Animal terminology in the Uyghur documents concerning the postal system of the Mongol Empire

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This article examines some unclear animal denominations in the Uyghur documents concerning the postal system of the Mongol Empire.[1] The investigation focuses, on two expressions *ulag* and *boguz at*, but a number of other terms are analysed too. Alongside philological analysis of the documents, data from earlier sources and modern language usage are also used.
Keywords: Old Uyghur documents, Mongol Empire, postal system, *ulag*, *boguz at*

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While in editions of the Middle Mongolian documents the word *ulaγa* or *ula'a* is consistently translated as 'post horse, relay horse' or the like,[2] in the contemporaneous Uyghur documents the term *ulag* receives additional translations in the fundamental dictionaries and scholarly works.[3] This article clarifies the exact meaning of

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2 In the standard dictionaries: *ulaγa* 'relais, chevaux de relais, chevaux de poste' (Kowalewski 1: 394); *ula'a(n)* Pferde, Reitpferde, Remonten; Postpferd (Haenisch 1939: 162); *ulaƶ-a(n)* n. 'relay horses, relay transportation' (Lessing 1973: 869). In text editions: Ramstedt (1909: 841); Mostaert & Cleaves (1952: 433–434; 440–444); Cleaves (1953: 31–32, 91); Poppe (1957: 88, Nr. 20); Weiers (1967: 16–17, 25–27); Franke (1968: 8–9, 13); Kara (1990: 330); Cerensodnom & Taube (1993: Nr. 69, Nr. 72, Nr. 74, Nr. 75, Nr. 77); Rachewiltz (2004: 127, 737–738).

3 In the present paper I use the term "Uyghur document" for the documents of the Mongol period (13th–14th centuries) written in Old Uyghur language in the cursive style of the Uyghur script.

this Turco-Mongol technical term in Uyghur civil documents concerning the postal system of the Mongol Empire (Turkic *yam*, Mongolian *ǰam*)[4] from the 13th and 14th centuries. Starting with the question of possible etymologies, the few appearances of the word in earlier sources are then taken into account. After a philological analysis of the Uyghur documents from the Mongol period, a new interpretation of the terms *ulag* and *boguz at* is provided and, finally, the later history of the words is illuminated.

Ulag

Almost all fundamental works and dictionaries agree on the origins of the term, linking it to the Old Turkic verb *ula-* 'to join together, to join' and the like (Kotwicz 1953: 346–348; Ramstedt 1957: 143; Räsänen 1969: 512; TMEN 2: 102, 105; Sevortjan 1974: 588–590; ED: 136; Erdal 1991: 212–213).[5] Differences can, however, be found in their etymological interpretation. For example Doerfer states: "Etymologie: das Wort ist eine Ableitung von *ula-* 'festbinden' (schon K u.a.), also *ulaγ* = 'das festgebundene (Tier)'" (TMEN 2: 103). Clauson's explanation is as follows: "The specific meaning seems to be that it is one of a string of horses available for hire or use, and it may originally have meant a string of horses rather than a single animal, but if so this meaning became obsolete very early. It is therefore prob. a Dev. N. [probably a deverbal noun] fr. *ula:-*, etymologically identical with 1 *ula:ğ*, but with a specialized meaning" (ED: 136).[6] Erdal confutes Doerfer's etymology and

4 Although, according to Lessing, the Mongolian *örtege(n)* means 'relay system with stages about 20 miles apart, postal relay station' (Lessing 1973: 643), and *ǰam* is 'road, route, way, pass' (Lessing 1973: 1033), the latter was used in the Middle Mongolian documents in the sense of 'post station' and sometimes referred to the whole postal system too (cf. Cerensodnom & Taube 1993: 181–182, Nr. 74–75). Meanwhile we have no evidence for such use of *örtege(n)* from this period. For the history of the word *örtege(n)*, see Ligeti (1970: 293–294). For the closely related Mongolian *ǰam* and Turkic *yam*, see TMEN IV: 110–118 (Nr. 1812); ED: 933; Vér (2016).

5 Here we have to refer to Denis Sinor's theory, which differs from the points of view mentioned above. He mentions that the Ugric languages (Vogul, Ostiak and Hungarian) use the same word for horse. In Vogul it is *luv, lō, lū*, in Ostiak *laų, taų*, and in Hungarian *ló* (lō). These words go back to an Ugric **laγ*, which he believes to be the origin of the Turco-Mongol *ulag*. Based on this he reconstructs a west-east movement of the expression (1965: 314–315). Sinor's proposal was not accepted by other scholars, or at least there are no references to his theory in later literature. Louis Ligeti took quite the opposite view. He proposed the idea that the Hungarian *ló* originates from the Turkic *ulag* (1986: 139–141). The recent work of András Róna-Tas and Árpád Berta deals with the question in detail in their list of improbable etymologies, providing rich bibliographical data concerning the topic. They argue that the Hungarian *ló* goes back to Proto-Ugric, but the origin of the Proto-Ugric word is unclear (2011: 1192–1195).

