of Jiaohe 交河. Thus, judging from the German translation, the entire unit was considered as a clause without a predicate in T. Thilo’s paper. After this starts the second sentence which states “This headless *Qianziwen* has a beginning”. Obviously, here the second character in line 3, *you* 有 ‘has’, was considered as a predicate of the second sentence. The next character *bao* 寶 ‘jewel’ was ignored. The four characters *Jianglai xuexi* 將來學習 were interpreted as “[I] put it down for future study”. The remaining part was simply considered a complement to this sentence.

The text includes some uncommon words and expressions that are not observable in regular Chinese texts; thus, it sounds strange if we interpret it as a normal Chinese text. For this reason, T. Thilo tried to connect some phrases with Old Uyghur expressions: *wutou* 无頭 with *bašsüz* ‘headless’, *zhisong* 執誦 with *ayizta tut-* ‘keep in the mouth’ or *ayizinta tut-* ‘keep in one’s mouth’ (Thilo 1981: 204–205). Nishiwaki T. also pointed out that the expression of a year in this way is uncommon in Chinese. He correctly states that the characters *ban* 伴 and *fen* 分 in this text cannot be explained (Nishiwaki 2002: 76). However, the colophon was accepted as a Chinese text and its interpretation remained as Chinese.

2. OLD UYGHUR INTERPRETATION OF THE COLOPHON

In the talk I gave at the 42nd Regular Lectures of the Haneda Memorial Hall of Kyoto University in 1999, I pointed out that this colophon follows the syntax of Old Uyghur and was assumed to have been read in Old Uyghur. Since then, I suggested a tentative Old Uyghur reconstruction of the second and third lines of the colophon. Below I present my revised reconstruction of the entire colophon:

1:	**Tenxi atl(i)γ yilning 天禧年 qış ayining 冬月之	üč y(e)girminč 十三 ***eš ülüšintä 伴分	yıl kızıgi 歲次	sin qoyn künkä 辛未
2:	üč otuzqa 卅三回 ming 千	Yaryolluy 交河 užiklarnıng 字	Šingtsün 勝泉	Tutong 都統 bo 慈 bašsüz 无頭

⁵ For the Old Uyghur translation of the text, see Wilkens 2006.



3: čiziŷin 文 ayayu 敬	ayizimta □	başliŷ 有頭 寶 tutup 執	kälürüp 將來 sarit qilu 誦	boşyunu 學習 tägin-tim ada tuda bolmazun. 不禍咎
-------------------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	----------------------------------	---

The reconstruction of the first line contains many uncertain elements as many items were not attested in the hitherto-published Old Uyghur texts. For this reason, I marked the phrase ***Tenxi atl(i)ŷ yilning* with two asterisks and ****eš ülüšintä* even with three asterisks. However, the reconstructions of the second and third lines are relatively well-founded.

I assume the year name Tianxi 天禧 in the first line was read in the IUPC and suggests **Tenxi* as its reading.⁶ The year sequence *xinwei* occurs in Chapter 7 of the *Xuanzang Biography* and it was translated into Old Uyghur as *sin qoyn künk[ä]* which might be rendered as ‘on the Sheep day of Sin’ (Röhrborn 1991: 108, l. 1199). I speculate the same Old Uyghur phrase was used to render *xinwei* in this colophon.

T. Thilo (1981: 203) writes that *ban* 伴 ‘to accompany’ occurs in *banfen* 伴分. It can be assumed that *ban* 伴 here means ‘half’ (半) and *banfen* 伴分 thus means ‘middle’. If this was indeed the case, **yarim ülüšintä* ‘in the half part’ or ‘in the middle’ might be a possible reconstruction. Nishiwaki T. (2002: 76) questions this explanation and leaves the interpretation of *banfen* open because the identification of these two characters is uncertain. After all, the colophon was written by someone who is not very familiar with Chinese, and the text bears some unusual expressions (Nishiwaki 2002: 76). As an alternative, if we accept the reading 伴分 *banfen* and consider both elements as nouns, it might be reconstructed as **eši ülüšintä* because, in some instances, *ban* 伴 was rendered using *eš* ‘companion’ or ‘friend’ (Mirsultan 2010: 186, l. 1211). Another possibility might be **qatmiš ülüšintä* ‘in the accompanying part’. Here, we obviously take *ban* 伴 as a verbal participant and use *qat-* ‘to mix’ and ‘to add’ as the verb to render *ban* 伴 in this instance (Dietz *et al.* 2015: 238, l. 2271). However, the exact meaning of this phrase in this context remains unclear. The two characters look like *mou hen* or *mou han* *彘劣 but their meaning and use in this context is also unclear.

