
The Nánzhào ‘Storehouse Tablet’

An Annotated Translation of the 《仓贮碑》

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The Papers

This text is part of a series of translations of historical Chinese texts concerning .

This series does not aim to present any new research but to allow an English-speaking audience to better understand 's history and culture through original texts. The texts are heavily annotated, giving geographical, historical and cultural background information and references to contemporary academic discussions.

The texts in this series are currently in draft and undergoing revision. Those translations that have reached a certain state of maturity can be found on my website at

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Contents

1	Introduction	5
2	Annotated Translation	5
2.1	Simplified Version of the Original Text	5
2.2	Translation of the Simplified Version	7
3	Glossary	8
4	References	9
	Index	10

Illustrations

1	A rubbing of the 'Storehouse Tablet' 《仓贮碑》	6
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1 Introduction

The 'Storehouse Tablet' 《仓贮碑》 is a Nánzhào 南诏 relic discovered by accident in 2001 near the ruins of Nánzhào's first capital Tàihé 太和.⁽¹⁾ It records information regarding a granary.

The text is carved on a local gneiss stone, uncut and unpolished, about 57cm high and 40cm wide at the widest point.

The text on the front side is complete and almost without damage. It consists of seven columns of text, between 6 and 13 characters per column, in total 70 characters. There is no text on the back.

The text consists of three parts:

- The first part records the appointment of officers in charge of the granary.
- The second part records the grain provisions stored in the granary.
- The third part names the officials who commissioned the text of this tablet.

The tablet does not provide any information about when it was written, but Yáng Déwén 杨德文 argues that it must have been during the period Tàihé was the capital of Nánzhào, i.e. 739–779 CE. Tián Huáiqīng 田怀清 narrows the date range to 752–766 CE, the early period of Nánzhào.

2 Annotated Translation

2.1 Simplified Version of the Original Text

The text on the tablet uses a number of alternate character forms 别字, which make the text impossible to typeset in its original as these characters are not part of modern fonts. In these cases I have, based on the analysis by Tián Huáiqīng 田怀清 and Yáng Déwén 杨德文, substituted alternate characters. The original text can be seen in illustration 1 on page 6.

After a thorough textual analysis Yáng Déwén 杨德文 derived a simplified version of the text of the 《仓贮碑》, which is given on the right hand side.

倉官丘羅寬倉	仓官丘罗宽，仓
子之邏騾羅勸利羅勒顛	子定罗骡、罗劝利、罗勒颠。
谷判官大寬倉壹所受穀玖仟	谷判官大宽，仓一所受谷玖仟
伍佰肆拾玖硯玖斗肆騰貳拾肆	伍佰肆拾玖石玖斗肆升貳拾肆

[1: 丘] 别字 - The inscription can be read as 丘, in which case it should be read as a name, but Yáng Déwén 杨德文 argues that it is here an elaborate way of writing 立, changing the text's meaning, the official's name then would just be Luó Kuān.

[4: 肆] 别字 - the meaning of this character is unclear, it seems to serve as measure word.

[4: 硯] 别字 -

[4: 斗] 别字 -

[4: 肆] 别字 - Even though it is written a little different to the character annotated above, it seems essentially the same.

[4: 騰] 别字 -

[4: 肆] 别字 - See note above.

⁽¹⁾ This text is based on Tián Huáiqīng 田怀清 (2003) and Yáng Déwén 杨德文 (2006), which describe the discovery of the tablet, the historical background and analyse its text. The full text of the tablet is also copied from these articles.

