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# An Uigur Document Preserved in the Library of Istanbul University

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## Introduction

The Library of Istanbul University (İstanbul Üniversitesi Merkez Kütüphanesi) preserves a collection of the Old Uigur texts, which are apparently brought from East Turkestan, most probably from Turfan basin.<sup>1</sup> Compared with the huge collections of Berlin, St. Petersburg, London, Kyoto and China, the Istanbul collection is rather small. However, as Kōgi Kudara noted, it is not negligible, since it has close connection with the Berlin collection.<sup>2</sup>

Seven secular documents belong to the Uigur collection. Five of them are contracts, partly published by Reşid Rahmeti Arat and Nobuo Yamada, later revised by Hiroshi Umemura, and finally compiled in SUK as Sa11, Lo18, Mi30, Mi31, Mi32.<sup>3</sup> One of the remaining texts is an administrative order for delivery of wine, and has been published by Yamada and later revised by me.<sup>4</sup> In this paper the remaining small fragment is edited for the first time.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Yamada 1968, pp. 15-17; Sertkaya / Kudara, Nos. 1-14, 18.I.(a), 19-21, 27-29, 35.

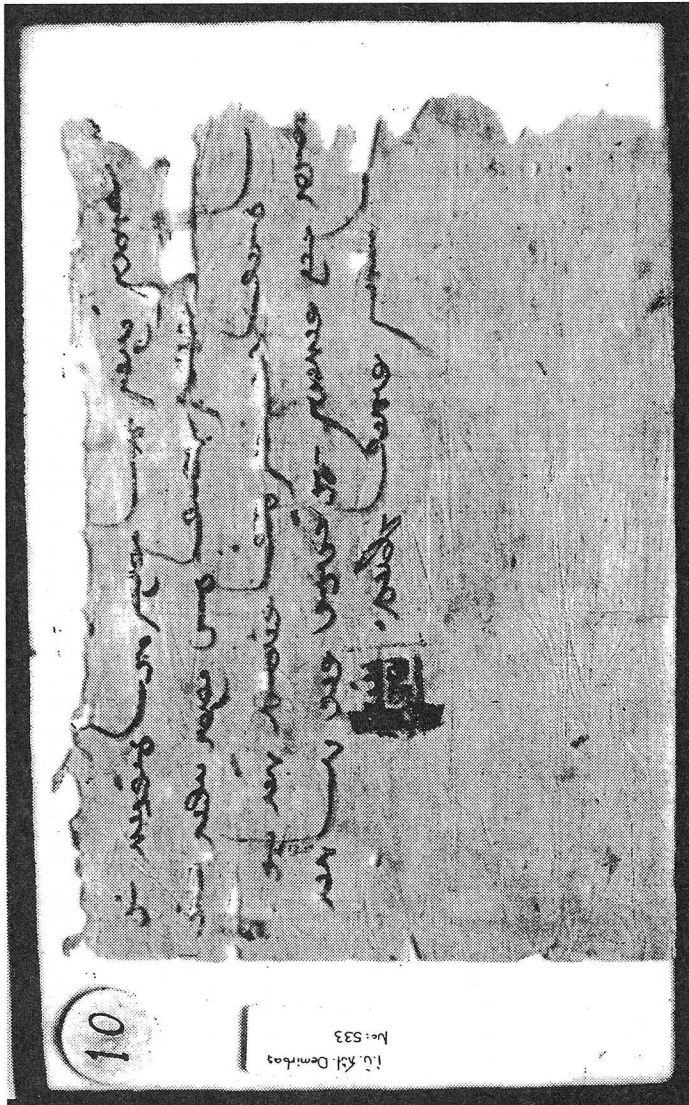
2 Kudara 1992, esp. pp. 143-140. Recently Ayşe Gül Sertkaya reported the situation in which the collection was brought to Istanbul. See Sertkaya, A. G. 2006.

3 Arat 1965 = Yamada 1968, Text 1 = Umemura 1977, Text 1 = SUK Sa11; Yamada 1968, Text 2 = SUK Lo18; Mi30, Mi31 and Mi32 were not published until SUK.

4 Yamada 1968, Text 3; Sertkaya / Kudara, No. 12; Matsui 1998a, Text IV = Matsui 1998b, Text 8 = Matsui 2006, Text 1.

5 I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Osman Fikri Sertkaya (the Institute of Turkic Studies, Istanbul University) and Dr. Yasemen Akçay (the Library of Istanbul University) for their kind permission for my research.





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## Notes

**1a, (..):** -WN ~ -WX ~ -T.

**1b, yosunča:** = Mong. *yosu(n)* “rule, law” + Uig. -ča (equative).

**1c, kälın:** ED, p. 719, “the wife of one’s younger brother or son; bride”.

**1d, oylan qy-a:** Here seemingly not a personal name but a word *oylan* “sons” with the diminutive *qy-a*.

**1e, tapmıř:** Here I regard it as a name of a person; It is also possible to take it for a perfective / gerund from v. *tap-* “to serve” dependent on “the bride and sons”.

