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THE OFFICIAL SEALS AND CIPHERS OF THE YÜAN PERIOD

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While engaged in a study of the central government officialdom of the Mongolian Yüan dynasty, it occurred to me, after reading Walter Simon's article "A *H*Phags-pa Seal of 1295,"[1] that the official seals of the Yüan period would be first-class historical sources for establishing a correct official terminology. It is true that very few of the original seals are available for examination, but Chinese scholars of the past few centuries have compiled numerous catalogues of seal impressions, some of which contain those of Yüan seals. A quick survey of these materials showed that they were indeed a valuable supplement to the terminology contained in the standard literary sources like the *Yüan-shih* 元史 and the *Yüan-tien-chang* 元典章.

Nearly all of these seals are in the Chinese language written with the 'Phags-pa script in seal form, and thus are sources for the linguist studying the Chinese of the thirteenth and fourteenth century and the philologist studying the 'Phags-pa script.[2] For these reasons, it seemed worthwhile to publish the texts of a selection of these seals, and to attempt to solve some of the problems which they raise.

I. A Princely Seal—The Yisüngge Seal of 1262

The largest and earliest seal from the Chinese seal catalogues, and the one embodying the greatest problems in interpretation, is the seal given to the royal prince Yisüngge (Ch. I-hsiang-ko

1) *Asia Major* v. VI. 2 (1958), pp. 203–205.

2) See the survey of the recent literature on these topics by Paul B. Denlinger, "Chinese in HP'ags-pa Script," *Monumenta Serica* v. XXII. 2 (1963), pp. 407–433, notes 1, 3, 4–12.

移相哥,[3] Yeh-sung-ko 也松格,[4] Yeh-sheng-ko 也生哥,[5] or E-sen-k'o 額森克[6]). This man, the second son of Qasar (J̌oči-qasar) and a nephew of Činggis Qan, is very well known to history. It was he who made the extraordinary bow shot of 335 fathoms celebrated in the earliest known monument in the Mongolian language.[7] As a youth, he, his brother and his step-mother[8] had been captured by Ong Qan of the Kereyid, shortly before the latter's defeat by Činggis Qan.[9] Yisüngge followed Činggis in the war against the Tangut (Hsi Hsia 西夏) and participated in at least two great assemblies (*quriltai*), one for the election of the Emperor Möngke (Hsien-tsung 憲宗, b. 1209, r. 1251–1259), and another for the election of Qubilai (Sečen, Shih-tsu 世祖, b. 1215, r. 1260–1294). Qubilai made Yisüngge a protector of Qaraqorum, and it was during this time that the rebellious Ariγ-böke attacked that city.[10]

Shortly thereafter, on May 12, 1262, Qubilai gave Yisüngge a gold seal with a "hornless dragon handle" (*ch'ih niu* 螭紐). This event is recorded in *Yüan-shih* ch. 108, p. 4a, as follows:

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3) So in the *Yüan-shih* ch. 5, p. 5a; ch. 107, p. 3b; ch. 108, p. 4a, and on the seal presently being discussed.

4) So in *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* 元朝祕史 (ed. V.I. Pankratov, *Iuan'-chao bi-shi*, Tom. I, Tekst, Moscow, 1962), ch. 7, p. 21b, ch. 14, p. 6b (Pars. 183, 269). This suggests a Mongolian *Yesüngge*, but I have followed the spelling of the Stone of Činggis Qan. See note 7 below.

5) So in K'o Shao-min 柯劭忞, *Hsin Yüan-shih* 新元史 (Taiwan reprint ed.), ch. 105, p. 3a.

6) So in the revised (but quite incorrect) transcriptions of the Ch'ien-lung Commission, employed in the Palace edition of the *Yüan-shih* ch. 5, p. 4b. In later chapters of this edition, however, the old spelling, I-hsiang-ko, is retained. For other variants, see L. Hambis, *Le chapitre cvii du Yuan che, Les généalogies impériales mongoles dans l'histoire chinoise officielle de la dynastie mongole* (Leiden, 1945), pp. 24–25, n. 3.

7) See S. Murayama, "Über die Inschrift auf dem 'Stein des Čingis'," *Oriens* v. III (1950), pp. 108–112.

8) I. e. the wife of Qasar. Yisüngge's natural mother was Altan Qatun 阿蘭塔可敦, a concubine of Qasar. See *Hsin Yüan-shih* ch. 105, p. 4b.

9) *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* par. 183. This paragraph has been translated into English by Francis Woodman Cleaves, "The Historicity of the Baljuna Covenant," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* v. XVIII (1955), p. 368.

10) *Hsin Yüan-shih* ch. 105, pp. 3a–4b. See also on Yisüngge, Rashid ad-Din, *Sbornik letopisei*, Tom. I. 2, trans. O. I. Smirnov (Moscow, 1952), p. 52.

"In the year__the great prince Yisüngge 移相哥大王 was given a seal." The missing date can be supplied from *Yüan-shih* ch. 5, p. 5a.[11]

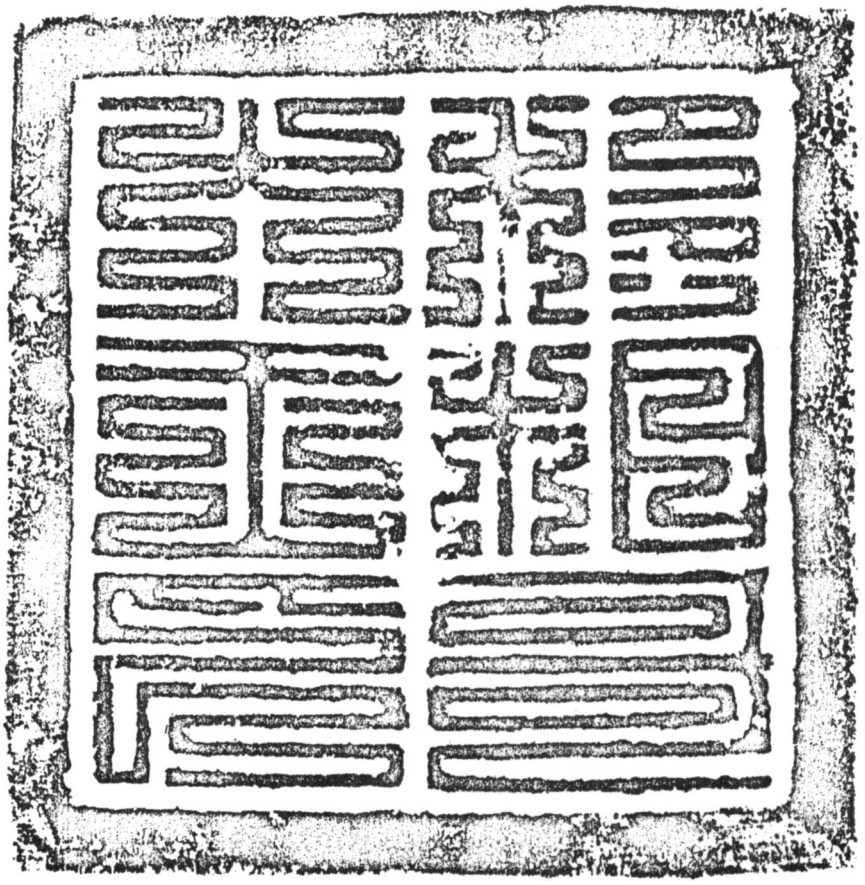


Fig. 1.

The seal impression reproduced in fig. 1 (after Lo Chen-yü 羅振玉, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un* 隋唐以來官印集存 [n. p., 1916], p. 26a) is presumably from this very seal.

Transliteration: [1] *I-hsiang-ko* 移相哥
[2] *ta wang yin* 大王印
Translation: "The seal [of] the great prince, Yisüngge."

11) L. Hambis, trans. *Le chapitre cviii du Yuan che* t. I (Leiden, 1954), p. 109 n. 2.

This text is in exact agreement with the *Yüan-shih*. That it is the 1262 seal and not some later one given to Yisüngge is attested to by the fact that it is written in the Chinese script instead of the 'Phags-pa script, which was introduced only in 1269.[12] The seal impression also agrees with the official dimensions for princely seals of the Yüan dynasty, which are 3 *ts'un* 寸 2 *fen* 分 (ca. 10.24 cm) square.[13] The seal given to Yisüngge was made of gold, but Lo Chen-yü makes no mention of the material out of which the seal published by him was cast; indeed, he may not have seen the original itself, for his note states that the seal was "[formerly] in the collection of Mr. Ting 丁 of Shan-yang 山陽, but its present whereabouts are not known."[14]

In one respect this seal does not conform to the one given Yisüngge in 1262: it lacks the "hornless dragon" handle. Lo Chen-yü adds: "There is no handle; the back [of the seal, where the handle would normally be] has been recut in the form of a seal which is extremely strange. This seal on the back has three columns of script: the first column is in the Mongolian [='Phags-pa] script, the next column is in the Sanskrit script, and the last column has two [Chinese] characters in seal script, *chih-pao* 之寶; the text is in reverse order (反文 i.e., reads from left to right)."[15] So far as it goes, this description is correct. We will now attempt a reading of this second seal, reproduced in fig. 2.[16]

Transliteration:[17] [1] *γoṅ d'î*
[2] *śrīḥ svāsti*
[3] *chih-pao* 之寶

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12) See Nicholas Poppe and John Krueger, *The Mongolian Monuments in ḥP'ags-pa Script* (Wiesbaden, 1957), p. 5. K'o Shao-min in his *Hsin Yüan-shih* ch. 96, p. 2a notes that "in general, the texts of seals [of princes and emperors] all employ the Mongolian script [='Phags-pa script]."