The Old Uyghur title of the *Qianziwen* used in the reconstruction occurs on the back side (U[yghur] side) of the Ch/U 8152 as [*ming uš*]iklarning čiziŷi and it is written on the right side of the Chinese title at the end of the text (Zieme 1999: 321). We find it in a similar form, *ming üzüklär čiziŷi*, in another text written on a board (Raschmann 2016: 43).

The colophon has two highly interesting words, *wutou* 无頭 and *youtou* 有頭. The first one might be rendered as ‘headless’ and the second one as ‘with a head’. Both T. Thilo and Nishiwaki T. assume that *wutou* goes back to the Old Uyghur *bašsüz* ‘headless’, or ‘without head’. According to T. Thilo (Thilo 1981: 204), *wutou*, or *bašsüz*, might be related to this ‘stupid’ manuscript of the *Qianziwen* which only has 67 lines and not 250 like the complete text. Only seven pages, altogether 67 lines, of the main Chinese text to which the colophon belongs have survived; this is little more than a fifth of the text. However, this does not mean that the original manuscript was as short as we see it nowadays. The last part of the manuscript might be missing, therefore, this explanation can no longer be justified.

⁶ The Middle Chinese pronunciation of these two characters is *t'en1 xi* in Takata 1988 and *t^hen xi* in Pulleyblank 1991.



Nishiwaki T., on the other hand, explains both *wutou* and *youtou* in the frame of Tibetan designation. According to him, the regular script is called *youtou wenzi* 有頭文字 and the cursive *wutou wenzi* 无頭文字 in Tibetan. He assumes that Old Uyghurs had the same concept. Thus, the *Qianziwen* part of the text to which the colophon belongs was considered cursive by Śingtsün Tutong, and the *Qianziwen* itself was judged as regular (Nishiwaki 2002: 79–80). There is no evidence to prove or disprove this argument from the side of Old Uyghur. Nevertheless, such a designation of script types in Old Uyghur has not been known thus far. However, if Śingtsün Tutong considered this *Qianziwen* text cursive, then this short colophon is assumed to have dealt with two different types of *Qianziwen* text, though this explanation is difficult in the context of the reconstructed text.

Sir Gerhard Clauson's dictionary does not have the word *bašsüz* but it was included in the concise dictionary compiled by Jens Wilkens. According to J. Wilkens (2021: 149b), the word *bašsüz* has the meaning 'headless' or 'without head'; metaphorically, is also used with the meaning 'unfounded', or 'unfair' (German: grundlos). We find *bašsüz* in this metaphorical meaning in some Old Uyghur and Karakhanid texts. In the Sängim version of the *Maitrisimit*, it occurs in the sentence *inčip ymä ayi baramqa azlanmaqin bašsüz közsüz äzüg yalyan savin sinü sökti* 'In this way, again he cursed his own lust after treasures and property and the unfair, groundless falsehoods' (Tekin 1980: 50, 13, I, 17, ll. 1–3). We also find it as part of the phrase *bašsüz balamut sözlüg* 'of unfair, crazy words' in a late Old Uyghur text known by the title 'Erntesegen' (Zieme 1975: 119, l. 139; Yakup 2015: 357, SB09). In the *Qutadyu Bilig*, the 11th-century monument of Islamic Turkic literature, we also find the word in the two meanings 'headless' or 'without leader' and metaphorically as 'insubordinate'. Below, I only cite a verse where *bašsüz* metaphorically means 'insubordinate' (Qutadyu Bilig, ll. 4323–4324):

qara qılqı barča bolur qap qara
qara qılma özni küdüzü tur a
qara qılqı **bašsüz** qılınçı saši
iši küdgi barča qılınçı tuši

'The manners of commoners are black, so take care that you do not blacken yourself.

By nature they are **insubordinate** and wild, and all their actions accord with these qualities' (Dankoff 1983: 180).

The other word *bašliy* which was reconstructed based on the Chinese phrase *youtou* 有頭 basically means 'heaving a head', e.g., *bašliyiy yükündürmiş tizlig sökürmiş* 'They made those who had heads bow them and those who had knees bend them.'⁷

My understanding is that in this colophon both 无頭 and 有頭, that is **bašsüz* and **bašliy*, are used metaphorically: *bašsüz* means 'unfounded', 'unfair', or 'non-compliant' as attested in the Old Uyghur and Karakhanid texts, whereas *bašliy* signifies 'thorough', 'profound', and 'compliant'. Thus, *bo bašsüz ming uzıklarning čiziyn* can be interpreted as 'this unfair *Thousand Characters Essay*', the modest designation of his own copy of the *Qianziwen* by Śingtsün Tutong, and the phrase *bašliy ärdinig* as 'profound jewel'. The latter refers to the *Qianziwen* itself which was considered a holy scripture by the Old Uyghurs. Below is my translation of the reconstructed text:

⁷ Clauson 1972: 381. For a discussion of this word in more detail, see Ağca 2021.



