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AN AGRICULTURAL TERM IN AN OLD UIGHUR DESCRIPTION OF HELL

BY

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Descriptions of hells and descents to hell are well-known in Indian Buddhist literature. Numerous texts on hells in Chinese, Tibetan and Mongolian translations have been edited and studied, but the old Uighur texts dealing with the same subject matter have been less widely studied although one of these texts contains a fragment of a systematic approach to hells which is unique in the Turkic languages.

The text, written in the Uighur script, can be found in the Turfan Collection (T III M84-55) and was edited by W. Bang and R. Rachmeti.[1] The text is not complete as the beginning and the end are missing, but there exists about 140 lines which describe the tortures that are in store for murderers. The fragment deals with a fifth hell, called *mäŋarau-rab* that is *mahāraurava* in Sanskrit, a sixth hell, *tapan* (Sanskrit *tapana*), and a seventh hell *pratapan* (Sanskrit *pratāpana*). Each hell is described in the form of a dialogue as the master answers his pupils' questions.

In this paper I will attempt to explain a passage of the above-mentioned text which so far has been misunderstood. The passage runs as follows:

(31) . . . *birök ölütči tïnlïγ mäŋarau-*
(32) *rab tamuda toγsar, anta tamu ärkligl-*
(33) *äri örtlüg qïzartmïš tämirlig yir-*
(34) *dä töpün*[2] *yatγururlar. üzäsintä*[3]
(35) *yalïnlayu turur yoγun tuluqlar tägräsindä*
(36) *toqïp, anïη ičindä batururlar.*

In Bang's and Rachmeti's translation: «Wenn die Mörder in der *Mahāraurava*-Hölle wiedergeboren werden, so legen die Höllenherrscher sie auf brennende und glühende Eisenplatten nieder. Dicke Schläuche, deren Ober-

[1] *Türlü Cehennemler üzerine Uygurca Parçalar: Türkiyat Mecmuası* IV (1934), pp. 251—263 and *Uigurische Bruchstücke über verscheidene Höllen: UJB* XV (1935), pp. 299—402. I quote from the German edition, on *tuluq* see note 35.

[2] In the editors' transcription *töbün*, but see Clauson, *Et. Dict.*, p. 441 and 436.

[3] In the editors' transcription *özäsintä*, but see Clauson, *Et. Dict.*, pp. 280—281.

fläche flammt, um sie herum festschlagend (?) versunken sie sie darin.» (*op. cit.*, pp. 391—392).

In the editors' rendering, a question-mark indicates the uncertainity of their interpretation of the passage. They translated the word *tuluqlar* as «Schläuche», but it is not clear how it is possible to «beat someone round and round with a wine-skin», and how it is possible to «press the sinners into the ground» with such a light object. Clauson noticed that the problem lies in the interpretation of the word *tuluq*: «Hap. leg.; the meaning can only be conjectured; the editors suggest a connection with modern words of similar form meaning «wine-skin» and the like, no doubt derived from *to:l-*, but this is not very plausible; the meaning seems rather «barrier», or the like . . .»[4] Clauson's translation: «when a murderer is reborn in hell, the lords of hell lay him face downwards on a surface of red hot iron. They fasten thick barriers (?) constantly flaming on the top round him and lower him within them».[5] But Clauson could not define the word either.

There exists a word meaning «wine-skin» in some of the Turkic languages[6] in this or similar form, but the passage requires another word, a hononym of the suggested one, which better suits the translation.

In the Chinese pentaglott dictionary that was published in Peking in 1800[7] and arranges the words in thematic order, in the chapter on agricultural implements,[8] there can be found the word *tuluq*.[9] The meaning «a threshing roller, mill-stone» can be figured out with the help of its equivalents in the four other languages: Manchu *niyeleku* «1. Oberer Mühlstein; 2. Klöppel zum Waschen»;[10] Tibetan *'thag-skor*;[11] Mongolian *ing* «cylindrical stone for threshing grain; millstone»;[12] Chinese *nien* »a stone roller, used for husking rice, etc.», *nien tzŭ* «the roller on the mill».[13]

[4] Clauson, *Et. Dict.*, p. 495.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 495 (under *tuluq*). Not knowing the meaning of *tuluq*, Clauson could not understand this passage properly. He translated *toqïp* «they fasten» (viz. «fastening») which seems to be a mistake, because *toqï-* means «to hit, knock, etc.» (*Et. Dict.*, p. 467). Clauson must have mixed it up with another verb: *taq-* «to fix, or attach» (*Et. Dict.*, p. 464).