13) *Hsin Yüan-shih*, ch. 96, p. 1b.

14) Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un, mu-lu* 目錄 p. 6.

15) *Ibid.*

16) *Ibid.* p. 26a.

17) Chinese in 'Phags-pa script is transliterated according to the system in Louis Ligeti, "Le *Po Kia Sing* en écriture 'phags-pa," *Acta Orientalia* (Hungary), v. VI. 1-3 (1956), pp. 1-52, with the following exceptions: Ligeti's *'u* and *ô* are rendered simply *u* and *o*, although I accept Ligeti's interpretation of the medial *-ô-*. See his "Trois notes sur l'écriture 'phags-pa," *ibid.* v. XIII. 1-2 (1961), pp. 215-216.
Mongolian in 'Phags-pa script is transliterated according to the system in Nicholas Poppe and John Krueger, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-24.

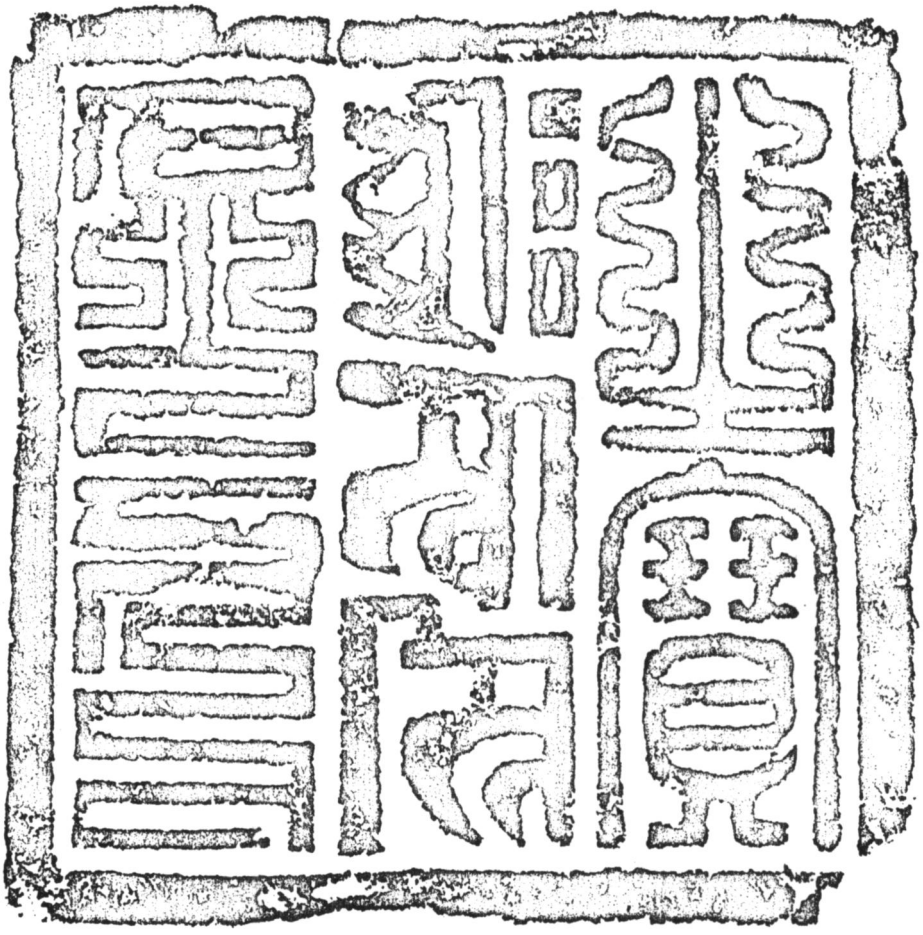


Fig. 2.

Line 2, in Sanskrit written with the Lañca script,[18] is clearly simply an ejaculation, "Glory! Felicity!," which serves as a sort of monogram and does not participate in the sense of the seal's text.[19]

18) The Lañca script employed in Yüan China is discussed in Murata Jirō 村田治郎 ed., *Kyoyōkan* 居庸關, v. I (Kyoto, 1957), pp. 137-138.

19) Similar Sanskrit and Buddhist devices have been found on a number of seals of Mongolian origin. A particularly interesting example is a Yüan (Northern Yüan ?) imperial seal with a text in Chinese characters reading *chih-kao chih pao* 制誥之寶 "[Imperial] seal for decrees and ordinances," which has in its center the Buddhist talisman known in Tibetan as the *rnam-bču dbaṅ-ldan*, and a Sanskrit text in Lañca script on the left (fig. 2A). This seal was discovered in the Ordos country and was

The balance of the seal thus means "the seal of *γoṅ d'î*." The meaning of *γoṅ d'î*, however, is by no means clear. *Γoṅ* is the 'Phags-pa spelling for, among other characters, *huang* 皇 "imperial,"[20] and the large size of the seal as well as the use of the word *pao* 寶 "seal (of an emperor, empress or qan)," would suggest this particular word. But *d'î* spells no Chinese word in Yüan times—the letter transcribed here as "'" occurs only initially in Chinese, while *î* occurs only with initials *k*, *k'*, *g*, and *h*. Indeed,

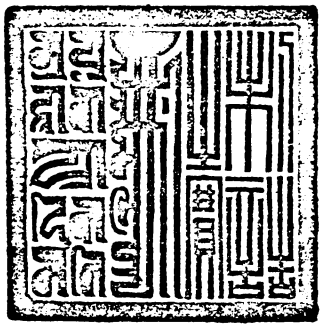


Fig. 2A.

submitted to the throne by Dongrubǰamco 東魯卜瞻磋, 棟嚕布札木素, who was a ǰasaγ of the Ordos right-wing central banner between 1747 and 1773 (see *Ch'ing-tai pien-cheng t'ung-k'ao* 清代邊政通考 [Taipei, 1959 ed.], p. 142). A drawing of the seal and its impression were reproduced in the imperial catalogue of antiquities, the *Hsi Ch'ing hsü chien* 西清續鑑 (Shanghai, 1910 ed.), *chia-pien* 甲編, *fu-lu* 附錄 (*ts'e* 21), pp. 14ab.

This seal resembles quite closely the descriptions of the famous "seal perpetuating the country" (*ch'uan-kuo hsi* 傳國璽) which formerly belonged to Toγon Temür and which was purportedly taken by Dorgon after the death of Ligdan Qan (1592-1634). It also had four seal characters reading *chih-kao chih pao*, and like the above seal, had a handle which incorporated entwined dragons, but was made of jade instead of metal. See Pentti Aalto, "Qaš buu tamaγa und Chuan-kuo hsi," *Studia Sino-Altaica, Festschrift für Erich Haenisch* (Wiesbaden, 1961), p. 17 ff, and Ch'i Yün-shih 祁韻士, *Huang-ch'ao fan-pu yao-lüeh* 皇朝藩部要畧 (Taiwan ed.), ch. 1, pp. 22b-23a. On the *rnam-bču dbaṅ-ldan* talisman, see Robert Bleichsteiner, *L'Église jaune*, Jacques Marty, trans. (Paris, 1937), pp. 203-205. For a later example of a Sanskrit-Lañca seal on a Mongolian document, see the letter of ca. 1662 reproduced in N.P. Shastina, "Pis'ma Lubsan-taidzhi v Moskvu," *Filologiia i istoriia Mongol'skikh narodov* (Moscow, 1958), p. 286.

20) See Lo Ch'ang-p'ei 羅常培 and Ts'ai Mei-piao 蔡美彪, *Pa-ssu-pa tzu yü Yüan-tai Han-yü* (*Tzu-liao hui-pien*) 八思巴字與元代漢語 (資料彙編), (Peking, 1959), p. 103.

this second syllable more closely resembles a Mongolian 'Phags-pa word, *d'eė*, than a Chinese one; it could then be understood as *dēi* (or *de'ei*<**degeï*). But no such word is known in Mongolian. We are no better off if we try to interpret the two syllables as one Mongolian word: *γoŋd'eė*=*χöŋdēi* (*γ* [=*χ*] appears in Mongolian 'Phags-pa texts only in words of foreign origin).[21]

It is tempting to interpret this text as a bizarre spelling of *γoṅ di chih pao*=*huang-ti-chih pao* 皇帝之寶 "Seal of the Emperor," perhaps carved on the Yisüngge seal for one of the Northern Yüan emperors of the post-1368 period. But imperial seals reading *huang-ti-chih pao*, while known to have been employed by Sung and Jurchen-Chin emperors and by the Mongolian emperors of pre-dynastic times, are unknown for Yüan times.[22] For the time being, this seal cannot be interpreted with certainty; all that can be said is that it was added to the object at a date subsequent to its issue to Yisüngge.

II. Official and Office Seals

The largest group of seals in the seal catalogues is made up of seals issued by the government either to officials as individuals, or to the offices which they held.