‘Thirteenth of the year called Tenxi, on the year sequence Sin of Sheep, in the following part (???) of the Winter Month (11th month), on 23rd, I, Šingsün Tutong, brought this unfair *Thousand Character Essay*, the profound jewel, and ventured to learn and respectfully keep it in my mouth and recite. May nowhere be in danger!’

In contrast to the existing interpretation of the colophon as Chinese that identifies three sentences, there are only two sentences in our reconstruction: a long temporal clause comprising the first line and a main clause consisting of the second line and parts of the third line, followed by an imperative sentence represented by the last three characters in line 3.

3. OLD UYGHUR'S USE OF THE *QIANZIWEN*

Judging from the last sentence of this colophon, we may say that the *Qianziwen* was not only used by Old Uyghurs to learn Chinese characters but was also considered a holy text to receive protection from dangers. This point was put forward by Nishiwaki T. (2002: 81–82). He states that the Old Uyghurs considered the *Qianziwen* as a religious work just like the Chinese did in the 7th century. To support his claim, he cites the following sentence from the *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳 ‘A Record of Buddhist Practices Sent Home from the Southern Sea’ by Yijing 義淨 (T.54n2125p227c25–26):

若神州法侶誦《觀音》、《遺教》，俗徒讀《千文》、《孝經》矣

‘As, in China, the Sūtras about Avalokiteśvara (chapter 24 in Saddharma-puṇḍarīka) and the Last Admonition of the Buddha (abridged Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra) are recited by young priests, as the ‘Composition of the One Thousand (Chinese) Characters’ (Ch’ien-tzu-wen) and the ‘Book of Filial Piety’ (Hsiao King) are learnt by lay students, (just so the work above referred to is studied (in India) with great earnestness, and is regarded as standard literature).’⁸

Nevertheless, we now know that the text was frequently used by the Old Uyghurs. Aside from Ch/U 8152 (plus Ch 3716) in the Berlin Turfan collection, to the best of my knowledge, the *Qianziwen* has four different manuscripts in Old Uyghur. They can be briefly described as follows:

- (1) the manuscripts with a Chinese line and its Old Uyghur translation,
- (2) the manuscripts with the Chinese line in the IUPC followed by the Old Uyghur translation,
- (3) the manuscripts with the Chinese line in the IUPC followed by the last one, or two Chinese characters of the line and then the Old Uyghur translation, and
- (4) the manuscripts only with the Old Uyghur translation without the Chinese text.

Four fragments preserved at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), SI 4083 (4b Kr 181), SI 400 (4b Kr 182), SI 4084 (4b Kr 185), and SI 406 (4b Kr 194), represent group (1). In these fragments, each Chinese line was represented by the first character and the remaining three characters were indicated through three horizontal strikes; the Old Uyghur translation of each line then followed. All four fragments were published by Shōgaito

⁸ The English translation is cited from Takakusu 1896: 162.



M. and A. Yakup.⁹ It should be noted that SI 4083 comes from a different manuscript, although it shows the same characteristics as the other three fragments.

Among the hitherto-published fragments of the *Qianziwen*, only SI 578 (3 Kr/14), currently kept at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS, represents group (2). In this fragment, the Chinese text was only given in the IUPC and no Chinese characters occur. This fragment was first edited by Shōgaito M. (2003: 116–125) together with SI 5836 (3 Kr/15).

The most typical fragment that belongs to group (3) is SI 5836 (3 Kr/15) which is currently kept at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS. This fragment was first edited by Shōgaito M. (2003: 116–125) together with SI 578. Soon after the publication of this fragment, Shōgaito M. discovered that the verso of SI 1787 (Kr IV/ 260) also comes from the same text. A joined edition of these two fragments and SI 578 was published by Shōgaito M. first in 2004 in Japanese, later in 2008(b) in Russian. However, the situation is complicated in the case of SI 1787. In the first 12 lines and line 18 of this fragment, the first two characters were presented in the IUPC, but the remaining two characters of the verse line were in Chinese characters. In line 13, the third character was given in the IUPC, and the remaining three in Chinese characters. In line 14, we find three Chinese characters, but the last character is missing. Interestingly, the second character was represented by a different one and no IUPC presentation can be recognized in this line. In line 15, the first two Chinese characters are visible. In line 19, all four Chinese characters occur, followed by their Old Uyghur translation.

