Matsui Dai

Old Uyghur Graffiti Inscriptions from Central Asia

Abstract: This paper introduces the results of recent research on Old Uyghur-Turkic graffiti inscriptions from Central Asia. Most of these, written on the walls of Buddhist sanctuary cave temples (in Turfan, Xinjiang, and in Dunhuang, Gansu), consist of the memorial writings of pilgrims and visitors. These graffiti inscriptions demonstrate the diversity of Old Uyghur literary culture and Buddhist cults, as well as various aspects of their daily lives that are undetectable from the enormous Buddhist religious canons; examples of religious practices conducted by visitors and pilgrims at cave temples; and the nodes and terminals of their geographical network.

1 Introduction

The Old Uyghurs[1] were Turkic nomads who built an empire on the Mongolian Plateau in the mid-eighth century CE. With their powerful cavalry force, they flourished amid the Silk Road trade between Tang China and western Eurasia. As the Uyghur nomadic empire collapsed in the mid-ninth century, a considerable part of the Uyghur population migrated to and occupied eastern Central Asia or the eastern part of the Tianshan Mountains (in present-day Xinjiang, People's Republic of China), where they established the West Uyghur kingdom. During the late ninth and tenth centuries, the Turkic Uyghurs linguistically Turkicized the native inhabitants of Chinese or Indo-Iranian origin in the oasis cities of the region, which came to be regarded as *turkistān*, 'the land of the Turks', in Iranian sources. In turn, the religions and sedentary culture of the native inhabitants gradually influenced the Uyghur nomads: though the Uyghurs had adopted Manichaeism in the late eighth century, most of them converted to Buddhism after the westward migration, influenced by the sedentary Tocharians and Chinese, whose Buddhist culture had been established in the Tarim Basin since the earliest centuries of the Christian era. Some of the Uyghur nomads adopted a mercantile

1 The Old Turkic ethnonym Uyghur is also Romanized as Uigur, Uighur, or Uygur, all of which derive from the form *'WYXWR* = *Uyyur* in Uyghur script.

Open Access. © 2023 the author(s), published by De Gruyter. BY-NC-ND This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.
https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111326306-006

lifestyle and became more active in interregional trade throughout the Silk Road. From the earliest stages, they enjoyed close contact with Dunhuang 敦煌, a neighbouring oasis state at the westernmost edge of the Gansu Corridor. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Uyghurs placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the emerging Mongol empire, and a considerable number of Uyghurs participated in the Mongol administration as bureaucrats or commercial agents, extending their sphere of activity to Eurasia – from China in the east to Anatolia in the west – through the late fourteenth century. Consequently, these Buddhist Uyghurs were mostly absorbed into the local societies.[2]

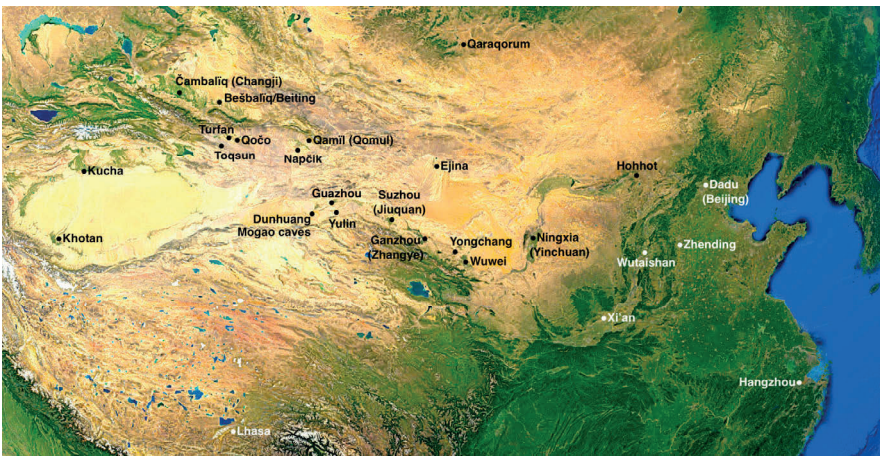


Fig. 1: Map with geographical names related to the present paper.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Europe and Japan dispatched expeditions to ruined oases and archaeological sites in Xinjiang and Gansu, respectively. In particular, expeditions to ruins around Gaochang 高昌 (→ Uyg. *Qočo*) – the ancient winter capital of the Uyghur kingdom, in the Turfan (= Tulufan 吐魯番) basin of Xinjiang – and the Mogao 莫高 cave temples of Dunhuang were the most successful in yielding a great number of paper fragments of textual materials in various

2 Successive waves of Islamization had forced the Buddhist Uyghurs of East Turkestan to migrate to the Gansu region by the early sixteenth century. Eventually, the identity of the ethnic 'Uyghurs' of East Turkestan, which had been closely linked with Buddhist culture, was replaced by 'Muslim' or 'Turk'. The term 'Uyghur' as a generic political appellation for the Turkic Muslim people of modern Xinjiang was not adopted until the early twentieth century, and has scarce continuity with the Old Uyghurs as a historical entity.

languages and scripts belonging to the millennium from the third to fourteenth centuries CE. Among these paper materials are Old Uyghur texts written in the Old Uyghur-Turkic language in the Uyghur script and generally dated between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. The majority of the Old Uyghur texts concern the Buddhist canons, while a smaller number are related to Manichaeism or the Christian Church of the East (the so-called 'Nestorian Christians'). These religious texts are significant sources for the religious and cultural history of the Old Uyghurs and their Eurasia-wide activities. Secular documents also serve to reconstruct the daily socio-economic aspects of Uyghur history. For more than a century after the excavation, studies on the history of the Old Uyghurs in Turfan and Dunhuang were based mainly on the philological decipherment and textual editing of these unearthed paper materials.[3]

However, another type of Old Uyghur religious text – the inscriptions and graffiti written on the walls of the Buddhist cave temples of Xinjiang and Gansu – have piqued the interest of scholars in this field. This paper presents information on these Old Uyghur wall inscriptions and graffiti and their significance, mainly as the textual sources for the reconstruction of the history of the Old Uyghurs in Central Asia.[4]

2 Definition of Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions and brief research history

Texts in various languages including Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Tocharian, Tangut, Mongolian as well as Old Uyghur that were written or inscribed on the walls of the Buddhist cave temples in Xinjiang and Gansu can be collectively designated in Chinese as *tiji* 題記 'memorial writing', which is generally classified into two categories.[5]

3 For a survey of Old Uyghur studies up to 2009, see Matsui 2009.

4 There are also non-textual graffiti by Old Uyghurs on wall paintings or paper; see, for example, Zieme 1977, 271 and Tafel XIII.1 = Zieme 2015a, 122; Raschmann 2009, 188, 189, 222; Zieme 2013a, 182–183, 192; Zieme 2013b, 55, 193; Zieme 2013c, 15, 37 (pict. 19); Raschmann and Sertkaya 2016, 91, 279; Yakup and Li Xiao 2019, 417. Thus far, the known number thereof is too low to enable considerable collective analysis.

5 For examples of the Chinese inscriptions at the Buddhist cave temples, see Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 1986.



Fig. 2: Portrait of the West Uyghur King as a donor and his 'identity inscription'; the Buddhist temple ruins of Bešbalïq (Beiting 北庭), Jimsar, Xinjiang, *c.* tenth to eleventh century CE; based on Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 1991, Colour Plate X. The text reads: $_1$*kün ay tngri-lär-tä qut bulmïš [buya]n ornanmïš alpïn ärdämin el* $_2$*tutmïš üčünč arslan bilgä xan* 'Arslan-Bilgä Khan III, who was given divine charisma by the sun and moon gods and was provided with meritorious virtue, and [who] ruled the realm with his bravery and manliness'; cf. Umemura 1996, 364.

The first category is called *bangti* 榜題 or *timing* 題銘 in Chinese, which can be interpreted as 'title inscriptions', 'identity inscriptions', or 'explanatory inscriptions'. They usually appear on commissioned wall paintings, either in a space specifically assigned for this in the main painting or in a rectangular cartouche (*ti'e* 題額) beside the accompanying portraits of the wall paintings' donors (*gongyangren* 供養人). Inscriptions of this category were generally written or inscribed based on the wishes of the donors, the majority of whom were political rulers or local leaders and their families, offering material support to the religious communities.[6] Even shorter inscriptions, simply declaring the identity, name, and title of each donor, can offer a more concrete image of the people who supported these religions (Fig. 2). Some of the longer ones include praise of their meritorious deeds—such as construction and renovation of monastic facilities, or donations to religious communities—or expressions of their religious wishes and desires, and therefore deserve the special designation of 'donor inscriptions' (Fig. 3), which may be parallel to the Chinese technical term *gongdeji* 功德記 'record of meritorious deeds'. Most of the identity or donor inscriptions in Old Uyghur date from the tenth to eleventh centuries, a period for which information on the Uyghurs is quite scarce in the narrative historical record. Therefore, these inscriptions can be valuable sources for grasping the structures of political power or social community that supported Uyghur Buddhism in Central Asia.[7]

Another category is broadly designated as *youren manti* 游人漫題 in Chinese, 'visitors' graffiti' in English; these graffiti do not necessarily relate to the content of the Buddhist wall paintings nor to the donor portraits featured there (Fig. 4), but were written by visitors to Buddhist cave temples or other religious sites. Their contents are generally commemorative (Uyg. *ödig*) of their visits or religious pilgrimages to the sanctuary cave temples. Quite a few of them have only a couple of words—the visitor's name, their actions, and sometimes the deities worshipped[8]—though longer ones may include the date, the visitor's place of birth or departure,

6 See Zieme 2013b and Zieme 2013c for an overview of Old Uyghur donor portraits on various materials and their corresponding texts. We have many Chinese inscriptions with textual explanations of the Buddhist connotations of the scenes or deities depicted in the wall paintings, while Old Uyghur ones of this kind are not as many. See e.g. von Le Coq 1913, 38; Russel-Smith 2005, 91–96; Mirkamal and Yang Fuxue 2012; Zieme 2013c, 8; Li Gang and Kadir 2020, *passim*; Chen Aifeng, Chen Yuzhen and Matsui 2020, *passim*; Zieme 2021b.

7 Especially those left in the Dunhuang grottoes are of historical significance as evidence for the close relationship between the West Uyghur kingdom and the Dunhuang region. See e.g. Moriyasu 2008; Matsui 2014; Matsui 2017, 4–5.

8 See, e.g. Matsui 2017, no. 49, *buyan qy-a* (a personal name only), no. 5, *arqaži bitidim* 'I, Arqaži, wrote (this)', no. 81, *adityazen yükünürmän* 'I, Adityazen, venerate', no. 64, *tngri maitri bodistv*

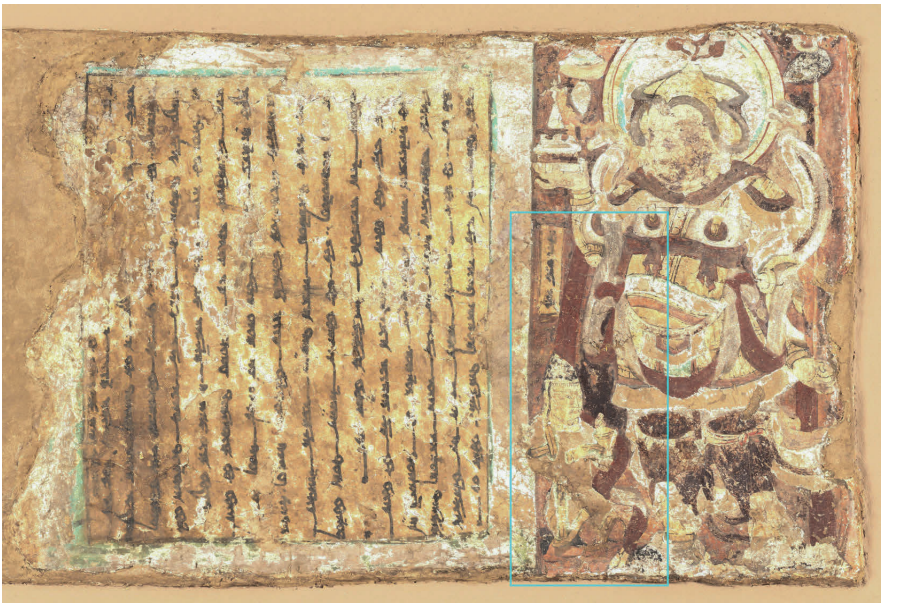


Fig. 3: Donor inscriptions on a Buddhist wall painting of the West Uyghur period; Bezeklik Cave 46, Turfan, Xinjiang, *c*. tenth to eleventh century CE; VD 831, the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (formerly IB 8622a, the Berlin Turfan collection); based on Zieme 2022, 433, Fig. 4, with modifications. Encircled is the portrait of a male donor with a cartouche displaying his name, Boruγčï. In the longer Uyghur inscription on the left, the donor Boruγčï declares his wish to transfer the merit he earned from constructing the cave temple (*v(i)rxar*) – perhaps '(after) destroying the Manichaean(?) monastery (*$_2$[manis]dan? buzturup*)' – to his family; cf. Zieme 2022, 433–434.

and the duration of their stay at the cave temple, offering detailed information about the reality of Old Uyghur Buddhist religious practice at the cave temples.[9] Some scribes even declare the motive of their visit and their wish to obtain enlightenment and to transfer the merit of their pilgrimage to their family, as also commonly expressed in donor inscriptions, reflecting their religious sentiment, enthusiasm, and piety as Buddhists. Furthermore, in many cases, the scribes expected their graffiti to remain long afterwards and be witnessed by future visitors.[10] In view of their content, it would not be reasonable to define such writings

'Holy Bodhisattva Maitreya!', no. 94, *bo mančuširi bodistv* 'This Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī!'; Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, *passim*.