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21) See Poppe and Krueger, *op. cit.*, p. 22. There now seems to be general agreement that the letter here transliterated *γ* in both Chinese and Mongolian 'Phags-pa was in reality voiceless (*χ*) in both languages in the 13th-14th centuries, although scholars working with Chinese have continued to use *γ* because of the archaizing character of Chinese 'Phags-pa spellings. See E.R. Hope, *Karlgren's Glottal Stop Initial in Ancient Chinese, with Particular Reference to the HPhags-pa Alphabet and to Certain Points of Linguistic Psychology* (Ottawa, 1953), pp. 42-43; Poppe and Krueger, *op. cit.*, p. 146; Sir Gerald Clauson, "The hP'ags-pa Alphabet," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* v. XXII (1959), p. 315.

22) See *Sung-shih* 宋史 ch. 154, p. 5b, *Chin-shih* 金史 ch. 31, p. 7b, and Francis Woodman Cleaves, "The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1240," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* v. XXIII (1960-1961), pp. 65, 68 n. 28, and Plate I. On the Yüan imperial seals see T'ao Tsung-i 陶宗儀, *Nan-ts'un Cho-keng-lu* 南村輟耕錄 (*SPTK* ed.), ch. 2, pp. 10b-11a, and *Hsin Yüan-shih* ch. 96, pp. 1ab.

1) *Official Seal of 1274*

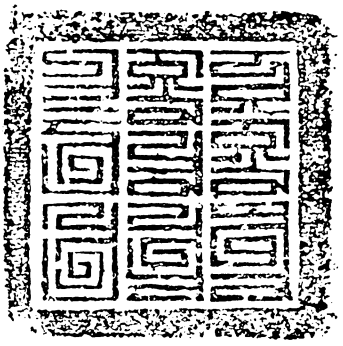


Fig. 3.

Reproduced (fig. 3) after Lo Fu-i 羅福頤 and Wang Jen-ts'ung 王人聰, *Yin-chang kai-shu* 印章概述 (Peking, 1963), p. 107. This seal is one of the earliest known with a 'Phags-pa inscription.

Transliteration: [1] *šaṅ du lu*
[2] *gon pan puị*
[3] *hụo gon yin*

Modern transcription and translation: *shang-tu lu kuan-pan p'i-huo-kuan yin* 上都路管辦皮貨官印 (these characters are also incised on the back of the seal) "Seal of the official in charge of leather goods for Shang-tu circuit."

No such official is mentioned in either the *Yüan-shih* or the *Yüan-tien-chang*;[23] the former mentions a Leather Goods Office (*P'i-huo-chü* 皮貨局), a Shang-tu Soft-skin Office (*Shang-tu juan-p'i-chü* 上都軟皮局), and a *Shang-tu hsieh-p'i-chü* 上都斜皮局 "Shang-tu Shagreen Leather Office."[24] No officials at all are listed

23) Statements about the existence or non-existence of particular terms in the *Yüan-shih* or the *Yüan-tien-chang* are based, respectively, on: Kyōto daigaku, Bungakubu 京都大學文學部 ed., *Genshi goi shūsei* 元史語彙集成, 3 vols., (Kyoto, 1961-1963) and Kyōto daigaku, Jimbun kagaku kenkyūjo 人文科學研究所 ed., *Gentenshō sakuinkō* 元典章索引稿 (Kyoto, 1954).

24) *Yüan-shih* ch. 10, p. 8a, ch. 89, p. 14a, p. 15a. That the official was perhaps in the Leather-goods Office is favored by a remark in *Yüan-shih* ch. 10, p. 8a that on August 14, 1278 this office was made a part of the Circuit Directorate-General (*tsung-kuan-fu* 總管府). On this latter office, see Paul Ratchnevsky, *Un code des Yuan* (Paris, 1937), p. 33 n. 6.

for the first bureau, and the officials for the other two have no titles resembling that on the seal.

The back of the seal bears a date: [至] 元拾壹年伍月□日 "(Made on) the__day of the fifth month of the eleventh year of the [Chih-]yüan period (=1274)". The manufacturer of the seal is also noted: 中書禮部造 "Made by the Board of Rites of the Central Secretariat." Legends identical in form to these appear on the backs of nearly all official seals of Yüan times.

The 'Phags-pa spellings on this seal are quite regular.[25]

2) Office Seal of 1280

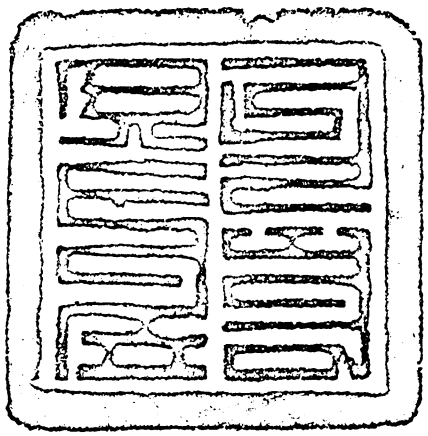


Fig. 4.

Reproduced (fig. 4) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un*, p. 32a.

Transliteration: [1] *ɣo ǰiw*
[2] *c'aṅ yin*

25) I note all unusual spellings occurring on these seals. I have checked the spelling of each syllable against those in the *Meng-ku tzu-yün* 蒙古字韻 reproduced in Lo Ch'ang-p'ei and Ts'ai Mei-piao, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–127. This is an extremely valuable compendium, but full of orthographical mistakes, most notably a failure to distinguish *e*, *i̯-*, and *u̯*. For a critique of this source, see Denlinger, *op. cit.*

Modern transcription and translation: *Ho-chou ts'ang yin* 河州倉印 "Seal of the Ho-chou Granary."

Lo, *ibid.*, *mu-lu* 目錄 p. 7a, notes this text incised on the back together with Board of Rites mark and the date "second month of the seventeenth year of Chih-yüan (=1280)."

3) Official Seal of 1295

Reproduced (fig. 5) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un*, p. 31b.

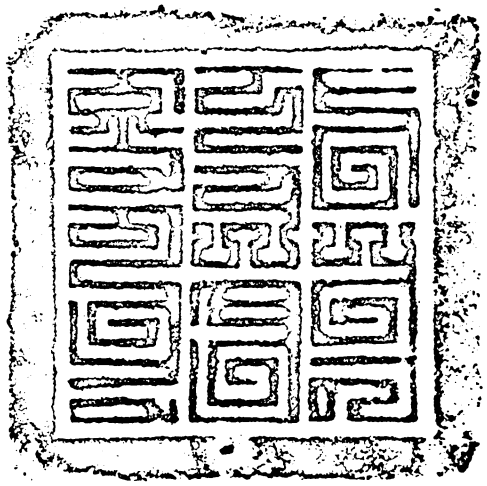


Fig. 5.

Transliteration: [1] *gon gün*
[2] *hä bay γu*
[3] *ǰi yin*

Modern transcription and translation: *kuan-chün hsia-pai-hu chih yin* 管軍下百戶之印 "Seal of the inferior centurion commanding troops." These Chinese characters are inscribed on the back, with the omission of *chih*.

In 1284 the centurions and their soldiers were classified as "superior" (*shang* 上) or "inferior." The inferior centurion had

the rank 7B.[26] The full title appearing on this seal, *kuan-chün hsia-pai-hu* nowhere occurs in the *Yüan-shih* or the *Yüan-tien-chang*. The seal is dated to the first year of Yüan-chen 元貞 (1295).

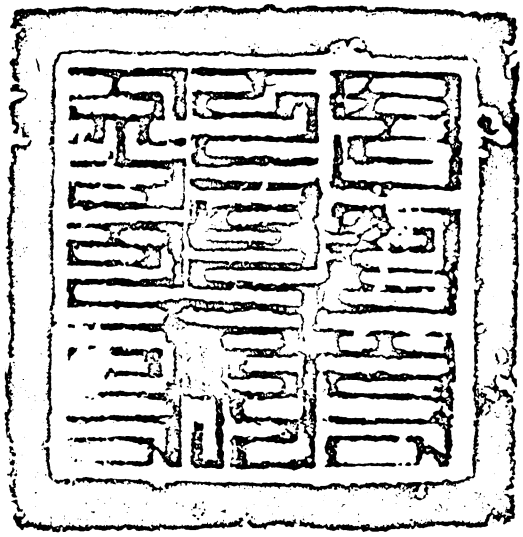


Fig. 6.

4) Office Seal of 1295

Reproduced (fig. 6) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un*, p. 31a.

Transliteration : [1] *gon gün*
[2] *hä c'än*
[3] *ɣu šu yin*

In this case, the text of the seal does not agree with the text incised on the seal's back, which reads, according to Lo Chen-yü, *ibid.*, *mu-lu* p. 7a,[27] *kuan-chün hsia-ch'ien-hu chih yin* 管軍下千

26) *Yüan-tien-chang* ch. 9, p. 4b; *Yüan-shih* ch. 91, p. 8b.

27) Lo reproduces on p. 31a a rubbing of the back of this seal but it is extremely difficult to decipher.