[6] L. Ligeti, *Mongolos jövevényszavaink kérdése* [The problem of the so-called Mongolian loan-words in Hungarian]: *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* XLIX (1935), pp. 219—220, and G. Doerfer, *TMEN* II, pp. 550—553.

[7] *Wu t'i Ching-wen chien*, Peking 1957.

[8] *Wu t'i* II, pp. 2938—2949.

[9] *Wu t'i* II, p. 2944. The word also occurs in compounds: *tuluq taš* «id.» and *tuluq-nïŋ astïn taš* «lower millstone».

[10] E. Hauer, *Handwörterbuch der Mandschusprache* III, p. 717.

[11] I can find the phrase only in Sumatiratna's dictionary (see note 35), but it is not explained in Tibetan.

[12] Lessing, *Mong.—English Dict.*, p. 411.

[13] Giles, *A Chinese—English Dict.*, No. 8312.

The Turkic section of the pentaglott dictionary reflects the language of the Turkic population of Chinese Tukestan; it is, thus, no coincidence that the word occurs in the same form in the Modern Uighur (Turki) language: *tuluq(γ)* «die Walze; der Lehmsarkophag auf Grabstätten»;[14] *tuluq* «a stone roller, used for threshing the sheaves; or softening hides»;[15] *tuluq* (turf.) «a stone roller, used as a harrow»;[16] *tuluq* «1. a threshing-machine; *buγday tepidiγan yayač tuluq* a threshing-machine, used for threshing the grain; 2. a harrow»;[17] *tuluq* (Tar.) «die ausgehöhlten Steinwalzen, mit denen man das Getreide ausdrückt; *tuluq taš* id. (die Walzen sind achteckig und der Länge nach ein rundes Loch, durch welches ein Stab gesteckt wird, an den Enden des Stabes sind Stricke befestigt, an denen ein Pferd gespannt ist. Zieht das Pferd an, so rollt die Walze über das auf der Tenne ausgebreitete Getreide), and Salar *toluχ* «stone roller».[18] The basic meaning of *tuluq* is «roller, a stone roller». This tool has several different functions such as threshing grain, smashing clods in the fields after ploughing, and softening hides.

However, the word is unknown in the other Turkic languages. It is worth mentioning that words similar in form to *tuluq*, like *tulum* and *tulup* meaning «wineskin, sack» have been discussed by Ligeti and Doerfer,[19] but we have yet to make a clear distinction between these words and the word meaning «threshing roller».

As for the etymology of *tuluq*, I would suggest that it is derived from the verb *tul-* «to rotate, go round» with an *-(u)q* suffix.[20] The verb *tul-* can be found in Yakut «id.».[21] Other derivations of this verb occur in the *Codex Cumanicus* *tulqma* «Holzstück vor dem Aufsägen, en gancz holtz»;[22] Yakut *tula* «surroundings; round, in a circle»;[23] Khakass *tulya* (mat.), *tulyu* (mat. k.) «round;

[14] A. v. Le Coq, *Sprichwörter und Lieder aus der Gegend von Turfan. Mit einer dor aufgenommenen Wörterliste*, Leipzig und Berlin 1911, p. 88.

[15] S. Ė. Malov, *Ujgurskij jazyk. Chamijskoe narečie. Teksty, perevody is slovar'*, Moskva—Leningrad 1954, p. 187.

[16] Ibid., *Ujgurskie narečija Sin'czjana. Teksty, perevody, slovar'*, Moskva 1961, p. 162.

[17] Ė. N. Nadzip, *Ujgursko—russkij slovar'*, Moskva 1968, p. 339.

[18] Radloff, *Wb.* III, 1469; Ė. R. Tenišev, *Stroj salarskogo jazyka*, Moskva 1976, p. 513.