9 See Section 4 of the present paper.

10 See the examples cited below.

as 'ephemeral graffiti' and to strictly distinguish them from '(identity or donor) inscriptions': the previous scholarly works have used not only simply 'graffiti' or 'scribbles', but also such terms as 'visitors' graffiti', 'pilgrim inscriptions', 'memorial inscriptions', and 'postscripts to pilgrimage', according to the content of the writings. The most appropriate umbrella term—to comprehensively indicate their nature, written occasionally and carelessly but piously, as a memorial—may be 'graffiti inscriptions'.[11]

The majority of the Old Uyghur texts on the cave walls can be classified as graffiti inscriptions with mainly Buddhist content, though they have not received as much scholarly attention as the paper manuscripts from these sites. One reason for this may be that they were regarded as rather worthless due to their lacking any direct connection with the images in the wall paintings.[12] Moreover, compared to the quantity of easily transportable paper manuscripts, the number of wall fragments that the European and Japanese expeditions cut down from the caves and brought to various holding institutes and offered to academic circles was much smaller. Although the explorers did not neglect to photograph the graffiti inscriptions at the ruins or cave temples, deciphering the Uyghur inscriptions based solely on photographs might lead to misinterpreting stains or shadows on the wall surface as strokes of the Uyghur script.[13] The direct investigation of the originals still extant in the cave temples of Xinjiang and Dunhuang was indispensable to preparing a reliable philological edition of the Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions.

Since the 1980s, specialists in Old Uyghur studies have conducted fieldwork in Xinjiang and Dunhuang and produced editions of Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions as significant sources for the history of the Old Uyghurs and Central Asian Buddhism. As a result of his fieldwork, Moriyasu Takao published several Manichaean graffiti inscriptions on wall paintings in the Buddhist cave temples of Bezeklik (= Baizikelike 柏孜克里克) in the Turfan basin, displaying the historical interaction between Manichaeism and Buddhism around the tenth to eleventh centuries.[14] Through direct investigation of the originals, the present author revised the previous facsimile-based edition of the graffiti inscriptions of the Yulin 榆林 caves

11 See also Zieme 2013c, 7; Porció 2014, 162–163, n. 37.

12 Porció 2014, 158–159.

13 We may note that Paul Pelliot prepared eye copies of many Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions during his investigations of the Dunhuang caves in 1908, though they could not help being inaccurate. See Matsui 2008b, 29; Matsui 2017, nos 3, 16, 34, 35, 44, 53, 65.

14 Moriyasu 1991, 18–30; Moriyasu 2004a, 17–32.

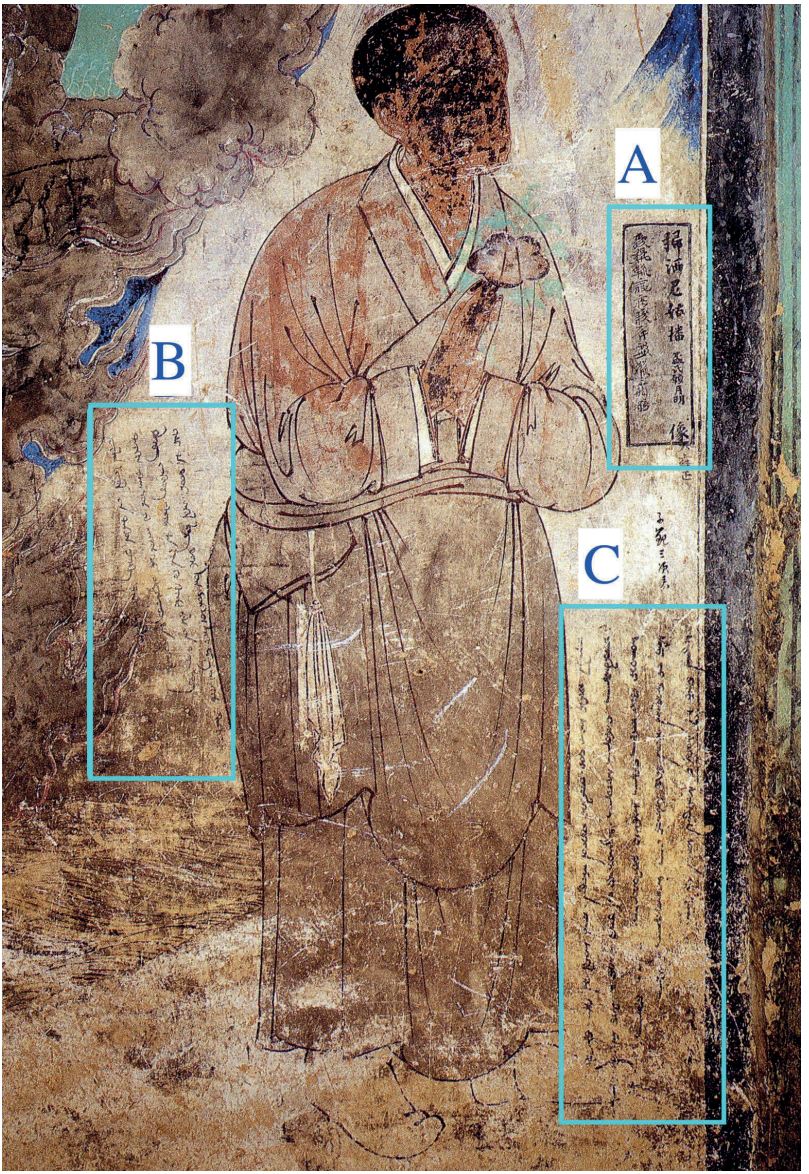


Fig. 4: A nun portrait of the Xixia period; Mogao Cave 61, Dunhuang, Gansu, *c*. eleventh to twelfth century CE; based on Duan Wenjie (ed.) 1996, 144 (Fig. 183), with modifications. A: Tangut-Chinese bilingual identity inscription attached to the nun portrait; Sato 2017, 343. B: Uyghur graffiti of the thirteenth to fourteenth century by a visitor from Ningxia; Matsui 2017, no. 13. C: Mongolian graffiti in alliterative verse of the thirteenth to fourteenth century; Matsui 2017, no. 12.

of Guazhou 瓜州, in the environs of Dunhuang, and highlighted their significance as sources for Old Uyghur history from the tenth to fourteenth centuries.[15]

Around the same time, Porció Tibor conducted a pioneering qualitative analysis of graffiti inscriptions through a comparison with various types of Old Uyghur Buddhist literature, including colophons and alliterative verse texts in paper manuscripts or on temple banners. As a result, he detected many common features in their formulas and wording, and established the significance of Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions not as 'simple old touristic "scribbles" with silly content', but as textual sources exhibiting a Uyghur Buddhist literary culture.[16] Notably, in his analysis, Porció took account of Old Uyghur memorial writings and scribbles on the margins or back sides of Buddhist scrolls that were also left at the cave temples by Uyghur visitors or pilgrims, and consequently have quite a similar character as the graffiti inscriptions on the walls.[17]

Only thirty-three graffiti inscriptions were treated in Porció's paper, though; many more have since been made available to researchers. Peter Zieme edited twelve inscriptions attached to a Brāhmaṇa painting from the Bezeklik caves,[18] and offered a brief but informative overview of the graffiti inscriptions.[19] The present author continued his field research in Dunhuang and Xinjiang to produce a series of articles.[20] A Buddhist pagoda established in Hohhot (~ Kökeqota = Huhehaote 呼和浩特), Inner Mongolia, in the eleventh century also preserves twenty Old Uyghur graffiti of the Mongol Yuan era comparable with those from Xinjiang and Dunhuang.[21] In 2017, the present author provided a comprehensive edition of some 260 Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions as a result of fieldwork on around 150 caves in the Dunhuang area,[22] including ones predating the Mongol period.[23] This edition was followed by investigations of a considerable number of

15 Matsui 2008b. Cf. Hamilton and Niu Ruji 1998.

16 Porció 2014. This work is helpful as a brief survey of research on Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions, though it lacks reference to those published by Umemura and Min 1995.

17 See Porció 2014, 161, 164–167, 172, 173, where he labels them as 'manuscript inscriptions'. On Uyghur visitors to Buddhist cave temples who left memorial writings on cave walls and the backs of Buddhist scrolls, see Matsui 2021, 38–41, and Figs 11 and 12 in the present paper.

18 Zieme 2013a.

19 Zieme 2013c, 7–10.

20 Matsui 2013; Matsui 2014; Matsui 2015; Matsui 2016a.

21 Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016.

22 Matsui 2017. For a Chinese and an English paper based on this edition, see Matsui 2018; Matsui 2019.

23 Matsui 2017, 6.

Old Uyghur inscriptions at the newly excavated temple ruins of the Toyoq (~ Tuyuq = Tuyugou 吐峪溝) caves near Turfan,[24] as well as the more fragmentary materials yielded by earlier expeditions.[25]

Such developments in the textual and archival situation enable further progress in the study of Uyghur graffiti inscriptions in various respects.[26]

3 A variety of scripts, languages, ethnicities and religions

First, we must consider the variety of scripts that the Old Uyghurs used. Most of their graffiti inscriptions were written in the so-called Old Uyghur script, and a smaller number in the Brāhmī, Tibetan, 'Phags-pa, and Syriac scripts.[27]

Graffiti inscriptions in the Brāhmī script, of Indic origin, were retrieved by the German Turfan expeditions and assembled by Dieter Maue;[28] Kitsudō Kōichi detected many more such instances in the Dunhuang caves.[29] More recently, the archaeological investigations of the Toyoq caves, Turfan, yielded further new materials.[30]

The number of Brāhmī graffiti inscriptions in the Old Uyghur language is smaller than those in Indic (Sanskrit) or Tocharian languages, which were also sometimes written by ethnic Uyghurs. For example, in the Dunhuang caves, the monk Adityazen left twenty-nine graffiti in Brāhmī,[31] seven of which were paired with his Old Uyghur graffiti (Fig. 5),[32] while in five other graffiti he used solely the

24 Yakup and Li Xiao 2019; Fu Ma and Xia Lidong 2021; Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021a; Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b.

25 Raschmann 2020, 215–229; Chen Aifeng, Chen Yuzhen and Matsui 2020; Zieme 2021b; Zieme 2022; Matsui 2022.

26 See also Raschmann 2020, 204–215, for an overview of recent research trends in Old Uyghur graffiti epigraphy.

27 For the variety of the scripts used by the Old Uyghurs, see von Gabain 9–41; Ölmez 2017, 189–209. See also Moriyasu 2004b, 228–232, on the chronological classification of the Uyghur script.

28 Maue 1996; Porció 2014, 162–163.

29 Kitsudō 2017a.

30 Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, nos 13, 39, 40(?), 52(?), 82, 83.

31 Kitsudō 2017a, nos 1–4, 6–8, 11, 13, 14, 16–18, 20–23, 25, 28, 30–32, 35, 36, 39–43.

32 Kitsudō 2017a, no. 24 and Matsui 2017, no. 175; Kitsudō 2017a, no. 28 and Matsui 2017, no. 184; Kitsudō 2017a, no. 28 and Matsui 2017, no. 193; Kitsudō 2017a, no. 34 and Matsui 2017, no. 210; Kitsudō 2017a, no. 36 and Matsui 2017, no. 222; Kitsudō 2017a, no. 39 and Matsui 2017, no. 231;



Fig. 5: Graffiti inscriptions by Adityazen; Yulin Cave 19, Guazhou, Gansu, *c.* tenth to twelfth century CE; based on Dunhuang yanjiuyuan (ed.) 2014, 84 (Fig. 51), with modifications. A: Brāhmī Sanskrit graffiti by Adityazen; Kitsudō 2017a, no. 34. B: Uyghur graffiti by Adityazen; Matsui 2017, no. 210. C: Bilingual graffiti of Tangut ^{1}*hu* ^{2}*leu* ^{1}*kyin* (← Chin. Fu Liujin 傅六斤) and Chin. *Fu Liujin nan Anu* 傅六斤男阿奴 'Fu Liujin and his son Anu', but not referring to the male donor portrait; Arakawa 2017, 298.

Uyghur language and script:[33] he was apparently multilingual in Sanskrit, Tocharian and Uyghur, as suggested by his name, Adityazen, deriving from Sanskrit *Ādityasena* via the Tocharian intermediate form *Ādityaseṃ*.[34] According to the information in his graffiti, Adityazen came to Dunhuang from Bešbalïq (the ruined city of Beiting 北庭 in Jimsar = Jimusaer 吉木薩爾 county, Xinjiang), seemingly during the West Uyghur period. Focusing on his graffiti, Kitsudō demonstrated

Kitsudō 2017a, no. 41 and Matsui 2017, no. 260. Kitsudō 2017a, no. 40 and Matsui 2017, no. 249 may also be paired.