戶之印 "seal of the inferior chiliarch commanding troops." The text of the seal must surely be interpreted *kuan-chün hsia-ch'ien-hu so* 所 *yin* "seal of the office of the inferior chiliarch commanding troops."[28]

This seal, like the previous one, is dated to the first year of Yüan-chen (1295).

5) *Official Seal of 1299*

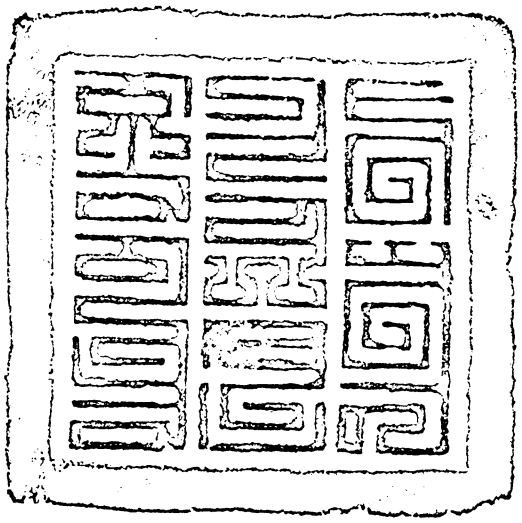


Fig. 7.

Reproduced (fig. 7) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un*, p. 31a.[29]

Transliteration : [1] *gon gün*
[2] *šaṅ bay ɣu*
[3] *ǰi yin*

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28) *So* 所=Ancient Mandarin *šu*=Ancient Chinese °*s̬iwo*. See *Meng-ku tzu-yün* in Lo and Ts'ai, p. 109, and Shen Chien-shih 沈兼士, *Kuang-yün sheng-hsi* 廣韻聲系 (Peking, 1945), v. 2, p. 1010. For examples of *ch'ien-hu so* 千戶所 in *Yüan-shih*, see *Genshi goi shūsei* v. I, p. 169.

29) This seal has also been published by Lo Fu-i and Wang Jen-ts'ung, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

Modern transcription and translation: *kuan-chün shang-pai-hu chih yin* 管軍上百戶之印 "seal of the superior centurion commanding troops."

This seal complements seal II. 3) above. A rubbing of the back of the seal appears to read (and has been so read by Lo Chen-yü, *ibid.*, *mu-lu* p. 7a) *kuan-chün cheng-pai-hu chih yin* 管軍正百戶之印. No title *cheng-pai-hu* is recorded in the Yüan official sources, although *cheng ch'ien-hu* 正千戶 "chief chiliarch" occurs in some contexts.[30] Both *cheng pai-hu* and *shang pai-hu* could translate some unknown Mongolian original, perhaps *terigün jaγun-u noyan* or *terigün jaγu-tu*. It is also possible that two accidental gouges on the back of the seal have converted 上 into 正.

The seal is dated to the third year of Ta-te 大德 (1299).

6) Official Seal of 1278

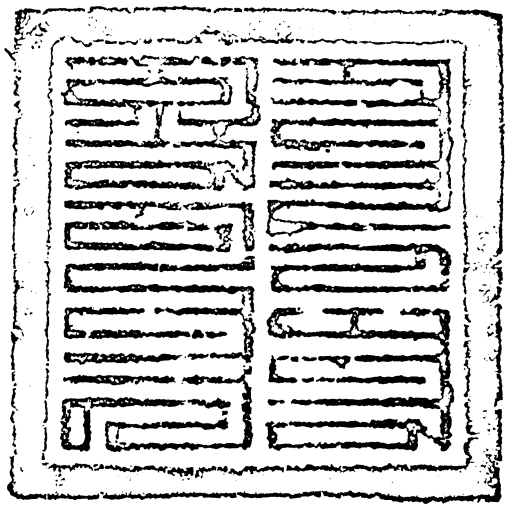


Fig. 8.

Reproduced (fig. 8) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un*, p. 30b.

30) See *Yüan-shih* ch. 86, p.22b.

Transliteration : [1] *gon gün*
[2] *ʒuṅ ba yin*

Modern transcription and translation : *kuan-chün tsung-pa yin* 管軍總把印 "seal of the *tsung-pa* commanding troops."

The *tsung-pa* was a military grade in between the chiliarch and the centurion, which was created in the time of Qubilai.[31] Lo Chen-yü, *ibid.*, *mu-lu* p. 7a, cites the same title from the back of the seal, and records the date fifteenth year of Chih-yüan (1278).

7) *Official Seal of 1345*

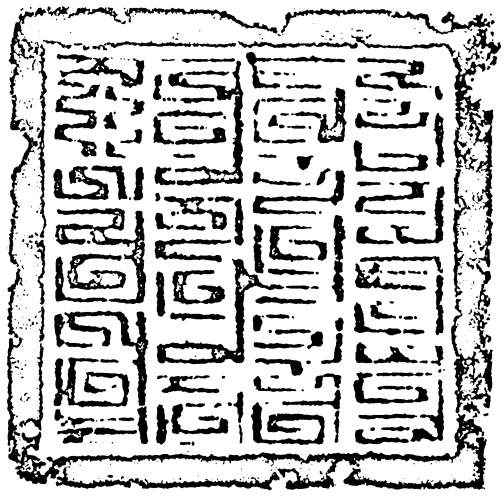


Fig. 9.

Reproduced (fig. 9) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un*, p. 30b.

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31) See Ratchnevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 283 n. 3; *Yüan-shih* ch. 98, p. 1b. A seal recently discovered in China has the text *ʒuṅ ba / ǰi yin=tsung-pa chih yin* 總把之印. Although inscribed on its back, the seal is undated. See Ts'ai Mei-piao, "Yung-chia fa-hsien Yüan-tai Meng-wen yin k'ao-shih, 永嘉發現元代蒙文印考釋," *Wen-wu ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao* 文物參攷資料 No. 1 (1958) (Whole No. 89), pp. 42-43.

Transliteration : [1] *ʒo ″a su ″uį*
[2] *c'in gün du*
[3] *ǰi hüį šï*
[4] *sï bay ɣu yin*

Modern transcription and translation : *tso A-su wei ch'in-chün tu-chih-hui-shih ssu pai-hu yin* 左阿速衛親軍都指揮使司百戶印 "seal of the centurion of the imperial military commandery of the left Asud guards." The left and right Asud guards were created in 1309.[32] Lo Chen-yü, *ibid.*, *mu-lu* p. 7a, records with some uncertainty the inscription on the back of the seal as follows : *tso A-su wei__chün chen-shih ssu erh-pai-hu yin* 左阿速衛□軍鎭使司二百戶印. Lo has obviously misread the legend—an easy thing to do, for the characters on the backs of official seals are often carelessly inscribed and difficult to read, particularly if one must work from rubbings instead of the seal itself.

The name *A-su* requires some comment. It stands for Mongolian *As-ud* "the Alans," a people speaking an Indo-European language, who came originally from the Caucasus (the Ossetians are their descendents). Many of them were found in East Asia in Mongolian times.[33] In the present seal, the Mongolian word *As-*

32) See *Yüan shih* ch. 86, p. 15a ; ch. 99, pp. 5b-6a ; ch. 135, p. 14a. Paul Pelliot, in his *Notes on Marco Polo* v. I (Paris, 1959), p. 20, states : "The 'Right Asut Guard' had been created in 1272, the 'Left Asut Guard' in 1310 (YS86, 6b7a)." Both the dates and the reference are incorrect. 1272 was the date when the first Asud military unit was created under the *Asud batu daruɣači* 阿速拔都達魯花赤; this unit, called the Asud Regular Army 阿速正軍 had more than 3000 men, and from them were selected the 700 men for the Asud Reserve Guards Army (*Asud geǰigelegül kesigten chün* 阿速揭只揭了溫怯薛丹軍). In 1286 the Asud Regular Army became the Asud Army 阿速軍. The Right and Left Asud Guard Commanderies were both founded in 1309 (*Yüan-shih* ch. 99, pp. 5b-6a).

Another seal from a guards unit has been published by Lo and Ts'ai, *op. cit.*, p. 20, after Chin Yü-fu 金毓黻, *Tung-pei ku-yin kou-ch'en* 東北古印鉤沈, a work not available to me. The seal impression is poorly drawn, so I have not reproduced it here. The text reads *lüń ǰin / ″uį bay / ɣu ǰi yin=Lung-chen wei pai-hu chih yin* 隆鎭衛百戶之印 "seal of the centurion of the Lung-chen Guards." This guards unit was also formed from Asud men, in 1312. They were stationed at various places along the northern frontier of China proper. See *Yüan-shih* ch. 86, pp. 9ab.

33) See the long note on the "Alains" in Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo* v. I, pp. 16-25.

ud is written as a Chinese word, whereas in the seal published by Walter Simon, the word "Mongol" is written in the correct Mongolian manner: *moŋqol*—not in the Chinese manner: *muṅ gu.*[34]

8) Official Seal of 1358

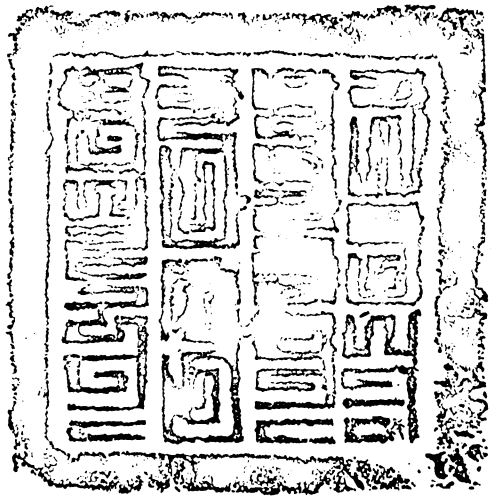


Fig. 10.