6 Clauson's definition for 1 *ula:ğ*: "Dev. N. fr. *ula:-*; lit. 'something joined on', and the like with various specific applications" (ED: 136).

gives various possible interpretations: "I think it follows from the semantic development which this word took that such a horse was not called *ulag* because it was a 'festgebundenes Tier' (TMEN 521), but because it represented an element in a chain (as pars pro toto). Thus, the grammatical task of *ulag* with respect to *ula-* could be as action noun (the 'connection'), subject noun ('what connects'), object noun ('what is connected') or as instrument noun ('what one uses for connecting')" (Erdal 1991: 212–213). In sum we can state that most of the scholars are in agreement concerning the Turkic origins of the term (*ula-*), but etymological interpretations vary.[7]

According to Paul Pelliot the first appearance of the word *ulag* dates back to the 7th century. He states that it can be found in the Chinese biography of the Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang (664). In the account about his travels across the territories of the Western Turks, the term appears twice in Chinese transcription as *wuluo* 鄔落 (**uo-lâk*), with the meaning 'corvée horse'. According to Pelliot this is the standard Chinese equivalent of the Turkic *ulag* (1929: 220). If Pelliot is right this would be the earliest appearance of the term.[8]

The next occurrence of the word, which is well-known in the Turcological literature, can be found in Maḥmūd al-Kāšγarī's *Dīwān Luγāt at-Turk* (Compendium of the Turkic dialects, hereafter DLT) (1072–1074). In Robert Dankoff's translation of the work the definition of *ulag* is "A horse which an express courier takes by order of the emir and rides until he finds another" (DLT 1: 147). The word appears in another part of the work as well: "Let me be generous and get a name for generosity, send me to battle and help me by giving me a horse (*ulag*) that will convey me to it." (DLT 2: 238).[9]

7 The fact that there are no occurrences of the word in Mongol texts prior to the 13th century is not in itself a strong argument for Turkic origin since we have only sporadic Mongolian words in our sources before the Mongol period.

8 The Japanese sinologist Masaharu Arakawa studied the above-mentioned passage of the Xuanzang biography in detail. According to his analysis of the text, someone issued a decree (in Chinese: *chi* 勅) to the leaders of the oasis states located west of Kočo (present-day 高昌 Gaochang in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China) to provide *ulag*-horses to the traveller. He argued that only the khagan of the Western Turks had the authority to give such an order. In Arakawa's interpretation, the king of Kočo asked the khagan of the Western Turks to order the leaders of the other oasis states to give *ulag*s to Xuanzang. The rulers provided not only *ulag*s but also guides. Arakawa interpreted this as evidence for the existence of a well-established traffic system in the region. He thinks that *wuluo* 鄔 落 must be the Chinese phonetic transcription of *ulag*, which must be of Turkic origins because this was the language of the Western Turk khagan and the leaders of the oasis states (2010: 25–29). I would like to express my gratitude to Yukiyo Kasai and Dai Matsui for summarizing the contents of Arakawa's Japanese articles for me.

9 In Brockelmann's dictionary we find these definitions: *ulaγ* 'Kurierpferd, Streitross' (1928: 229).

On the basis of the DLT data we can state that the word had partly differing meanings in the 11th century, at least at the Karakhanid court. Apart from these two sources – the Chinese Xuanzang biography and the DLT – the earlier Turcological literature on *ulag* cited no other occurrences of the word in texts from before the 13th century, leaving a four-century chronological gap in the history of the expression.

Dai Matsui has called attention to those works by Arakawa which dealt with the questions of transportation and communication during the Tang dynasty (618–907) on the western borders of China and in Central Asia (Matsui 2008: 236, fn. 25). In an article Arakawa dealt with a series of Chinese Turfan documents dated after 657. These fragments included the expression *wuluozi* 烏駱子 'a guide accompanying *ulag*' (1994a), which must be a takeover of the Old Turkic *ulagčï* 'stableman, relay coachman, relay service attendant', a derivative form of *ulag*. In another work Arakawa dealt with a Chinese document from Mazar-Tagh (located in present-day Xinjiang Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China). This document is dated to around the 8th century, and includes the expression *wuluoma* 烏駱馬 '*ulag*-horse' (1994b). After comparative research on Chinese documents from Central Asia, Arakawa concluded that the Western Turk Khaganate (581–657) imposed a so-called *ulag*-system on the subordinate oasis states in the Tarim Basin, to requisition horses (*ulag*), guides and provisions from local inhabitants. He went further and suggested that this system could have been inherited by the Uyghur Khaganate (744–840). He quoted Tamīm ibn Baḥr's record of a journey (ca. 821) to the Uyghur khagan[10] in order to strengthen this theory (1994b: 21).[11]

It is clear that the chronological gap between the Chinese biography of Xuanzang and the DLT can be filled almost completely with the results of Arakawa's investigations. The word *ulag* is traceable in the Central-Asian Chinese sources from the 7th century on. Although Tamīm ibn Baḥr used Arabic terminology to describe the Uyghur relay system (Minorsky 1948: 278, 283) and did not mention *ulag*, if we take into account the numerous similarities between the Uyghur

10 The travel account of Tamīm ibn Baḥr was published by Minorsky (1948). The report on the relay horses which were sent to Tamīm ibn Baḥr by the Uyghur khagan can be found at the very beginning of the account: "1. Tamīm b. Baḥr al-Muṭṭawwi'i reports that their (i.e. the Turks') country is very cold and one can travel in it (only) during six months of the year. He says that he journeyed to the country of the Tughuzghuzian khāqān on relay horses (*barīd*) which the khāqān sent him and that he was travelling three stages (*sikak*) in a-day-and-a-night, travelling as hard and as fast as he could. He journeyed twenty days in steppes (*barārī*) where there were springs and grass (*kalā'*) but no villages or towns: only the men of the relay service (*aṣḥāb al-sikak*) living in tents. And he was carrying with him twenty days' provision." (Minorsky 1948: 283).