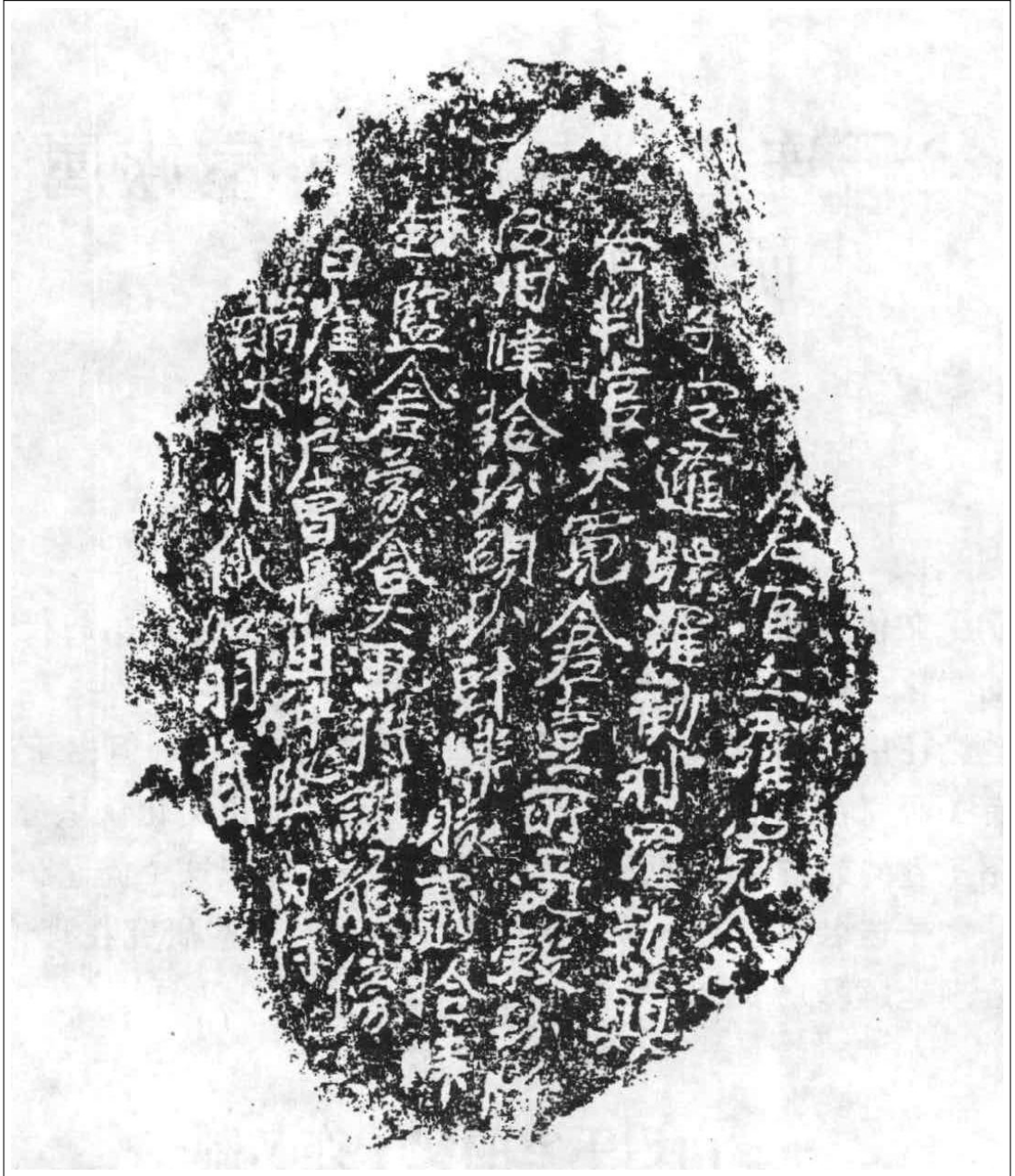


Illustration 1:
A rubbing of the 'Storehouse Tablet' 《仓贮碑》

钱监仓蒙舍大军将谢龙傍 白崖城户曹长生仲坚内侍 醋大羽儀加朋首	钱。监仓蒙舍大军将谢龙傍 白崖城户曹长生仲坚内侍 醋大羽仪加朋首。	仓贮碑 5
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2.2 Translation of the Simplified Version

The following is my translation of the simplified version.

仓官立罗宽, 仓子定罗骡、罗劝利、罗 勒颠, 谷判官大宽。	The granary officer Qiū Luōkuān appoints Luō Luó, Luō Quànli and Luō Lèdiān as granary administrative assistants.	
仓一所受谷玖仟伍佰肆拾玖石玖斗肆 升贰拾肆钱。	The number one granary has received nine thousand five hundred forty-nine <i>dàn</i> nine <i>dǒu</i> and forty coins.	仓贮碑 10
监仓蒙舍大军将谢龙傍、白崖城户曹 长生仲坚。内侍醋大羽仪加朋 首	Granary supervisor, great commander of Méngshè Xiè Lóngbàng, revenue <i>cáo</i> head of Báiyá town Shēng Zhòngjiān, attendant <i>cùdà</i> feather fan bearer Jiā Péng. Official Announcement.	仓贮碑 15

[6: 坚] 别字 -

r13: *cùdà*] It is unclear what this is supposed to mean, Yáng Déwén 杨德文 (2006) thinks that this is part of his title.

r15: Official Announcement.] Yáng Déwén 杨德文 (2006) thinks that this is a floskel used at the end of a proclamation to express that this has been written with approval of the king of Nánzhào.