Reproduced (fig. 10) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un*, p. 30b.

Transliteration: [1] *ɣu yaṅ diṅ*
[2] *č'ü wu*
[3] *yüṅ ṅi biṅ*
[4] *bay ɣu yin*

34) Walter Simon, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-205. The text of this seal reads *moṅ qol / gün bay / ɣu yin=Mongɣol chün pai-hu yin* 蒙古軍百戶印 (so inscribed on the back). Professor Simon's comments on the letter *q* in the word *moṅqol* (as contrasted with the spelling *moṅɣol* which occurs in the *Meng-ku tzu-yün*) must be modified by the remarks of Sir Gerald Clauson, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-316. Sir Gerald's hypothesis that the letter here transliterated as *q* was in fact voiced (*ǧ*) in Middle Mongolian is extremely suggestive. Since part of his evidence is based on Turkic loans into Mongolian, one would feel more confident about the hypothesis if he had dealt with the 'Phags-pa Turkic seal discussed under IV. 1) below, where "*q*" occurs twice.

Modern transcription and translation: *hu-yang teng ch'u wu-yung i-ping pai-hu yin* 湖楊等處武勇義兵百戶印 "seal of the centurion of the Martial and Heroic militia of Hu-yang and other places."

The *i-ping*, "righteous troops," were a defensive militia recruited from local populations. Militia myriarchies (*wan-hu-fu* 萬戶府) were established first in 1277 in several places; in 1350 a number of militia chiliarchies (*i-ping ch'ien-hu-so* 千戶所) were established, each of which had ten centurions.[35] However, neither the expression "Hu-yang and other places" nor the modifying phrase "Martial and Heroic" is noted in the *Yüan-shih*.

The seal is dated to the eighteenth year of Chih-cheng 至正 (1358), according to Lo Chen-yü, *ibid.*, *mu-lu*, p. 7a. Lo also reproduces a rubbing of the back, but it is extremely difficult to read more than a few characters.

9) Office Seal of 1358

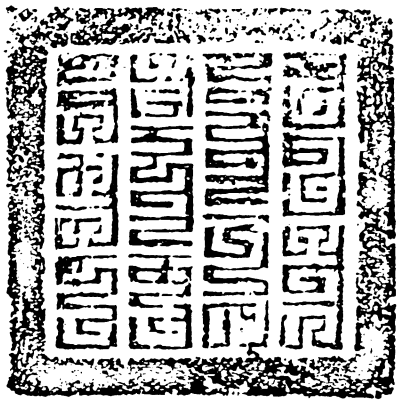


Fig. 11.

Reproduced (fig. 11) after Lo Fu-i and Wang Jen-ts'ung, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

Transliteration: [1] *ɣu̯ay* [?] *man hü*
[2] *yi d'ïn̂ č'ü*

35) *Yüan-shih* ch. 92, pp. 17ab.

[3] *ṅi biṅ c'än*
[4] *γu šu yin*

Modern transcription and translation: *huai-*[?]*man*[36] *hsü-i teng ch'u i-ping ch'ien-hu-so yin* □□□□等處義兵千戶所印 "seal of the office of the chiliarch of the militia of Huai(?)-man, Hsü-i, and other places."

According to Lo and Wang, the seal has incised on its back ten characters, of which they have been able to decipher only the last four, 處千戶印. All efforts to identify the first four syllables of the text, Huai-(or Hsieh-?)man and Hsü-i — obviously place-names—have been unsuccessful. Here, as in the previous example, the word *so* has been omitted from the back. The seal is dated the eighteenth year of Chih-cheng (1358).

10) Official Seal of 1341–1350

Reproduced (fig. 12) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin-chi-ts'un*, p. 31b.

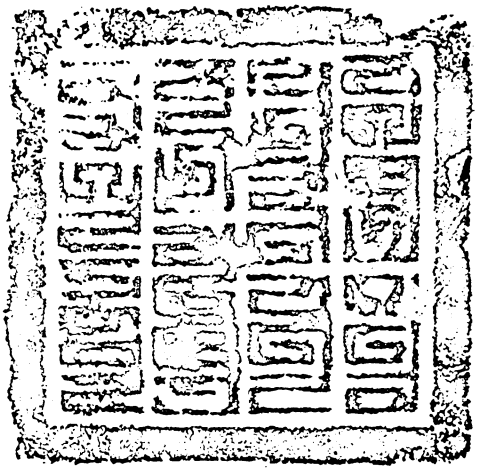


Fig. 12.

36) The initial letter of the first syllable is difficult to decipher. It may read *ḥiay*=modern *hsieh*. The symbols for *ɣ* and *i-* are frequently hard to distinguish in their seal forms.

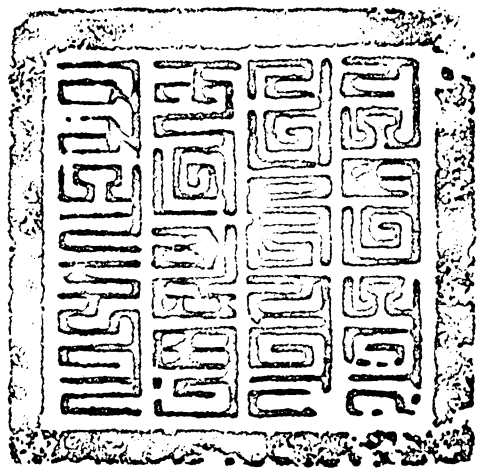


Fig. 13.

Transliteration: [1] *nam yaṅ dïṅ*
[2] *č'ü maw ɣu*
[3] *lu ṅi biṅ*
[4] *bay ɣu yin*

Modern transcription and translation: *nan-yang teng ch'u mao-hu-lu i-ping pai-hu yin* 南陽等處毛胡蘆義兵百戶印 "seal of the centurion of the Hairy Gourd militia in Nan-yang and other places."

These particular militia units were founded in 1277; the men recruited into them were freed from tax and labor service obligations. The appellation *mao-hu-lu* "hairy gourd" was an old popular term for militiamen and irregulars which became part of the official name of these units in Yüan times.[37]

Lo Chen-yü's description (*ibid.*, *mu-lu* p. 7a) of the incised characters on the back of the seal (a rubbing is reproduced, but it is quite illegible), deciphers only eight of the twelve characters. The date is given as "__day of the ninth month of the__year of Chih-cheng" (至正□年九月日), which places the seal somewhere

37) See *Yüan-shih* ch. 92, p. 17b. Identical units were established at Teng-chou 鄧州.

between 1341 and 1350. Another seal (fig. 13) reproduced by Lo Chen-yü (*ibid.*, p. 32a) has an identical text, but Lo gives no information about it.

11) Undated Official Seal

Reproduced (fig. 14) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un*, p. 32a.[38]

Transliteration : [1] *·ăn* [*·ụan?*] *šiṅ*
[2] *dïṅ č'ü*
[3] *ṅi biṅ*
[4] *bay γu yin*

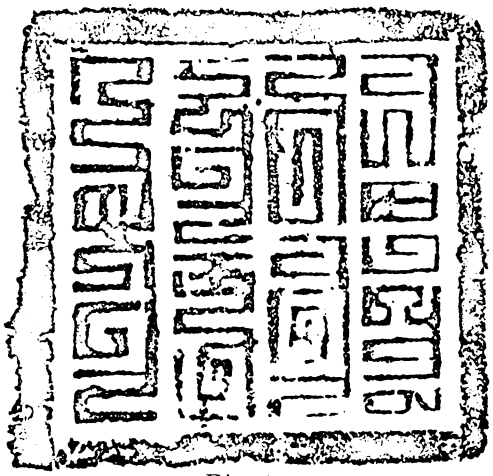


Fig. 14.

Modern transcription and translation : *Yen (Wan?)-sheng teng ch'u i-ping pai-hu yin* □□等處義兵百戶印 "seal of the centurion of the militia of Yen (Wan?)-sheng and other places." I have not succeeded in identifying the place-name, and Lo Chen-yü provides no information about the seal.

12) Undated Office Seal

Reproduced (fig. 15) after Liu T'i-chih 劉體智, *Shan-chai*

38) The same seal impression has been reproduced in Lo Chen-yü, *Ho-lien-ch'üan kuan ku-yin ts'un* 赫連泉館古印存 (*Ni-ku ts'ung-pien* 泥古叢編, *ts'e* 7), p. [28a].

hsi-yin lu 善齋璽印錄 (n. p., 1930), *ts'e* 16, p. [17a].