11 For further references to Chinese sources on early Turkic corvée systems, see Vér (2016: 236).

Khaganate and their predecessors the Turks,[12] it seems probable that they inherited some kind of relay system from the Turks as well.[13] Therefore the word *ulag*, which was introduced as a Turco-Mongol technical term in the opening paragraphs of this study, seems to appear only in Chinese sources in the first four centuries of its history, though the etymologies mentioned above agree on its Turkic origin.

The term *ulag* in Uyghur civil documents

As seen above, contrary to the Middle Mongolian texts' usage of *ulaγa* or *ula'a*, there are different ways of translating the term *ulag* in Old Turkic dictionaries and text editions. We can state that there were two main directions of definitions given in the dictionaries: one describing *ulag* as a pack animal or a beast of burden, the other connecting it tightly with the postal system and translating it as post horse or the like.[14] In the standard editions of the documents, scholars follow these two principal directions as well, always choosing the interpretation which best fits the context (cf. Radloff 1928: 4, 47, 56; SUK 2: 296; VOHD13,21: 37; Tuguševa 2013: 204). In order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon we must perform a philological investigation of the Uyghur documents.[15]

12 For the summary of these similarities, see Sinor (1998: 192); Sinor (2000: 189). For the criticism of Sinor's standpoint: Drompp (2005: 23).

13 For a long time it was generally agreed that the postal system of the Mongol Empire was adopted from the Chinese *Yi* 驛 system, through the mediation of Chinggis Khan's Khitan and Uyghur advisers (Gazagnadou 1994: 45–47; Morgan 2000: 379; Morgan 2007: 94, Gazagnadou 2016: 47–48). Lately Adam J. Silverstein has brought up some arguments against this (2007: 141–144); however he acknowledged that the Chinese tradition was, at least initially, a model for the Mongols (2007: 144). In my view the above-mentioned continuity of a postal relay system in Central Asia from the time of the First Turk Khaganate is a strong argument for the existence of a parallel tradition of maintaining communication systems in Central Asian states, even if this had originated from a Chinese model long before. It is therefore misleading to associate the Mongol *yam* only with the Chinese *Yi*. See also: Allsen 2010. For a presentation of the different theories and a detailed explanation of the traces of Central Asian traditions, see Vér (2016).

14 Radloff describes it as follows: 'jedes Hausthier, welches zum Transporte von Sachen gebraucht wird, ein Lastthier, Saumthier, Thier, welches den Wagen oder schlitten zieht' (1893: 1679a). Ahmet Caferoğlu's definition is: 'ulak, yük hayvanı' (1934: 205; 1968: 264). Doerfer, in his *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, translates the word as 'Postpferd, Relaispferd, später Esel' (TMEN 2: 102). The *Drevnetjurkskij Slovar* defines it as: '1.вьючное животное, верховой конь; 2. почтовый транспорт на перегонах между станициями' (DTS: 608). Clauson, in his etymological dictionary, wrote, in addition to the part mentioned above: "a technical term for a horse used for carrying goods or riding, more particularly a horse for hire and a post horse." (ED: 136).

15 Another contemporary Turkic source has to be mentioned here: the *Codex Cumanicus,* from the southern part of the East European steppe zone. There are two riddles which may contain the word (Drimba 2000: 116 folio 60r line 31–32). Géza Kuun, the first editor of the source, transcribed it as *ut(a)hî* in the first riddle and did not include it in the glossary

In the documents concerning the postal system of the Mongol Empire we find many attestations of *ulag* and other animals, and we find many composite terms, too.[16] Among the approximately 70 texts which can be linked with the postal system we find the word *ulag* and the term *ulagčï* 'stableman', which is derived from *ulag*. The compositions in which the term appears are the following: *at ulag* ('horse-ulag'), *ulag at* ('ulag-horse'), *müngü* [number] *at ulag* ('[number of] riding horse-ulag'), *äškäk ulag* ('donkey-ulag'), *müngü bir äškäk ulag* ('one riding donkey-ulag'), *uzunka bargu äškäk ulag* ('long distance donkey-ulag'), *uzun ulag* ('long-range-ulag'), *kïsga ulag* ('short-range-ulag'), and *ud ulag* ('ox-ulag'). It seems certain that the scribes employed these compositions to express specialized meanings.