33 Matsui 2017, nos 16, 44, 81, 190, 224.

34 We find further evidence of Indic-Uyghur bilinguals in the Dunhuang graffiti inscriptions: Matsui 2017, no. 158 and Kitsudō 2017a, no. 24; Matsui 2017, no. 88 and Kitsudō 2017a, no. 32; Matsui 2017, no. 173 and Kitsudō 2017a, no. 33.

the close cultural ties between the Tocharian-Uyghur Buddhists in East Turkestan and Chinese Buddhists around Dunhuang.[35]

Buddhist Uyghurs were heavily influenced by Chinese Buddhism throughout the tenth to fourteenth centuries; therefore, unsurprisingly, they inserted Chinese characters in their memorial writings and scribbles on paper materials as well as in graffiti inscriptions on cave walls.[36] Paul Pelliot reported a Uyghur-Chinese bilingual graffiti in Dunhuang, written by a Uyghur scribe named Ayïš-Qaya, but this had been lost until recently.[37] Another Uyghur graffiti from Hohhot ends in two Chinese characters, which seem to be a translation of a common Uyghur phrase and were probably read in the Uyghur language (Fig. 6).[38]

The Tibetan elements of Uyghur Buddhism have mainly been detected in Old Uyghur Tantric texts of the Mongol period and are generally considered reflections of the prestige that the Mongol imperial family of the Yuan dynasty afforded to Tibetan Buddhism in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[39] Such a situation may likewise be evinced by the Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions of the Mongol period, which newly attest many Tibetan names of Uyghur pilgrims and visitors.[40] Recently a Uyghur-Tibetan bilingual graffiti of the Mongol period was discovered in a cave near Turfan.[41]

Among the Old Uyghur texts related to Tibetan culture, one unique instance is the Old Uyghur Buddhist catechism written in Tibetan script, which was retrieved from the so-called Cangjingdong 藏經洞 'Library Cave' of Dunhuang (Mogao Cave 17) and then dated to before the eleventh century. The text reflects the Sarvāstivādin tradition prevalent in the Tocharian Buddhism of East Turkestan, which led the Uyghurs to convert to Buddhism.[42] Through our fieldwork in Dunhuang, we have newly discovered Tibeto-Uyghur graffiti from an older period (Fig. 7C): the scribe, with a name of Tocharo-Uyghur origin (Tib. *Sang ga seng* ← Uyg. *Sangazen* ← TochA. **Saṅghaseṃ* ← Skt. *Saṅghasena*), used the Tibetan script

35 Kitsudō 2017b.

36 Matsui 2010, 707; Porció 2014, 163; Matsui 2017, no. 269; Matsui 2021, Text D.

37 Matsui 2017, no. 23.

38 On the Chinese characters inserted into Uyghur texts, some of which were read in the Uyghur language, see, e.g. Shōgaito 2004, 322; Shōgaito 2014, 14–27.

39 See, e.g. Zieme 1992, 40–42; Elverskog 1997, 13; Zieme 2015b, 877–878.

40 E.g. Uyg. *čospal* < Tib. *chos dpal* ; *dorčïpal* < *rdo rje dpal* ; *luqpal* < *lugs dpal*?; *sangpo* < *bzang po* ; *šakyapal ~ šakyapa* < *sha kya dpal*. See Matsui 2017, 7.

41 Tulufanxue yanjiuyuan 2020, 103, and Plate 2, Fig. 7.

42 Moriyasu 1985; cf. Maue and Röhrborn 1985. See also Maue 1996, 210–222, on the Uyghur fragments in Tibetan script in the Berlin Turfan collection, which cannot definitively be dated to the pre-Mongol period.

to leave graffiti in the Uyghur language, and was even accompanied by a Tibetan colleague with the title *sha 'pi* 'novice' (← Uyg. *šabi* ← Chin. *shami* 沙彌).[43] This instance merits attention from the viewpoint of Buddhist cultural interaction between the Uyghurs and Tocharians in the region covering East Turkestan



Fig. 6: Uyghur graffiti with Chinese characters; The White Pagoda, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, *c.* thirteenth to fourteenth century CE; based on Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, 73. The text reads: ₁*taqïyu yïl törtünč ay-nïŋ* ₂*beš yangï-qa tonga ŗrs[la]n ša* 戲筆 '₁₋₂On the fifth day of the fourth month (of) the Rooster year. ₂I, Tonga-Arslan-Ša, wrote (this) for fun'. The Chinese *xibi* 戲筆 'wrote for fun' might correspond to Uyg. *erikip bitidim* 'I wrote in boredom'; see Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, Text P.

43 Iwao 2017, no. 59. The scribe Sang ga seng is likely identical to the scribe of two Brāhmī Sanskrit graffiti, Saṅghasene (← Skt. *Saṅghasena*). See Kitsudō 2017a, nos 26, 27.

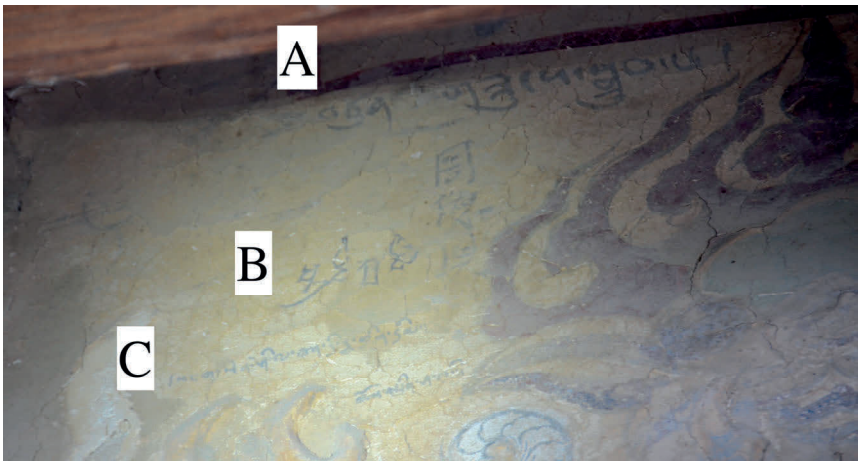


Fig. 7: Graffiti inscriptions in Tibetan and Brāhmī scripts; The 'Stupa of Maitreya' (Cishita 慈氏塔), Dunhuang, Gansu, *c.* tenth to twelfth century CE; after Matsui and Arakawa 2017, Fig. 2, with modifications. A: Tibetan graffiti; Iwao 2017, no. 58. B: Brāhmī graffiti by the Tocharian-Uyghur pilgrim Adityazen; Kitsudō 2017a, no. 22. C: Uyghur graffiti in Tibetan script by Sangazen, followed by another line in Tibetan: $_{1}$*sang ga seng shi la ['an di di] gyin drim* (← Uyg. *sanggazen šila[vandi tä]gindim*) 'I, Sangazen-*šilavanti*, arrived here'; $_{2}$*chos sprin sha 'pi* 'Chos sprin, the novice'; Matsui *apud* Iwao 2017, no. 59.

and Gansu, where the Tibetan script was in popular use in the ninth to twelfth centuries.[44] The novice Tsunpa (Uyg. *yangï tsunpa* = Tib. *btsun pa sar pa*), a Uyghur pilgrim from Qamïl (present-day Qomul = Hami 哈密, Xinjiang), who left bilingual Uyghur-Tibetan graffiti inscriptions in the Yulin caves, should also belong to a similar historical context.[45]

The 'Phags-pa script was invented in 1269 CE by the Imperial Preceptor (*dishi* 帝師) of the Mongol Yuan court, and can therefore be used as a dating marker for graffiti inscriptions of the following period.[46] Only one Old Uyghur graffiti in the 'Phags-pa script was available to Porció,[47] although our fieldwork retrieved a

44 For the use of the Tibetan script in the East Turkestan and Gansu in the ninth to twelfth centuries, see e.g. Takeuchi 2012.

45 His graffiti had been regarded as dating to the Mongol period, though Kitsudō has suggested an earlier date. Cf. Porció 2014, 162; Matsui 2017, nos 185, 202, 211, 220, 226, 251, 258; Iwao 2017, nos 61, 65, 67, 69, 72, 76, 79, 80, 81, Kitsudō 2017a, 167.

46 See Zieme 1998 on the Uyghur or Turkic materials in 'Phags-pa script that were known to researchers at the time.

47 Cf. Matsui 2017, no. 51 (= Matsui 2019, Text B), line 6.

further twenty-one instances of the script, a considerable number of which were written in Old Uyghur (Fig. 8C).[48] These instances allow us to speculate that the Uyghurs of the Mongol period were susceptible to the cultural trends of the Mongol Yuan Imperial court.

In contrast, the literary culture of the Uyghurs strongly influenced the Mongols in various respects, as has been detected through research on contract documents and Buddhist scriptures in both languages.[49] This is corroborated by the Mongol graffiti inscriptions from Dunhuang, the formulas and wording of which are almost parallel to those of the Uyghurs.[50] Below, I present typical examples of Uyghur and Mongolian graffiti inscriptions, whose content is mostly parallel, sharing such elements as: [1] the date; [2] the name(s) of the visitor or pilgrim; [3] their activities (arrival/visit, veneration, departure/return, offerings, writing, etc.); [4] the name of the scribe (frequently substituted by [2]); and [5] the closing, which often includes [5a] the scribe's wish to transfer the merit of their pilgrimage, that the inscription be seen by posterity, etc.

Uyghur:

1*qutluy qoyn yïl altïnč ay yägrmi [....]*	.....[1]
2*biz qur? buq-a [....]K tay buq-a elig?*	
3*tüz tämür bašlap kim? kun ''LD(...)-ta y(...)*	.....[2]
4*bo tay süm-lär-kä kälip barïr-ta*	.....[3]
5*män tay buq-a*	.....[4]
kenki-kä körgü bolzun tep	.....[5a]
6*bir iki käzig bitidim*	.....[5]

[1] 1The fortunate Sheep year, the sixth month, on the [....] day.
[2] 2We, Qur?-Buqa, [....]K, Tay-Buqa, Elig?, 3Tüz-Tämür, and [the people?] in Kim?-Kun-[....],
[3] 4came to these mountain temples, and on departure,
[4] 5I, Tay-Buqa, [5a] saying 'May (this writing) be seen by posterity!',
[5] 6wrote a couple of lines.

(Matsui 2017, no. 63)

48 Matsui 2017, nos 31, 122, 131, 144, 191, 195, 199, 213, 263. Furthermore, the language of nos 10 and 124 is indiscernible, though they are written alongside graffiti in the Uyghur language. Nos 104 and 112 are in Mongolian; no. 123, in Chinese; we have not yet deciphered the texts of nos 9, 11, 107, 117, 127, 188 and 245, enough to discern their languages.

49 E.g., Cleaves 1955; Matsui 2016b; Shōgaito 1991.

50 See, e.g. Matsui 2017, nos 13, 63, 147, 169, 228, 230.

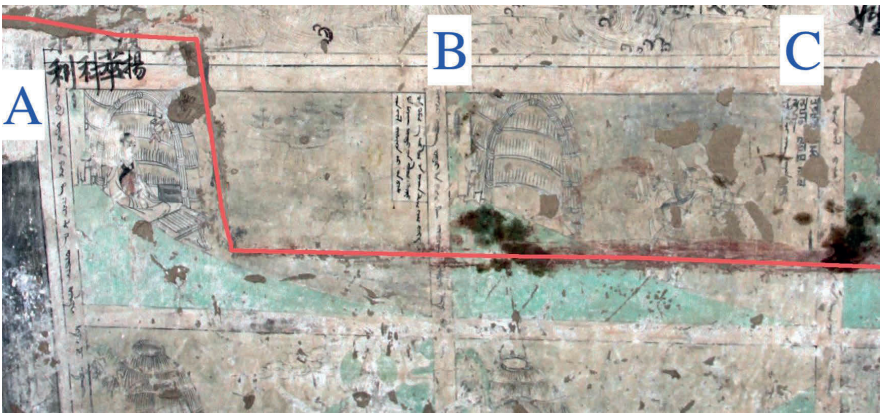


Fig. 8: Graffiti inscriptions in Uyghur and ’Phags-pa scripts; Yulin Cave 3, Guazhou, Gansu, *c*. thirteenth to fourteenth century CE; based on the online colour version of Liu Yongzeng 2014, Fig. 7 <https://news.artron.net/20161111/n883482.html> (accessed on 5 March 2022), with modifications. A: Uyghur, with two Mongolian words at the end: *šakyapal uday-qa barïr-ta kenki-lär-kä ödig qïlďïm qutuytu boltuyai* ‘I, Šakyapal, in leaving for Uday (= Wutaishan), made (this) record for posterity. [Mongolian] May it be fortunate!’; Matsui 2017, no. 128. B: *täväči tutung uday-qa barïr-ta kenki-lär-kä ödig qïlďïm sadu bolzun* ‘I, Täväči-*tutung*, in leaving for Uday (= Wutaishan), made (this) record for posterity. May it be good!’; Matsui 2017, no. 130. C: Lines 2–4 are in ’Phags-pa script, but in the Uyghur language: *$_{2}$män $_{3}$män luqpal $_{4}$yükü[n]dü[m]* ‘I, Luqpal, venerated (here)’; Matsui 2017, no. 131.

Uyghur:

$_{1}$quḍluy taqïyu yïl bešinč ay on beš-tä	.....[1]
$_{2}$män luqpal šakyapal ṭorčïpal üčägü	.....[2=4]
kälip bo ïduq buqar-$_{3}$qa yuḳünüp barďïmïz	.....[3, 5]
bo buyan-ï alqu quḍrulmaq ol	
$_{4}$yana tapmaq-lar-ï bolzun tep tedi	.....[5a]

[1] $_{1}$The fortunate Hare year, the fifth month, on the fifteenth day.
[2=4] $_{2}$We, Luqpal, Šakyapal, and Dorčïpal, three of us,
[3, 5] came (here), $_{2–3}$venerated this sacred (cave) temple, and departed.
[5a] This meritorious deed is to exempt all (living beings). And they shall find (this writing)! Thus (I) said.

(Matsui 2017, no. 147)

Uyghur:

$_1$qut-luy yunt yïl törtünč ay-nïŋ $_2$ygrmi säkiz-kä	..... [1]
qaču-nïŋ tay süm-kä $_3$yüküngäli kälip	
yükünüp yanar-ta	..... [3]
män $_4$darm-a širi bitiyü tägindim	..... [2=4, 5]

[1] $_1$The fortunate Horse year, the fourth month, $_2$on the twenty-eighth day.
[3] Coming to and venerating the mountain temple of Qaču (← Guazhou 瓜州), and on return,
[2=4,5] $_5$I, Darmaširi, humbly wrote (this).