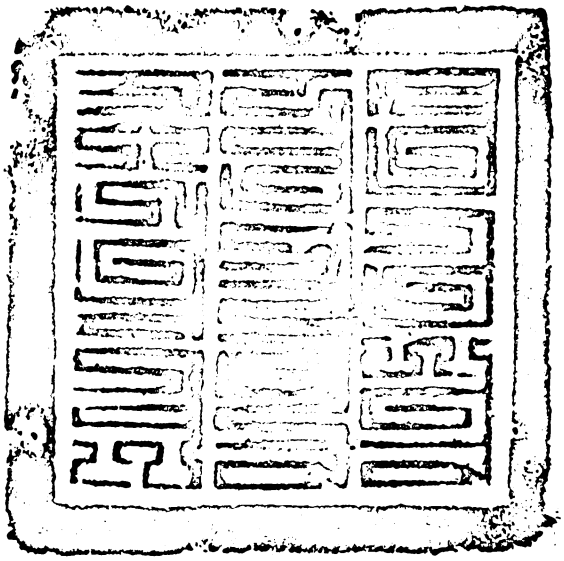


Fig. 15.

Transliteration : [1] *ʒo ''uị̈ šụay*
[2] *fu šaṅ c'än*
[3] *ɣu šu yin*

Modern transcription and translation : *tso-wei shuai-fu shang ch'ien-hu-so yin* 左衞率府上千戶所印 "seal of the office of the superior chiliarch of the Left Guard Command Office."

The Left Guard Command Office was a guards unit which was established in the Eastern Palace (東宮) in 1308, and was recruited from among the *Han-chün* 漢軍, the Yüan dynasty's Northern Chinese army. Its name was several times changed in the next few years : in 1314 it became the *Chung-i-fu* 忠翊府 and then the *Yü-lin ch'in-chün tu-chih-hui-shih ssu* 御臨(羽林)親軍都指揮使司. In 1319 the original name, *Tso-wei shuai-fu*, was restored.[39]

39) *Yüan-shih* ch. 99, p. 6b.

13) Official Seal of 1330–1340

Reproduced (fig. 16) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un, fu-lu* 附錄, p. 5b. The impression is very clear, but because of the ornamental character of the letters it is one of the most difficult seals to read.

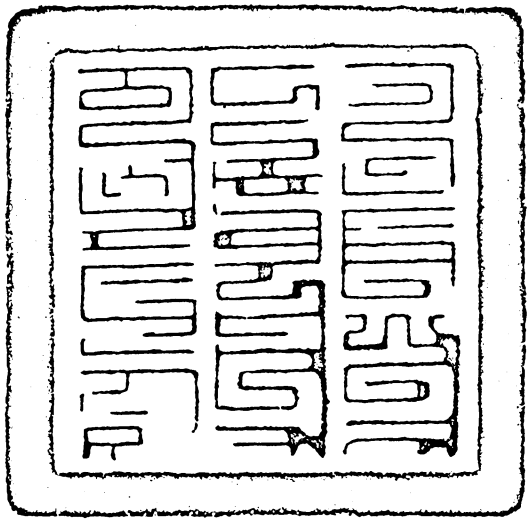


Fig. 16.

Transliteration: [1] *güi̯ ǰaṅ go*
[2] *häw čï c'am*
[3] *šü ǰi yin*

Modern transcription and translation: *k'uei-chang-ko hsüeh-shih ts'an-shu chih yin* 奎章閣學士參書之印 "seal of the assistant secretary of the academy in the K'uei-chang Pavilion." In this text the spelling *güi̯* instead of *k'üi̯* for 奎 is unexpected.[40]

The Academy in the K'uei-chang Pavilion (*K'uei-chang hsüeh-shih yüan* 奎章學士院) was founded in 1330. The assistant secretaries (*ts'an-shu*) were its fifth ranking officials (grade 5B).[41]

40) See *Meng-ku tzu-yün* in Lo Ch'ang-p'ei and Ts'ai Mei-piao, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
41) *Yüan-shih* ch. 88, p. 6b, which has been translated by Francis Woodman Cleaves, "The 'Fifteen "Palace Poems"' by K'o Chiu-ssu," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* v. XX. 3-4 (1957), p. 465 n. 136. T'ao Tsung-i, *Nan-ts'un Cho-keng lu* ch. 2, p. 11a, says the K'uei-chang Pavilion (as opposed to the Academy located in it?) was founded in 1328 or 1329 (天曆初...).

In 1340 the Academy was abolished and replaced the following year by the Hsüan-wen Pavilion (*Hsüan-wen-ko* 宣文閣).[42] The seal must thus be placed within the decade 1330–1340.

14) Official Seal of 1377

Reproduced (fig. 17) after the *Hsi Ch'ing hsü-chien* 西清續鑑 (Shanghai, 1910 ed.), *chia-pien* 甲編, *fu-lu* 附錄 (*ts'e* 21), pp. 15a–16a.

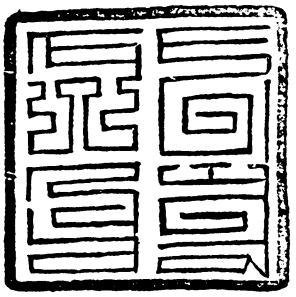


Fig. 17.

Of all 'Phags-pa seals this one has attracted the greatest interest since it was first discovered by accident in Mongolia in the eighteenth century and presented to the throne by the Military Governor-general of Uliyasutai, Čenggünǰab (成袞扎布, d. 1771).[43] The Ch'ien-lung emperor thought this object was worthy of one of his colophons, which he composed in 1771; drawings of the seal, its impression, and the emperor's colophon, together with an editor's colophon, were reproduced in the official catalogue of palace antiquities, the above-mentioned *Hsi Ch'ing hsü-chien*. The seal has since been published and discussed several times.[44]

This early interest in the seal was generated because it appeared to be an anomaly. It was in every way identical to the official seals of the Yüan period, and yet it was dated by a then unknown reign title: "__day of the eleventh month of the first year of Hsüan-kuang" 宣光元年十一月□日. This, the Ch'ien-lung editors concluded, after some research in Korean sources, was equivalent to the tenth year of Hung-wu 洪武 of the Ming dynasty (1377), placing it in the reign of the Qaγan Ayusiridara (Biligtü Qaγan, Chao-tsung 昭宗, r. 1369–1378). In addition, the

42) T'ao Tsung-i, *ibid.*; *Yüan-shih* ch. 92, p. 4a.

43) Čenggünǰab was Military Governor of Uliyasutai and Warden of the Marches during 1750–1754 and 1756–1771, dying in office. See *Ch'ing-shih* 清史 v. IV (Taipei, 1961), ch. 205, pp. 3196 and 3208.

44) Lo Ch'ang-p'ei and Ts'ai Mei-piao, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–20; Lo Fu-i and Wang Jen-ts'ung, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

back of the seal bore a Chinese character version of the text on the face, and the Yüan style mark of manufacture, "made by the Board of Rites of the Central Secretariat." All of this was exciting evidence for the persistence of Chinese institutions and cultural influence among the supposedly re-barbarized Mongols of the post-1368 period.

Transliteration: [1] *tay ·uį*
[2] *ǰi yin*

Modern transcription and translation: *t'ai-wei chih yin* 太尉之印 "seal of the Grand Commandant."

The grand commandant was a high honorary official title which was not given out in any regular manner in Yüan times. This official nevertheless had a key role in the performance of many state sacrifices.[45] This seal is not the only evidence that the title "Grand Commandant" persisted among the Mongols of Ming times, for the *Ming-shih-lu* 明實錄 under the date February 7, 1439, records that the Ming emperor Ying-tsung 英宗 gave rewards to a number of Mongolian officials of the qaγan Toγtō-buqa 脫脫不花 (Tayisung, r. 1438–1452), one of whom was a certain T'ieh-mu-erh sa-ha-t'ai 帖木兒撒哈台 (Temür-saqaltai "Temür the Bearded"?) with the title "Grand Commandant."[46]

15) Undated Official Seal

Reproduced (fig. 18) after Bijutsu kenkyūjo 美術研究所 ed., *Ryō Kai* 梁楷 (Kyoto, 1957), plate 26. This seal was impressed on one of the most famous Chinese paintings in existence, "Li Po strolling as he sings" (李白吟行) by the great Southern Sung artist, Liang K'ai, which now belongs to the Japanese Commission for the Protection of Cultural Assets (*Bunkazai hogo iinkai* 文化財保護委員會). While the painting is often reproduced,

45) *Yüan-shih* ch. 85, pp. 2ab; ch. 73, pp. 1b ff.

46) See *Mindai Mammō shiryō* (*Min jitsuroku shō, Mōko hen*) 明代滿蒙史料 (明實錄抄, 蒙古篇) v. II (Kyoto, 1954), p. 554.