Besides the so called *ulag*-compositions we have many constructions with other animals, such as *müngü at*, *kïsga at*, *ṭüli at, uzun at*, *yol at*, *yam at*, *yüdgü äškäk*. Some of these are easy to explain: Old Turkic *yol* means 'road, way' (ED: 907), so *yol at* can surely be translated as 'horse for the route'. The participle *müngü* goes back to the verb *bin-* 'to mount or ride (a horse)', which has as a late form *mün-* (ED: 767, 348), and with the -GU deverbal suffix[17] it results in a composition *müngü at* 'a horse to ride on', which means 'riding horse'. We find the same case in the term *yüdgü äškäk*: *yüd-* 'to carry' (ED: 885) plus the -GU suffix, and the result is *yüdgü äškäk* 'a donkey to carry' which is actually a pack-donkey.

On *uzun* and *kïsga at*, we can accept the opinion of Matsui, who proposed that the adjectives *uzun* 'long' and *kïsga* 'short' refer to the range the horses could reach, so *uzun at* is a horse for long-range travel, while the *kïsga at* can be used for short-distance journeys (Matsui 1998a: 43–45; Matsui 2002: 107-108).[18] This definition

(1880: 144); in the second riddle he read *ulah* in both lines, and translated it simply 'equus' (1880: 145; 260). Later Willy Bang transcribed the word in the first riddle as *ulahim* and in the second as *ulah* and translated it as 'Lasttier' (1912: 344). Németh confuted Bang's readings and transcribed the word in the first riddle as *ulaγim* and translated as 'Zicklein', while in the second he read *ulak*, but gave no different translation (1913: 592–593). The Old Turkic word for 'young goat' is *oglak* (ED: 84), so he might have considered it a typographical error, but he made no mention of it (cf.: Róna-Tas & Berta 2011: 638–642). Grønbech accepted Németh's translation and gave the following entry in his dictionary referring to the first riddle: ulaχ [ulaH] 'Zicklein' (1942: 264). Later Andreas Tietze investigated the riddles of the *Codex Cumanicus* in detail and brought modern parallels into consideration. He mentioned that Radloff and Malov agreed with Németh as well (1966: 71).

16 This paper cites original documents from the Berlin collection with the signatures in VOHD13,21 and in VOHD13,22, and adopts the transcription system of these catalogues. Photographs of the original documents in most cases can be found at the Digital Turfan Archive (http://turfan.bbaw.de/dta/index.html). In the case of original manuscripts from other institutions we follow the signatures as given in the relevant literature.

17 Cf.: Gabain (1974: 117); Erdal (2004: 302–306).

18 Matsui surmised that the Turkic expressions go back to Chinese forms: the *uzun ulag* goes back to *changxingma* 長行馬 'horse for distant transportation' which appears in the Chi-

helps us in the interpretation of the term *uzun ulag*: this expression surely refers to an *ulag* which is capable of performing long-distance journeys. Matsui puts the expression *ṭüli at* in this group of compositions. This appears in a text belonging to a group of five administrative orders from the Mongol period (13th–14th centuries) which was unearthed at the Bezeklik Caves near Turfan (Matsui 2009: 340–341).[19] Matsui transcribes the second line of the first text as ₂ïndu elči-ning ṭüli at-larïnga and translates it as: "₂for the middle (-distance) horses of ambassador Ïndu". He follows Umemura[20] in equating *ṭüli* with the Mongolian *düli*[21] 'half, middle, middle of the day or night, noon, midnight; middling, mediocre, average; halfway, partly' (Lessing 1973: 280),[22] but contrary to Umemura's 'usual horse; normal horse' interpretation, he suggests a "middle (-distance) horse" translation. If we accept his argument, we can state that there was a triple-grade classification of horses within the *yam*-system, according to the distance they were capable of achieving.

The following document gives us further help in explaining the exact meaning of *ulag*:

*U 9241 (TM 69)[23]

ud yïl säkizinč ay tokuz
yaŋï-ka yeṭär elči-kä yürüŋčïn-
ka bargu : tört at ulag-ta .
nampï-ta [tä]mir-či buyan tükäl
/[ ]WNG č(a)gan k[u]lï bilä bir at
berip yam at san-ïnta tutzun

"₁Ox year, eighth month, on the ninth ₂₋₃new day.

nese documents from the Tang period; and the *kïsga ulag* is derived from *jinxingma* 近行馬 'horse for short range travel' which is attested in documents from the Qu 麴 dynasty (502–640) of the Gaochang Kingdom (2008: 236).

19 These documents were first published by Geng Shimin with a Chinese translation (1980). Later Umemura Hiroshi (1981) and Kurban Weli (1984) presented their own readings. More recently Matsui gave a new interpretation of the texts and republished the *facsimile*s (2009). The inventory numbers of the originals were unknown for a long time, but lately, due to a reorganization of the Turfan Museum's collection, all five documents were rediscovered. Their inventory numbers are: 74TB60:6–3, 74TB60:6–4, 74TB60:6–5, 74TB60:6–6 (Li–Matsui 2016: 69).

20 For the citation and refutation of the other readings see Matsui (2009: 340 fn. 5).

21 According to Róna-Tas and Berta the Mongolian originates from a West Old Turkic **tülčï* > **tülï* and the original meaning was 'midday-time, *lit.* the sun came to its place' (2011: 292–294).