[19] The word *tuluq* «wine-skin» also occurs in Turki and it can be added to the data enumerated by Doerfer: *tuluq* «fur; a wine-skin» (S. Ė. Malov, *Lobnorskij jazyk. Teksty, perevody, slovar'*, Frunze 1956, p. 176), *tuluqča* (Turf.) «like a seamless sack, a wine-skin» (Malov, *Ujg. nareč. Sin'czjana*, p. 162), *tuluqča* (dial.) «a wine-skin» (Nadzip, *Ujg.—russ. sl.*, p. 339).

[20] M. Räsänen, *Materialien zur Morphologie der türkischen Sprachen*: *Studia Orientalia* XXI, Helsinki 1957, p. 132.

[21] Ė. K. Pekarskij, *Slovar' jakutskogo jazyka* III, 2798—9.

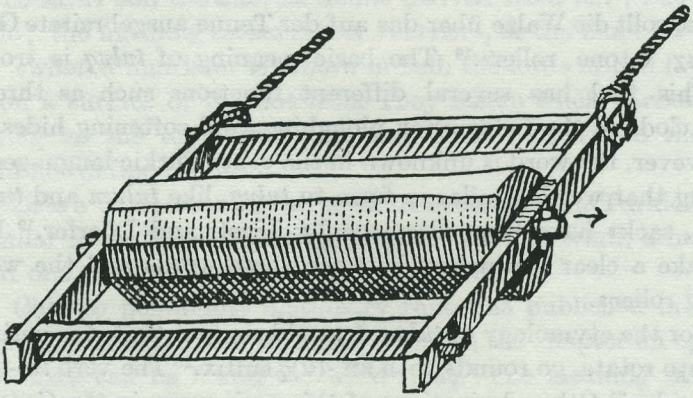
[22] K. Grønbech, *Komanisches Wörterbuch*, p. 253.

[23] Pekarskij, *op. cit.* III, 2799.

stump(wood)»;[24] *tulku* (Alt. Tel. Kkir.), *tulyu* (Leb. Sag. Koib.) «rund, walzenförmig, cylidrisch», *tulkula-* (Alt. Tel., von tulku + la) «rund machen, walzenförmig machen», *tulkučak* (Tel.) «rund, abgerundet»;[25] Kirghiz *tula*, *tulku* «complete, entire, all»; *tultuy-* «to be fat», *tultuk* «thick-set, stout, fat».[26] However, I could find neither the verb itself, nor other derivations of it in Turki.

At any rate, the word *tuluq* which occurs in the Uighur description of hell should be interpreted as a «threshing roller». We can understand why, if we research the ethnographical background of this agricultural implement.

L. Golomb, a missionary, who lived in Turkestan at the beginning of this century, described the tool and made a sketch of ot. (Fig. 1.):



«Zum Dreschen benützen sowohl die Einheimischen wie die zugewanderten Chinesen ausschließlich eine achtkantige Steinwalze. Sie ist aus Kalk- oder Granitstein gehauen, etwa 1 m lang bei 30 cm Durchmesser und läuft in einem Holzrahmen. An den Drehpunkten der Walzenköpfe sind vermittels Schwefel oder Alaun nestartige Gusseisenstücke einkittet. In diese hinein greifen die mit Holtzkeilen am Rahmen befestigen gusseisenernen Zamfen. Als Vorspanngeschirr dienen lediglich zwei Haufstricke, die den kummet des Zugtires mit den zwei Rahmenecken der Walze verbinden. Als Zugtiere werden ausschließlich Pferde oder Esel genommen, weil die Tiere beim Dreschen traben müssen und Ochsen dazu nicht taugen. Bei größeren Betreiben läßt man mehrere Tiere mit je einer Dreschwalze hintereinander laufen.»[27]

This threshing roller is known and used in Western Turkestan as well in the Ili river valley. In 1978, while in Turkey, I recorded the following descrip-

[24] V. Verbickij, *Slovar' altajskago i aladatagskago narečij tjurkskago jazyka*, Kazan' 1884, p. 373.