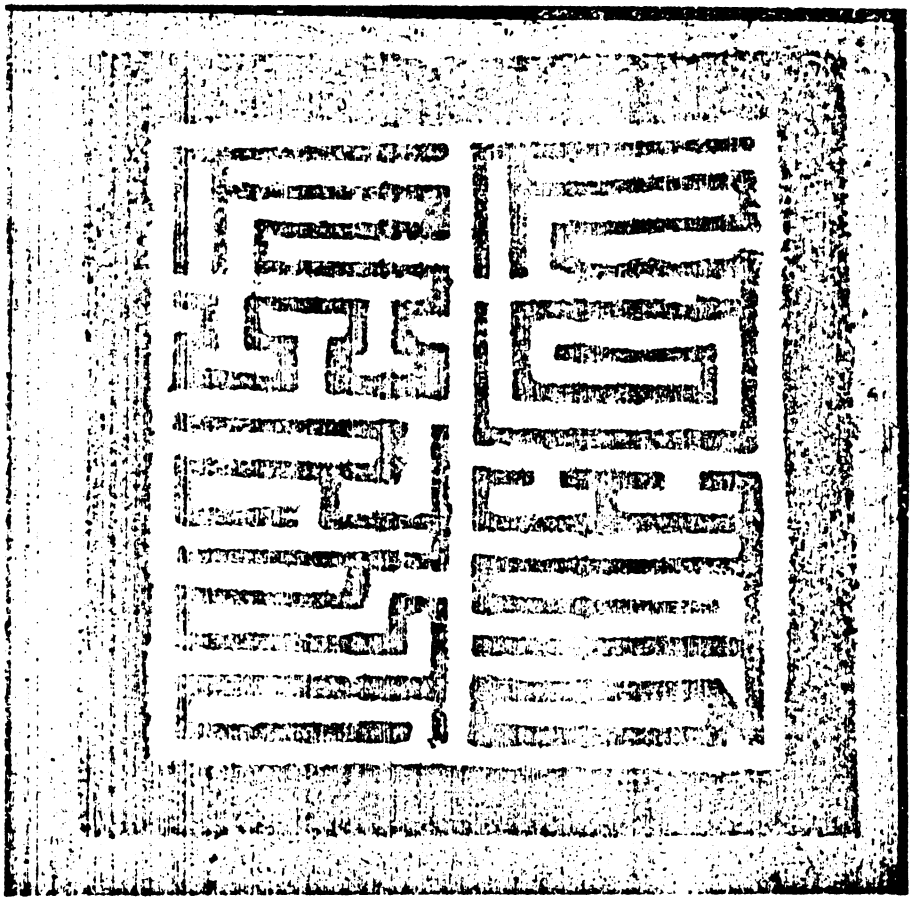


Fig. 18.

no one seems to have attempted to read the seal.[47]

Transliteration : [1] *tay sï*
[2] *tu yin*

Modern transcription and translation : *ta ssu-t'u yin* 大司徒印

47) This seal was also copied on facsimiles of this and other paintings by Liang K'ai. See *Ryō Kai*, figs. 19–20. Kumagai Nobuo 熊谷宣夫, writing in *Bijutsu kenkyū* 美術研究 No. 161 (1951), p. 293, notes that the same seal impression may be found on a Sung large-character Szechwan edition of the *Chou-li* 周禮 kept in the Seikadō 靜嘉堂, the library of the Iwasaki family. (I am grateful to Mr. Che-hwei Lin of the Oriental Library, University of California, Los Angeles, for information on this point.)

"seal of the Grand Instructor."

The *ta-ssu-t'u* was a high honorary title during the Yüan period, although from 1314 the chief official of the Court of Imperial Sacrifice (*T'ai-ch'ang-ssu* 太常寺, later the *T'ai-ch'ang-(ssu) li-i-yüan* 禮儀院) bore that title.[48]

The identity of the particular Grand Instructor who owned this painting and impressed his seal on it cannot be determined with certainty. The *Yüan-shih* mentions five persons who received the title: one of them, Ch'eng Chü-fu 程鉅夫, did so posthumously;[49] four others were the powerful eunuch Li Pang-ning 李邦寧;[50] Wang Wei-hsien 汪惟賢;[51] Wang Shan-kuo 王善果;[52] and Chang Chiu-ssu 張九思 (d. 1302), high official under Qubilai who received this title in 1301 after the latter's death.[53] A particularly likely candidate is the Grand Instructor A-ni-ko 阿尼哥, a former Nepalese who had strong artistic interests and was a distinguished calligrapher.[54]

III. Personal Seals

Not all 'Phags-pa seals can readily be identified as official. Most of these are probably personal seals, for the first syllable usually spells a family name. One example is reproduced here

48) *Yüan-shih* ch. 85, pp. 2ab; ch. 88, p. 1b.

49) *Ibid.* ch. 172, p. 4a.

50) *Ibid.* ch. 204, p. 2b.

51) Second son of Wang Shih-hsien 汪世顯 (d. 1262). *Ibid.* ch. 155, p. 5a.

52) *Ibid.* ch. 169, p. 17a.

53) *Ibid.* ch. 169, p. 15a.

54) On A-ni-ko (1244/5-1306) see Ch'ên Yüan, *Western and Central Asians in China under the Mongols*, trans. Chien Hsing-hai and L. Carrington Goodrich (Monumenta Serica Monograph XV, Los Angeles, 1966), p. 188.

Here I would like to give the texts of two decipherable office seals for which legible reproductions could not be obtained. Both are from edicts cut on stone. The first edict, dated 1306, has been published by Édouard Chavannes, "Inscriptions et pièces de chancellerie chinoises de l'époque mongole," *T'oung Pao* v. 9 (1908), plate XXV, and by Poppe and Krueger, *op. cit.*, plate VI. The seal reads *ǰüṅ šü li / pu ǰi yin=chung-shu li-pu chih yin* 中書禮部之印 "seal of the Board of Rites of the Central Secretariat." The second edict, dated 1307, was also published by Chavannes (*ibid.*, plate XXVI); the seal reads *ǰüṅ šü / šiṅ yin=Chung-shu-sheng yin* 中書省印 "seal of the Central Secretariat."

M.S. XXV 25

(fig. 19) after Lo Chen-yü, *Sui T'ang i-lai kuan-yin chi-ts'un*, p. 30a.

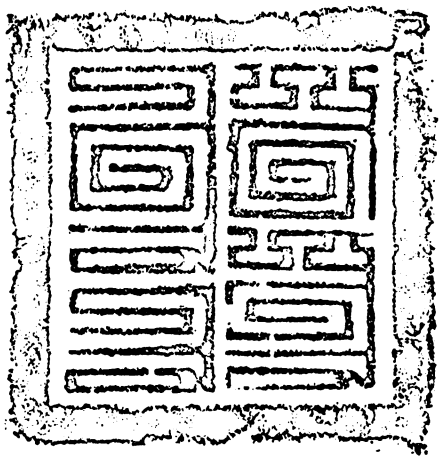


Fig. 19.

Transliteration : [1] *šin šan*
[2] *yi yin*

Modern transcription : *Shen* (or *Ch'en*) *shan i yin* 印. *Šin* could here stand for the family name Shen 申 (but not for Shen 沈, which would be *šim* in 'Phags-pa).

IV. Cipher Seals

First a seal in the Turkic language.

Reproduced (fig. 20) after Erich Haenisch ed., *Mongolica der Berliner Turfan-Sammlung II* (Berlin, 1959), p. 29 B2.



Fig. 20.

This seal is of great interest for being the only known text in a Turkic language written with the 'Phags-pa script. It appears on a Mongolian document discovered in Turfan, and was first deciphered by G. J. Ramstedt in his " Mongolische Briefe

aus Idiqut-Schähri bei Turfan," *Sitzungsberichte der königl. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil. Hist. Kl.* (1909), p. 845. The text of the seal has been recently published again by Herbert Franke, "Datierung der mongolischen Schreiben aus Turfan," *Oriens* v. XV (1962), p. 407.

Transliteration (after Franke):

[1] *o ron qud*
[2] *luq*
[3] *bol sun*

This is interpreted *oron qudluq* (or *qutluγ*) *bolsun* "möge das Reich glücklich werden" (Ramstedt translated "das Reich werde glücklich [oder majestätisch]").

Line 2 of the text contains two signs which were indecipherable to Ramstedt. The top sign has been brilliantly identified by Franke (*ibid.*) as *Allāh* "God" in the Arabic script. The symbol below it, resembling an inverted Tibetan letter *čh*, was correctly identified as a cipher already in the Ramstedt article in an editorial footnote by Albert von Le Coq. He cited an article of E.E. Oliver in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* v. 60 (1891), entitled "The Coins of the Chaghatái Mughals," in which Oliver recognized this same symbol as "the characteristic mark of the [Čaγataid] dynasty," which appeared on nearly every one of its coins.[55]

This sign is neither of Tibetan nor Central Asian origin. It is in fact a characteristic Chinese cipher, which has been in use there for a great many centuries, and which has spread over large areas of Eastern and Central Asia. It is worked into the designs of most of the small black seals impressed on the other Mongolian official documents discovered at Turfan;[56] it is found handwritten

55) All of these characteristics of the seal — the formula, its expression in a Turkic language, the Arabic device, and the cipher, together with the site of the document's discovery — have led Franke to question both the usual attribution of the document to the East Mongolian qaγan Öljei-temür (r. 1403–1410) and the date 1408 for the "Mouse Year" of the document. The name of the issuing person is mutilated, but the use of the word *üge* "word" instead of *jarlγ* (*jarlγ* "edict") to designate the contents of the document, certainly suggests that it did not issue from one of the great qaγans.