22 In Kowalewski's dictionary: 'milieu, moitié, midi, minuit' (Kowalewski 3: 1917).

23 This document, from the Berlin collection, was lost during the Second World War. A photograph of the original manuscript is preserved in Reşit Rahmeti Arat's estate, and was published in Matsui (2013: 432).

From the four horse-ulags for Yetär elči to go to Yürüŋčïn,
4-6Tämir-či, Buyan Tükäl, [ ]WNG with Čagan Kulï from Nampï
(each) shall give one horse and take it into account as postal horse-tax."

This text shows us that the original *at*s given by the persons mentioned were used as *at ulag* (i.e. horse-*ulag*) and the newly added decree states that they have to be taken into account as *yam at*, which probably can be interpreted in this phrase as postal horse-tax.[24]

To determine the specific meaning of these *ulag*-compositions we can have a look at another document:

Ch/U 7344 v[25]

[ ]Q' […
bir [a]t P//-kä bir at buka t[ämir...
[a]*t* [*u*]*lag*-čï bilä berdi säkiz yaŋïka P[...
[t]okuzunč ay altï y(e)girmikä QW//[...
toksïn-[t]a buka tämir bir *koyn* T[...
bermiš at-lar *uẓu[n u]*lag-ka *tuṭ*[*zun*...
boldï tümän *ak-a* 'Y[ ]WN //LWN […
-kä toksïn iki [ ]/// *-ay/ni* […
[b]ir ulag mïsïr P[ ] [...
ulag-čï-ka *tuṭuldai* toksïn [...
[ ]/L'R *bargu* //Y/[...

"1[ ]Q'
2one [ho]rse for P[ ], one horse for Buka T[ämir ...]
3horse together with a stableman was given. On the eighth new day P[...]
4[n]inth month on the 16th day QW//[...]
5in Toksïn Buka Tämir one sheep. T[...]
6the given horses shall be reg[arded] as long-range ulag […]

24 The literary meaning of *yam at* is 'postal horse'; but Dai Matsui called my attention to a possible abstract interpretation of the expression as 'postal horse-tax'. As he pointed out, in several cases in Uyghur official decrees the noun before the expression *sanïnta tutzun* or *sanka tudup* 'take into account', denotes a specific tax. He detected this phenomenon in the case of: *bor* 'wine-tax' (U 5323) (1998b: 47–48); *tütün* 'smoke-tax' (U 5284, U 5291, U 5292, U 5305 and Mi20 in SUK) (2002: 108–109); *saŋ* 'land-tax' (SI Kr I 149) (2004: 18–19).

25 In this document the lower part of the manuscript is missing; i.e. it cannot be presumed how long the lines are. Line breaks in this translation are applied in order to mirror this peculiarity of the text.

7became. Tümän Ak-a ’Y[...]
8for [...], Toksïn two [...] ///// […]
9one ulag Mïsïr P[...] /// month [....]
10for the stableman. Tutuldai[26] Toksın[...]
11[....]/L’R ought to go to //Y/ [....]”

In both cases we find that the ordinary horses (*at*), which were provided due to an administrative order as a kind of additional tax, became some kind of *ulag*s. On this basis we can state that, after the ownership of the animals has changed, their status changed too. We can apply the same line of thought for those cases in which the other component of the compound is not a horse, namely *äškäk ulag* and *ud ulag*. Most probably, in these cases the original donkey and ox received special status and became donkey-*ulag* and ox-*ulag*.

Ulag in other languages

To understand the special status of these animals we have to look at the later life of this term. As mentioned above, scholarly literature agrees that the Turkic word *ulag* was borrowed into Mongolian around the 13th century at the latest, in the form of *ulaγa* or *ula’a* as ‘relay horse’ and the like. In Turkic sources originating from the later Golden Horde, the word *ulag* or *ulak* was used for the postal system and for the claims that envoys made from the local population for food and animals (Spuler 1943: 335; Özyetgin 1996: 238; Özyetgin 2004: 139).

During the Mongol period the term spread widely among the languages of Eurasia. In many cases (especially when the mediator language was Mongolian) the sense of the loanword was connected to the postal system. In the postal system of China under the rule of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), the word *wulachi* 兀剌赤 was used for courier companions (Olbricht 1954: 60), or in David Farquhar’s formulation ‘Relay Horse Managers’ (1990: 220), which is a Chinese equivalent of the Mongolian *ula’ačin* ‘relay coachman, relay service attendant’ (Lessing 1973: 869).[27] In Tibetan *u-lag* ‘socage service, compulsory post service’ (Laufer 1916: 492); in Manchu: *ula* ‘Relaispost’ (Hauer 2007: 494); in Persian: *ulāg̲h* (الاغ), *ulāq* (الاق) ‘A forcing of one to work gratis;[28] a relay of post horses; a courier; a small horse; ass’

26 This reading is very dubious. Here this word is interpreted as a (probably Mongolian) personal name.

27 Though Farquhar refers only to Mongolian words as possible origins, if we take into account the above-mentioned works by Arakawa, we see that the word was borrowed into Chinese long before the Mongol period.