Recently, the Japanese historian Umemura Hiroshi and P. Zieme (2015) published another fragment, SI 1850 (Kr IV/312), from the same collection; they identify it to be from the same manuscript. However, the fragment shows different features than the two fragments published by Shōgaito M., although it is parallel to some lines of the fragments edited by Shōgaito M. The most obvious point is that, in SI 1850, the use of Chinese characters differs: In line 6, we see the third character followed by the IUPC of the fourth character. In line 7, only the last Chinese character of the line occurs, whereas the preceding three characters appear only in the IUPC. In line 12, we recognize the last two characters from line 36 of the original Chinese text; however, 方 *fang*, the last character of line 36, occurs at the beginning of the line in this text. Thus, we cannot conclude anything because the text between this character and the last two Chinese characters is damaged.

The last group, namely group (4), is represented by Ch/U 6701 (T II 1596) from the Berlin Turfan collection. Aside from 千[字]文 in the first line, this fragment only comprises the Old Uyghur translation.¹⁰

In addition to them, there are five *Qianziwen* notes, and they show similarity to the colophon which we have discussed in this paper. All five notes are written on a board with the shelf number MIK III 307 and are currently kept in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst in Berlin. All notes were published by Simone-Christiane Raschmann (2016). Below, I only cite one of them:¹¹

1. taqıyü yil ücünç ay üč otuz-
2. qa m(ä)n toyunçuy tutong
3. bitidim 千字文 ming
4. üzük-lär cizi[γ]i

⁹ For details, see Shōgaito and Yakup 2001.

¹⁰ For edition, see Zieme 1999.

¹¹ Cited from Raschmann 2016: 43.



‘The year of the rooster, third month, on the 23rd (day): I Toyunčuy Tutong wrote (it). 千字文, ‘the outline of Thousand Characters’ (i.e. ‘The Thousand Character Classic’).

Interestingly, this note was also written on the 23rd day, and by Toyunčuy Tutong who also has the title Tutong. This is also true of other relatively well-preserved notes (text 3 in Raschmann 2016) on the same board.

It is unclear whether the first scribble on the back side of the board is the continuation of the *Qianziwen* notes on the front side. In the first scribble, we read the following:¹²

1. [] yil törtünč ay / []
 2. p[] tu[tong] bitidim ögdir¹³ bolzun yazuk
 3. [bol]mazun sadu sadu ädgü ädgü
- ‘The year of [], 4th month [] P[] Tu[tung] wrote it. May it result in gratification! May there be no sin (or: failings)! Sadhū! Sadhū! Good, good!’

If this note is also connected to the *Qianziwen* notes on the front side, this strengthens the claim that the *Qianziwen* was used by the Old Uyghurs as a holy text to take protection from dangers.

The catalogue of the Old Uyghur manuscripts and block prints in the Serindia Collection of the Institute of the Oriental Manuscripts, RAS, lists SI 3864 verso (4b Kr/38) as a fragment of the *Qianziwen*.¹⁴ It is not clear yet from which version of the Old Uyghur *Qianziwen* it comes. Aside from the Old Uyghur versions, a considerable number of Chinese fragments of the *Qianziwen* were discovered in Turfan and Dunhuang (Zhang 2009). Surely, at least some of them were used by Old Uyghurs.

4. NOTES TO ANOTHER COLOPHON

In the end, I would like to make a short note to another colophon of the same *Qianziwen* manuscript which is written on the verso of Ch/U 8152. The text below principally follows the reconstruction suggested by Nishiwaki T. (2002: 77):

Page A:

1. [調語]助者 焉哉乎也
2. [ming už]iklarnıñ čiziyi
[千]字文一卷了畢也
3. [十?]一団十四余勝泉都統受也

Page B:

4. [千字]文壹[卷] 尚泉沙弥受
5. []受却
6. [千字]文壹卷 敕員外散騎侍郎
7. [周興嗣?]所報造也

¹² Cited from Raschmann 2016: 44.

¹³ In Raschmann 2016: *ögdik*.

¹⁴ See IOM, RAS, and The Toyo Bunko eds. 2021: 175, catalogue No. 0384.



The first line of Page A presents the last two verses of the *Qianziwen* which were translated by Herbert A. Giles (2004: 89) as ‘Four words which give a sentence force, Are really, so, indeed, of course.’ Presumably, these verses were read in the IUPC. I assume that the remaining part of the text was read in Old Uyghur. For instance, *yi juan* 一卷 ‘one chapter’ in line 2 might have been read as **bir küün* or **bir tägzinč*, both mean ‘one fascicle’, and *liao bi ye* 了畢也 as **tükädi*, although we cannot exclude the possibility that the latter might have also been read in the IUPC.