56) See E. Haenisch, *op. cit.*, Documents B 1, B 2 (both seals), B 6, B 7, B 8, B 13 (pp. 29, 32, 33, 35).

by the contracting parties in the early Mongolian loan contract from Qara Qoto,[57] and on the Uighur Turkic loan contracts which were its models.[58] The same sign occurs at the end of some imperial edicts carved on stone during the Yüan period.[59] Many of the ciphers used by the Japanese are of the identical sort.[60] That these ciphers all fall into relatively few basic patterns should not surprise us; in Europe and America the ciphers of illiterates have been mostly in the shape of the letter X, while the paraphs and notary signs of the educated, appended to their signatures, have been likewise classifiable into a limited number of types.[61]

In China and Japan, these ciphers (*hua-ya*, *kaō* 花押) were normally written with a brush, but in Yüan times, T'ao Tsung-i tells us, ciphers came to be carved in wood or ivory because Mongolian and Central Asian (*se-mu* 色目) officials were unable to manipulate the Chinese hair brush. The practice spread from them to Chinese officials because of its convenience. T'ao traces the practice to the official Li Ku 李穀 of the later Chou dynasty, who in 952 had such a seal made because of a sore arm. But the discovery of bronze seals resembling the later cipher seals, but of

57) Published by Francis Woodman Cleaves, "An Early Mongolian Loan Contract from Qara Qoto," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* v. XVIII. 1-2 (1955), pp. 1-49.

58) See the contract published by Huang Wen-pi 黃文弼, *T'u-lu-fan k'ao-ku chi* 吐魯番考古記 (Peking, 1954), p. 110. This document is also reproduced in Cleaves' article (note 57) as plate II. Some of the ciphers seem to be handwritten while others are impressed with a seal, as Professor Cleaves has observed (*ibid.*, p. 17 n. 10).

59) See Edouard Chavannes, *op. cit.*, inscriptions XXXVII, XXXVIII and XXXIX (plates 14 and 15). Note also Chavannes' comment, p. 359 n. 5: "Au-dessous de la date, on voit un signe bizarre qui tient lieu de signature 押.... Ces signes sont assez analogues, semble-t-il, à la *tamga* qui figure sur les inscriptions turques de l'Orkhon."

60) See for example, Tōkyō daigaku, Shiryō hensanjo 東京大學史料編纂所 ed., *Kaō kagami* 花押かがみ v. I (Tokyo, 1965). This volume contains only ciphers of the Heian period, but a large number are identical to the Mongolian ones. See especially Nos. 206, 289, 540 II, and 905 I. I am grateful to Mr. Stephen A. Young for this reference.

61) See for example the discussion in A. Giry, *Manuel de diplomatique* (Paris, 1925), pp. 591-621. I am grateful to my colleague, Professor Lynn T. White, Jr., for this reference.

62) *Nan-ts'un Cho-keng lu* ch. 2, p. 10b.

apparently much earlier date, (fig. 21), suggests that this story is traditional.[63]



Fig. 21.



Fig. 22.



Fig. 23.



Fig. 24.



Fig. 25.



Fig. 26.



Fig. 27.

A number of seals (or seal impressions) of the cipher sort have survived from Yüan times. They are of several sub-types :[64] 1) seals which contain a cipher only (figs. 22–27);[65] 2) seals containing a cipher and a text, of which the present Turkic language



Fig. 28.



Fig. 29.



Fig. 30.

63) Fig. 21 is reproduced from Wang Ch'ang 王常, *Chi-ku-yin-p'u* 集古印譜 (1575 ed.), ch. 6, p. 39a. This seal (and a similar one on the same page) looks early, but it cannot be assigned a date. See also Huang Wen-pi, *op. cit.*, plate 109, figures 6-10; these are bronze seals with a "monster face" design. Huang (pp. 113-114) calls them cipher seals and ventures the opinion that they may be from Han times, although he confesses difficulty in dating them. The eyes of the monster faces superficially resemble the two loops found on the later *hua-ya.*— The most thorough discussion of Chinese ciphers, based on the study of T'ang and Sung originals, is by Niida Noboru 仁井田陞, *Tō-Sō hōritsu bunsho no kenkyū* 唐宋法律文書の研究 (Tokyo, 1937), pp. 24-36.

64) Classification suggested by Lo and Ts'ai, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

65) Figures 22-25 after Lo Chen-yü, *Ho-lien-ch'üan kuan ku-yin ts'un*, p. [61a]; figs. 26-27 after Lo Fu-i and Wang Jen-ts'ung, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

seal is one (figs. 20, 28–30);[66] 3) seals in 'Phags-pa script only (figs. 31–36).[67]



Fig. 31.



Fig. 32.



Fig. 33.



Fig. 34.



Fig. 35.

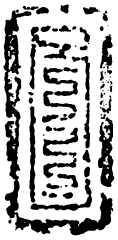


Fig. 36.

Seals of the first type, having no text, require no comment—except to note their astonishing similarity to each other. Seals of the second type generally have a 'Phags-pa spelling of a family name with the additional syllable *gi* (=*chi* 記), which appears to be the contemporary name for seals containing ciphers (the character 記 is sometimes incised on the backs of these seals).[68] The seal in fig. 28 is unusual in that it appears to read from right to left, contrary to the 'Phags-pa rules of writing: *han gi* "the seal of Han [=漢?]." The text of fig. 29 reads *čin gi* "the seal of Ch'en [=陳?]." The seal in fig. 30 is of special interest; at the bottom is the cipher, while over it are some lines which superficially resemble the outward appearance of 'Phags-pa writing, but are in

66) Figure 28 after Liu T'i-chih, *Shan-chai hsi-yin lu, ts'e* 16, p. [33a]; fig. 29 after Lo Fu-i and Wang Jen-ts'ung, p. 36; fig. 30 after Lo Chen-yü, *Ho-lien-ch'üan kuan ku-yin ts'un*, p. [59a]. Lo Ch'ang-p'ei and Ts'ai Mei-piao give two more examples on p. 21, figs. 2–3.

67) Figures 31, 34 and 35 after Lo Chen-yü, *ibid.*, pp. [60a, 61a]; fig. 32 after Tōa kōkogakkai 東亞考古學會 ed., *Nai-Mōko, Chōjō chitai* 內蒙古, 長城地帶 (*Archaeologia Orientalis*, B Series, vol. I, Tokyo and Kyoto, 1935), p. 159, plate 95, fig. 13; figs. 33 and 36 after Liu T'i-chih, *ibid.*, *ts'e* 16, pp. [30a, 31a].

68) The term *chi* for seals seems to become popular in Sung times. See Morohashi Tetsuji 諸橋轍次, *Dai Kan-Wa jiten* 大漢和辭典 v. 10, p. 10839, *s.v.* 記, definition 6.

fact not writing at all. Many seals with imitation 'Phags-pa legends have been found on the Turfan Mongolian documents, both with and without ciphers.

The third group within this class of seals is made up of those which contain no cipher-symbol, but which nevertheless seem to serve the functions of a cipher. They may contain simply the word *gi=chi* 記 "seal" (fig. 31), or an added family name (fig. 32): *ši gi=Shih chi* 施記 "the seal of Shih." Others contain words which cannot be readily identified: fig. 33, *k'iṅ wun=ch'ing wen* =? or fig. 34, *ʒün fu=tsun-fu*=? As in group two, there are a number of small seals which imitate the outward form of 'Phags-pa writing without spelling anything (figs. 35–36).[69]

These ciphers, *hua-ya*, or the seals which reproduce them (also called *hua-ya*, *ya-tzu-yin*[70] 押字印, or *chi*) are called *nišan* in Mongolian documents of the pre-classical period (i.e. before 1500)—a word borrowed from Persian by way of Uighur Turkic. Thus the document which bears the Turkic-language seal discussed above refers to itself as *al nišan-tu bičig* "letter having a vermillion cipher-seal."[71] Proper official seals, on the other hand, are called *tamγa*~*tamaγa* in Mongolian (also a loan from Old Turkic), or *yin* 印 in Chinese (*pao* 寶 if they are the seals of emperors or qans).[72] *Nišan* seems not to occur in Mongolian texts of the classical period, having been replaced by *temdeg* or *tamaγa*. Even in the Turkic language areas *nišan* and *tamγa* became confused: the royal ciphers of Čaγatai, the Golden Horde and Kwarezm are generally called "tamġa" by specialists in Islamic history.[73]

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69) For many others see *Nai-Mōko, Chōjō chitai* Plate 95. One of the seals on this Plate, fig. 15, appears to read *c'an* (=?), but is a mirror image of the correct orthography.

70) *Yüan-shih* ch. 41, p. 12a, reports that Emperor Toγon-temür (Shun-ti 順帝) in 1347 had jade cipher-seals (玉押字印) issued to his highest officials only.

71) E. Haenisch, *op. cit.*, p. 29, B 2. See the good discussion of the term *nišan* by Francis Woodman Cleaves, "An Early Mongolian Loan Contract," pp. 42–43, n. 34.

72) Note that the seals used by the Il-Qans of Persia all contain the self-name *pao*. See Antoine Mostaert and Francis Woodman Cleaves, "Trois documents mongols des Archives secrètes vaticanes," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* v. XV. 3-4 (1952), pp. 482-495, Plates VI-VIII. The oldest surviving seal in the Mongolian language, the seal of Güyüg, has no self-name, however.

73) On the royal seals and ciphers (*tamġa*) of the Golden Horde, see Bertold Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, 2nd ed., (Wiesbaden, 1965), pp. 262–264, 309–310.