[25] Radloff, *Wb.* III, 1472.

[26] K. K. Judachin, *Kirgizsko—russkij slovar'*, pp. 764, 765.

[27] L. Golomb, *Die Bodenkultur in Ost-Turkestan. Oasenwirtschaft und Nomadentum*: *Studia Instituti Anthropos*, Vol. 14., Freiburg 1959, p. 87.

tion of the threshing roller from an old Uighur man who had immigrated from Gulja :[28]

būda^{y} bay digän bir usul bilän bāγlanip harman yärigä tåšinidu, vä tuluq digän yoγan bir taš bilän bastïrïlup būdayï, arpasï, samanï, mäŋäni ā^{y}rïlïp čïqïdu. tuluq yoγan vä qälin granit taštin yasïlïdu. bu iki türlü qolïdu. bir atlïq vä iki atlïq. bir atlï'ïmïz ottuz, ottuzbäš santïm qälinlïγïda bir metru uzunluγunda, vä iki täräfidin tam ortusudun t^{š}äšilip üyägä oχ tigän bir tömür yärläštirildu. bunï bir atlïχïnï bir at, iki atlïχïnï iki at tåši^{y}du. iki atlïq tuluq ällig santïm qälinlïγïda bir metru uzunluγunda, altï bu̇ǰäk väyä säkkiz bu̇ǰäk. bir atlïq tuluq oχšaš. bunïn iki täräfidin t^{š}äšilip iki at bilän sörülüp būdaynï äzilidu.

«The wheat is tied [in sheaves] and transported to the threshing-floor [where] the wheat or barley is separated from the straw and chaff. The threshing roller is made of a thick, wide piece of granite. There are two kinds, the one-horse and the two-horse [threshing roller]. The [roller], drawn by one horse, is 30—35 cm in width and 1 m in length. Two holes are bored on its two sides [where two] pieces of iron, called *oχ* are fixed. The one-horse [threshing roller] is drawn by one horse, two two-horse [threshing roller] by two. The two-horse roller is 50 cm in width and one and a half metre long, its form is hexagonal or octogonal, it resembles the one-horse roller. It is also bored on its two sides, drawn by two horses and [in this way] it threshes the grain.»

But we have, however, an earlier source. P. Zieme edited an Uighur text[29] dating from the 13th—14th centuries which contains farmers' prayers to the gods for abundant harvests. In the section describing the farmers' work an object called *täpin* is mentioned :

(73) *täpip yorïp mangayu*
tägirmi ör̤-(74)*-gün qïldurup*
täpin-kä ud-lar (75) *qošdurup*
turmadïn tudčï täp-(76)*-türüp*
toṣyurup oḏïra yïγdu-(77)*-rup . . .*

«(73) gehend und laufend läßt man durch das Treten einen runden Getreidehaufen (Tenne) (74) herrichten, an den Getreideschlitten spannt man die Rinder, (75) ohne stehenzubleiben läßt man sie ständig (76—77) treten (dreschen) und zertreten, man häuft (die Körner) zur Mitte» (*op. cit.*, p. 118).

[28] My informant was Mesutoğlu Kıvılcım Sabri Baykuzu, 48, a Taranchi who was born and lived in the village of Arabuz, located east of Gulja, and left Turkestan at the age of 19. I recorded the text in Istanbul.

[29] P. Zieme, *Ein uigurisches Erntesegen* : *Altorientalische Forschungen* III (1975), pp. 109—143.

The word *täpin* is also a *hapax legomenon* and, as P. Zieme rightly indicated,[30] it is derived from the verb *täp-* «to kick, to stamp, clap, to thresh».[31] From the context one clearly sees that the *täpin* was an implement used for threshing grain, and that oxen were harnessed to it. There can be little doubt that this tool is the threshing roller under discussion, under another name. What we have here is a mention of this agricultural implement from the 13th—14th centuries which indicates that it has probably been used in Turkestan for centuries.

This tool has been well-known in China since the first and second centuries A. D.,[32] and it is possible that Chinese settlers brought it into general use among the peoples of Turkestan.