The third line was surely read in Old Uyghur. I suggest **bir y(e)girminč aynıng tört y(e)girmis-intä m(ä)n Šingtsün Tutong tägintim* or **bir y(e)girminč ay tört y(e)girmikä m(ä)n Šingtsün Tutong tägintim* for this line,¹⁵ which might be translated as ‘On the fourteenth of the Eleventh Month, I Šingtsün Tutong ventured to (...)’. It is not clear whether Šingtsün Tutong ventured to copy the text or ventured to read it on this day. In the first instance, **bitiyü tägintim* or **bitigäli tägintim*, both mean ‘I ventured to write/copy’, might be possible reconstructions. Note that 受也 *shou ye* simply means ‘received’. In the second instance, **oqiyyu tägintim* ‘I ventured to read’ might be the possible reconstruction. I believe the first one is most plausible because the scribe of the colophon is Šingtsün Tutong again (Nishiwaki 2002: 78). This was clearly pointed out by Nishiwaki T. (2002: 85–86, note 14) who identified the writer of the text on Page A as the same person as the copyist of the main text of the *Qianziwen*.

The text on Page B must be from a different scribe. Its first line starts with the title of the *Qianziwen*, we suggest **[ming užiklarnıng] čiziyi bir küün* or **[ming užiklarnıng] čiziyi bir tägzinč* as its reconstruction. This is followed by *Shangquan Shami shou* 尚泉沙弥受 with some distance. I suggest **Šotsün Šabi tägintim* for this sentence. According to Nishiwaki T., the text on Page B was written by imitating the colophon on Page A and its scribe is *Shangquan Shami* 尚泉沙弥, that is **Šotsün Šabi*. Unfortunately, we find no information about this person in the hitherto-published Old Uyghur texts.

In the second line (line 5), we find only two characters, 受却 *shou que* at the beginning of the line, the remaining part is left empty. I assume that the characters 受却 simply repeat or present the predicate of the last sentence in the preceding line in complete form, i.e., *tägintim*.

In the third line (line 6), we find the same title of the *Qianziwen* again. After that occurs the title of the composer of the *Qianziwen*, namely *Chiyuan Waisan qi shilang* 敕員外散騎侍郎 ‘Supernumerary Senior Recorder with imperial appointment’, and then his name, Zhou Xingsi 周興嗣. It is not clear how the title was rendered into Old Uyghur. Nevertheless, the title was specific to Zhou Xingsi, although *Waisan qi shilang* 外散騎侍郎 was also given to other officials. It is clear, however, that the name Zhou Xingsi was presumably read as **Čiv baylıy χisi atl(i)y baχšī*. The remaining characters *suobao zao ye* 所報造也 are nothing else than the Chinese rendering of the Old Uyghur expression *yaratmıš ol* ‘reportedly was created’ or ‘reportedly was composed’. This is different from the note *Chiyuan waisan qi shilang Zhou Xingsi ci yun* 勅員外散騎侍郎周興嗣次韻 ‘Rhymed prose by the Supernumerary Senior Recorder with imperial appointment Zhou Xingsi’ which we find at the beginning of the *Qianziwen* text in Ch 3716.

¹⁵ I express my sincere thanks to one of the anonymous reviewer for her/his kind remark.



5. FINAL REMARKS

Among the finds from Dunhuang and Turfan are some Chinese texts written by Old Uyghurs. Some of them clearly follow the syntax of Old Uyghur and are assumed to be read in Old Uyghur just like the colophon I have reconstructed in this paper. Even if they were not read in Old Uyghur, Old Uyghur texts that are very similar to the one I have reconstructed here were behind these Chinese texts. Indeed, Chinese colophons written on the strong influence of the Old Uyghur language are not rare. The late Japanese Buddhologist Kudara Kōgi discussed one such colophon found at the end of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*; it is preserved at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm. He recognized that ll. 54–58 of the colophon written in Chinese follow the word order of Old Uyghur (or Mongolian) and suggested its Old Uyghur reconstruction (Kudara 1984: 77). In his edition of the entire text of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* preserved at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, Shōgaito M. (2014: 13–14) discussed the colophon again and pointed out that such Chinese sentences are specific to the Old Uyghurs. Similar Chinese colophons were discovered in further Chinese Buddhist texts written by Old Uyghur Buddhists. One sentence found in a small booklet in the Berlin Turfan collection (shelf number Ch 2980) was reconstructed and discussed by Kitsudō Kōichi (2011: 329–331). Similar texts also exist among secular documents. Four Old Uyghur documents containing Chinese parts were included in the *Sammlung der Uigurische Kontrakte* (Yamada 1993: 130, 155, 173–174, 179–180). I discussed one of them in my recent paper (Yakup 2022: 374–375). They are only parts of such texts. They can hardly be understood without reference to the lexicon and syntax of the Old Uyghur language. Presumably, this was not a problem for the Old Uyghur Buddhists as they mastered both Chinese and Old Uyghur. Obviously, these texts reflect lexical and syntactic features of Chinese used by Old Uyghurs. Very importantly, they demonstrate that the linguistic situation on the ancient Silk Road was significantly more complicated than we know. Perhaps, ‘plurilingualism’ which was recently suggested by some scholars is the most suitable term to describe this linguistic situation ‘in which people must and can navigate among two or more languages in their lives and work’ (Most *et al.* 2023: 3).