(Matsui 2017, no. 198)

Mongolian:

$_1$morin ǰil doluyan sara-yin yurban sinede	.....[1]
$_2$yung čang vuu-ača iregsed	.....[3]
bi dorǰi en-e $_3$süm-e-ṯür mörgüǰü	.....[2=4, 3]
šaču-yin süm-e-$_4$ṯür odbai	.....[3, 5]
qoyin-a üǰeküi boltuyai	.....[5a]

[1] $_1$The Horse year, the seventh month, on the third day.
[2=4] $_2$I, Dorǰi, [3] who came from the Yung-čang (← Yongchang 永昌) Circuit, $_3$venerated this sacred (cave) temple and [5] $_4$departed for the temple of Šaču (← Shazhou 沙州 = Dunhuang). [5a] May (this writing) be seen in the future!

(Matsui 2017, no. 169)

Mongolian:

$_1$bečin ǰil doluyan sara-yin $_2$dörben sinede	.....[1]
bi [....] dorǰi	.....[2=4]
$_3$süm-e-ṯür mörgüǰü yarba	.....[3, 5]

[1] $_1$The Monkey year, the seventh month, on the fourth day.
[2=4] $_2$I, Dorǰi, [3, 5] $_3$venerated (this cave) temple and $_4$departed.

(Matsui 2017, no. 177)

In the tenth to fourteenth centuries, a small population of Turkic peoples, including Uyghurs, were believers in the Christian Church of the East. Besides the Uyghur script, they also used the Syriac script, mainly for ecclesiastic texts.[51] Some

51 See Zieme 2015a for the Christian Uyghur texts.



Fig. 9: Uyghur graffiti inscription, with a Christian prayer in Syriac in the fifth line; White Pagoda, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, *c*. thirteenth to fourteenth century CE; based on Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, 74.

of these Christians occasionally visited Buddhist sanctuaries to leave their graffiti inscriptions in the Uyghur and Syriac languages in Uyghur and Syriac scripts.

During the Mongol period, the Buddhist 'White Pagoda' of Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, was supported financially by the Christian princes of the Turkic Önggüd tribe (hereditary sons-in-law of the Mongol Emperors), and attracted not only Buddhist but also Christian visitors who left their memorials on the inner wall. Alongside twelve Syro-Turkic graffiti inscriptions,[52] we have detected two Uyghur-Turkic ones related to the Christian Church of the East.[53] One of them, cited below, mentions two visitors with Christian names (*Pilipoz* ← Syriac *pylypws* 'Philip', and *Yušimut* ← Sogdian *ywšmbd* 'Sunday', deriving from Middle Iranian), and puts a Christian prayer in Syriac in its fifth line, clearly displaying affiliation with the Church of the East:

> $_1$*küskü yïl t[o]quzunč ay yeti otuz-qa* $_2$*[bi]z pilipoz yušimut qïrqïz? y-a-čï bačay?* $_3$*[mon]gol?-day munčayu bo suburyan-nï körgäli* $_4$*kälü? täginip bitiyü tägintimiz čïn'ol* $_5$*(ʾm)yn w(ḥyl) lš(...) 'bdk pyl(ypws)*
>
> $_1$Monkey year, the ninth month, on the twenty-seventh day.
> $_2$We, Pilipoz, Yušimut, Qïrqïz?, Y-a-čï, Bačay?, $_3$Mongolday? – these people
> humbly came to watch this pagoda, $_4$and wrote (this). This is true.
> $_5$[Syriac] Amen! May Pilipoz, Your slave, be encouraged ....
>
> (Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, Text Q. See Fig. 9).

According to the text ($_3$*bo suburyan-nï körgäli* 'to watch this pagoda'), this group of Uyghurs, including at least two Christians, apparently visited the White Pagoda of Hohhot on purpose. However, it is more likely that the Christian Uyghurs regarded the Buddhist pagoda as a tourist site than a target of religious worship.[54]

On the other hand, a Syro-Uyghur graffiti inscription we have recently retrieved from the Yulin caves apparently shares the same formula as the Buddhist graffiti inscriptions cited earlier, and suggests contact between their epistolary cultures:

---

52 Borbone 2013.

53 Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, Texts C, Q; Takahashi 2019, 638.

54 Cf. Borbone 2013, 61. See also Zieme 2011, 179–180, who refrains from interpreting the Buddhistic phrase in a Syro-Uyghur Christian booklet as a kind of syncretism between Buddhism and Christianity.

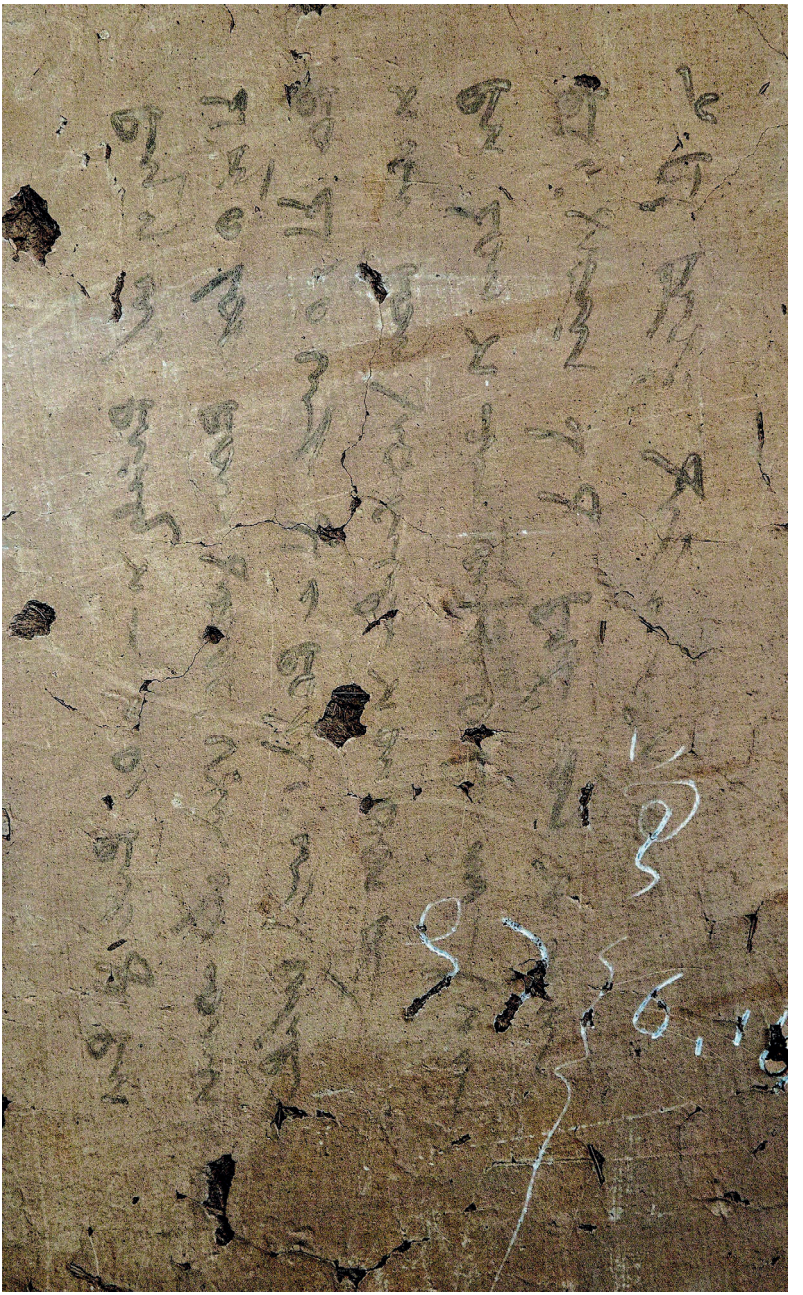


Fig. 10: Syro-Uyghur graffiti inscription; Yulin Cave 16, Guazhou, Gansu, *c*. thirteenth to fourteenth century CE; based on Matsui and Arakawa 2017, Fig. 5.

$_{1}$bečin yïl bešinč ay on beš-tä .....[1]
biz $_{2}$xaču-luy buyan temür
natanayel yōḥannān .....[2=4]
$_{3}$bo xaču-nïng tay buxar-ïnga kälip
$_{4}$iki kün tezginip üč sorma $_{5}$bir xoyn
ašïn sökünüp yenä ya[n]ïp $_{6}$bartïmïz .....[3, 5]
yad bolzun amin $_{7}$abamuya tegi amin .....[5a]

[1] $_{1}$Monkey year, the fifth month, on the fifteenth day.
[2=4] $_{2}$(We) Buyan-Temür, Natanayel, and Yōḥannān of Guazhou, [3] $_{3}$came to this mountain temple of Guazhou, $_{4}$visited (the caves) for two days, $_{4–5}$venerated with (the offering of) a meal (*aš*) of three (bottles? of) wheat beer (*sorma*) and one sheep, and then [5] $_{5–6}$started on our way back.
[5a] $_{6–7}$May (this) be memorialized! Amen! For ever! Amen!
(Matsui 2017, no. 197. See Fig. 10).

As revisited in Section 4 below, this Syro-Uyghur graffiti inscription also implies that these Christian Uyghurs participated in Buddhist feasts conducted at the Yulin caves and even offered a donation to the Buddhist monastery. The cultural and religious contact between Buddhist and Christian Uyghurs deserves further scholarly attention and investigation.

Though few in number, some Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions attest scribes or authors with Muslim names of Arabo-Persian origin: for example, Uyg. *Sul(a)yman* ← Sulaymān; *Uḍman* ← Uṯmān; *Axmat* ← Aḥmad; *Ïqbal-Sang* ← Iqbāl Sang.[55] These names do not directly witness their religious affiliation with Islam: perhaps they were children of mixed Buddhist and Muslim parentage.[56] Even in the case that they were Muslims, they likely visited the Buddhist sanctuaries simply as attractions, similarly to some of the Christian Uyghurs.[57]

55 Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, Texts A, D; Matsui 2017, nos 61, 105.
56 According to Marco Polo, the Turkic Önggüd tribe, who adopted the Christianity of the Church of the East, ruled the city of Tiande 天德 (→ *Tenduc*, present-day Hohhot), which was also inhabited by a people called the *argon* (← Turkic *aryun*), 'born of the two races, of the lineage of those Tenduc who worship idols [= Buddhists] and those who worship by the law of Mahomet [= Muslims]'. See Moule and Pelliot 1938, 182; Pelliot 1959, 48–51.
57 Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, 51–53; Matsui 2017, 8.

4 Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions as Buddhist literature

As mentioned above, one of Porció's most significant contributions was identifying common elements between graffiti inscriptions and Old Uyghur Buddhist colophons.[58] His analysis is supported by many newly available materials. The Uyghur authors of graffiti inscriptions frequently expressed their wishes to achieve Buddhahood (Uyg. *burxan qutï* = Chin. *foguo* 佛果),[59] be reborn in the Pure Land (*sukavadi uluš*),[60] become a buddha (*burxan bol-* = Chin. *chengfo* 成佛),[61] and transfer their meritorious deeds to the living and deceased (Chin. *huixiang* 迴向).[62] One instance from Dunhuang wishes to encounter Maitreya or the future Buddha, and its text is almost parallel to one of the colophon texts from Turfan:

> $_{1}$*br(a)xmazen qaytso gunazen* $_{2}$*yüküngäli käldimz*
> *bo buyan* $_{3}$*küčintä maitri tngri burxan* $_{4}$*birlä oqadmatïn odyuraq* $_{5}$*tuš bolmaqï bolzun*
>
> $_{1–2}$We, Braxmazen, Qaytso, and Gunazen, came (here) to venerate.
> $_{2–3}$Through this merit, $_{3–5}$may (we) surely encounter Holy Buddha Maitreya without delay!
>
> (Matsui 2017, no. 88)

> $_{1}$*ärdinig bošyunyalï tutyalï-ï* $_{2}$*oqïyalï oqïtyalï bititgäli-i* $_{3}$*bitigäli ögrätig qïlmïš kärgäk*
> $_{4}$*bo avant tïltay üzä kenki* $_{5}$*burxan-larïy oqadmatın* $_{6}$*odyuraq tuš* $_{7}$*bolyay-sizlär*
>
> In order to learn and retain the (*dharma*) jewel; in order to recite (it), and to have (others) recite and copy (it); and in order to write (it), one must do exercises.
> $_{4}$Through these causes, $_{5–7}$you will surely encounter the future Buddhas without delay!
>
> (Kasai 2008, 84–85, lines 153[1]–159[7])

58 Porció 2014, 166–174.
59 Matsui 2017, nos 79, 219, 231.
60 Matsui 2017, no. 176.
61 Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, Text R; Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, nos 29, 37.
62 Beside Matsui 2017, no. 147 cited above, also see nos 173, 182, 252.

Porció also noticed examples of stanzaic alliterative poems among the graffiti inscriptions from Turfan.[63] Similar stanzaic alliterative graffiti inscriptions have been retrieved not only from Turfan but also from Dunhuang.[64] A long graffiti inscription of fifteen stanzas from Yulin Cave 34,[65] seemingly written by the above-mentioned pilgrim Adityazen, is noteworthy from the viewpoint of Uyghur Buddhist culture and literature. Its first seven stanzas are allotted to the life story of Buddha Śakyamuni and the spread of his doctrine by *arhat*s (→ Uyg. *arxant*). The latter eight stanzas are praise of the 'Mountain Hermitage' (*tay aryadan*), that is, the Yulin cave temples. This alliterative poem reveals that Buddhist Uyghurs worshipped the sanctuary cave temples that were generally established in the mountain gorge.[66] Another graffiti inscription in memory of a pilgrimage to Hohhot contains alliterative praise of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, the text of which substantially parallels a small stanzaic poem on a fragment discovered at Singgim, near Turfan:[67]

5*alqu? biraman?-lar-nïng körgülüki?*
6*adroq? adroq? dintar-lar-nïng yüküngülüki?*
7*arïy? maxa[ya]n? nom-lar-nïng soq-a? öztözi?*
8*ary-a mančuširi-qa yükünürmän*

5(He is) to be seen by all Brahmans(?);
6(He is) is to be venerated by various(?) monks;
7 (He is) exactly(?) the essential nature(?) of the pure *dharma*s of Mahāyāna(?);
8I venerate the Noble Mañjuśrī!

(Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, 45, Text T)

63 Porció 2014, 166–167, citing only Zieme 1985, Text 60b, from Turfan.

64 Hamilton and Niu Ruji 1998, Inscription G = Matsui 2017, no. 172; Zieme 2013a, 188–189; Matsui 2017, nos 93, 137; Fu Ma and Xia Lidong 2021, I-2 = Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021a, K10-B-Z4; Fu Ma and Xia Lidong 2021, II-7 = Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021a, K10-B-Z2; Fu Ma and Xia Lidong 2021, III-2 = Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021a, K10-B-Y1; Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, no. 67.

65 Matsui 2017, no. 249.

66 The Uyghur phrases for the Dunhuang cave temples, 'Mountain Hermitage' or 'Mountain Temple' (*tay vrxar ~ tay buqar ~ tay süme*), parallel the Chinese *shansi* 山寺 'Mountain Temple' and Tangut (Xixia) [1]*shyan* [2]*miq'* [2']*yen*; the Mongolian phrase for the Dunhuang caves, *ayula-yin süme* 'Mountain Temple', should be a translation of the Uyghur. See Matsui 2017, 19.

67 Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, 45–46.

> $_1$*kertgünč-lüg tïnly-lar-nïng yüküngülüki*
> $_2$*kinayan maxayan nom-lar soq-a öz tözi*
> $_3$*kirsiz arïy mančuširi-qa yükünürbiz*
>
> $_1$(He is) to be venerated by living beings having the faith, $_2$and (He is) exactly the essential nature (of) the *dharma*s of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna.
> $_3$We venerate the Pure Mañjuśrī!
>
> (Zieme 1985, 146, no. 32)

Their textual similarity over a geographically broad range may reflect the Uyghurs' knowledge of popular texts or formulaic phrases of the Mañjuśrī cult.

5 Daily Buddhist practices of the Uyghurs

The huge number of manuscripts and fragments of Old Uyghur Buddhist canons unearthed in Central Asia demonstrate the variety of Buddhist works and cults (e.g. Maitreya, Avalokieśvara, Amitāyus/Amitābha, Mañjuśrī) spreading among the Uyghurs.[68] However, these materials offer limited information on the daily lives of the Buddhist Uyghurs who produced them. Notably, the majority of Old Uyghur Buddhist works were discovered in the Buddhist cave temples at Turfan and Dunhuang. Consequently, they should be closely related to the religious practices of the Uyghur monks dwelling at the cave temples, as well as those of visitors and pilgrims. The details provided by the Uyghur graffiti inscriptions—the number of people for each delegation and pilgrimage, their duration of stay, the religious practices they conducted at the caves, etc.—are indispensable to grasping the historical background of Uyghur Buddhism.

Regarding the duration of visits, one graffiti inscription recounts that the scribe, named Buyan-Qaya, left his hometown Suzhou 肅州 (→ Uyg. *Sügčü*, present-day Jiuquan 酒泉) in Gansu three years prior and stayed at the Dunhuang Mogao caves for seven months.[69] The circumstances that enabled him to undergo such a long-term pilgrimage deserve historical investigation.

In addition, the graffiti inscriptions refer to various religious practices. The first one mentioned is the Old Uyghur term *pakčan (~ bakčan)* 'summer retreat',

68 For a brief overview of Old Uyghur Buddhist literature, see e.g. Elverskog 1997; Zieme 2015b.
69 Matsui 2019, Text A. On his route from Suzhou to Mogao, Buyan-Qaya passed by the Yulin caves, leaving memorial inscriptions there. See Matsui 2019, Texts D–H.

which refers to the three months of the rainy season, during which the Buddhist monks conducted intensive religious training.[70] The Uyghurs paraphrased the term *pakčan*, of Tocharian origin, as *üč ay* 'three months (of summer retreat)' in their own tongue (Fig. 11).[71]

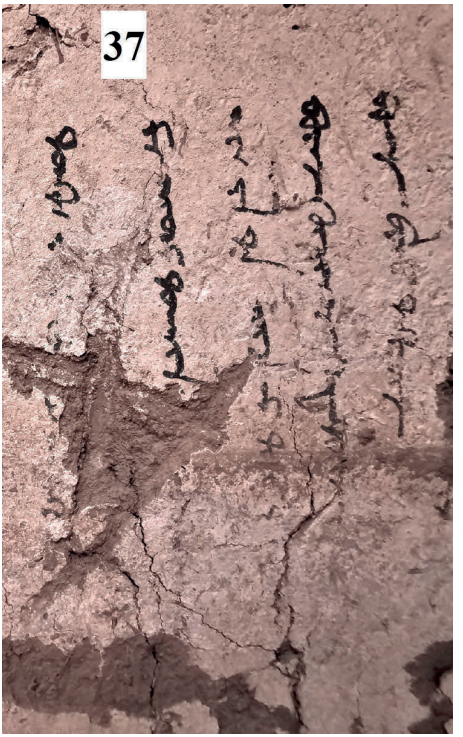


Fig. 11: Uyghur graffiti in memory of a stay of *üč ay* 'three months', a figurative term for Buddhist summer retreat; Cave 26 of the West Zone of the Toyoq grottoes, Turfan, Xinjiang, *c.* thirteenth to fourteenth century CE; based on Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, no. 37 (Fig. 13). The text reads: $_1$*tonguz yïl ye[tin]č? (ay) säki[z ....] $_2$män qïtay toyrïl [....] bo? tïyoq? $_3$qïsïl-ta üč ay tur(u)? (tägintim? bo?) $_4$buyan küčintä käd toyïn (.....) $_5$burxan bolu täginäyin* '$_1$The Boar year, the seventh? month, on the [.... day]. $_2$I, Qïtay-Toyrïl, $_3$humbly? stayed? in the gorge of Toyoq? (*tïyoq*) for (the summer retreat of) three months. Through (this?) $_4$meritorious deed, Käd-Toyïn, [....] $_5$we shall become Buddha!'; after Matsui 2021, Text B, with modifications.

70 Matsui 2017, no. 231; Niu Ruji and Zieme 1996, 46, 49, 52; Wilkens 2021, 98.

71 Fu Ma and Xia Lidong 2021, 186; Matsui 2021, 40 = Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, no. 37.

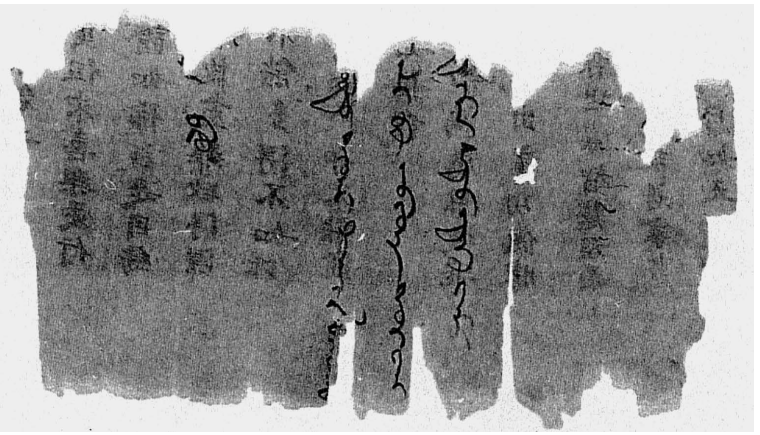


Fig. 12: A Uyghur scribble written on the back of a Chinese Buddhist scroll; seemingly from the Toyoq caves, Turfan, Xinjiang, *c*. thirteenth to fourteenth century CE; Dx 9569, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg; based on Matsui 2021, 41; text: Matsui 2021, Text C. The scribe, ₁Qïtay-Toγrïl, is probably the same one who produced the graffiti in Fig. 11.

These graffiti suggest that the Turfan and Dunhuang cave temples in the gorge, remote from cities and villages, were used for training during the summer retreat. One of the manuscripts of the Old Uyghur version of the Buddhist work *Maitrisimit* ('Encounter with Maitreya') was copied by a Uyghur monk as part of his practice during the summer retreat.[72] Though we do not find many mentions of the summer retreat (*pakčan*) or its paraphrase *üč ay* 'three months (of summer retreat)' in graffiti inscriptions on cave walls or in manuscript colophons, Buddhist Uyghurs would have considered copying or reading Buddhist texts at cave temples an important part of their religious training during the summer retreat (Fig. 12).

Other religious practices conducted by Uyghur Buddhist pilgrims and visitors were meditation (Skt. *dhyāna* → Uyg. *dyan* ~ Chin. *chan-ding* 禪定) and learning (Uyg. *bošyut* ; *nom tut-* 'to keep the *dharma* ; to learn'). Sometimes meditation and learning are mentioned alongside their duration[73] to suggest that the Buddhist

72 Kasai 2008, 192–193.

73 Matsui 2017, nos 37 (15 days), 146 (3 days), 165 (10 days), 197 (2 days), 231 (3 months); Fu Ma and Xia Lidong, 2021, I-15 (20 days?). Another instance, on a fragment of a cave wall from Turfan (TU 406 in the State Hermitage, St Petersburg), attests to *bir ay-lïq bošyut* 'learning for one month'. Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, no. 49, also suggests a one-month stay at the cave temple. Cf. Matsui 2010, 708–709; Porció 2014, 113.

monasteries at the cave temples prepared training programmes for low-ranked monks and laymen. One stanza of an alliterative poetic graffiti emphasizes that 'the living place of the Bodhisattvas is the *dharma*', and recommends that future readers learn (*bošyut*) *dharma*.[74]

Besides the summer retreat, Buddhist religious feasts were conducted on various occasions. The fifteenth day of the fifth month of the lunar calendar was one of the most important feast days for Dunhuang Buddhist monasteries. In the ninth to eleventh centuries, it was customary for the local Chinese government of Dunhuang to conduct the *guanzhai* 官齋 'official Buddhist feast' on that day. This custom was seemingly inherited by the Tanguts in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and later by Uyghurs under the Mongols, as suggested by many Old Uyghur and Mongolian graffiti inscriptions dated to this occasion in the Dunhuang caves.[75] The aforementioned Syro-Uyghur Christian graffiti of Yulin Cave 16 also has the same date, and its authors, the Christian Uyghurs, stayed there for more than two days.[76] Apparently, they participated in and enjoyed the Buddhist feast on that day, leaving offerings for the monastery and a memorial graffiti.

Mainstream Buddhism had six *poṣadha* (→ Uyg. *posat* ~ Chin. *busa* 布薩) days, namely the eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, twenty-third, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth of every month of the lunar calendar. On these days the monks conducted a repentance ceremony and preached to laypeople. The Buddhist Uyghurs likewise followed this code, as suggested by memorial graffiti written on 'the day of the *poṣadha* commandment' (*posat bačay kün*).[77] A newly introduced Uyghur graffiti inscription from the Toyoq cave refers to the fourteenth day of the fourth month as *suv yayïš kün* 'the day of flowing water', likely a type of feast day.[78] There are many more instances of Uyghur memorial graffiti on the back sides of Chinese Buddhist manuscripts brought from the Toyoq caves to the St Petersburg collection, and their dates are worthy of further comparative analysis.[79]

---

74 Zieme 2013a, 188–189.

75 Matsui 2017, nos 56, 97, 110, 111, 119, 121, 129, 138, 141, 142, 145, 146, 147, 275.

76 Matsui 2017, no. 197; Matsui 2018, 38–39. See also the text cited in Section 2 above.

77 Matsui 2017, nos 167, 168, 201. For similar instances of Uyghur Buddhist colophons, see Kasai 2008, 56, 132, 133, 209, 240.

78 Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, 26, relate 'the day of flowing water' to the Buddhist ceremony of *yufojie* 浴佛節 'Buddha Bathing Festival', though this ceremony should have been held on the Buddha's birthday, that is, the 8th of the 2nd/4th month.

79 Matsui 2004, 61. One of the texts (4b Kr/12, now renumbered as SI 4029 at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg) is dated to the eighth day of the second month, that is, Śākyamuni Buddha's birthday.

Some caves depicted the Buddha or principal deities on their central pillar or set their statues on a main, central seat. In such caves, the ritual of *weirao* 圍遶 'to circle the Buddha three times with one's right shoulder facing in' would have been conducted. In the Hohhot Buddhist pagoda, climbing up the internal spiral staircase and circumambulating the corridor would correspond to the *weirao* ritual, which was apparently referred to as *tägzinmäk* 'to revolve, rotate' (← v. *tägzin- ~ täzgin-*) in Old Uyghur.[80] This Uyghur phrase was also used in graffiti in Dunhuang and Turfan, seemingly in its original sense 'to travel around; to visit many grottoes'.[81] Newly published instances from the Toyoq caves attest to the practice of 'pulling the pearl/jewel' (*monču*q *tart-*), the reality of which is not well understood, though it apparently entails the Buddhist rosary (Chin. *shuzhu* 數珠).[82]

Sometimes the pilgrims mentioned their offerings (*čodpa*, *yayïš*) to the monastery, such as fruit (*yemiš*), sheep (*qoyn*), and beer (*sorma*).[83] We may cite an instance written by a local Uyghur governor in memory of his visit to a cave of Dong-Qianfodong 東千佛洞 'the Eastern Thousand-Buddha Caves', some 150 km east of the Dunhuang Mogao caves. The term *daruyačï* 'governor general', a loanword from Mongolian, clearly dates this inscription to the Mongol period.