**2a, üčün:** “for, since, because of, in order to”. The reading is certain.

**2b, siqap:** As it stands, initial letters are damaged: [...]X’P. However I would restore this place name, which is frequently attested in the Uigur secular texts. See SUK WP04, <sup>18</sup>*siqap ögän-täki yaşı-tün* “von den Ebenen am Fluß Siqap”; Mi25, <sup>4-5</sup>*siqap-ta üşdüñ aldın yir-tä yarımñı* “In Siqap von dem oberen und dem unteren Landstück eine Halfe”; T I α (= ETHV 124/040), <sup>4-5</sup>*siqap-taqı [al]tün-qı yir-tä* “of the land at downward (downstream?) in Siqap”; RH08, <sup>4-5</sup>*siqap-taqı yarım ayız yir* “half mouth of field in Siqap”; RH11, <sup>4-5</sup>*siqap-taqı ilči bilä ülüş-lüg manga tögär yarım ayız yirin* “half mouth of field, located in Siqap, belonging to me under joint ownership with İlči”; U 5963 (in the Berlin collection), line 6.<sup>8</sup>

If the place name Siqap is originated from Chinese, we may tentatively propose 西閘 *xi-ge* “western water gate” for its etymon,<sup>9</sup> since it is used as a name of an irrigation channel (Uig. *ögän*). Cf. SUK WP04 above.

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8 In the texts cited above Uig. *ängiz* “Stoppelfeld” by SUK is corrected into *ayız* “mouth; a measure for space”. See Matsui 2005a, pp. 36-47. T I α = ETHV 124/040 is to be jointed to the beginning of SUK Ex02. See Sertkaya, O. F. 2002, p. 283, though his *ängiz* is again to be read *ayız*, and *altın say* > *altın-qı* “beneath, below, downward.”

9 For Chin. 西 > Uig. SY = *si* / *sı*, see Shögaito 2003, p. 128. For the ancient pronunciation of 閘 \**kap*, see Pulleyblank, p. 106. The Uigur transcription of 閘 *ge* has not yet been attested, while the homophone 甲 *ge* is transcribed as X’P = *qap* ~ *qab* in Uigur. See Shögaito 1987, pp. 85, 140.

**2c, uluḡ aḡiz yir:** For *aḡiz* ~ *atiz* “field partitioned by irrigation; Feldstück zwischen Bewässerungsgräben”, see Zieme 1974, p. 303; Zieme 1980, p. 199; UW, pp. 260-261; SUK Sa03, Sa07, Sa13, RH02, Mi32. Here “the large partition of field located in Siḡap” might be related to *siḡap öḡän-täki yaši* “Ebenen am Fluß Siḡap” of SUK WP04 as mentioned above.

**3a, [ ]-’:** In comparison with line 1, we may restore [*oylan qy*]-a, or other personal names as [*Buq*]-a, [*Qay*]-a, [*Qar*]-a, etc. Anyway, the word in question is a subject of the following verbs: *tarip yizün*. See the next note.

**3b, tarip yizün:** “[one] shall cultivate [the field] and eat (i.e. live on) [its harvest]”. See SUK RH13<sup>9-11</sup> and the editors’ note.

**4:** Note that *ygrmi bir-kä* instead of *bir otuz-qa* is used for “on the twenty-first (day)”.

**5, nišan basip:** Uig. *tamya* means “a stamp, seal”, while *nišan* stands for “a sign, mark, signature, written seal” (< Pers. *nišan*). This is shown also by Uigur attestations *nišan čizip* “drawing *nišan*” and *tamya basip* “pressing (i.e. putting) *tamya*”.<sup>10</sup> However, the scribe of our fragment here clearly uses *nišan* as a word for “stamp, seal”, as is clear from the following word *basip* < v. *bas*- “press, stamp”. This usage can be an influence by Mongolian: the Mongolian decrees discovered from Turfan are

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10 For the attestations of *nišan*, see SUK RH13, <sup>14-16</sup>*bu yirm-ni yişün tip nišan čizip biḡig birdim*: “one shall eat (i.e. live on) my land. Thus saying, and drawing [my] signature, I gave the document”; Mi25 (with modifications), <sup>22-24</sup>*bu yir-lär-ni siḡidu mädiz bilä täng yişün tip öz nišan (.) čizip biḡip[sic!] birür-män* “Siḡidu and Mädiz shall eat these lands equally. Thus saying, drawing my own signature, I give the document (*biḡip* > *biḡig*)”; Mi31, <sup>14-15</sup>*nišan čizip [bu bitig?] bitidim* “Drawing signature, I wrote [this document]”; Or 12452 (B) 9 (= *Innermost Asia* III, pl. CXXVI), <sup>16-17</sup>*nišan čizip bitig idüm* “Drawing [my] signature, I send [this] letter”; U 5935 (in the Berlin collection), <sup>8-9</sup>*[nišan] čizip biḡig birtim*. For *tamya basip*, see U 5305 = USp 21, <sup>9-11</sup>*budaşiri-qa borluq-č’ birtimiz tip tamya-a-larimiz-ni basip birtimiz* “To Budaşiri we gave [Altia-Qaya as] a vineyard worker. Thus saying, pressing our seals, we gave [this document]” (cf. IUCD, No. 102); ETHV 116/031, <sup>7-8</sup>*tamya-a basip biḡig birdimiz* “pressing the seal, we gave [this] document”. Again I would express my thanks to Prof. Osman Fikri Sertkaya for offering me the photograph of the last document, whose original had belonged to the Berlin collection but was lost during the World War II.

stamped with black or red seals and referred to by the scribes themselves as *nišan-tu* (~ *nišatu* ~ *ništu*) *bičig* “mit Siegel versehen Schreiben”. See BTT XVI, Nm. 68-76, 78, 79, 84, 86.