3 Glossary

- Báiyá** 白崖: pre-Nánzhào polity, thought to have been in present-day Mídù 弥渡 valley – see page 7
- Cāngzhǔ Bēi** 《仓贮碑》: ‘Storehouse Tablet’, small stone with inscription regarding a storehouse, found at Tàihé 太和 – see page 5, 8
- cáo** 曹: *cáo*, Nánzhào term unit of government, akin to a department, apparently modelled on the Táng dynasty administrative system – see page 8
- Dà Jūnjiāng** 大军将: great commander, Jūnjiāng 军将 is ‘an ad hoc designation for a military commander’, see Hucker (1985), 1745 – see page 7, 8
- Ěrhǎi** 洱海: lake Ěrhǎi, highland lake in western Yúnnán with the center of Nánzhào on its western side. It was also called Xīěr 西洱, Xīěrhé 西洱河 – see page 8
- Hùcáo** 户曹: revenue *cáo*, one of six *cáo* in Nánzhào, ‘responsible for overseeing regional or local fiscal management’, see Hucker (1985), 2798 see = 曹 – see page 7, 8
- Jiā Péng** 加朋: name mentioned on the 仓贮碑 – see page 7
- Luō Lèdiān** 罗勒颠: name mentioned on the 仓贮碑 – see page 7
- Luō Luó** 罗骡: name mentioned on the 仓贮碑 – see page 7
- Luō Quànlì** 罗劝利: name mentioned on the 仓贮碑 – see page 7
- Méngshè** 蒙舍: one of the five Zhào, in the present-day basin of Wēishān 巍山, excavations believed to be the settlement of the Méng 蒙 clan have been made south of the present county town 田, see Tián Huáiqīng 田怀清 (2011) – see page 7
- Mídù** 弥渡: valley south of Ěrhǎi –
- Nánzhào** 南诏: southern *zhào*, regional power with its center on Ěrhǎi during the 8th and 9th centuries – see page 5, 8
- Nánzhào Wáng** 南诏王: king of Nánzhào, official title conferred to some of the rulers of Nánzhào by the Táng dynasty – see page 7, 8
- Qiū Luōkuān** 丘罗宽: name mentioned on the 仓贮碑 – see page 7
- Shēng Zhòngjiān** 生仲坚: name mentioned on the 仓贮碑 – see page 7
- Tàihé** 太和: first capital of Nánzhào – see page 5
- Táng Cháo** 唐朝: Táng dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 618–907 – see page 8
- Wēibǎoshān** 巍宝山: Wēibǎo mountain, holy mountain in today’s Wēishān 巍山 – see page 8
- Wēishān** 巍山: mount Wēi, mountain south of Ěrhǎi, in the historic context probably not what is called Wēibǎoshān 巍宝山 – see page 8
- Xiè Lóngbàng** 谢龙傍: name mentioned on the 仓贮碑 – see page 7
- Yǔyí** 羽仪: feather fan bearer, title court official during Nánzhào – see page 7, 8
- Zhǎng** 长: head, ‘lit., senior. ... Common suffix indicating the chief official of whatever is designated by what precedes: Head, Chief, Director, Magistrate, etc.’, see Hucker (1985), 84 – see page 7, 8
- zhào** 诏: *zhào*, term for a local ruler or his realm – see page 8

4 References

- Hucker, Charles (1985). *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press (cit. on p. 8).
- Tián Huáiqīng 田怀清 (2003). 《南诏王都太和城遗址发现仓贮碑考释》. In: 白族文化研究, pp. 414–425 (cit. on p. 5).
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Index

739–779 年, 5

752–766 年, 5

Báiyá 白崖, 7-13R

Biézi 别字, 5

Cāngzhǔbēi 仓贮碑, 5

Dà Jūnjiāng 大军将, 7-12R

Hùcáo 户曹, 7-13R

Jiā Péng 加朋, 7-14R

Luó Kuān 羅寬, 5-1*n*

Luō Lèdiān 罗勒颠, 7-9R

Luō Luó 罗骡, 7-8R

Luō Quànlì 罗劝利, 7-8R

Méngshè 蒙舍, 7-12R

Nánzhào Wáng 南诏王, 7-15*n*

Qiū Luōkuān 丘罗宽, 7-8R

Shēng Zhòngjiān 生仲坚, 7-13R

Tàihé 太和, 5

Xiè Lóngbàng 谢龙傍, 7-12R

Yǔyí 羽仪, 7-14R

Zhǎng 长, 7-13R