> 1*qoyn yïl* aram *ay on üč-tä* 2*qaču-nïng čopan-ï-nïng oylï* 3*äsän quḍluy atlïy q(aču)-ta* 4*daruyačï bolup tay-qa barïp kali* 5*tungur-täki on beš kiši birlä kali tungur-*6*ta tay sümä qonïp bo bitig-ni* 7*bitip bardïmïz ärti bo bitig-ni* 8*biz-tin sangïk qalyan? yemiš-lär* 9*uluy kenki-lär körüp qaqïmïš bolmazun* 10*män tämür äsän qutluy bitiy[ü]* 11*qodtïm qut[luy bolzun]* 12*ädgü-lüg kälzün* 13*nišanim č[ïztïm]*
>
> 1The Sheep year, the first month, on the thirteenth day.
> 2[I,] the son of the mayor of Guazhou, 3–4named Äsän-Qutluy, have been (assigned to) the governor general (*daruyačï*) of Guazhou, visited (caves in) the mountain, 5–6stayed at the mountain temple of the Kali caves (Uyg. *tungur* ← Chin. *dongku* 洞窟 'cave, grotto') together with fifteen people (resident) in the Kali caves, 7wrote this writing, and we have departed. 8–9Even seeing the (small quantity of) fruit left for the monastery by us, 9may the noble posterity not be angry! 10I, Tämür and Äsän-Qutluy, wrote and 11left (this). May it be auspicious! 12May prosperity come! 13I drew my mark (here).
>
> (Matsui 2017, no. 281. See Figs 13 and 14)

80 Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, Texts J, R, T.
81 Matsui 2017, no. 197; Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, no. 47.
82 Fu Ma and Xia Lidong 2021, 187–188, explain this practice as counting the 108 beads on the Buddhist rosary, while Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021a, 161, interpret it simply as 'meditation'.
83 Matsui 2017, nos 37, 146, 159, 183, 281; Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, no. 66.



Fig. 13: The wall painting of Four-armed Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva of the Xixia period; Dong-Qianfodong Cave 2, Guazhou, Gansu, *c.* eleventh to twelfth century CE; based on Zhang Baoxi 2012, 103 (Plate 5), with modifications.



Fig. 14: Uyghur graffiti inscription in the encircled space in Fig. 13; Dong-Qianfodong Cave 2, Guazhou, Gansu, *c.* thirteenth to fourteenth century CE; based on Zhang Baoxi 2012, 66 (Fig. 49); text: Matsui 2017, no. 281.

This graffiti inscription may suggest that the visitor and author, Äsän-Qutluγ, conducted his pilgrimage in token of his assignment to the governor general of Guazhou. In contemporaneous Yuan China, local governors generally paid great honour to Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian monasteries in the regions under their control, and it was their important duty to maintain those monastic facilities: fulfilling this duty earned them the great admiration of local society, and even homages in memory of this deed were prepared by Chinese literati and realized as stele inscriptions.

Äsän-Qutluγ, however, may have chosen the immediate reward of self-praise instead of future kudos from others. The phrase 'even seeing the (small quantity of) fruit left for the monastery by us, may the noble posterity not be angry!' should not be understood literally, but interpreted as a modest expression for his sizeable donation to the monastery. Local governor chiefs (as seen in other graffiti inscriptions), as well as envoys (*elči*) from the Mongol royal families, also

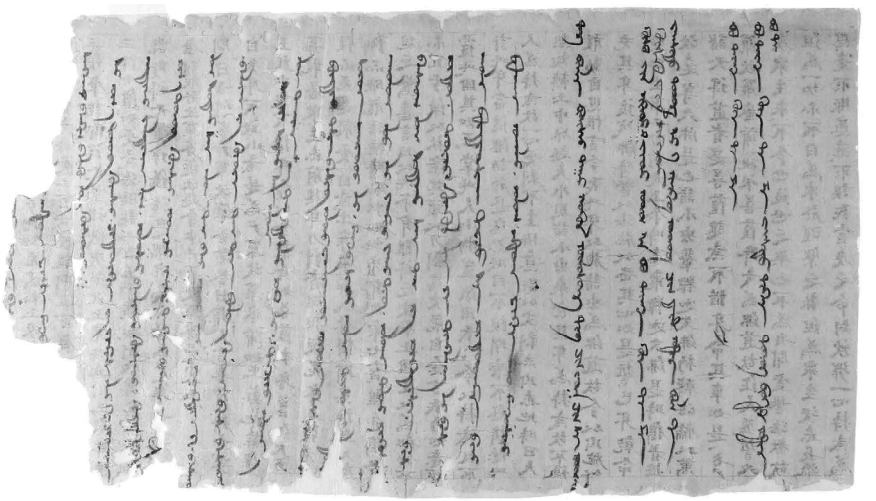


Fig. 15: Uyghur memorial writings (lines 18–24 from left) on the back side of a Chinese Buddhist scroll; seemingly from the Toyoq caves, Turfan, Xinjiang, *c*. thirteenth century CE; SI 4033 (4b Kr/16a); Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg; based on Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences and the Toyo Bunko 2021, 378 (Plate 22). The text reads: 19*küskü yïl ikinti ay yeti otuz-qa bo tavγač küen-tä män* 21*yaqšidu tutung qy-a erikip o[l]urup čïzdïm ödig bolzun* '19The Rat year, the second month, on the twenty-seventh day. On this Chinese scroll, I, 21Yaqšidu-*tutung*, staying (here) in boredom, depicted (this). May it be memorialized!'; cf. Matsui 2010, 700; Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences and the Toyo Bunko 2021, 251, no. 553.

supported the Buddhist monasteries with such material donations.[84] It is also highly likely that lay visitors were required to make donations to be allowed to leave memorial inscriptions on the walls of the sanctuary caves.

While Mahayana Buddhism generally prohibits eating meat, the aforementioned Syro-Uyghur Christian graffiti from the Yulin cave openly mentions sheep (*xoyn ~ qoyn*) as food (*aš*), that is, to be slaughtered.[85] Both a twelfth-century Chinese source and Marco Polo in the Mongol era further report that Buddhist Uyghurs practised the ritual slaughtering of sheep, which could be referred to in Uyghur as *čodpa*, derived from the Tibetan *mchod pa* 'offering; sacrifice'.[86]

84 Matsui 2017, nos 15, 37, 145, 167, 215.

85 Matsui 2017, no. 197; Matsui 2018, 38–39. Also see Section 2 above in the present paper.

86 As Uyghur words for 'offering, donation', *lab* (← Skt. *labhā*) and *bušï* (← Chin. *bushi* 布施) had taken root not only among the Buddhist Uyghurs, but also among the Manichaens and Christians. See Matsui 2008b, 24–25; Matsui 2017, 83. Cf. Porció 2014, 173.

Interestingly, some pilgrims and visitors expressed their honest feelings about religious activities in the graffiti inscriptions on the cave walls: for them, a stay at the cave temples and the associated religious practices were boring (*erikip* ← v. *erik-* 'to be bored').[87] One pilgrim even complains that the training (*iš küč*) at the summer retreat (*üč ay*) is distressing (*sïqïš*).[88] Many other Uyghur Buddhist pilgrims also recorded such feelings in their memorial scribbles in the margins or on the back sides of Chinese Buddhist scrolls, from which they learned Buddhism during their stay at the cave temples (Fig. 15).[89]

6 Geographical sphere of Old Uyghur pilgrimages and travels

As mentioned above, the Uyghurs placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Mongol Empire in the early thirteenth century. Many Uyghurs were appointed high officials and bureaucrats of the Mongol courts, and under the Mongols, they vastly extended their sphere of activity across the eastern half of Eurasia, as attested by Chinese narrative and biographical sources of the Mongol Yuan era.[90] The Old Uyghur Buddhist texts retrieved from Turfan and Dunhuang include a large number of block-print fragments published by technologically advanced printing offices in Yuan China, suggesting the Uyghurs' close Buddhist cultural ties across the eastern half of Eurasia.[91] Such circulation of Buddhist works and merchandise from China is also attested by some secular Uyghur documents.[92]

87 Fu Ma and Xia Lidong 2021, I-10; Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021a, 163; Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021b, nos 10, 56, 76.

88 For *sïqïš* 'distress, heavy burden', I modify the previous readings and interpretations by Fu Ma and Xia Lidong 2021, 184–186 (*saqïš* 'number') and Li Gang and Zhang Hailong 2021a, 158–159 ('finished').

89 Matsui 2004, 51; Matsui 2010, 703; Porció 2014, 165.

90 For examples of Uyghur families of noble bureaucrats who migrated to China proper and culturally assimilated into China, see Brose 2005.

91 See Zieme and Kudara 1985, 29–35 on the Old Uyghur Buddhist canons printed in the Yuan capital of Dadu 大都, present-day Beijing, and in Hangzhou 杭州, the former capital of the Southern Song dynasty.

92 See Moriyasu 1982 for Old Uyghur letter correspondence, excavated from Dunhuang, on the transaction of Uyghur Buddhist canons being translated by Uyghur high priests of the Yuan court; see Moriyasu 1988 on the circulation of *qïngsay tavar* 'damask of Hangzhou' (Uyg. *qïngsay* ← Chin. Xingzai 行在, an alias of Hangzhou) as a luxury item among Buddhist Uyghurs.

Declaring the homeland or starting point of the scribes, Old Uyghur visitors' graffiti and pilgrim inscriptions can provide evidence for the reality of the geographically extensive mobility of the Uyghurs. In particular, the graffiti inscriptions of the Dunhuang grottoes may reveal a sphere of activity extending from their homeland in East Turkestan (Fig. 1). Of the Uyghur (and Mongol) visitors and pilgrims to Dunhuang in the Mongol era, the majority of those from the west were inhabitants of *Qamïl* (present-day Qomul = Hami 哈密),[93] while those from the east came mainly from *Sügčü* = Suzhou (present-day Jiuquan).[94] Both Qomul and Suzhou were neighbouring cities of Dunhuang, and, during the Mongol period, the Uyghur inhabitants of the latter were mostly immigrants from East Turkestan. Also attested are *Bešbalïq*, *Qočo*, *Turpan* (= Turfan = Tulufan 吐魯番), *Čambalïq* (present-day Changji 昌吉, west of Urumchi = Wulumuqi 烏魯木齊), and *Napčik* (present-day Lapchuq = Lafuqueke 拉甫卻克, *c.* 65 km west of Qomul) as the main cities of the Uyghur kingdom,[95] as well as *Qamču* (← Ganzhou 甘州, present-day Zhangye 張掖), *Yung-čang* (← Yongchang 永昌, between Zhangye and Wuwei 武威), and *Isinai* (→ Yijinai 亦集乃 of Yuan, the ruined city of Khara-khoto or Heishuicheng 黑水城 in present-day Ejina 額濟納, Inner Mongolia) along the Gansu Corridor.[96]

In addition to the main cities of Uyghur habitation, pilgrims also came from more distant places. Two Dunhuang graffiti were written by a visitor from *Tangut-čölgä* 'the Circuit of the Tanguts', which corresponds to Yuan-era name Xixia-lu 西夏路 (= Ningxia-lu 寧夏路), that is, present-day Yinchuan 銀川 in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, north-west China.[97] Two groups of visitors arrived at the Yulin caves from further east, *Aqbalïq ~ Aq-Balïq* 'the White City', the Turkic toponym for the city of Zhending 眞定, present-day Zhengding 正定 in the Hebei Province of China proper (Fig. 16).[98] We also see that pilgrims left the Yulin caves for *Uday*, a partial transcription of Chinese Wutaishan 五臺山 or Mt Wutai, the

93 Matsui 2017, nos 39, 53, 161, 220, 226, 251.

94 Matsui 2017, nos 20, 32, 50, 78, 137, 149, 163, 165, 167, 180, 230, 246, 250, 261.

95 Matsui 2017, nos 13, 31, 37, 162, 248, 231.

96 Matsui 2017, nos 169, 176, 227, 255.

97 Matsui 2013, 43–44; Matsui 2017, nos 13, 14. Cf. Fig. 4 (B) above.

98 Matsui 2016a, 285; Matsui 2017, nos 160, 208. The Uyghur-Turkic *Aqbalïq ~ Aq-Balïq* is referred to as *achbaluch* by Marco Polo, and corresponds to the Mongolian *Čayan-Balyasun* 'the White City', which is transcribed as *Čaġān Balġasūn* in the Persian source of the Ilkhanid Iran. See Moule and Pelliot 1938, 257; Pelliot 1959, 8–9; Sugiyama 1990, 15–16.



Fig. 16: Uyghur graffiti inscription by visitors from Aqbalïq (present-day Zhengding); Yulin Cave 12, Guazhou, Gansu, *c*. thirteenth to fourteenth century CE; after Hamilton and Niu Ruji 1998, 168. The text reads: $_{1}$*biz aqbalïq-ta liu sinpo lu ödigä* $_{2}$*sigu (..)D(...)W üčägü qaču* $_{3}$*süm kälip* 'We three, Liu Sinpo, Lu Ödigä, and Sigü (..)D(...)W of Aqbalïq, came (to) the temple of Guazhou, and ....' (Matsui 2017, no. 160, lines 1–3). The first two visitors have apparently Chinese surnames (*Liu* and *Lu*), while the name of the third, *Sigu*, seems to be a transcription of a Tangut surname ^{2}*si:* ^{2}*gyu* (→ Chin. *Jiwu* 即兀).

renowned sanctuary of Manjuśri Bodhisattva, located in Shanxi Province, North China (Fig. 5 A, B).[99]

Notably, these minor nodes and terminals of the Buddhist Uyghur pilgrimage network overlap with the locations of the one hundred Buddhist temples to which Yïymïš (→ Chin. Yiheimishi 亦黑迷失), a distinguished Uyghur official of the Yuan court, made donations.[100] The White Pagoda of Hohhot also received pilgrims from cities in the Uyghurs homeland of East Turkestan, such as *Qamïl*, *Čambalïq*, and *Toqsïn* (present-day Toqsun = Tuokesun 托克逊, ca. 80 km to the west of Turfan).[101] The extent of the Buddhist Uyghur spheres of mobility and pilgrimage was likely closely related to the commercial activities of Uyghur merchants on the Silk Road.[102] Furthermore, the Buddhist networks extending to Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Fujian were likely shared with Christian Uyghurs.[103]

7 Conclusion

This paper has described the Old Uyghur texts written on walls of Central Asian Buddhist cave temples by Uyghur visitors and pilgrims as 'graffiti inscriptions', and outlined their contents and peculiarities from the viewpoint of Old Uyghur history of the tenth to fourteenth century.