## Preliminary Analysis

We can easily date this document to the Mongol times (13th – 14th cc.), basing on the following criteria: written in a rapid cursive script; the word *nišan* “signature” [see Note 5 above]; a loanword from Mongolian <sup>1</sup>*yosun* “law, rule”.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, noteworthy is the square black seal. Its shape is like “III” of Roman numerals and the inscription seemingly consists of three vertical lines. The inscription on the center line may be regarded as an illformed *g-e-i* = *gei* < Chin. 吉 \**gei* in 'Phags-pa script.<sup>12</sup> If my assumption is correct, the document certainly belongs to the Mongol times later than 1269 AD, when 'Phags-pa script was invented.

The extant text is too little for one to allow the fully understanding on the contexts of the document. Yet the phrase <sup>2-3</sup>*[sɪ](q)ap-taqi uluɣ aɖiz [y]ir ..... tariɣ yizün* “the large partition of field located in Siqap ..... shall cultivate [the field in Siqap] and eat (= live on) [its harvest]” suggests that the document should authorize the ownership or usufruct of the cultivated field in Siqap. Similar contexts also appear in other contracts (SUK Sa11<sup>9</sup>, RH13<sup>9-11, 14-15</sup>, Mi25<sup>2-4, 22-24</sup>, Mi28<sup>9-10</sup>). Nevertheless, all these contracts known thus far have the date at the beginning, in contrast with the present text which has the date at the end.<sup>13</sup> From the viewpoint of its format, our document is not likely to be a contract.

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11 On the criteria for dating (called “markers” by Moriyasu) of Uigur documents, see Moriyasu 2004, pp. 228-229.

12 The inscription of the seal of our fragment may be compared with that of “Qutluɣ-seal D” on the Uigur administrative orders, which Kōichi Yoshiike regards as the deformation of 'Phags-pa *gei* < Chin. 吉 \**gei*. See Yoshiike 2000, pp. 110-112.

13 Yamada 1967, pp. 88-89.

The closing phrase *idiim* “I sent” indicates that our document was a letter or correspondence, though the date is seldom given in Uigur letters, in particular at the end.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, one may compare the way our document gives its date at its end with a declaration form for census register,<sup>15</sup> four pledge documents submitted by the officials to the Uigur king İduq-qut,<sup>16</sup> and an official decree of tax-exemption issued under the Chaghataid ruler Duwa (r. 1282-1307).<sup>17</sup> They exemplify the Uigur official documents from the Mongol times and likely have been influenced by the contemporary Mongolian chancellery practice.<sup>18</sup> The Mongolian usage of the word *nišan* for “seal” found in our document also lends support to my presumption.

Although we need further comparable source materials for the final decision, I am currently inclined to regard our text as an official or administrative document, or, perchance, a decree of granting privileges (*soyurgal*) on the cultivated field in Siqap.<sup>19</sup>

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14 So far as I know, only the Uigur letters are dated: K 7715 = Tezcan / Zieme 1971, Text C; 4bKr 153v (in the St. Petersburg collection, unpublished); U 181 = Tezcan / Zieme 1971, Text B. The last enters the date at the end. It is written in semi-square script and is to be dated certainly to the West Uigur period (10th – 12th cc.). Cf. Moriyasu 1982, pp. 4-5, for the expression *X ay X-qatägi / -kätägi inč äsän bar turur* “(at least) up to the Xth of Xth month, I have been well and fine” as seen in the letters or correspondences.

15 U 5298 = Zieme 1982.

16 TM 244 = USp 40 = ETHV, p. 42, III = Sertkaya 1992, Text III; TM 239 = USp 41 = Sertkaya 1992, Text II; ETHV 215/67 = Sertkaya 1992, Text IV; U 5947 = Sertkaya 1992, Text V.

17 T III 253a Murtuq = ETHV77/01, lost in the World War II and not yet published. See Matsui 2005b, fn. 13.

18 For the format of the Mongolian administrative documents, see Ligeti 1972a; Ligeti 1972b; BTT XVI, pp. 165-167; Matsukawa 1995, pp. 36-44.

19 In the decree of *soyurgal* issued by Timurid Sultan Umar-Şayḥ (1469 AD) is attested a phrase similar to our text: <sup>11</sup>*özi alıp yisiün* “[they] shall eat (i.e. live on) [the harvest of the land] by themselves”. See Мелиоранский 1904, as well as the corrections placed by Ono 2006, *passim*.



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