28 Such pejorative connotations can be noted in the Turkic and Mongolian languages too. In Mongolian there is a verb *ulaγla-* ‘to use a relay system, travel by relay; to take by force, confiscate; to rob’ (Lessing 1973: 869). In the Central Asian literary language (so-called Chagatay) اولاغ, ق ‘travail sans salaire; cheval; courrier; petit bateau’ (Pavet de Courteille 1870: 74). These disparaging overtones resulted from the regular abuses and misuses in

(Steingass 1947: 91); in Zenker's dictionary: *ulak* (اولاق, اولاغ, الاغ, اولق) 'Eilbote, Eilschiff, Courierschiff'; اولاق بارکیری 'Postpferd, Courierpferd', پیاده اولاق 'Eilbote zu Fuss' (1866: 129); Ottoman Turkic *ulaq* (اولاق) 'messenger, a courier, one who is the channel for forwarding messages' (Redhouse 1890: 265).[29]

To summarize the early history of the word *ulag* it is very likely that the Turkic etymology going back to the word *ula-* 'to join together, to join' is correct. According to Pelliot and Arakawa's investigations, it first appeared in the 7th century Chinese sources, and was tightly connected with some kind of relay system in Central Asia. From this time the word is documented in the Chinese sources on Central Asia and Tang China. The first appearance of the word in Turkic sources can be dated to the second half of the 11th century in the DLT, where it has a dual meaning: 'courier horse' and 'warhorse'. Most probably the word was borrowed into Mongolian by the beginning of the 13th century at the latest. If we take into account the proximity of Turkic- and Mongolian-speaking peoples living together in the eastern part of the Eurasian steppe zone long before the rise of the Mongol Empire, it does not seem impossible. Additionally, we know how important a role the Turkic advisers played in the establishment and early history of the empire.[30] The administration of this newly established empire had to respond to many challenges concerning the maintenance of this huge state. In this process they needed language tools to describe ele-

connection with the postal relay system of the Mongol Empire and its successors. The contemporary Persian historiographers Juvainī (Boyle 1958: 501, 524, 598–599) and Rashīd ad-Dīn (Thackston 1999: 714–718) mention this frequently. Rashīd ad-Dīn draws an especially vivid picture of these abuses, but might exaggerate their scale. For an analysis of the Persian sources on the subject see Morgan 1977: 311–312; Morgan 2000: 380–383; Silverstein 2007: 141–164 (especially 151, 156–157).

29 For further data on the spread of the word see TMEN 2 (105–107); Ligeti (1986: 139–141); Róna-Tas & Berta (2011: 1192–1195).

30 There is agreement among the scholars about the basic idea that the non-Mongol population of the Empire played a key role in the establishment of administrative systems of the Empire, but there are long lasting debates about the involvement of certain groups (Rachewiltz 1966; Morgan 1982). We have quite detailed data on the Turkic influence on the Mongol Empire in its early phase. The first known Uyghur who entered the service of the Mongols, in 1204, was *Tata Tonga*, formerly seal-bearer and chief administrator to the Mongolized Turkic Nayman tribe, one of the main enemies of the Mongols in the 12th century and early 13th century. Traditionally he is credited with the introduction of the Uyghur script among the Mongols. We cannot be sure about this information, but the fact of the introduction of the Uyghur script in the Mongol Empire itself shows us the extent of Uyghur cultural influence on the Mongols in this formative period. We know as well that *Tata Tonga* became a teacher to the khan's sons, a position carrying status not necessary to stress here (Brose 2005: 407–410; Brose 2007: 84–87; Rachewiltz 1983: 283). Another Turk, *Hala Ihachi Beilu* (Kara Igač Buyruk?) was also appointed as tutor to the princes in those times. On the basis of these data we can assume that in the early imperial period, one of the main cultural influences in the Mongol court was the Uyghur advisers (Brose 2005: 416–412; Rachewiltz 1983: 284).

ments of their new circumstances. The word was therefore most probably borrowed into the Mongolian language in the early years of the empire at the latest, as 'post horse, relay horse'. From this time on it was surely tightly connected to the imperial postal system, which was far larger in size and far more complex in the variety of services it offered than its Central Asian predecessors. And these factors led to a change in the meaning of the word in Old Turkic. The spread of the word did not stop in Central Asia, but within the framework of the empire infiltrated into numerous Eurasian languages. Based on this, in my opinion the special status of those animals which became *ulag*s meant that they became the property of the state, more precisely, probably the property of the postal system. A passage by Juvainī seems to strengthen this theory:

> Elchis now departed to all the lands to procure and dispatch taghars of flour for the provisioning of the army and also a great number of animals both for slaughter and for use as mounts. The provisions had to be transported [over an area stretching] from Armenia to Yezd and from the land of the Kurds to Jurjan and the beasts belonging to the Divan being insufficient for the purpose the order was given that the animals of any person whatsoever, whether noble or base, Turk and Tazik, should be seized as ulaghs and the taghars thus dispatched. (Boyle 1958: 621)[31]

So probably in the Uyghur documents of Central Asia from the 13th and 14th centuries the word *ulag* could mean any kind of livestock which was the property of or was used by the postal relay system, and if the scribes of the documents wanted to specify which kind of animals they meant, they used the compositions, such as *at ulag*, *äškäk ulag*, etc., mentioned above.