The threshing roller is used in Manchuria as well. The Manchu equivalent of *tuluq* in the Peking pentaglott dictionary is *niyeleku* meaning «mill-stone, etc.». The threshing roller is used by Chinese farmers in Manchuria, as we know from V. S. Starikov's description and photograph.[33] (Fig. 2):



[30] P. Zieme, *op. cit.*, note 74.

[31] Clauson, *Et. Dict.*, p. 435.

[32] W. Wagner, *Die chinesische Landwirtschaft*, Berlin 1926, Abb. 91, Fig. 1.

[33] V. S. Starikov, *Material'naja kul'tura kitajcev severovostočnych provincij KNR*, Moskva 1967, p. 161.

The Mongols were also familiar with the threshing roller. The manner in which the tool was used was depicted by Marzanšerab, the famous Mongolian painter.[34] (Fig. 3):



In Marzanšerab's painting, the roller has a circular cross section and the structure of the implement is simpler, as the wooden framework — we can see it in Golomb's sketch — is missing. The threshing process can be seen quite well in this painting. The sheaves are placed on the ground in a circle with the ears outside. A man stands in the middle and drives the horse around in a circle.

This threshing roller is explained in Mongolian in Sumatiratna's Tibetan—Mongolian Dictionary[35] (under Tibetan *'thag-skor*): *ing*: *inu čilayun tosqur-un*

[34] A. Róna-Tas, *Some Data on the Agriculture of the Mongols: Opuscula ethnologica memoriae Ludovici Bíró Sacra*, ed. by T. Bodrogi and L. Boglár, Budapest 1959, pp. 443—472.

[35] Sumatiratna, *Bod-hor-kyi-brda-yig-miń-chig-don-gsum-gsal-bar-byed-pa-mun-sel-skron-me* I—II, Ulan Bator 1959, I, p. 963. I would like to express my sincere gratitute to Prof. András Róna-Tas for his calling my attention to the occurence of the Mongolian word in this dictionary, and his help in interpreting the text.

dumda anu modun-u küisü talbiǰu tere inu toγurin čilaγun-i modun-u qaγurai ǰegüǰü toγurin öngüregülün amu tariya amusiγulaqu-yi ing kememüi «[Two] pivots are fixed in the middle [of the two sides] of a stone roller. This round stone is placed on a rough wooden [surface] and as it rolls round in a circle the grain is threshed. [This stone roller] is called *ing*.»

This ethnographical material offers a possibility for a better understanding of the passage under discussion. Now, getting back to the passage in the Uighur description of hell, the heavy object called *tuluq* that presses the sinners into the ground must have been the threshing roller that we have been discussing and describing here. As seen in Fig. 1., the log was angular, and as it was drawn round and round by the horses, and as it rolled from plank to plank it thudded to the ground and threshed the grain.

Keeping this process in mind helps to understand the phrase *tägräsindä toqïp* «beating round and round» in the description of hell, and the hitherto misinterpreted passage becomes clear.

In our case recent ethnographical material gives a key to the interpretation of this passage. An agricultural implement and process taken from everyday reality appears in the description of hell, having been transformed as the «roller constantly flaming on top, going around on a ground made of red hot iron».

The manuscript is a part of a *pothi*-book called the «N-Buch» by F. W. K. Müller and A. v. Gabain.[36] We know from the colophon that the description of hell had been translated from a Tokharian account that had itself previously been translated from the *ugu-küšän* language. In P. Zieme's opinion[37] the document can be dated at about the 10th—12th centuries.

Unfortunately, the original texts from which the Uighur translation was made are unknown. We can only guess as to whether the idea of pressing the sinners into the ground with a threshing roller was in the original or not. Be that as it may, the translators used a Turkic word for the threshing roller, one that is known and used by the Turkic population of Turkestan to the present day. So they must have been familiar with the object and the process when translating the text, that is in the 10th—12th centuries. Considering these facts, the Uighur description of hell contributes to our knowledge of the historical ethnography of Central Asia.

[36] F. W. K. Müller—A.v. Gabain, *Uigurica* IV, p. 678.

[37] I am indebted to Dr. Peter Zieme, of Berlin, for his kind help in dating this manuscript.