The colophon discussed in this paper is only one example of the Old Uyghur’s use of Chinese, more correctly a partial demonstration of Old Uyghur ‘plurilingualism’. However, it shows that medieval Turfan was a real crossroad of languages and scripts: not only concerning the diversity of languages and scripts but also with regard to the use of languages and scripts. I believe this point would be strengthened following the discovery and investigation of texts of similar types.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper presents part of the research being carried out within the framework of the Specially Funded Research Project ‘Etymological investigations on the Turkic languages in China’ (Foundation No. 11& ZD 130) supported by the National Social Sciences Foundation of China.

I express my thanks to Dilrishtā Abdurishid, Department of English and American Studies, Humboldt University of Berlin, for improving the English of the paper.



REFERENCES

- AĞCA, Ferruh 2021. 'Köl Tigin ve Bilge Kağan Yazıtlarındaki *başlıgıg yöküntür- tizligig sökür-* İbaresini Hakkında [On the expressions *başlıgıg yöküntür- tizligig sökür-* in the Köl Tegin and Bilgä Qaghan inscriptions].' *Selçuk Türkiyat* 52: 1–16.
- Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (ed.) 2007. *Turfanforschung*. Berlin: Printing House zu Altenburg.
- CLAUSON, Gerard 1972. *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- DANKOFF, Robert (trans., intro., notes) 1983. Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig): A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- DICKENS, Mark 2020. *Echoes of a Forgotten Presence. Reconstructing the History of the Church of the East in Central Asia*. [orientalia – patristica – oecumenica, vol 15.] Vienna: LIT Verlag.
- DIETZ, Siglinde, Mehmet ÖLMEZ & Klaus RÖHRBORN 2015. *Die alttürkische Xuanzang-Biographie V. Nach der Handschrift von Paris, Peking und St. Petersburg sowie nach dem Transkript von Annemarie v. Gabain herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert*. [Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica, Bd. 34,5.] Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- VON GABAIN, Annemarie & Werner WINTER 1958. *Türkische Turfantexte IX. Ein Hymnus an den Vater Mani auf „Tocharisch“ B mit alttürkischer Übersetzung*. [Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur und Kunst, Jahrgang 1956, Nr. 2.] Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- GILES, Herbert A. (trans.) 2004. *Master Essays in a Thousand (Chinese) Characters*. Compiled by Huang Ping-wei. Taizhong: Morning Star Publishing Inc.
- I(nstitute of) O(riental) M(anuscripts), RAS and THE TOYO BUNKO (eds.) 2021. *Catalogue of the Old Uyghur manuscripts and blockprints in the Serindia Collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS*. Vol. 1. Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko.
- KASAI Yukiyo (in collaboration with OGIHARA Hirotoshi) 2017. *Die altuigurischen Fragmente mit Brāhmī-Elementen*. [Berliner Turfantexte 38.] Turnhout: Brepols.
- KUDARA Kōgi 1984. 'Uigurugo yaku "Abidatsuma kusharon" shotan: Fujii Yürinkan shozō dampen ウイグル語訳『阿毘達磨俱舍論』初探: 藤井有鄰館所蔵斷片 [A Preliminary Study of an Uigur Version of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*: a Fragment preserved at the Museum of Fujii Yürinkan].' *Ryūkoku Daigaku Ronshū* 龍谷大学論集 425: 65–90.
- KITSUDŌ Kōichi 2011. 'Two Chinese Texts Written by Uighurs.' *Acta Orientalia Hung.* 64/3: 325–343.
- LAUT, Peter & Peter ZIEME 1990. 'Ein zweisprachiger Lobpreis auf den Bāg von Kočo und seine Gemahlin.' In: Jens Peter LAUT and Klaus RÖHRBORN (eds.) *Buddhistische Erzählliteratur und Hagiographie in türkischer Überlieferung*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 15–36.
- MATSUI Dai 2012. 'A Sogdian-Uighur bilingual fragment from the Arat Collection.' In: Xinjiang Tulufanxue Yanjiuyuan 新疆吐魯番學研究院 / Academia Turfanica (ed.) *Yuyan beihou de lishi: Xiyu gudian yuyanxue gaofeng luntan lunwenji* 語言背后的歷史: 西域古典語言學高峰論壇論文集 / *The history behind the languages: Essays of Turfan Forum on Old languages of the Silk Road*. Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe / Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 115–127.
- MAUE, Dieter 1996. *Alt türkische Handschriften Teil 1: Dokumente in Brāhmī und tibetischer Schrift*. [Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, 13,9.] Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- MAUE, Dieter 2015. *Alt türkische Handschriften Teil 19: Dokumente in Brāhmī und tibetischer Schrift*. Teil 2. [Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, 13,27.] Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.



- MIRSULTAN, Aysima 2010. *Die alttürkische Xuanzang-Biographie X. Nach der Handschrift von Paris, Peking und St. Petersburg sowie nach dem Transkript von Annemarie v. Gabain herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert*. [Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica. Bd. 34.] Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- MORIYASU Takao and Peter Zieme 1998. 'From Chinese to Uighur Documents.' *Nairiku Ajia gengo no kenkyū* 内陸アジア言語の研究 / *Studies on the Inner Asian Languages* 14: 73–102.
- MOST, Glenn W., Dagmar SCHÄFER & Márten Söderblom SAARELA (eds.) 2023. *Plurilingualism in Traditional Eurasian Scholarship. Thinking in Many Tongues*. [Ancient Languages and Civilisations, 3.] Leiden: Brill.
- NISHIWAKI Tsuneki 西脇常記 2002. *Doitsu shōrai no Torufan Kango bunsho* ドイツ将来のトルファン漢語文書 [English title: Chinese documents in the Berlin Turfan Collection]. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press.
- NISHIWAKI Tsuneki 西脇常記 2009. *Chūgoku koten shakai ni okeru Bukkyō no shoshō* 中國古典社會における佛教の諸相 [The aspects of Buddhism in the Chinese society]. Tokyo: Chisen Shokan.
- NISHIWAKI Tsuneki 西脇常記 2016. *Chūgoku koten jidai no monjo no sekai: Torufan bunsho no seiri to kenkyū* 中國古典時代の文書の世界: トルファン文書の整理と研究 [The world of texts from the classical period of China: the exploration of the Turfan texts]. Tokyo: Chisen Shokan.
- PULLEYBLANK, Edwin G. 1991. *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- RASCHMANN, Simone-Christiane 2016. 'Uygur scribbles on a wooden object.' In: Lilla RUSSELL-SMITH and Ines KONCZAK-NAGEL (eds.) *The Ruins of Kocho: Traces of Wooden Architecture on the Ancient Silk Road*. Berlin: Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 42–48.
- RÖHRBORN, Klaus 1991. *Die alttürkische Xuanzang-Biographie VII. Nach der Handschrift von Paris, Peking und St. Petersburg sowie nach dem Transkript von Annemarie v. Gabain herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert von Klaus Röhrborn*. [Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica. Bd. 34,3.] Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- SHŌGAITO Masahiro 庄垣内正弘 1982. *Uigurugo Uigurugo bunken no kenkyū* ウイグル語・ウイグル語文献の研究 [Studies on Uighur Language and Literature I.]. [Monograph Series XII.] Kobe: Kobe City University of Foreign Studies.
- SHŌGAITO Masahiro 庄垣内正弘 2003. *Roshia shozō uiguru bunken no kenkyū—uiguru moji hyōki kanbun to uigurugo butten tekisuto* ロシア所蔵ウイグル文献の研究 — ウイグル文字表記漢文とウイグル語仏典テキスト [Uighur manuscripts in St. Petersburg: Chinese texts in Uighur script and Buddhist Uighur texts]. [Studies in Old Eurasian languages 1.] Kyoto: Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University.
- SHŌGAITO Masahiro 庄垣内正弘 2004. 'Roshia shozō uigurugo dampen no kenkyū 4: 'Senjimon' (Zokuhen) 'Daijo hōen girin shō' (Zokuhen) ロシア所蔵ウイグル語断片の研究4: 『千字文』(続編)『大乘法苑義林章』 [Four Uighur fragments preserved in Russia: Further research on the Qianziwen 千字文 and Dasheng fayuan yilin zhang 大乘法苑義林章]. *Kyoto University Linguistic Research* 23: 191–209.
- SHŌGAITO Masahiro 庄垣内正弘 2008. *Uigurubun Abidaruma ronsho no bunkengaku teki kenkyū* ウイグル文アビダルマ論書の文献学的研究 [Uighur Abhidharma texts: A philological study]. Kyoto: Shōkadō.
- SHŌGAITO Masahiro [Сёгайто, Масахиро] 2008b. 'Уйгурский фрагмент под шифром SI Kr.IV 260 из собрания ИВР РАН. Перевод на уйгурский язык китайского «Тысячесловника» («Цянь цзы вэнь»).' *Письменные памятники Востока* 8: 177–186.