Boguz at

There is another problematic word composition in the documents, *boguz at*. In his text edition Radloff completed the expression as *boguz[-lïg] at* and translated it as 'ein Pferd zum Schlachten' (1928: 154–155, Nr. 91$_{6–7}$),[32] probably deriving it from the verb *boguzla-* 'to cut the throat of, slaughter' (ED: 322). Matsui thinks the word

31 One of the most important tasks of the postal relay system of the Mongol Empire was the supplying of the army, the newly built cities in the steppe region (e.g. Qara Qorum or Sarai) and the *ordo*s ('moving cities'). Cf. Allsen (2009: 144).

32 Document Nr. 91 in Radloff's is identical with the U 5311 manuscript of the Berlin signatures. Recently Matsui noted that there is not enough space on the manuscript for Radloff's *-lïg* completion (2015: 99). After the analysis of the original document I too reject Radloff's *-lïg* completion. The 17th line namely starts with a *-lïg* suffix, and if we compare the size of it with the missing part of the paper at the end of the 6th line, it is clear there is simply not enough space to write the suffix there. In the DTS we find *boguz[lug] at* with the explanation: лошадь для убоя 'horse for slaughter' and the quotation of the above-mentioned paragraph of Radloff (DTS: 110).

boguz has a ‘food’ meaning and explains the expression *boguz at* as ‘the horse for eating’ or ‘a horse as food’ (2002: 107–108). Matsui quotes the account of Wang Yande, the 10th century Chinese envoy to the Turfan Uyghurs, in which several attestations of the Uyghurs’ habit of eating horse meat can be found (İzgi 1989: 89, 91–92). In the following we give a closer analysis of this composition in order to gain a better understanding and, if possible, give a more plausible interpretation of the expression *boguz at*.

First we have to look at the sources from before the Mongol period. In a document about the economy of a Manichean monastery from the West Uyghur period (9th–12th centuries)[33] the expression *aš boguz* appears two times (lines 45 and 47) and the inflected form *ašï boguzï* once (line 43). The first part *aš* means ‘food’ (ED: 253). The primary meaning of *boguz* in the Old Turkic sources is ‘throat’ (ED: 322), but in the interpretation of the passage mentioned above, Moriyasu proposes to take it rather as ‘Magen, Bauch’, because the secondary meaning of the word according to the DTS is ‘желудок’ (‘stomach’) (DTS: 110).[34] Finally, he recommends translating the composition as ‘Essen’ (2004: 84). There is also a solo appearance of the word *boguz* in an adoption document from the same period, which was translated in the *Sammlung uigurischer Kontrakte* as ‘Nahrung’ (SUK 2: 118–119). Thirdly we can quote Nobuo Yamada, who interpreted the word in an article as ‘a kind of corn for feed stuff’ (1967: 90, fn. 6).

In order to better understand the expression, the various senses of the word in later periods shall be examined. In the dictionaries of the later Turkic languages we found that the word has two other secondary meanings beside its primary sense (‘throat’). In Pavet de Courteille’s dictionary we find بوغوز, بوغز gosier (‘throat’), grain (‘grain’), jument pleine (‘pregnant mare’) (1870: 172). In Budagov’s dictionary it appears as a variant of بوغاز in the form بوغوز ‘пища, корм’ (‘food’), in an expression as اتقه بوغوز بيريب ‘дав корм лошади’ (‘giving food for the horses’), and thirdly means беременная женщина (‘pregnant woman’), стельная корова (‘cow with calf’) (1960: 283). In Radloff’s dictionary the secondary meaning is ‘das Futter, die Nahrung’ (1911: 1651), while Räsänen’s etymological dictionary gives ‘Khele’ and ‘schwanger’ (1969: 78). Sevortjan discusses the term under *bogaz* and has two entries for it. In the first entry, as the fourth meaning we find: корм (‘food’) кормовое зерно (‘coarse grains’), провиант, фураж (‘provisions, forage’), твердый корм (‘solid food’), пища (‘food’), хлебные злаки (‘cereals’) (1978: 167–168). There are two meanings in the second entry: беременная (‘pregnant’) and беременная женщина (‘pregnant woman’) (1978: 169). In the modern Turkic lan-

33 The manuscript was unearthed in the Tarim Basin, and kept in Beijing at the Museum of Chinese History. The signature of the manuscript is *Zong* 總 8782 T, 82 = Y 974 K 7709. It was published by Takao Moriyasu with rich historical and philological commentary (2004: 39–147).

34 In the dictionary of Caferoğlu the secondary meaning of the word is ‘hayvan yemi olmak üzere tâne halindeki ekin’ (1968: 46).

guages there are some similar cases too. In the Khalaj language *bọγaz* is ‘schwanger’ (Doerfer & Tezcan 1980: 94). In the Eastern-Turki *boγaz~buγaz* means: 1) ‘strong fodder, grain or corn (used as fodder)’ 2) ‘pregnant’ (Jarring 1964: 57). In Modern Uyghur the secondary meaning of *boğuz* is ‘feed, fodder, and forage’ (Schwarz 1992: 79). In the *Derleme sözlüğü*, which collects the vernacular usage of Turkish words, the third meaning of *boğaz* redirects to *buzalacı* ‘gebe inek, manda, gebe hayvan’ (‘pregnant cow, water buffalo, pregnant animal’), and the fifth meaning of *boğaz* is ‘yiyecek’ (‘food’) (1965: 726, 810). Even in the Redhouse dictionary under *boğaz* the following meanings can be found: 5. supplying food, feeding, 6. a mouth to feed, 7. eating and drinking (2007: 134).

Taking these data into account it can be stated that the word *boguz* in Old Uyghur had some secondary meanings like ‘food, fodder’[35] and ‘pregnant’ or ‘pregnant animal’ besides the primary sense ‘throat’. All of these meanings became widespread in the modern languages too, in which the Old Turkic *boguz* form frequently changed to *bogaz* and the like. So during the interpretation of the expression *boguz at* we have at least two additional senses of *boguz*, namely ‘food, fodder’ and ‘pregnant, pregnant animal’ which may be a homonym.[36]

The expression appears in three documents from the Mongol period: U 5306, U 5311 and U 5285. The first two of these are lists giving no further hints for the interpretation of the composition. But the document U 5285 – already quoted with regard to the term *kïsga ulag*s – is a decree concerning the supply of horses. In this text we find the following passage:

ud y[ï]l [ž]ụn čahš(a)put ay bir
yaŋï-ka tüŋül elči-kä üč
kün-lü*k* bir boguz at

“$_{1}$Ox year, the [ ] intercalary 12th month, on the first $_{2-3}$new day.
[From] the one led horse (i.e. a packhorse, M. V.) with fodder for three days for *Töŋül elči*…”

35 Like *boguz*, the Old Turkic *tamgak* also had two meanings ‘throat’ and ‘food’ (ED: 505). The Mongolian ***koala(ï)* also has these two meanings (Nugteren 2011: 416).

36 The semantic connection between the first meaning ‘throat’ and the secondary ‘food, fodder’ is quite obvious, but on the other hand it is not yet clear how the third meaning ‘pregnant, pregnant animal’ is related to the other two. Maybe it is just a coincidence or, as mentioned above, a homonym. Apart from the data of the dictionaries we have some appearances of the word in the meaning ‘pregnant’ and the like in historical sources also. For example in the *Däftär-i Čingiz-nāmä* its Kipchak form is *buwaz* (Ivanics & Usmanov 2002: 136). Moreover it appears in the Uyghur script version of the *Oguz-nāmä* twice in a compound *töl bogus*. (Personal communication with Balázs Danka, whose detailed analysis of the source is forthcoming; see Danka (2019).)

The argument for this translation is that, in this context, the 'fodder, feed' sense is much more plausible than Radloff's 'horse for slaughter' or the 'pregnant' reading. On the one hand, it makes no sense to give pregnant horses to travellers. On the other hand, we have no contemporary information about the horses taken by travellers purely to slaughter for their meat, but the fact that they possessed led horses to transport provisions for both people and animals is well known. Moreover, if we take into consideration that an envoy usually travelled with companions and frequently also official attendants of the postal system (*ulagči*), the necessity of a horse to carry the fodder and food – in our case three days' worth – becomes clear.[37] In this case, therefore, *üč künlük bir boguz at* means 'a horse which is capable of carrying fodder (and food) for three days'.[38]

Although we have just a few instances of *boguz at* in Uyghur documents concerning the postal system of the Mongol Empire, if these are compared with data from earlier texts and modern languages a much more probable interpretation of the composition can be achieved. According to this *boguz at* means 'fodder horse, led horse' or 'horse to carry fodder (and food), i.e. provision'. Of course we need further instances of the word in old texts to answer for certain the question which emerged concerning the expression *boguz at*, but in the present state of research we lack them.

Summing up, in this article the animal terminology of the Uyghur documents concerning the postal system of the Mongol Empire was investigated through the detailed analysis of two expressions *ulag* and *boguz at*. This examination results in the proposal of new interpretations for them: in the Uyghur documents of the 13th–14th centuries *ulag* referred to any kind of livestock which was the property of or used by the postal system of the Mongol Empire; in the same sources *boguz at* meant 'led horse' or 'proviion(-carrying) horse'. In general we can state that a very sophisticated denomination system was in usage in the postal system of the Mongol Empire, which differed from the ordinary animal denominations and was based on practical considerations.[39] Moreover if we take into account all the information in the documents, it is clear that one of the main duties of the *yam*-system was to supply animals for travellers. Seemingly a whole sub-system of the postal system was responsible for the uninterrupted supply of animals, an element that, according to the here established meaning of the word *ulag*, could be called the *ulag*-system.

37 On the size and working practices of the embassies in Central Asia under the Mongol rule, see Biran (2008: 382–385).

38 Cf. Erdal (1991: 121–131).

39 The ordinary denominations for horses in Turkic and Mongolian languages are very varied as well. On this topic see the 3–4 issues of the 10th volume of the *Central Asiatic Journal* (1965) and especially Clauson (1965).

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