The variety of scripts and languages used in the graffiti inscriptions clearly reflects the multilingual and multi-religious culture established among the Old Uyghurs, and their interaction with other cultural entities such as Indo-Tocharian, Tibetan, Chinese, and Mongolian.

As Porció has previously pointed out, the Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions of the Buddhist cave temples are of course to be related to Buddhist culture, and find a position within Uyghur Buddhist literature, sharing various elements with paper manuscripts and block prints. Considering how casually and carelessly these

99 Matsui 2014, 38; Matsui 2017, nos 128, 130; Kasai 2020, 27; Raschmann 2020, 206–207; Zieme 2021c, 231–232.

100 See Chen Dezhi 2008; Matsui 2016a, 286–287; Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, 47–53; and Fu Ma 2022, for the inscription in honor of Yïymïš preserved at the Quanzhou Maritime Museum (Quanzhou 泉州, Fujian). Among the destinations of his donations, we find Zhendìng 眞定 (= Uyg. *Aq-Balïq*), Ningxia 寧夏 (= Uyg. *Tangut*), and Xiliang 西涼 (present-day Wuwei).

101 Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, Texts E, J, K, L, T.

102 Noteworthy in this respect is a Uyghur contract document of an agreement to drive a Buddhist master (*baxšï*) and his loads from Heishuicheng to Suzhou. See Umemura and Matsui 2008, 185–186. Furthermore, see Matsui 2008a, 170–171.

103 Matsui 2016a, 287–290; cf. Bai Yudong and Matsui 2016, 47, 49–51, 53.

graffiti inscriptions were written, the Buddhist literary elements they contain may reflect what kinds of clichés and stock phrases were extracted from the canonical texts and used daily among Buddhist Uyghurs.

The graffiti inscriptions also display various aspects of the daily activities of Uyghur pilgrims and visitors to the cave temples. They devoted themselves to Buddhist practices and disciplines, during which they produced the manuscripts of Old Uyghur Buddhist works that have come down to us. Alongside such piety (as also discerned in Buddhist manuscript colophons), however, some of the graffiti inscriptions disclose their true feelings that Buddhist practices and discipline were not always joyful for them.

The geographical sphere of Uyghur travel and pilgrimage can be detected from information in the graffiti inscriptions. It has been revealed by both the Old Uyghur texts unearthed in Central Asia and Chinese narrative sources that Buddhist and Christian Uyghurs extended their range of activity across the eastern half of Eurasia, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The information from graffiti inscriptions likewise suggests such a situation, in addition to offering more details on the increase of Uyghur mobility in the Mongol period; moreover, it allows for evaluating the religious significance of each cave temple site as a Buddhist sanctuary.

The arguments I have presented above, however, may still be regarded as tentative, as they are based on the corpus of Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions, which is far from complete. I have conducted fieldwork on Dunhuang Uyghur graffiti at only some 150 of the 800-odd caves of the Dunhuang grottoes; smaller Buddhist cave sanctuaries scattered throughout East Turkestan and the Gansu Corridor also reportedly preserve Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions that have not yet been made available to researchers.[104] While we may also expect new archaeological findings from present-day Xinjiang, especially the Turfan region, the materials previously excavated or retrieved, as well as those offered in my edition, deserve further analysis and revision.

It may be noted that Uyghur graffiti inscriptions have thus far mainly been transcribed with the naked eye or photographed with rather simple equipment. However, the graffiti inscriptions on the walls of the Central Asian cave temples are fading, becoming fainter and being more difficult to decipher and photograph. Moreover, they could be accidentally damaged or broken amid preservation work on the cave wall, if adequate precautions are not taken. We expect that further developments in optical scientific methods will aid in detecting and deciphering

104 For yet unedited Old Uyghur graffiti, see, e.g. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 1991, *passim*; Raschmann 2020.

the faded graffiti inscriptions, and that exhaustive investigations will rigorously collate data from graffiti inscriptions at various archaeological sites.

Summing up, the historical reality of the Old Uyghurs – as seen from their graffiti inscriptions – will always need future revisions and amendments in the light of new textual information. It is also a future task to elucidate the connection between Buddhist Uyghur religious trends and their preference in pilgrimage caves, comparing the textual information from graffiti inscriptions with Buddhist mural paintings. For a holistic investigation of Old Uyghur graffiti inscriptions, it is necessary to constantly search for new methodologies.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP20H013240.

Abbreviations

Chin. = Chinese
Skt. = Sanskrit
Tib. = Old Tibetan
Uyg. = Old Uyghur
v. = verbal stem

References

Arakawa, Shintarō 荒川慎太郎 (2017), 'Tonkō sekkutsu Seika-bun daiki meibun shūsei' 敦煌石窟西夏文題記銘文集成, in Matsui and Arakawa 2017, 241–333.

Borbone, Pier Giorgio (2013), 'More on the Priest Särgis in the White Pagoda', in Li Tang and Dietmar W. Winkler (eds), *From the Oxus River to the Chinese Shores*, Berlin: Lit, 51–65.

Brose, Michael C. (2005), *Subjects and Masters: Uyghurs in the Mongol Empire*, Western Washington: Western Washington University.

Chen Aifeng 陳愛峰, Chen Yuzhen 陳玉珍 and Matsui Dai 松井太 (2020), 'Da-Taoergou di-9 ku bashisi dachengjiuzhe tuxiang bukao' 大桃兒溝第 9 窟八十四大成就者圖像補考, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究, 5: 63–76.

Chen Dezhi 陳得芝 (2008), 'Cong Yiheimishi shenfen kan Make Boluo' 從亦黑迷失身份看馬可波羅, *Yanjing xuebao* 燕京學報, 26: 39–57.

Cleaves, Francis Woodman (1955), 'An Early Mongolian Loan Contract from Qara Qoto', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 18: 1–49.

Duan Wenjie 段文傑 (ed.) (1996), *Zhongguo Dunhuang bihua quanji 10: Dunhuang, Xixia, Yuan* 中國敦煌壁畫全集 10: 敦煌西夏元, Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe.

Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院 (ed.) (1986), *Dunhuang Mogaoku gongyangren tiji* 敦煌莫高窟供養人題記, Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe.
Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院 (ed.) (2014), *Yulinku* 榆林窟, Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe.
Durkin-Meisterernst, Desmond, Simone-Christiane Raschmann, Jens Wilkens, Marianne Yaldiz and Peter Zieme (eds) (2004), *Turfan Revisited: The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
Elverskog, Johan (1997), *Uygur Buddhist Literature*, Turnhout: Brepols.
Fu Ma 付馬 (2022), 'Hanghaijia Yiheimishi de muyu shiyan' 航海家亦黑迷失的母語誓言, *Haijiaoshi yanjiu* 海交史研究, 3: 61–70.
Fu Ma 付馬 and Xia Lidong 夏立棟 (2021), 'Comprehensive Study on Old Uighur and Chinese Wall Inscriptions in Room B of Newly Excavated Cave 26 in Tuyuq Grottoes, Turfan', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 74/2: 181–206.
Gabain, Annemarie von (1974), *Alttürkische Grammatik*, 3rd edn, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
Geng Shimin 耿世民 and Zhang Baoxi 張寶璽 (1986), 'Yuan Huigu-wen "Zhongxiu Wenshusi-bei" chushi' 元回鶻文《重修文殊寺碑》初釋, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報, 2: 253–264 and Plates 19–20.
Hamilton, James and Niu Ruji 牛汝極 (1998), 'Inscriptions ouïgoures des grottes bouddhiques de Yulin', *Journal Asiatique*, 286: 127–210.
Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences 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.
Iwao, Kazushi 岩尾一史 (2017), 'Tonkō sekkutsu Chibetto-go meibun shūsei' 敦煌石窟チベット語銘文集成, in Matsui and Arakawa 2017, 199–239.
Kasai, Yukiyo (2008), *Die uigurischen buddhistischen Kolophone* (Berliner Turfantexte, 26), Turnhout: Brepols.
Kasai, Yukiyo (2020), 'The Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, Mt. Wutai, and Uyghur Pilgrims', *BuddhistRoad Paper*, 5/4: 3–39.
Kitsudō, Kōichi 橘堂晃一 (2017a), 'Tonkō sekkutsu Burāfumī moji daiki meibun shūsei' 敦煌石窟ブラーフミー文字題記銘文集成, in Matsui and Arakawa 2017, 163–198 and Figs 1, 2, 8.
Kitsudō, Koichi 橘堂晃一 (2017b), 'Bezekuriku sekkutsu kuyō biku-zu saikō' ベゼクリク石窟供養比丘圖再考, in Miyaji Akira 宮治昭 (ed.), *Ajia bukkyō bijutsu ronshū, Chūō Ajia 1, Gandāra – Tōzai Torukisutan* アジア佛教美術論集：中央アジア 1：ガンダーラ～東西トルキスタン, Tokyo: Chūō kōron bijutsu shuppan, 523–550.
Li Gang 李剛 and Umar Kadir 吾買爾・卡得爾 (2020), 'Tulufan baixiha shiku cancun Huigu-wen tiji shaokao' 吐魯番伯西哈石窟殘存回鶻文題記少考, *Studies on the Inner Asian Languages*, 35: 25–37.
Li Gang 李剛 and Zhang Hailong 張海龍 (2021a), 'Tulufan Tuyugou 10-hao ku xinfaxian zhi Huigu-wen tiji kaoshi' 吐魯番吐峪溝 10 號窟新發現之回鶻文題記考釋, *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究, 1: 152–164.
Li Gang 李剛 and Zhang Hailong 張海龍 (2021b), 'Uyghur Wall Inscriptions Newly Discovered in the Cave 26 of the Tuyuq Grottoes of Turfan (II)', *Studies on the Inner Asian Languages*, 36: 23–59.
Liu Yongzeng 劉永增 (2014), 'Guazhou Yulinku di-3 ku de niandai wenti' 瓜州榆林窟第 3 窟的年代問題, *Yishu sheji yanjiu* 藝術設計研究, 4: 16–23.
Matsui, Dai 松井太 (2004), 'Shivushidu Yakushidu kankei monjo to Toyoku sekkutsu no Bukkyō kyōdan' シヴシドゥ・ヤクシドゥ關係文書とトヨク石窟の佛教教團, in Moriyasu

Takao 森安孝夫 (ed.), *Chūō Ajia shutsudo bunbutsu ronsō* 中央アジア出土文物論叢, Kyoto: Hoyu shoten, 41–70.
Matsui, Dai (2008a), 'A Mongolian Decree from the Chaghataid Khanate Discovered at Dunhuang', in Peter Zieme (ed.), *Aspects of Research into Central Asian Buddhism: In Memoriam Kōgi Kudara*, Turnhout: Brepols, 159–178.
Matsui, Dai (2008b), 'Revising the Uigur Inscriptions of the Yulin Caves', *Studies on the Inner Asian Languages*, 23: 17–32.
Matsui, Dai (2009), 'Recent Situation and Research Trends of Old Uigur Studies', *Asian Research Trends: New Series*, 4: 37–59.
Matsui, Dai (2010), 'Uigur Manuscripts Related to the Monks Sivšidu and Yaqšidu at "Abita-Cave Temple" of Toyoq', in Xinjiang Tulufanxue yanjiuyuan 新疆吐魯番學研究院 (ed.), *Tulufanxue yanjiu: di-san jie Tulufanxue ji Ou-Ya youmu minzu de qiyuan yu qianxi guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 吐魯番學研究：第三屆吐魯番學暨歐亞游牧民族的起源與遷徙國際學術研討會論文集, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 697–714.
Matsui, Dai 松井太 (2013), 'Tonkō sho sekkutsu no Uiguru-go daiki meibun ni kansuru sakki (I)' 敦煌諸石窟のウイグル語題記銘文に關する箚記（一）, *Jinbun shakai ronsō* 人文社會論叢, 30: 29–50.
Matsui, Dai 松井太 (2014), 'Tonkō sho sekkutsu no Uiguru-go daiki meibun ni kansuru sakki (II)' 敦煌諸石窟のウイグル語題記銘文に關する箚記（二）, *Jinbun shakai ronsō* 人文社會論叢, 32: 27–44.
Matsui, Dai 松井太 (2015), 'Dunhuang Mogaoku Anxi Yulinku de Huigu-yu tiji' 敦煌莫高窟・安西榆林窟的回鶻語題記, in Abdurishid Yakup 阿不都熱西提·亞庫甫 (ed.), *Xiyu: Zhongya yuwen-xue yanjiu* 西域——中亞語文學研究, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 210–225.
Matsui, Dai (2016a), 'Mengyuan shidai Huigu Fojiaotu he Jingjiaotu de wangluo' 蒙元時代回鶻佛教徒和景教徒的網絡, in Xu Zhongwen 徐忠文 and Rong Xinjiang 榮新江 (eds), *Make Boluo*, *Yangzhou*, *Sichouzhilu* 馬可·波羅，揚州，絲綢之路, Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 283–293.
Matsui, Dai (2016b), 'Uigur-Turkic Influence as Seen in the Qara-Qota Mongolian Documents', in Nikolaj N. Telicin and J. N. Šen (eds), *Aktual'nye voprosy tjurkologičeskix issledovanij: K 180-letiju kafedry tjurkskoj filologii Sankt-Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* (*Актуальные вопросы тюркологических исследований: К 180-летию кафедры тюркской филологии Санкт-Петербургского государственного университета*), Sankt-Peterburg: Kafedra tjurkskoj filologii SPbGU, 559–564.
Matsui, Dai 松井 太 (2017), 'Tonkō sekkutsu Uiguru-go Mongoru-go daiki meibun shūsei' 敦煌石窟ウイグル語・モンゴル語題記銘文集成, in Matsui and Arakawa 2017, 1–160 and Figs 1, 3–7, 11.
Matsui, Dai 松井 太 (2018), 'Yulinku di-16 ku Xuliya-zi Huigu-wen Jingjiaotu tiji' 榆林窟第 16 窟叙利亞字回鶻文景教徒題記, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究, 2: 34–39.
Matsui, Dai (2019), 'Remarks on Buyan-Qaya, a Uighur Buddhist Pilgrim to Dunhuang', in Zekine Özertural and Gökhan Şilfeler (eds), *Unter dem Bodhi-Baum: Festschrift für Klaus Röhrborn anlässlich des 80. Geburtstags überreicht von Kollegen, Freunden und Schülern*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 209–224.
Matsui, Dai (2021), 'Two Remarks on the Toyoq Caves and Abita Qur "Abita Cave"', *Pis'mennye Pamiatniki Vostoka (Письменные памятники Востока)*, 18/3: 37–50.
Matsui, Dai (2022), 'Bir Eski Uygur duvar metnine göre Koço Uygur krallığında Budist manastırların himayesi', in Osman Fikri Sertkaya, Günay Karaağaç and Mesut Şen (eds), *Prof. Ceval Kaya armağanı*, Ankara: Akçağ, 335–345.