- SHÖGAITO Masahiro 2014. *The Uighur Abhidharmakośabhāṣya preserved at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm*. [Turcologica 99.] Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- SHÖGAITO Masahiro. 2021. 'Philology and linguistics: *Ondoku* and *Kundoku* in Old Uighur.' [Trans. OHSAKI Noriko, SUGAHARA Mutsumi and FUJISHIRO Setsu, proofread by Abdurishid YAKUP] *Gengo Kenkyu Anthology / Linguistic Research Supplement* 1: 155–185.
- SHÖGAITO Masahiro and Abdurishid YAKUP 2001. 'Four Uyghur Fragments of *Qianziwen* 'Thousand Character Essay'." *Turkic Languages* 5/1: 3–29 (+ 4 plates in *Turkic Languages* 5/2).
- SUNDERMANN, Werner & Peter ZIEME 1981. 'Soghdisch-türkische Wortlisten.' In: Klaus RÖHBORN and Horst Wilfrid BRANDS (eds.) *Scholia. Beiträge zur Turkologie und Zentralasienkunde: Annemarie von Gabain zum 80. Geburtstag am 4. Juli 1981 dargebracht von Kollegen, Freunden und Schülern*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 184–193.
- TAKAKUSU Junjiro (trans.) 1896. *A Record of the Buddhist religion as practised in India and the Malay archipelago (A.D. 671-695) by I-TSING*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- TAKATA Tokio 高田時雄 1988. *Tonkō shiryō ni yoru chūgokugoshi no kenkyū — kyū-jusseiki no Kasei hōgen* 敦煌資料による中國語史の研究—九・十世紀の河西方言 [A historical study of the Chinese language based on Dunhuang materials — The Hexi 河西 dialect of the ninth and tenth centuries]. Tokyo: Sōbunsha.
- TEKIN, Şinasi 1980. *Maitrisimit nom bitig. Die uigurische Übersetzung eines Werkes der buddhistischen Vaibhāṣika-Schule* [Old Uyghur translation of a text of the Buddhist Vaibhāṣika school]. 1–2. [Berliner Turfantexte IX.] Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- THILO, Thomas 1981. 'Ein chinesischer Turfan-Text aus der Qara-Qitay.' In: Klaus RÖHBORN and Horst Wilfrid BRANDS (eds.) *Scholia. Beiträge zur Turkologie und Zentralasienkunde: Annemarie von Gabain zum 80. Geburtstag am 4. Juli 1981 dargebracht von Kollegen, Freunden und Schülern*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 201–205.
- UMEMURA Hiroshi and Peter ZIEME 2015. 'A Further Fragment of the Old Uighur *Qianziwen*.' *Written monuments of the Orient* 2: 3–13.
- WILKENS, Jens 2007. *Das Buch von der Sündentilgung. Edition des alttürkisch-buddhistischen Kṣānti Kilguluk Nom Bitig*. Teil 1-2. [Berliner Turfantexte XXV,1-2.] Turnhout: Brepols.
- WILKENS, Jens 2016. *Buddhistische Erzählungen aus dem alten Zentralasien. Edition der altuigurischen Daśakarmaphāvadāna-mālā*. 1–3. [Berliner Turfantexte 37,1–3.] Turnhout: Brepols.
- WILKENS, Jens 2021. *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen. Altuigurisch-Deutsche-Türkisch*. Göttingen: Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen.
- YAKUP, Abdurishid 2015. *Gudai Weiwueryu zanmeishi he miaoxiexing yunwen de yuwenxue yanjiu* 古代维吾尔语赞美诗和描写性韵文的语文学研究 [Old Uyghur Hymns, Praises, Blessings and Descriptive Poems]. Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe / Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House.
- YAKUP, Abdurishid 2022. 'On the Old Uyghur Wooden Nameplates from the West Zone of the Tuyuq Grottoes in Turfan and the Wooden Objects with Old Uyghur Writing.' *Acta Orientalia Hung.* 75/3: 371–390.
- YAMADA Nobuo 山田 信夫 1993. *Uigurubun keiyaku monjo shūsei* ウイグル文契約文書集成 [Corpus of Old Uyghur documents]. [Ed. ODA Juten, Peter ZIEME, UMEMURA Hiroshi and MORIYASU Takao] Osaka: Osaka Daigaku Shuppankai.
- ZHANG Xinpeng 張新朋 2009. 'Tulufan chutu "Qianziwen" canpian kao' 吐鲁番出土千字文殘片考 [On the fragments of the *Qianziwen* unearthed in Turfan]. *Wenxian* 文獻 4: 11–16.
- ZIEME, Peter 1999. 'Das *Qiānziwén* bei den alten Uiguren.' In: Juha JANHUNEN and Volker RYBATZKI (eds.) *Writing in the Altaic World*. [Studia Orientalia 87.] Helsinki: Societas Orientalis Fennica, 321–326.
- ZIEME, Peter 1975. 'Ein uigurischer Erntesege.' *Altorientalische Forschungen* 3: 109–143.