Matsui, Dai 松井太 and Arakawa Shintarō 荒川慎太郎 (eds) (2017), *Tonkō sekkutsu tagengo shiryō shūsei* 敦煌石窟多言語資料集成, Fuchu (Tokyo): Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asian and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

Maue, Dieter (1996), *Alttürkische Handschriften, Teil 1: Dokumente in Brāhmī und tibetischer Schrift*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner.

Maue, Dieter and Klaus Röhrborn (1984), 'Ein "buddhistischer Katechismus" in alttürkischer Sprache und tibetischer Schrift (Teil 1)', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 134: 286–313.

Maue, Dieter and Klaus Röhrborn (1985), 'Ein "buddhistischer Katechismus" in alttürkischer Sprache und tibetischer Schrift (Teil 2)', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 135: 68–91.

Mirkamal, Aydar 阿衣達爾・米爾卡馬力 and Yang Fuxue 楊富學 (2012), 'Dunhuang Mogaoku 464-ku Huigu-wen bangti yanjiu' 敦煌莫高窟 464 窟回鶻文榜題研究, *Minzu yuwen* 民族語文, 3: 78–81.

Moriyasu, Takao (1982), 'An Uigur Buddhist's Letter of the Yüan Dynasty from Tun-huang', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko*, 40: 1–18.

Moriyasu, Takao 森安孝夫 (1985), 'Chibetto moji de kakareta Uiguru-bun Bukkyō kyōri mondō (P. t. 1292) no kenkyū' チベット文字で書かれたウイグル文佛教教理問答（P. t. 1292）の研究, *Osaka Daigaku Bungakubu kiyō* 大阪大學文學部紀要, 25: 1–85 and 1 plate.

Moriyasu, Takao 森安孝夫 (1988), 'Tonkō shutsudo Gen-dai Uiguru monjo chū no Kinsai donsu' 敦煌出土元代ウイグル文書中のキンサイ緞子, in *Enoki Hakushi shōju kinen tōyōshi ronsō* 榎博士頌壽記念東洋史論叢, Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 417–441.

Moriyasu, Takao 森安孝夫 (1991), *Uiguru-Manikyō-shi no kenkyū* ウイグル=マニ教史の研究 = *Osaka Daigaku Bungakubu kiyō* 大阪大學文學部紀要, 31–32.

Moriyasu, Takao (2004a), *Die Geschichte des uigurischen Manichäismus an der Seidenstraße*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Moriyasu, Takao (2004b), 'From Silk, Cotton and Copper Coin to Silver: Transition of the Currency Used by the Uighurs during the Period from the 8th to the 14th Centuries', in Durkin-Meisterernst et al. 2004, 228–239.

Moriyasu, Takao (2008) 'Chronology of West Uighur Buddhism', in Peter Zieme (ed.), *Aspects of Research into Central Asian Buddhism: In Memoriam Kōgi Kudara,* Turnhout: Brepols, 191–227.

Moule, Arthur Christopher and Paul Pelliot (1938), *Marco Polo: The Description of the World*, Vol. 1, London: George Routledge & Sons.

Niu Ruji 牛汝極 and Peter Zieme (1996), 'The Buddhist Refuge Formula: An Uigur Manuscript from Dunhuang', *Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları*, 6: 41–56.

Ölmez, Mehmet (2017), *Köktürkçe ve Eski Uygurca dersleri*, İstanbul: Kesit.

Pelliot, Paul (1959), *Notes on Marco Polo*, vol. 1, Paris: Imprimerie nationale.

Porció Tibor (2014), 'Some Peculiarities of the Uygur Buddhist Pilgrim Inscriptions', in Christoph Cueppers and Max Deeg (eds), *Searching for the Dharma, Finding Salvation: Buddhist Pilgrimage in Time and Space*, Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 157–178.

Raschmann, Simone-Christiane (2009), *Alttürkische Handschriften, Teil 14: Dokumente, Teil 2*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner.

Raschmann, Simone-Christiane (2020), 'Pilgrims in Old Uyghur Inscriptions: A Glimpse behind Their Records', in Carmen Meinert and Henrik Sørensen (eds), *Buddhism in Central Asia I: Patronage, Legitimation, Sacred Space, and Pilgrimage*, Leiden: Brill, 204–229.

Raschmann, Simone-Christiane and Osman Fikri Sertkaya (2016), *Alttürkische Handschriften, Teil 20: Alttürkische Texte aus der Berliner Turfansammlung im Nachlass Reşid Rahmeti Arat*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner.

Russell-Smith, Lilla (2005), *Uygur Patronage in Dunhuang*, Leiden: Brill.

Satō, Takayasu 佐藤貴保 (2017), 'Tonkō sekkutsu Seika-ki Kanbun bokusho kokubun shūsei' 敦煌石窟西夏期漢文墨書・刻文集成, in Matsui and Arakawa 2017, 335–362.

Shōgaito, Masahiro (1991), 'On Uighur Elements in Buddhist Mongolian Texts', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, 49: 27–49.

Shōgaito, Masahiro (2004), 'How Were Chinese Characters Read in Uighur?', in Durkin-Meisterernst et al. 2004, 321–324.

Shōgaito, Masahiro (2014), *The Uighur Abhidharmakośabhāṣya Preserved at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Sugiyama, Masa'aki 杉山正明 (1990), 'Gen-dai Mou-kan gappeki meireibun no kenkyū (I)' 元代蒙漢合壁命令文の研究(一), *Studies on the Inner Asian Languages*, 5: 1–31 and 2 plates.

Takahashi, Hidemi (2019), 'Syriac Christianity in China', in Daniel King (ed.), *The Syriac World*, London: Routledge, 625–652.

Takeuchi, Tsuguhito (2012), 'Old Tibetan Buddhist Texts from the Post-Tibetan Imperial Period (Mid-9th C. to Late 10th C.)', in Cristina Scherrer-Schaub (ed.), *Old Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 10th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, Leiden: Brill, 205–215.

Tulufanxue yanjiuyuan 吐魯番學研究院 (2020), 'Tulufan Baixiha shiku fajue jianbao' 吐魯番伯西哈石窟發掘簡報, *Tulufanxue yanjiu* 吐魯番學研究, 1: 92–106 and Plates 1–2.

Umemura, Hiroshi (1996), 'A Qočo Uyghur King Painted in the Buddhist Temple of Beshbalïq', in Ronald E. Emmerick (ed.), *Turfan, Khotan und Dunhuang*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 361–378.

Umemura, Hiroshi 梅村坦 and Matsui Dai 松井太 (2008), 'Uiguru-moji Thuruku-go monjo' ウイグル文字テュルク語文書, in Yoshida Jun'ichi 吉田順一 and Chimeddorji チメドドルジ (eds), *Harahoto shutsudo Mongoru monjo no kenkyū* ハラホト出土モンゴル文書の研究, Tokyo: Yuzankaku, 183–199.

Umemura, Hiroshi 梅村坦 and Min Byung-hoon 閔丙勳 (1995), 'Gug-lib Jung-ang Bag-mul-gwan jang Be-je-keu-lig byeog-hwa Wi-gu-leu myeong-mun si-seog' 國立中央博物館藏베제크릭壁畫 위구르銘文試釋, *Mi-sul cha-ryo* 美術資料, 55: 119–155.

von Le Coq, Albert (1913), *Chotscho*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.

Wilkens, Jens (2021), *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen.

Xie Zhiliu 謝稚柳 (1955), *Dunhuang yishu xulu* 敦煌藝術叙錄, Shanghai: Shanghai chuban gongsi.

Yakup, Abdurishid and Li Xiao (2019), 'A Philological Investigation of the Old Uighur Pilgrim Inscriptions Recently Discovered in the Cave NK 10 in the Tuyoq Grottoes of Turfan', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 72/4: 399–417.

Zhang Baoxi 張寶璽 (2012), *Guazhou Dong-Qianfodong Xixia shiku yishu* 瓜州東千佛洞西夏石窟藝術, Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe.

Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院考古研究所 (1991), *Beiting Gaochang Huigu fosi yizhi* 北庭高昌回鶻佛寺遺址, Shenyang: Liaoning meishu chubanshe.

Zieme, Peter (1977), 'Zwei Ergänzungen zu der christlichen Handschrift T II B 1', *Altorientalische Forschungen*, 5: 271–272 and Plates XIII–XIV.

Zieme, Peter (1985), *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen der Uiguren* (Berliner Turfantexte, 13), Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
Zieme, Peter (1992), *Religion und Gesellschaft im Uigurischen Konigreich von Qočo*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
Zieme, Peter (1998), 'Turkic Fragments in 'Phags-pa Script', *Studies on the Inner Asian Languages*, 13: 63–69 and Plates XVI–XVII.
Zieme, Peter (2011), 'Notes on the Religions in the Mongol Empire', in Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (eds), *Islam and Tibet*, Farnham: Ashgate, 177–187.
Zieme, Peter (2013a), 'A Brāhmaṇa Painting from Bäzäklik in the Hermitage of St. Petersburg and Its Inscriptions', in Tatiana Pang, Simone-Christiane Raschmann and Gerd Winkelhane (eds), *Unknown Treasures of the Altaic World in Libraries, Archives and Museums*, Berlin: Klaus Schwartz, 181–195.
Zieme, Peter (2013b), 'Stifter und Texte von der Seidenstraße nach Zeugnissen des alt-uigurischen Buddhismus', in Barbara Schuler (ed.), *Stifter und Mäzene und ihre Rolle in der Religion*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 43–55 and 190–193.
Zieme, Peter (2013c), 'Some Notes on Old Uighur Art and Texts', in Ryūkoku Daigaku Ajia bukkyō bunka kenkyū sentā 龍谷大学アジア仏教文化研究センター (ed.), *Torufan no bukkyō to bijutsu: Uiguru bukkyō wo chūshin ni* トルファンの仏教と美術：ウイグル仏教を中心に / *Buddhism and Art in Turfan: From the Perspective of Uyghur Buddhism*, Kyoto: Ryūkoku Daigaku Ajia bukkyō bunka kenkyū sentā, 5–42.
Zieme, Peter (2015a), *Altuigurische Texte der Kirche des Ostens aus Zentralasien*, Piscataway: Gorgias Press.
Zieme, Peter (2015b), 'Local Literatures: Uighur', in Jonathan A. Silk, Oskar von Hinüber and Vincent Eltschinger (eds), *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism, vol. 1: Literature and Languages*, Leiden: Brill, 871–882.
Zieme, Peter (2020), 'Notes on the Interpretation of the Toyok Inscription of the West Uyghur Kingdom', *Studies on the Inner Asian Languages*, 35: 1–24.
Zieme, Peter (2021a), 'Merit Transfer and Vow According to an Old Uyghur Buddhist Text from Qočo/Gaochang', *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University*, 24: 217–229.
Zieme, Peter (2021b), 'Scenes from the Lotus Sūtra: An Old Uygur Temple Banner with Cartouche Inscriptions', *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 27/1: 3–19.
Zieme, Peter (2021c), 'Mount Wutai and Mañjuśrī in Old Uigur Buddhism', in Susan Andrews, Jinhua Chen and Guang Kuan (eds), *The Transnational Cult of Mount Wutai*, Leiden: Brill, 223–237.
Zieme, Peter (2022), 'Avalokiteśvara mit altuigurischen Inschriften aus der Bäzäklik-Grotte 46', in Ines Konczak-Nagel, Satomi Hiyama and Astrid Klein (eds), *Connecting the Art, Literature, and Religion of South and Central Asia: Studies in Honour of Monika Zin,* New Delhi: Dev, 431–436.
Zieme, Peter and Kudara Kōgi 百濟康義 (1985), *Uiguru-go no Kanmuryōjukyō* ウイグル語の觀無量壽經, Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō.