
SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS

Number 228

July, 2012

The “Silk Roads” in Time and Space: Migrations, Motifs, and Materials

edited by
Victor H. Mair

Victor H. Mair, Editor
Sino-Platonic Papers
Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305 USA
vmair@sas.upenn.edu
www.sino-platonic.org

SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS

FOUNDED 1986

Editor-in-Chief
VICTOR H. MAIR

Associate Editors
PAULA ROBERTS MARK SWOFFORD

ISSN
2157-9679 (print) 2157-9687 (online)

SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS is an occasional series dedicated to making available to specialists and the interested public the results of research that, because of its unconventional or controversial nature, might otherwise go unpublished. The editor-in-chief actively encourages younger, not yet well established, scholars and independent authors to submit manuscripts for consideration. Contributions in any of the major scholarly languages of the world, including romanized modern standard Mandarin (MSM) and Japanese, are acceptable. In special circumstances, papers written in one of the Sinitic topolects (*fangyan*) may be considered for publication.

Although the chief focus of *Sino-Platonic Papers* is on the intercultural relations of China with other peoples, challenging and creative studies on a wide variety of philological subjects will be entertained. This series is **not** the place for safe, sober, and stodgy presentations. *Sino-Platonic Papers* prefers lively work that, while taking reasonable risks to advance the field, capitalizes on brilliant new insights into the development of civilization.

Submissions are regularly sent out to be refereed, and extensive editorial suggestions for revision may be offered.

Sino-Platonic Papers emphasizes substance over form. We do, however, strongly recommend that prospective authors consult our style guidelines at www.sino-platonic.org/stylesheet.doc. Manuscripts should be submitted as electronic files, preferably in Microsoft Word format. You may wish to use our sample document template, available here: www.sino-platonic.org/spp.dot.

Beginning with issue no. 171, *Sino-Platonic Papers* has been published electronically on the Web at www.sino-platonic.org. Issues 1–170, however, will continue to be sold as paper copies until our stock runs out, after which they too will be made available on the Web.

Please note: When the editor goes on an expedition or research trip, all operations (including filling orders) may temporarily cease for up to three months at a time. In such circumstances, those who wish to purchase various issues of *SPP* are requested to wait patiently until he returns. If issues are urgently needed while the editor is away, they may be requested through Interlibrary Loan. You should also check our Web site at www.sino-platonic.org, as back issues are regularly rereleased for free as PDF editions.

Sino-Platonic Papers is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.5 License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

The “Silk Roads” in Time and Space:
Migrations, Motifs, and Materials

Edited by Victor H. Mair

Contents

Victor H. Mair	Introduction: Reconsidering and Reconfiguring the “Silk Roads”	3
Matthew Anderson	The Languages and Writing Systems of the Tarim Basin	5
Pablo N. Barrera	Wind and Water: Anthropogenic Use of Landscape at Small River Cemetery No. 5	20
Vivian Chen	“Weather” You Like It or Not: The Effects of Macro-Climatic Fluctuations on the Tarim Basin	55
Amelia Williams	Ancient Felt Hats of the Eurasian Steppe	66
Julia Becker	The Tarim Basin Beauties of Xiaohe and Krorän	94
Kimberly M. Castelo	The Loulan Coffin: The Cultural Influence of Han Dynasty China in the Tarim Basin	122
Eiren Shea Warneck	Representations of Tocharians in Buddhist Paintings	156
Robert Glasgow	The Evolution of Sogdian Identity	202
Joel Dietz	Hidden Dragon: Indo-European, Near Eastern, and Chinese Poetic Themes	228

ZHOU Ying	Jia Yi's Proposal of the "Three Exemplifications and Five Means of Allurement" and the Han-Xiongnu Relationship in Early Western Han Period	253
Rebecca Shuang Fu	A Misinterpreted Transmission: The Kang Poem in Dunhuang Manuscript S. 5381 and the Kong Poem in <i>Benshi shi</i>	273
Rashon Clark	The Northwestern Muslim Rebellions	289

Introduction:
Reconsidering and Reconfiguring the “Silk Roads”

Victor H. Mair

The papers in this volume were originally written as part of the requirements for a course entitled “Mummies of the Silk Road” that I taught at the University of Pennsylvania during the spring semester of 2011. There were over seventy students and auditors in this class. The present collection represents the best of the fifty or so papers that were turned in during that semester.

With these papers, we wish to problematize the very idea of a Silk Road or Silk Roads. To be sure, during roughly the period from the late second century BCE to the end of the ninth century CE, there was a trans-Eurasian traffic that spanned from one end of the Eurasian supercontinent to the other, but it was not monolithic, nor was it of high volume. This was what may be termed the classic Silk Road, and silk was indeed one of the most important commodities transported along this route. Yet, even during this period, many other goods and products were traded by stages along the so-called Silk Roads: glass, beads, silver, gold, medicines, spices, wool, furs, and so forth. Still further back in time, we know that jade was being exported to the Central Plains of East Asia from the mountains along the southern rim of the Tarim Basin. Even more importantly, during the second millennium BCE bronze metallurgy was transmitted from west to east,¹ as were wheat, the chariot, the domesticated horse, domesticated ovicaprids, and other important elements of civilizations. During the first millennium BCE, iron metallurgy spread along these same routes. In terms of technology, industry, military affairs, and the general economy, surely wheat, bronze, iron, and the chariot are of far greater consequence than silk. Thus, referring to the Eurasian transcontinental trade routes as the “Silk Road” truly does present considerable difficulties.

¹ Andrew Sherratt, “The Trans-Eurasian Exchange: The Prehistory of Chinese Relations with the West,” in Victor H. Mair, ed., *Contact and Exchange in the Ancient World* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), pp. 30–61.

Furthermore, starting from the third millennium BCE, trans-Eurasian contact and exchange was not at all simply about goods and products. Equally important were intangible assets such as ideas and ideologies. Religions, burial practices, art forms, musical instruments and styles, calendrical and astronomical sciences, scripts and languages, and many other intellectual and cultural properties and practices were transferred from place to place across the length and breadth of Eurasia.

Above all, peoples and the languages they spoke also spread across the megacontinent. The means for tracking their movements and migrations are becoming increasingly sophisticated with genetics, physical anthropology, historical linguistics, archeology, and other disciplines all playing key roles in the analysis of the abundant data.

The papers in this volume cover a rich assortment of large and small topics, ranging from climate to caps, from mythical dragons to Muslim rebellions. Some of the papers look at various phenomena in startlingly new ways (e.g., the aerodynamics of a desert necropolis), while others go over new materials using tried and trusted methods (e.g., a close philological examination of an old poem in the light of recently recovered manuscripts).

The Languages and Writing Systems of the Tarim Basin

Matthew Anderson

The Tarim Basin during the first millennium CE was remarkably diverse linguistically. The Berlin Ethnological Museum expeditions to the northern Tarim and Turfan basins¹ from 1902 to 1914 claimed to have collected documents written in 17 languages in 24 different scripts.² Doug Hitch counts over 20 languages written in at least 20 scripts in first millennium CE Turfan alone; his not necessarily comprehensive list includes Old Turkic, Chinese, Sanskrit, Sogdian, Middle Persian, New Persian, Parthian, Tibetan, Mongolian, Prakrit, Tumshuqese, Tocharian A and B, Bactrian, Khotanese, Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Tangut, Greek, and Khitan.³ Of all the locations in the Tarim Basin region, Turfan was the most linguistically diverse; however, as Hitch has given a comprehensive description of the situation in this region in his 2009 article, it will not be the focus of this discussion. While Turfan is unique, perhaps, in its having the highest level of linguistic and scriptural diversity, it is simply the most extreme case in the region — it is clear that the populations of many of the ancient urban centers of the Tarim Basin, from Kucha to Khotan, made use of many different languages and writing systems. According to Hitch, Khotan, for example, had seven languages — Khotanese, Sanskrit, Chinese, Prākṛit, Old Turkic, Tibetan, and New Persian — and Kucha had six — Tocharian B (Kuchean), Old Turkic, Sanskrit, Chinese, Sogdian, and Prākṛit.⁴

¹ Some scholars treat the Tarim Basin and Turfan Basin as separate regions; Doug Hitch, for example, does this (see Hitch 2009, p. 3, n. 7). For the purpose of this article I take the broader view, including the Turfan Basin as a region within the Tarim Basin.

² Mallory and Mair 2000, p. 102.

³ Hitch 2009, p. 1.

⁴ Hitch 2009, p. 3, n. 8 and n. 9.

Different languages were used by different populations and for different purposes. J. P. Mallory and Victor Mair’s *The Tarim Mummies* includes a very useful chart which gives a quick overview of which languages were used in which social domains for a few different regions. In Kucha, according to this chart, Chinese was the (or a) major written language, Tocharian B a major spoken language, Prākṛit and Sanskrit languages of religion, and Sogdian and Chinese languages of trade. For Turfan, the languages of these domains were Chinese, Tocharian B, Prākṛit and Sanskrit, and Sogdian and Chinese respectively; for Khotan they were Prākṛit, Saka (Khotanese), Prākṛit and Sanskrit, and Prākṛit; and for Krorān, they were Prākṛit and Chinese, possibly Krorānian, Prākṛit and Sanskrit, and Prākṛit.⁵ These groupings give the reader an excellent idea of the general situation, but (as always in the Tarim Basin, and as acknowledged in the text accompanying this chart), the situation is considerably more complicated. In all four of these regions, for example, the language of religion is given as Prākṛit and Sanskrit. These were certainly major languages of Buddhism, the most widespread religion of the region in the first millennium, but, in Turfan alone, Nestorian Christian documents have been found in Old Turkic, Syriac, Sogdian, and Middle Persian⁶; Manichean documents have been found in Old Turkic, Chinese, Sogdian, Middle Persian, Parthian, Tocharian B, and Bactrian⁷; and Buddhist documents have been found in Chinese, Old Turkic, Tocharian A, Tocharian B, Sogdian, Khotanese, Tumshuqese, Tangut, Mongolian, and Tibetan, in addition to those in Sanskrit and Prākṛit.⁸

The quantity of writing systems in use in the Tarim Basin is, if anything, more impressive than the quantity of languages. According to the Tang dynasty monk Xuánzàng 玄奘, the states of Āqíní 阿耆尼 (Yānqí 焉耆, Karasahr), Qūzhī 屈支 (Qiūcí 龜茲, Kucha), Bálùjiā 跋祿迦,

⁵ Mallory and Mair 2000, p. 123.

⁶ Hitch 2009, p. 2, n. 4.

⁷ Hitch 2009, p. 2, n. 3.

⁸ Hitch 2009, p. 2, n. 6. Unlike Mallory and Mair, Hitch does not explicitly mention Prākṛit, but he does mention a mysterious combination (“Brāhmī minus Prakrit”) which perhaps refers to some form of Prākṛit. His original source for this combination (Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities 2007) does not clarify the issue.

Qūshā 佉沙, Qièpántuó 竭盤陁, Wūshā 烏澁, Qúsàdànnà 瞿薩旦那 (Yútián 于闐, Khotan) and Suǒjùjiā 所句迦 all used more or less modified forms of “Indian” (Yìndù 印度) writing, with the writing systems of Kucha and Bálùjiā forming one group, Qūshā, Qièpántuó, and Wūshā forming another (though these three differ in varying ways from one another), and Khotan and Suǒjùjiā forming yet another. According to Xuánzàng, the state of Dǔhuòluó 覩貨邏 (Tǔhuòluó 吐火羅, Tokharoi) had its own writing system, written from left to right, using 25 characters, and another four states used similar systems. Various other details can also be discerned from Xuánzàng’s reports, such as the fact that the writing system (as well as the vocabulary) of Cáojuǎzhā 漕矩吒 is different from that of any other state.⁹ About the state of Sùlì 率利, he writes:

文字語言，即隨稱矣。字源簡略，本三（二）十余言，轉而相生，其流浸廣。
粗有書記，豎讀其文。¹⁰

Its writing and language is named following (the name of the state). The origin of the letters is not clear.¹¹ Fundamentally, there are over twenty letters, which can be turned around to create others. Their dissemination (or development) has gradually become more widespread. They are ordinarily used for records and are read vertically.

From Xuánzàng’s record, it is evident that there was a wide array of writing systems in use, though he does not even deal with the possibility of more than one writing system in a given region.

More modern sources mention a number of different writing systems used in the vicinity of the Tarim Basin. Old Turkic, for example, can be seen in documents from the Turfan area alone written in the Brāhmī, Manichean, Sogdian, Uyghur, Nestorian (Syriac), Tibetan, Runiform,

⁹ Ji Xianlin 1993, pp. 7–9.

¹⁰ Xuanzang 玄奘. *Da Tang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 [The Great Tang Records of the Western Regions], *juan* 1, “Sanshisi guo” 三十四國 [34 states] chapter.

¹¹ This sentence could also be understood as, “The letters are fundamentally quite simple” or “The origins and derivation of the letters are simple.”

Arabic, and ‘Phagspa scripts.¹² Other scripts evident in the Tarim Basin include the Kharoṣṭhī and Chinese scripts. Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī, which both originated in India, are undoubtedly among the most important scripts. Kharoṣṭhī was more regional in its use than Brāhmī, and was written from right to left rather than Brāhmī’s left to right. Early forms of both scripts survive essentially only in stone and copper carvings, with Kharoṣṭhī much more cursive in appearance, compared to Brāhmī’s more “monumental” look.¹³ Both scripts survive in quantity more in Inner Asia than in the land of their origination.¹⁴

The situation in Khotan can serve as an illustration of the general language and writing situation of the Tarim Basin. Khotan, known in contemporaneous Chinese records as Yútián 于闐 (also written 于寔) or Qúsàdànnà 瞿薩旦那, was an oasis kingdom along the Southern Silk Road. One of the fullest mid-first-millennium CE descriptions of the kingdom of Khotan can be found in the *Wèi shū* 魏書, completed in 554:

于闐國，在且末西北，葱嶺之北二百餘里。東去鄯善千五百里，南去女國二千里，西去朱俱波千里，北去龜茲千四百里，去代九千八百里。其地方亘千里，連山相次。所都城方八九里，部內有大城五，小城數十。于闐城東三十里有首拔河，中出玉石。土宜五穀并桑麻，山多美玉，有好馬、駝、騾。其刑法，殺人者死，餘罪各隨輕重懲罰之。自外風俗物產與龜茲略同。俗重佛法，寺塔僧尼甚衆，王尤信尚，每設齋日，必親自灑掃饋食焉。城南五十里有贊摩寺，即昔羅漢比丘盧旃為其王造覆盆浮圖之所，石上有辟支佛跣處，雙跡猶存。于闐西五百里有比摩寺，云是老子化胡成佛之所。俗無禮義，多盜賊，淫縱。自高昌以西，諸國人等深目高鼻，唯此一國，貌不甚胡，頗類華夏。城東二十里有大水北流，號樹枝水，即黃河也，一名計式水。城西十五里亦有大水，名達利水，與樹枝水會，俱北流。¹⁵

¹² Hitch 2009, p. 1.

¹³ Salomon 1996, p. 375.

¹⁴ Salomon 1996, pp. 377–378.

¹⁵ *Wei shu*, vol. 6, *juan* 102, pp. 2262–2263.

The state of Yútián (Khotan) lies northwest of Qiěmò (Calmadana), over 200 tricents north of the Cōnglǐng (Pamir mountains). Shànshàn is 1,500 tricents distant to the east, Nǚguó (“the Country of Women”) is 3,000 tricents¹⁶ distant to the south, Zhūjùbō is 1,000 tricents distant to the west, and Qiūcí (Kucha) is 1,400 tricents distant to the north; it is 9,800 tricents distant from Dài (Píngchéng/Dàtóng). Its area stretches for 1,000 tricents, continuously flanked by mountains. The area’s capital city is eight or nine tricents square, and (the state’s) internal divisions include five great cities and tens of small cities. Thirty tricents east of Yútián city is the Shǒubá River, from which raw jade comes. The soil is suitable for the five grains as well as mulberry and hemp, the mountains are rich in beautiful jade, and there are fine horses, camels, and mules. According to its penal statutes, murderers are executed and (those who commit) other crimes are each punished according to the severity (of those crimes). Otherwise, (Yútián’s) customs and products are approximately the same as (those of) Qiūcí.

Its customs treat the Buddhist dharma very seriously, and there are very many monasteries, pagodas, monks, and nuns. The king is especially faithful and reverent; whenever there is a fast day, he can be counted on to personally sprinkle water, sweep clean, and present food in (a monastery). Fifty tricents south of the city is Zànmó Monastery; this is the location of the Fùpén Stūpa, which the arhat-bhikṣu (arhat-monk) Lú Zhān built in antiquity for his ruler. On a stone (there) is the place of the barefoot Pratyekabuddha (self-enlightened Buddha), with a pair of footprints still extant. Five hundred tricents to the west of Yútián is Bǐmó Monastery. It is said that this is the place where Lǎozǐ converted the Hú barbarians and became the Buddha. The customs (of Yútián) are without rites and propriety, and there are many robbers and much lewd indulgence there.

¹⁶ I follow the commentary here and read “èr” 二 ‘two’ here as an error for “sān” 三 ‘three’; see *Wei shu* p. 2282, note 5. This revised reading corresponds with the distance given in the *Sui shu* 隋書, the *Bei shi* 北史, and other dynastic histories.

To the west of Gāochāng (Qoço), the various people of the many states have deep eyes and high noses; only in this one state (the people’s) appearance is not deeply barbaric but is considerably similar to the Huáxià (Chinese) type. Twenty tricents to the east of the city there is a great river which flows to the north, which is called the Shùzhī (branch) River. This is the Yellow River; it is also called the Jìshì River. Fifty-five tricents to the west of the city is another great river which is named the Dálì River. It meets with the Shùzhī River; they flow north together.

In addition to content similar to the description given above, the *Liáng shū* 梁書, completed in 635, states:

書則以木爲筆札，以玉爲印。國人得書，戴於首而後開札。¹⁷

For writing, they use wood for pen and paper,¹⁸ and they use jade for seals. When the people of the state receive letters, they put them against their heads before they open the letters.

As this suggests, the people of Khotan, like many others in the Tarim Basin, used wood as a writing surface. These accounts do not mention the Khotanese language or its writing system (beyond the physical nature of its written documents), but the above-referenced passage from *Da Tang xiyu ji* includes it among the languages written in “Indian” script; it also states that the language of Khotan is different from those of the other states (*yǔ yì zhū guó* 語異諸國).¹⁹

Khotanese was known as *hvatana* or *hvatāna*- in its own language when written in Brāhmī script and *khotana* when written much earlier in Kharoṣṭhī script.²⁰ The language is a member of the Saka group of Eastern Iranian — although it was unknown before the late

¹⁷ *Liang shu*, *juan* 54, p. 814.

¹⁸ “Paper” here is used to mean “writing surface,” not literally paper.

¹⁹ Ji Xianlin 1993, p. 9.

²⁰ Bailey 1961, p. 1; both names essentially mean ‘the land of Khotan.’ See also Mallory and Mair 2000, p. 112.

nineteenth or early twentieth century, it is the most well attested member of the Eastern Iranian branch. It is likely that forms of Saka were also spoken in Qāshqār and Tumshuq.²¹ There are essentially no records of Khotanese history in the Khotanese language before the eighth century CE, but there are third-century documents from the area of Niya written in Kharoṣṭhī which preserve royal Khotanese names, giving the earliest evidence that the Khotanese already spoke a form of Iranian, and the earliest documents fully in Khotanese date to the fifth century.²² Prior to using Khotanese as a written language, the kingdom used a form of Northwestern Prākṛit written in Kharoṣṭhī script for Buddhist and administrative documents for the first three of four centuries of the first millennium CE; civil documents from Kucha were also written in this combination of language and script around the same time.²³

As mentioned toward the beginning of this paper, Khotanese, Sanskrit, Chinese, Prākṛit, Old Turkic, Tibetan, and New Persian are all attested in documents from the Kingdom of Khotan. In addition to this kind of linguistic diversity, a number of different forms of Khotanese are attested, which in some cases even coexist with each other. Prods Oktor Skjærvø divides Khotanese into three periods: Old Khotanese (fifth to sixth centuries); Middle Khotanese (seventh to eighth centuries); and Late Khotanese (ninth to tenth centuries, that is, up until the end of Buddhism in Khotan and its displacement by Islam).²⁴ Old Khotanese texts are almost exclusively Buddhist in nature, mostly translations of texts from Chinese or Sanskrit. Middle Khotanese and Late Khotanese texts include, in addition to Buddhist texts, economic and legal documents, private and public letters, orders, omen texts, bilingual texts, itineraries, and an assortment of other documents.²⁵ Most of the documents are written in forms of Brāhmī, both Northern and Southern. Unsurprisingly, what Skjærvø classifies as the “formal ductus” script is used in all periods for Buddhist literary texts, while letters and reports tend to be written in

²¹ Mallory and Mair 2000, p. 112.

²² Skjærvø 2002, p. lxxv.

²³ Hitch 2009, p. 14.

²⁴ Skjærvø 2002, p. lxx.

²⁵ Skjærvø 2002, p. lxxii.

“regular cursive ductuses” and exercises tend to be written in “very cursive ductuses.” It is still the case, however, that any of these scripts can be used for essentially any of these categories of texts. There is not very much locally composed material in the Old Khotanese and Middle Khotanese periods, but there is a significant amount in the Late Khotanese era. Manuscripts in Old and Middle Khotanese have generally come from the region of the Khotan oasis, especially the areas of Khadaliq and Dandan Uiliq, and Late Khotanese manuscripts have generally been found at Dunhuang 敦煌.²⁶

But, again, the divisions into these periods are not very neat or orderly. Old Khotanese texts continued to be copied during the period when Middle Khotanese was otherwise the standard language. This can be seen in a manuscript of the *Book of Zambasta*, which was clearly written in the Middle Khotanese period, as it contains many Middle Khotanese spellings; it is written in an alphabet otherwise unattested before the seventh century; and its colophon is written in Middle Khotanese.²⁷ A manuscript of the “Bodhisattva Compendium” of Middle Khotanese date contains Middle Khotanese pronunciations essentially written over its original Old Khotanese forms. The Old Khotanese word *himāte* ‘he became,’ for example, is written with an added subscript *y* and superscript *e* (that is, as *him_y^eāte*) to provide the Middle Khotanese reading, *himye*, without obscuring the Old Khotanese original.²⁸

Additionally, a number of Khotanese documents are written in a language classified by Skjærvø as “Archaizing Middle Khotanese,” that is, Middle Khotanese with a variety of self-consciously inserted Old Khotanese elements. Unsurprisingly, these documents tend to be highly ritualistic in nature, including among their number mantra texts,²⁹ karma texts,³⁰ and *dhāraṇī*

²⁶ Skjærvø 2002, p. lxviii.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ One example can be seen in Skjærvø 2002, pp. 358–359.

³⁰ One example can be seen in Skjærvø 2002, p. 348.

texts.³¹ It is worth quoting one relatively complete mantra text at length, to give an idea of the kind of material that was intentionally archaized:

This *upacāra* should be tied onto this mantra. A circle of cow dung should be made for the bodhisattva Āryāvalokiteśvara. Four juices mixed with milk should be placed there at fifteen *harmus*(?), and flower wreaths with four perfumes, with eight perfumes, and with four perfumes, (and) perfumed flowers. For three nights and days ... should not be taken, but three times a day one should wash, and standing thus this mantra should be recited for the gods. And next, for another seven days eight times daily the mantra should be recited, and thus (too) at night. [One should wear] white garments³²

The Middle Khotanese texts that are written in this archaizing manner stand out even in this group of many highly formulaic religious texts as being especially formulaic and exclusively concerned with religious and magical protection; it is unsurprising that they are written in a different manner.

Documents from Khotan can also be seen to display other kinds of diversity. Examples include: Chinese documents with interlinear Khotanese *akṣaras*³³; religious texts written in both Sanskrit and Khotanese³⁴; a Khotanese document with, beneath the main text, the notation “*bod-skad*” (“[in] Tibetan”), preceding a Tibetan text³⁵; a medical text with facing Tibetan and Khotanese text, followed by the Sanskrit version³⁶; a medical text in which Buddha instructs

³¹ An example can be found in Skjærvø 2002, p. 346; I classify this text as a *dhāraṇī* text, as Skjærvø leaves it unclassified.

³² Skjærvø 2002, pp. 358–59. Translation by Skjærvø; punctuation as in original.

³³ An example can be found in Skjærvø 2002, p. 153.

³⁴ An example can be seen in Skjærvø 2002, p. 153.

³⁵ An example is in Skjærvø 2002, p. 36.

³⁶ An example can be seen in Skjærvø 2002, p. 316.

Jīvaka in medical care, written paragraph by paragraph, the Khotanese following the Sanskrit³⁷; and Khotanese coins dating to the Kushan period (first three centuries CE) with Prākṛit in Kharoṣṭhī script (including Khotanese names) on the obverse and Chinese on the reverse, dating to Kushan.³⁸

The Khotanese language continued to thrive through the tenth century. The Karakhanid kaghanate rose in Central Asia in the late ninth century. In the tenth century, Satuk, a member of the ruling family, converted to Islam and seized power, taking the title of Boghra Khan. He supposedly obtained a *fatwa* permitting the patricide of his father, who it can be presumed had not converted to Islam.³⁹ Starting in 961, and lasting for over twenty years, the Islamic Karakhanids fought Buddhist Khotan; in the wake of the triumph of Islam over Buddhism in Khotan, the Khotanese language (in both its written and spoken forms) was lost as well.⁴⁰

Manichean documents present a special case, unique in detail but similar in their chaotic variety. An unusual characteristic of the Manichean faith was the existence of a special Manichean script. While certain Manichean documents were written in other scripts, the Manichean script was widespread and, as mentioned above, has been used to write languages as varied as Old Turkic, Chinese, Sogdian, Middle Persian, Parthian, Tocharian B, and Bactrian. Relatively early (mid-first millennium?) Manichean services at Qoço (the Manichean Diocese of the East) were multilingual, with prayers conducted in Middle Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian.⁴¹ While Buddhist documents tended to be written in (almost) as many scripts as languages, Manichean texts (and to a lesser extent Nestorian texts) were vibrantly diverse linguistically, but much more limited in terms of scripts. Middle Persian was no longer a viable spoken language by the eighth century, but it was still being used for texts composed in that period, including one

³⁷ Bailey 1985, p. viii.

³⁸ Bailey 1985, pp. 5–6; see also Mallory and Mair, p. 78.

³⁹ Sinor 1990, pp. 355–357.

⁴⁰ Though it has been suggested that some forms of Saka have survived among small groups in remote parts of the Pamirs. See Mallory and Mair 2000, p. 112.

⁴¹ Lieu 1998, p. 9.

written by Sogdian priests which features a number of Turkish names, some transcribed directly from Turkish, some by way of Chinese. This, combined with other evidence, suggests that Middle Persian was an important liturgical language for this generally multilingual religion.⁴² A particularly linguistically interesting Manichean text is the famous Kuchean hymn. Tocharian B documents are otherwise only attested in Brāhmī script, but this hymn exists in three versions in Manichean script.⁴³ Doug Hitch argues that this hymn, however, does not reflect a preference for a particular language (in this case Tocharian B), but rather for Kuchean music (which was popular all the way from East Central Asia to the Tang court in central China).⁴⁴ So, in this case, the choice of language reflects additional, nonlinguistic concerns. Interestingly, hymns in Middle Persian and Parthian were more standard for hymns from the Turfan region, but hymns in these languages can be found transcribed into, in addition to Manichean script, Sogdian orthography, Turkic runic, and Chinese graphs.⁴⁵

A number of texts that exist in Tocharian versions can be found in a variety of other languages as well. Two main varieties of Tocharian are known from documents dated to the sixth through eighth centuries CE. Documents written in the variety known as Tocharian A have been found in the area of Turfan and Qarashähär; this seems to have been a liturgical language that was already dead by the second half of the first millennium CE. Tocharian B, apparently a vernacular language, is found in the same areas as Tocharian A, as well as in Kucha, further to the west. There is additional evidence for another, older variety of the language, sometimes called Tocharian C, evident from Tocharian words included in Prākṛit documents from Krorān. These documents, which date to around the beginning of the fourth century CE, are the oldest direct evidence of Tocharian.⁴⁶ The Tocharian A text *Maitreyasamiti-Nāṭaka*, written in Brāhmī script, also exists in versions written in the Old Uyghur, Chinese, Tibetan (one version translated

⁴² Lieu 1998, pp. 17–18.

⁴³ Hitch 1993, p. 96.

⁴⁴ Hitch 1993, p. 96.

⁴⁵ Hitch 1993, pp. 95–96.

⁴⁶ Mallory 1989, pp. 56–57.

from Sanskrit, one from Pāli), Khotanese, Pāli, and Sanskrit languages, as well as perhaps in Sogdian.⁴⁷

Other examples are almost unlimited; this section will conclude with brief discussions of Kushan and Sogdian. The Kushan empire thrived from the third century BCE to the third century CE, primarily in the region to the north of the Pamirs. No body of literature remains, only fragmentary inscriptions.⁴⁸ Craig Benjamin has argued that the Yuezhi probably spoke Tocharian in the northern Tarim Basin, but the descendents of the Kushans in Bactria likely adopted an Indo-Iranian language.⁴⁹ Benjamin’s theories are speculative, but, regardless of its accuracy, his description of Kushan writing in the southern Tarim Basin perfectly illustrates the kind of mixture that was inarguably happening throughout the region. After describing their writing system as utilizing “the Kharoshti alphabet expressed in Greek characters,” he goes on to argue that “the Kushans adopted a Sakan-native dialect, expressed it in a Kharoshti alphabetical and grammatical structure ... and inscribed it using Greek characters and constructions.”⁵⁰

Sogdian is well represented as a language of commerce and of communication. The dating of the famous “Sogdian ancient letters” is controversial, but they can perhaps be dated to the fourth century CE.⁵¹ These letters deal almost exclusively with secular matters, but Sogdian religious texts are also common, including Manichean texts written in Manichean script, Christian texts written in modified Syriac, and Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Christian, and Manichean texts written, like the Sogdian letters, in Sogdian script.⁵² A small variety of quite late, likely mid-ninth century, Sogdian texts from the Turfan region have also been discovered that are written in Brāhmī script — prominent among these is a bilingual medical text dealing with eye

⁴⁷ Ji 1998, p. 3.

⁴⁸ Benjamin 1998, pp. 31–32.

⁴⁹ Benjamin 1998, p. 33.

⁵⁰ Benjamin 1998, pp. 40–41.

⁵¹ De la Vaissière, pp. 68–70.

⁵² Sims-Williams, p. 307.

disease, written in both Sogdian and Sanskrit.⁵³ The appearance of Sogdian in this new orthography is interesting, as it appears in a critical time for the language — Persian began to replace Sogdian around the ninth century, as was the case with Khotanese; the language soon thereafter disappeared, following the expansion of Islam into what had been its territory.⁵⁴

It is quite difficult to see any consistent patterns in the spread of these languages and writing systems and in the domains in which they were respectively used. Several languages (along with their writing systems) were wiped out with the arrival of Islam into the region, an event that happened just too late (as the second millennium was beginning) to be dealt with seriously in this paper. Buddhism spread without regard for language — many Sanskrit or Prākṛit words were transcribed into new languages, and many texts were written in these languages, but many other Buddhist texts were translated into a wide variety of languages in a wide variety of scripts. Manichaeism, on the other hand, seems to be tied to a particular script, but not to a particular language; almost any East Central Asian language could be written in Manichean script. At first glance, it seems easy to state that, say, Tocharian A and Sanskrit were religious languages, and Tocharian B and Sogdian were secular ones, but a detailed study of the use of these languages does not completely bear this out. The main conclusion that can be drawn from this survey is simply that, prior to the arrival of Islam, not just Turfan but the entire area of the Tarim Basin region was one of the most linguistically and scripturally diverse regions in history.

Bibliography

Bailey, H. W., trans., ed. *Indo-Scythian Studies, Being Khotanese Texts*. Vol. IV. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1961.

_____. *Indo-Scythian Studies, Being Khotanese Texts*. Vol. VII. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

⁵³ Sims-Williams, pp. 307–08.

⁵⁴ Mallory and Mair 2000, p. 106.

- Benjamin, Craig. "An Introduction to Kushan Research." In *Silk Road Studies II: Worlds of the Silk Roads: Ancient and Modern*, ed. David Christian and Craig Benjamin, pp. 31–50. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1998.
- Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. *Turfan Studies*. 2007. www.bbaw.de/bbaw/Forschung/Forschungsprojekte/turfanforschung/en/blanko.2005-03-01.2776105380, last accessed May 2, 2011.
- De la Vaissière, Étienne. James Ward, trans. *Sogdian Traders: A History*. Boston: Brill, 2005.
- Hitch, Doug. "The Kuchean Hymn in Manichean Script," *Tocharian and Indo-European Studies* vol. 6 (1993), pp. 95–132.
- _____. "The Special Status of Turfan." *Sino-Platonic Papers* no. 186 (March 2009).
- Ji Xianlin, transliterator, translator, and annotator, with Werner Winter and Georges-Jean Pinault. *Fragments of the Tocharian A Maitreyasamiti-Nāṭaka of the Xinjiang Museum, China*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1988.
- Ji Xianlin 季羨林. *Dunhuang Tulufan Tuholuoyu yanjiu daolun* 敦煌吐魯番吐火羅語研究導論 [Introduction to Research on the Tocharian Language of Turfan from Dunhuang]. Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1993.
- Lieu, Sam. "From Iran to South China: The Eastward Passage of Manichaeism." In *Silk Road Studies II: Worlds of the Silk Roads: Ancient and Modern*, ed. David Christian and Craig Benjamin, pp. 1–22. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1998.
- Mair, Victor, ed. *The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Peoples of Eastern Central Asia*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man, 1998.
- _____, ed. *Secrets of the Silk Road*. Santa Ana, Calif.: Bowers Museum, 2010.
- Mallory, J. P. *In Search of the Indo-Europeans: Language, Archaeology and Myth*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1989.
- _____. "Bronze Age Languages of the Tarim Basin." *Expedition* vol. 52, no. 3 (Winter 2010): pp. 44–53.
- Mallory, J. P., and Victor Mair. *The Tarim Mummies: Ancient China and the Mystery of the Earliest Peoples from the West*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000.
- Meshcherskaya, E. N. "The Syriac Fragments in the N. N. Krotkov Collection." In *Turfan*,

- Khotan und Dunhuang: Vorträge der Tagung „Annemarie v. Gabain und die Turfanforschung“, veranstaltet von der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin (9.–12. 12. 1994)*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick, Werner Sundermann, Ingrid Warnke, and Peter Zieme, pp. 221–227. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996.
- Salomon, Richard G. “Brahmi and Kharoshthi.” In *The World’s Writing Systems*, ed. Peter T. Daniels and William Bright, pp. 373–383. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Shōgaito, Masahiro. “On the Contents of the Uighur version of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya-ṭīkā Tattvārthā*.” In *Turfan, Khotan und Dunhuang: Vorträge der Tagung „Annemarie v. Gabain und die Turfanforschung“, veranstaltet von der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin (9.–12. 12. 1994)*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick, Werner Sundermann, Ingrid Warnke, and Peter Zieme, pp. 293–306. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996.
- Sims-Williams, Nicholas. “The Sogdian Manuscripts in Brāhmī Script as Evidence for Sogdian Phonology.” In *Turfan, Khotan und Dunhuang: Vorträge der Tagung „Annemarie v. Gabain und die Turfanforschung“, veranstaltet von der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin (9.–12. 12. 1994)*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick, Werner Sundermann, Ingrid Warnke, and Peter Zieme, pp. 307–315. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996.
- Sinor, Denis, ed. *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Skjærvø, Prods Oktor with Ursula Sims-Williams. *Khotanese Manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan in the British Library: A Complete Catalogue with Texts and Translations*. London: The British Library, 2002.
- Wei Shou 魏收, compiler. *Wei shu* 魏書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997 [completed 554].
- Yao Silian 姚思廉, compiler. *Liang shu* 梁書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997 [completed 635].

Wind and Water:
Anthropogenic Use of Landscape at Small River Cemetery No. 5

Pablo N. Barrera

Abstract

This research focuses on Small River Cemetery No. 5 in Xinjiang, China, as a manmade structure that, when studied through the lens of landscape archaeology, provides usable evidence of conscious interaction between the inhabitants and the landscape of the Tarim Basin. The possibility that the vegetation and cattle used for burial practices on site was maintained nearby with the use of irrigation systems is explored. This paper argues that instead of reliance on surface water systems, a complex system of oases was employed to manage water supplies. Based on the technologies implemented for such a system, the research supports arguments that the burial mound was intentionally constructed through a keen understanding of the wind and sand deposition patterns in the desert. These same technologies reinforce theories that fertile soil in the form of loess carried by winds from the plains of north-central China was captured and used for agriculture by applying the same knowledge of wind and sand deposition.

Introduction

Small River Cemetery No. 5 (also known as Xiaohe Mudi, or Ördök's Necropolis) has recently garnered public attention due to collaborative efforts between Victor H. Mair and public institutions such as the Bowers Museum and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.



Figure 1. Small River Cemetery No. 5.¹

Mair's research on the mummies and artifacts excavated at this and related sites began in 1993, resulting in the landmark exhibition "Secrets of the Silk Road" which began touring in March of 2010, marking the first time that so many objects from this site were displayed outside of China. While the objects and human remains from 1800 BC offer tantalizing glimpses into the past life-ways of the Tarim Basin inhabitants, the location and construction of the cemetery site can also offer an indication of the technologies available and the techniques employed by these peoples when interacting with the landscape.

Two specific uses of landscape are explored: water systems and wind systems. Firstly, possible systems of water management need to be understood in order to appreciate the type of ingenuity required to survive in the desert. Secondly, knowledge of climatic and wind systems for the "building" of the mound at the cemetery site are explored in depth so as to illustrate the level at which these peoples would have been aware of their environment. Based on the material evidence found at Small River Cemetery No. 5 (SMC5), landscape archaeology theories and methodologies are applied towards understanding the types of construction and land use that may have occurred in this region.

¹ <http://www.ritualgoddess.com/the2012vortex/?p=988>. Accessed March 20, 2011.

The Site

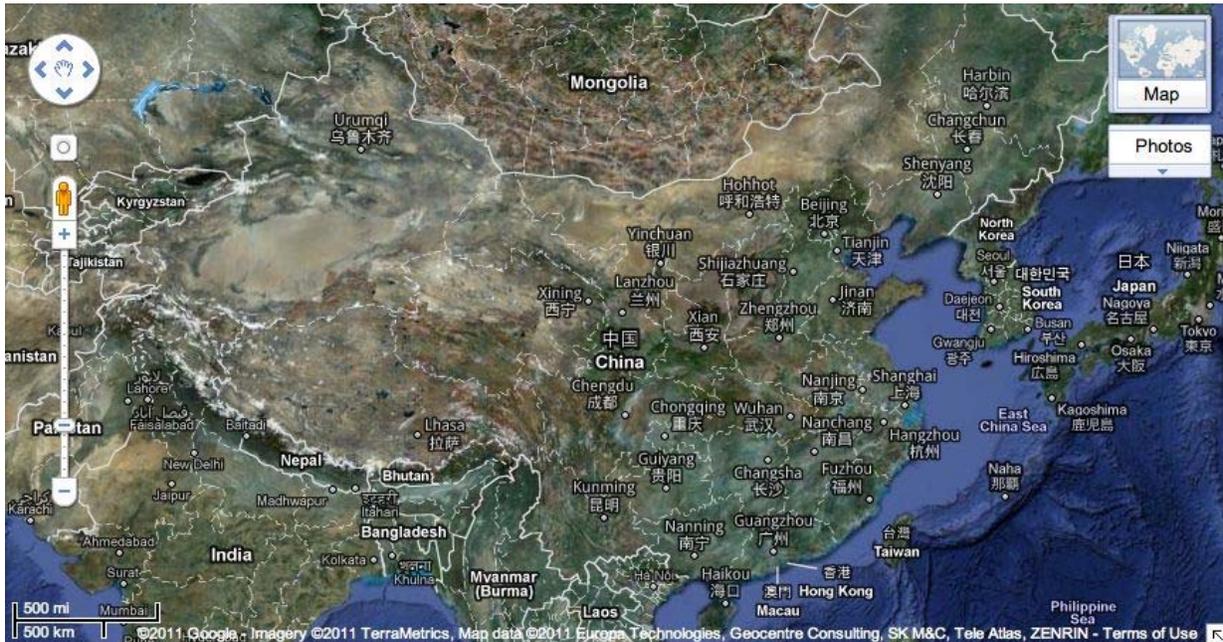


Figure 2. Map of Tarim Basin in relation to Central China and bordering nations.²

Small River Cemetery No. 5 is located in the Tarim Basin, four kilometers east of a small tributary of the Kōnchi River in the northeastern edge of the Tāklimakan Desert. It is located 60 kilometers south of the middle reaches of the Kōnchi River, 175 kilometers west of the ruins of the ancient city of Kroraina (also known as Loulan) and 36 kilometers to the north-northeast of Ayagh Arghan, which is “situated on the bend of the Tarim River where it begins to disappear into the desert sands” (Mair 2006:279)

In 1934, Swedish archeologist Folke Bergman, discovered Small River Cemetery No. 5 (Mair 2006:276), accompanied by a Uyghur man named Ördek, who had served as a guide decades earlier for Swedish explorer Sven Hedin (1865–1952) (Mair 2006:274). Hedin had first visited the region in the 1890s, creating an extensive cartography of the Tāklimakan Desert. In 1928, Hedin’s studies would contribute to our knowledge of the changing basins of Lop Nor “related to the shifting lower course of the Tarim River as it flowed along the northern edge of the eastern portion of the Tāklimakan Desert” (Mair 2006:275). Hedin’s work “opened the way

² Google Maps, <http://maps.google.com/>. Accessed March 20, 2011.

for more detailed explorations of the entire Tarim Basin" (Mair 2006:275), and Bergman's expedition was to conduct archeological surveys and excavations of areas previously mapped (Figure 4).

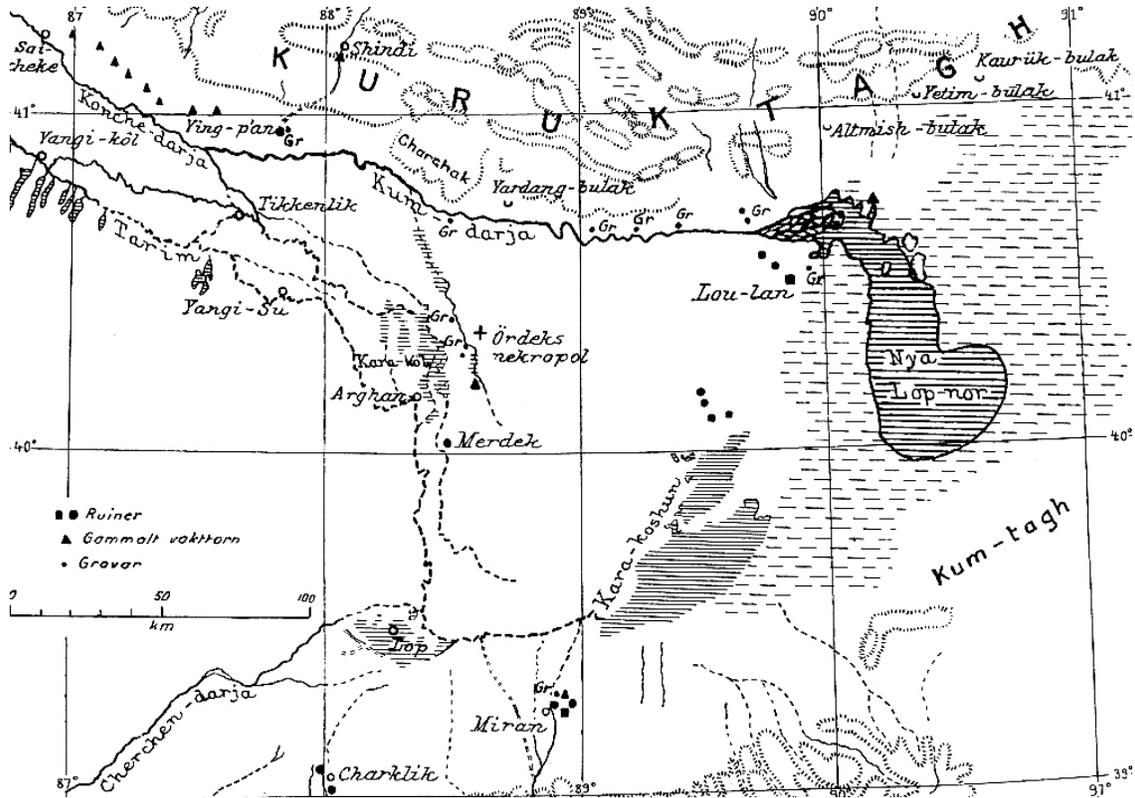


Figure 3. Map drawn by Folke Bergman, based on earlier maps by Sven Hedin.
Small River Cemetery No. 5 is labeled "Ördeks Necropol."³

The location of Small River Cemetery No. 5 was known to Ördek when he came upon this important Bronze Age burial ground in the desert in the early 1900's (Mair 2006:274). The site was reported to have "upwards of a thousand burials, and was one of the key sites that Bergman was hoping to study" (Mair 2006:275). Mair's paper titled "The Rediscovery and Complete Excavation of Ördek's Necropolis," which is also the first English introduction on the status of research conducted on the site up to this day, informs us that:

³ http://commons/c/ca/Map_of_the_Lop_Nor_region_by_Folke_Bergman_1935.jpg. Accessed March 20, 2011.

After Bergman in 1939 published a detailed report on his investigations at the cemetery, the site went unvisited for more than half a century until the year 2000, when it was rediscovered by a Chinese documentary crew using Global Positioning System instrumentation. In the three seasons between 2002 and 2005, the Small River Cemetery has been extensively excavated, and an abundant amount of textiles, ornaments, implements, and other artifacts have been recovered (Mair 2006:274).

Among these artifacts are the unavoidably controversial, yet fascinating, human remains, such as the Beauty of Xiaohe. However, as sensational as these objects are, this study is focused more on those objects that pertain directly to what can be learned about geomorphology and geophysical knowledge as expressed by the construction of the burial mound.

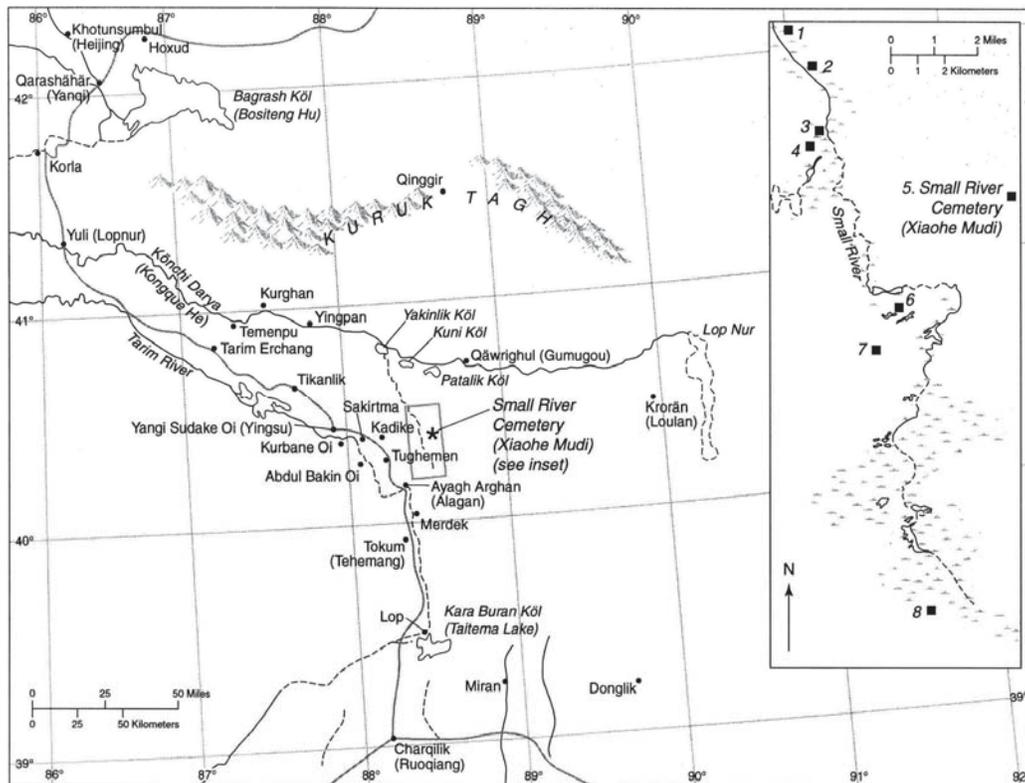


Figure 4. Map of the Lop Region. Inset shows the location of Small River Cemetery No. 5.⁴

⁴ East West Center, https://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/resources/education/asdp_pdfs/Victor_Mair-small.pdf.

Mair's unique observations on the body of evidence available for researching Small River Cemetery No. 5 have yielded incredible insights into potential studies regarding the material culture of this necropolis. One of his major contributions is the simple observation concerning remains of flora and fauna, as well as theories on how some of these items were used ritualistically. Archaeological remains at Small River Cemetery No. 5 show the use of poplar wood and oxen for burial rituals. The abundance of wood used for "boat-shaped" coffins, ritual posts, and palisade walls indicate trees and vegetation within traveling distance.



Figure 5. Small River Cemetery No. 5 "Boat-Shaped" Coffins, "Phallus" post, "Vulva" post, "Main" posts, and palisade. Also pictured are ox-hides as well as vegetation debris at the base of posts.⁵

The deceased are wrapped in textiles and wearing garments made of wool, proving that sheep were raised. Additionally, each coffin is sealed with whole ox hides, and ox heads top the tallest posts, suggesting not only that a form of agro-pastoralism was practiced, but also that water sources may have been more abundant and closer than previously thought.

Accessed March 20 2011.

⁵ <http://www.ritualgoddess.com/the2012vortex/?p=988>. Accessed March 20, 2011.



Figure 6. Example of ox horns and top part of skull used as a decorative element.⁶

The raising of sheep and oxen would require sustainable water sources and vegetation for these animals to graze on. The use of oxen hides to seal the coffins implies that oxen were killed on site and their raw hides placed atop these coffins, the aridity and heat acting to dry the oxen hide tightly upon the coffin (Mair 2006:288). Travel with the wood and materials necessary for ritualized burial would have been easier if these were loaded on the backs of oxen, themselves a necessary component of the burial practices. The oxen would require at the very least water to make the trek, suggesting that water sources could have been sustained near the site.

While these insights are compelling, the most inspired observation Mair offers is his hypothesis on the palisade walls' function. Two palisades run from north-northwest to south-southeast across the mound of sand.

⁶ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/toubib46/5182545462/>. Accessed March 20, 2011.

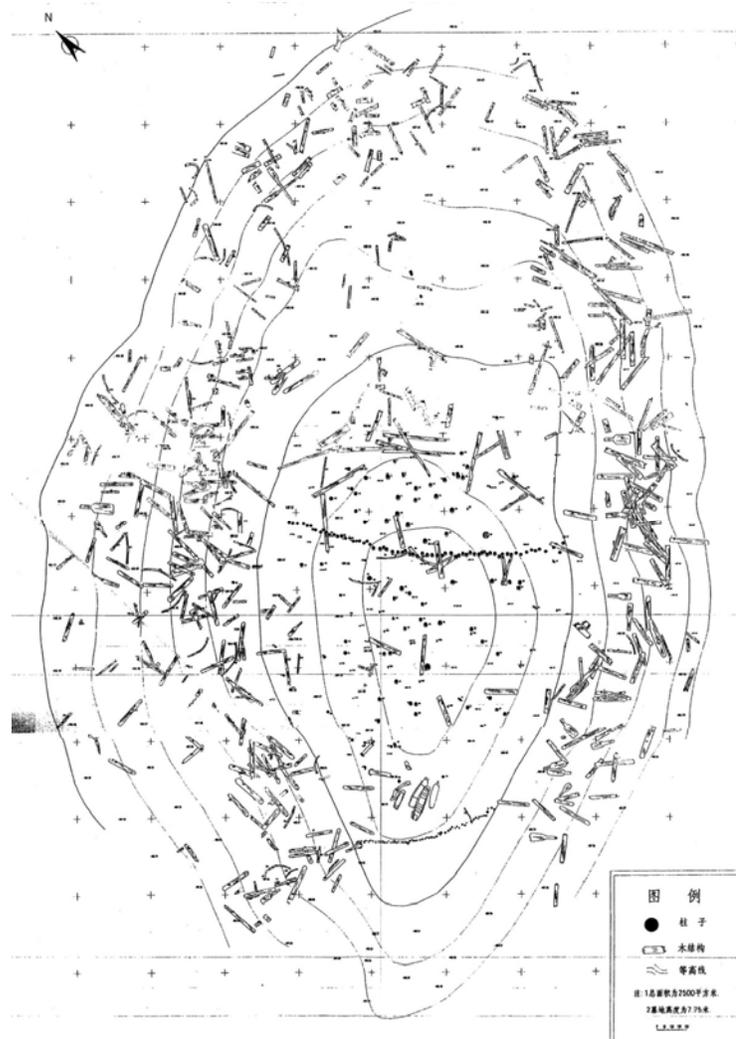


Figure 7. Plan View of Small River Cemetery No. 5 showing posts, coffins, and palisades. ⁷

One of the palisades is composed of thick posts placed next to each other in a long line stretching across the middle of the mound. The second palisade is composed of thinner posts and is set at the western end of the mound. Mair posits the following:

Various speculations have been put forth about the purpose of these palisades, such as that they were meant to divide the cemetery into sectors for different groups. Yet the pattern of burials has not confirmed any of these surmises. I

⁷ East West Center. https://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/resources/education/asdp_pdfs/Victor_Mair-small.pdf. Accessed March 20, 2011.

would suggest that the palisades may have been intended as windbreaks both to hold the oversized, artificial dune in place and to catch additional wind-borne sand. In essence, I believe that the palisades were designed, as it were, to maintain and grow the hillock (Mair 2006:283).

This is evident from their careful placement and tight construction. The palisades would have served to stop the majority of sand particles that were blown against it, with the placement of the secondary palisade determined by the directionality of the prevailing winds in the area "meant to complement and enhance the efficiency of the main palisade" (Mair 2006:283).

The mound itself should be regarded as an anthropogenic structure. The position of the palisade walls may have been designed to build and maintain the mound using knowledge of wind patterns and sand deposition. The varying heights of posts may also suggest that the people were aware of the rate at which sand would "build" the mound. To determine the plausibility of this hypothesis, environmental conditions, geomorphologic features, and archaeological evidence will inform potential, human-made models for interacting with the landscape. The following models will be critically examined via the body of evidence.

Theoretical Framework: Landscape and Analogous Models

In this case study, Small River Cemetery No. 5 will be analyzed within the framework of geophysics. Water management systems will be examined in reference to oases building, to be explored in detail later. The construction of the burial mound will be analyzed with reference to dune construction patterns and the effects of aerodynamics as it relates to sand deposition models. Both of these man-made structures will serve to highlight the level of human interaction with landscape, illustrating the active role that inhabitants took. Since the resulting constructions are to be regarded as anthropogenic uses of landscape, the concept of landscape should be defined, followed by an explanation as to why certain models are deemed relevant.

Landscape

The use of landscape in archeological study has shifted from one of landscape being considered a background upon which events play out and material evidence is imbedded, to a

role at the fore of an approach towards understanding past peoples (Anschuetz et al. 2001:157–158).

Landscape archaeologists have called for a focus on whole domains of human interaction, landscapes that are not simply natural domains that form the context for artifacts and buildings, but are temporally constructed cultural domains defined by the use and perception of land, features on the land, and associated activities. (Robin and Rothschild 2002:163)

Rather than simply reflecting function, "space also expressed symbolic and conceptual knowledge" (Robin and Rothschild, 2002:160). The people's association to these concepts activates a landscape. In this way, landscape is re-appropriated to reflect dominant ideas that are both practical and cultural. "People's ongoing uses, experiences, movements and interactions influence the meaning of space ... space is not simply a passive backdrop for action, but is socially constructed and constitutive of social relations" (Robin and Rothschild, 2002:161). Whether we are observing the actual physical, local environment or affiliated cosmological realms and references to imagined locales, the process of relating to a cultural landscape and the evidence it leaves behind can be found throughout multiple scales (Knapp and Ashmore 1999:3). The social and cultural meaning ascribed to the landscape can manifest in the form of the physically built environment or be ideational by residing in the collective memory of a community trained through their society to recognize the associative significance of their environment.

Landscapes are not necessarily the same as the natural environment. As Carl Sauer (1925) noted in his work "The Morphology of Landscapes," landscape is different from environment. A cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group; thus, human involvement distinguishes a landscape from the environment (Ashmore 2004:256). Anschuetz and colleagues explain that the cultural landscape may at first seem indistinguishable from the natural surroundings, but these natural features still hold meaning to the people that experience them within a cultural context. "Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result" (Anschuetz et al. 2001:164). Within a landscape, the environment

provides the range of opportunities for interpretation, appropriation, manipulation, or avoidance by the people in it (Whittlesey 2009:74). Therefore, to assume that a natural geographic feature does not play a role in the construction of a cultural space denies that these landscape features may be elements in a human-made cultural landscape and overlooks the planning and structure of the built environment in respect to these landscape features.

When analyzing a landscape, the physical patterning embedded or expressed in the built environment and cultural landscape makes studying the cultural phenomenon by archaeologists possible, but an understanding of relevant cultural themes at both the larger societal scale and the more individualized local scale can further inform methods of analysis, confirm overarching cultural ideas, and elaborate on the relationships formed between the people and the landscape. A settled space may have originally held appeal due to practical issues such as access to water, arable land, and mountain shelter from wind, but local ideas of the larger world order can find a symbolic resting place on a landscape feature that represents relationships (Whittlesey 2009:73).

Through their daily activities, beliefs and values, communities transform their physical surroundings into meaningful places based on particular patterns of morphology and arrangement; through their physical modifications, the intimacies of their experiences and the sharing of their memories, they reshape the natural settings contained within their geographical spaces to legitimize the meanings bestowed upon the landscape (Whittlesey 2009:75).

Each community and each generation imposes its own cognitive map on an anthropogenic world of interconnected morphology, arrangement, and coherent meaning (Anschuetz et al. 2001:161). Some of these ideas may be introduced, while others build on existing knowledge. The complexity of the shifting nature of a cultural landscape lies in the continuity of certain elements over time instead of a stark layering of ideas over time (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003:19). Thus, landscape is cultural space that merges the material and the symbolic, and is socially constructed and socially experienced. Through the process of living, people constantly create and transform space and place (Robin and Rothschild 2002:161). Few places exist where this sort of palimpsest of meaning cannot be found, making a multi-layered approach necessary towards understanding how a landscape relates to human activity.

The landscapes approach has tremendous potential, but it "has been little used... in

archaeological studies. This may stem from contemporary archaeology's positivist and materialist bias, which tends to shy away from models based on cognition or perception" (Whittlesey 2009:73). The most significant advantage to a landscape archaeology approach is the acknowledgment that space is "an essential component of socio-cultural theory. That is, anthropologists are rethinking and re-conceptualizing their understandings of culture in spatialized ways" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003:2).

Given these definitions and applications of landscape (as established through the Western field of anthropology) it is important to examine the role of people in creating sacred space, assigning guidelines for construction and orientation, and creating/reinforcing a microcosm within a community's landscape. Landscapes are not simply passive media, but can be active agents, pushing back at human efforts and forcing adaptations through innovation. Cultural activity may then leave behind a material imprint on the landscape over space and time, those same activities "informed" by the already existing spatial order (Llobera 1996:614). The features in question may or may not be easily recognizable to outsiders and can be quite subtle in material manifestation (Ashmore 2008:167). A landscape archaeology approach is necessary in order to bring in the theoretical framework that takes into consideration all technologies available to a people. Native epistemologies become important for understanding how a landscape takes shape and relates to the communities defining it. The cultural perspective elucidates the meaning behind landscape in the organization of a built environment as it pertains to landscape use.

Unfortunately, we do not have access to the native epistemologies that would inform how these peoples related to landscape. Therefore, we are forced to suffice with the silent, material evidence, and work backwards when attempting to determine such abstract concepts as "intention" or "technology." However, it is possible to analogously arrive at suitable theories if one subscribes to the notion that human beings operated at similar levels today as they did a few thousand years ago (especially if environmental conditions are similar). Tilley offers a compelling argument in favor of such thinking with his theories on phenomenology. According to Tilley, simply by looking at two-dimensional depictions of a landscape, such as on a map, archaeologists fail to understand how people living in these societies actually related to those areas. He believes archaeologists should exploit every landscape within their studies and use

landscape specifics to learn more how ancient peoples perceived them (Tilley 1994; 2010). The relationship between landscape features and human activities is stressed:

Humanized places become fashioned out of the landscape through the recognition of significant qualities in that which has not in itself been culturally produced (rocks, rivers, trees, etc.) by association with current use, past social actions, or actions of a mythological character (Tilley 1994:24).

Therefore, reference to territorial/geological patterns and their developments is vital to understand both "how" and "why" societies and landscapes are organized over time. Tilley states that "the landscape is an anonymous sculptured form, already fashioned by human agency, never completed and constantly being added to...the landscape is both medium for and outcome of action and previous histories of action" (Tilley 1994:23). The knowledge of form and nature of territorial expression is crucial for understanding distinctions, meanings and particularities through related societal and landscape practices (Tilley 1994:23).

In the case of Small River Cemetery No. 5, these theoretical contributions lend credence to seeking outside models of human interaction with landscape so as to better understand the ways in which past peoples may have dealt with similar problems of settlement, construction, or place-making. Such analogy seeking approaches have given rise to theories in which human interaction with landscape can be categorized formulaically according to the environmental context. An example is Landscape Ecology. The Landscape ecology theory stresses the role of human impacts on landscape structures and functions, proposing ways for recovering degraded landscapes. Landscape ecology explicitly includes humans as entities that cause functional changes of the landscape, even helping to maintain resistance to external threats like development and land transformation by human activity (Naveh and Lieberman 1984).

William Balee and Clark Erickson have challenged landscape ecology on the ground that it relegates humans as just another species within the ecosystem (Preucel and Mrozowski 2010:56). Erickson (2006; 2009; 2010) uses archaeological evidence to argue that certain regions are actually "domesticated landscapes" rather than an untouched, virgin wilderness. Humans not only adapt to their environments to become a "keystone species" within it, but intentionally alter

their surroundings to suit their needs. Erickson also points out the danger of using ethnographic accounts of modern peoples to infer how past societies interacted with their landscape. It is important to consider that even though past activities (the taskscape) are incorporated into a landscape, this does not provide archaeologists with unequivocal information regarding the past societies who dwelt there. Erickson claims that a "reverse-engineering" approach of historical ecology can distinguish between natural and cultural (anthropogenic) processes of environmental change via careful contextual analysis (Erickson 2010). However, the question remains as to how one goes about reverse-engineering one's way into a technological method used four thousand years ago in the Tarim Basin. For this, we look towards analogy.

Analogy and Metaphor

We are reliant on material culture, ethnographic data, and interpretation to construct a vision of past ways of life. Analogy plays a pertinent role in the inference of data through its use in the organization of methodology and the selection of histories that will be explored based on material evidence. Analogy, when used to illustrate the past, forms the basis of a narrative that fleshes out the limited material evidence from the archaeological record. (Stahl 1993:237).

In her discussion of the archaeological use of analogy, Ann Stahl (1993) points out the important distinction between a "source" culture and a "subject" culture. Stahl distinguished between "source" and "subject" culture based on the use of timeframe in rationalizing a choice of analogy. According to Stahl, the concept of "mundane time" lends credence to "source" cultures when exploring archaeological evidence (Stahl 1993:235). Mundane time encompasses the idea that a particular analogy from a source or assumed culture can be applied to analysis of material evidence based on the assumption that, regardless of vastly different time periods in which the material or the cultural ideas in question existed respectively, the association or even similarities are too relevant to be ignored (Stahl 1993:234). This concept has led to breakthroughs in anthropological studies of cultures in different continents or throughout different time periods by applying known analogues to the analysis of these peoples. A "subject" culture, instead, is encompassed within "typological time," or, the direct time period that the people's culture in question touched (Stahl 1993:234). This approach allows for the study of the development of culture to be seen within its own context. Either approach is indispensable.

The controversy in using analogues for archaeological study lies in the degree of uncertainty in the analogical inference (Stahl 1993:235). The uncertainty lies in what is referred to as "source-side" considerations and the mixing of source-side concerns with those of subject-side concerns. An example is found on the weight given to "traditional" ethnographies.

Ethnographic accounts were highly selective in their reporting of contemporary cultures due to the emphasis placed on "traditional" practice... A lack of source-side criticism led archaeologists to accept these descriptions as unproblematic representations. Archaeological considerations of relevance focused on selection criteria (was there a demonstrable historic link?). Once the veracity of the historical connection was established, the archaeologist was free to project ethnographic images into the... past. (Stahl 1993:243)

Stahl's criticism of the "use and abuse" of analogy may not be a specific concern with current research on Small River Cemetery No. 5, but there still exist concerns that the selection of source data used and the type of analogy examined is not criticized to the fullest extent possible. According to Stahl, we should be wary of a biased base of analysis, with analogy serving to illustrate what was already presumed.

In order to reduce this uncertainty Stahl recommends that scholars "work to establish the principles of connection [and] the considerations of relevance that inform the selection and evaluation of analogies" (Stahl 1993:236). To do this, both the source and subject-side aspects of analogical inference need to be strengthened (Stahl 1993:236). The value of individual analogues should be judged on the "basis of relevance assumptions or selection criteria (i.e., historical continuity, shared base, etc.), as well as the basis of how the analogue compares with [material evidence]" (Stahl 1993:236). This is what Stahl terms "analogy as a comparative model" (Stahl 1993:236).

With Stahl's directives and warnings in mind, we turn to our analysis of Small River Cemetery No. 5 in the framework of contemporary models as the source culture and archaeological material (devoid of any associations when possible) as the subject culture. The rationale for this selection is rooted in the subject culture itself. The physical aspects of the

material observe the laws of nature and physics, which are undeniably the same ones in operation today. Thus, the selection of contemporary models to compare should reflect congruity with these same principles of geophysics and geomorphology applicable to the limits of the material data. The subject culture will consist of those unchanging geophysical forces that affected environmental conditions, such as water movement and wind circulation, augmented by the lens of contemporary knowledge related to these systems. The source cultures used to make analogues will consist of oasis building programs as seen in desert areas for the past hundred years, and elements of dune construction including aeolian processes and the science behind aerodynamics.

Tools for Analysis: Combined Analogous Approach

The most influential contribution to studies of the temporal dimension of landscape has been Tim Ingold's (1993) discussion of "the temporality of landscape." He suggests that "temporality" (as opposed to history or chronology) emerges in a "rhythmic" manner from the "pattern" of human activities or "dwelling" in the landscape. Events can be seen to "encompass a pattern of retentions from the past and retentions for the future" (Ingold 1993:157). Ingold introduces the idea of the "taskscape" to denote the temporal and emergent nature of human dwelling in the landscape, and extends this concept to archaeological practice:

The practice of archaeology is itself a form of dwelling. The knowledge born on this practice is thus on a par with that which comes from the practical activity of the native dweller and which the anthropologist, through participation, seeks to learn and understand....To perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past. To be sure, the rules and methods of engagement employed respectively by the native dweller and the archaeologist will differ, as will the stories they tell, nevertheless — in so far as

both seek the past in the landscape — they are engaged in projects of fundamentally the same kind. (Ingold 1993:152)

Ingold goes on to argue that the taskscape is formed of resonances between humans and the world of plants and animals, both of which are linked to daily and seasonal rhythms dictated by movements of the earth. For this reason there can be no distinction between culture and nature, as both are symbiotically bound up with these wider natural rhythms. The landscape then becomes both a product of human activity (the taskscape) and a medium in which other humans are socialized through routine movement and activity. Thus, the study of taskscape is focused on ways in which the individuals are socialized into webs of knowledge, symbolism and power. Within this theoretical backdrop, we can confidently explore analogous systems that apply to Small River Cemetery No. 5, as long as they pertain to those “natural” systems that the material evidence supports.

Subject Culture: The Climate

Landscape study involves usage of special methods, including geomorphology research for paleolandscape reconstruction, paleoethnobotany analysis, macrofloral and microfloral studies, lithology study for climate reconstruction, ground penetrating prospection technologies, field surveys, topographic modeling, and stratigraphy-controlled excavations. They operate at multiple scales of analysis, and seek to move beyond bounded entities like monuments or sites (Hicks and McAtackney 2007:13).

With regard to Small River Cemetery No. 5, knowledge of how water operates in the Tarim Basin is paramount. Its elevated importance for survival makes it a key ingredient for understanding how peoples dealt with the desert environment. To observe how water appears in the desert, knowledge of microclimate conditions is required. Yugo Ono's paper, "Paleoenvironmental Changes of the Tibetan Plateau and Himalaya" introduces general climate patterns in the region, the geophysical structures behind water systems, and the location of oases in the Tāklimakan Desert. Ono argues that two major influences account for the arid world of the Silk Road: monsoons and glaciers. Monsoons are described as seasonal winds responsible for

precipitation during the warm season and the cold season (Ono 1999:13). Regarding the Tāklimakan Desert, Ono states that the cold season monsoon creates a high-pressure zone over the Tibetan Plateau that draws winds away from the Tāklimakan Desert towards the Indian Ocean (Ono 1999:13). The warm, moist winds in the summer that flow towards the Taklimakan Desert are prevented from depositing rain due to the Himalayas (Ono 1999:14). These winds lack the necessary force to overcome the mountain heights. These monsoons intensify during warmer periods and recede during colder periods (Ono 1999:14). As glaciers melt throughout the seasons, alluvial fans form as a result of fluctuations in water flow, feeding the streams and ground water needed for the formation of oases (Figure 8). In short, glaciers are needed to feed these streams at the edges of the desert.



Figure 8. Alluvial fans formed as a result of glaciers melting at irregular intervals.⁸

Guijin Mu elaborates on the role of glaciers through his paper "Environmental Changes in Northwest China during the last 2000 years and Its Possible Influence to the Rising and Falling of the Silk Road." He offers a complex model involving a system of lakes, rivers, oases, and the glaciers that feed them. In this model, Mu accounts for evaporation rates and temperature fluctuations over time (Mu 1999:23). These climactic patterns were operating within a Neoglaciation period lasting between 3000 BC and 2000 BC, followed by a warming trend between

⁸ Exploring the Planets, Second Edition, <http://explanet.info/Chapter08.htm>. Accessed March 20, 2011.

2000 BC and 1500 BC. During the glaciation period, moisture would have been locked into glaciers increasing aridity. However, Mu explains that warmer temperatures may actually lead to aridity, since colder temperatures increase snowfall and glacial growth (Mu 1999:21). Yet, during the start of the warming period, glaciers would begin to melt with increased volume, creating a very wet season due to glacial reserves built up during the colder period. At the beginning of a warm period, runoff and glacial melt increases, and oases are more abundant as water levels rise. This seems to contradict his assertion that warmer temperatures result in aridity, but this is explained by the lag in glacial melt; winters still exist, offering cold seasons and snow, however, as temperatures continue to increase, large snow buildup on glaciers is prevented and evaporation rates on lakes increase. Over time, the environment becomes more arid (Mu 1999:23). The past two thousand years of Northwest China's climate were not as stable as previously perceived. While temperature changes were minute, the effects were substantial (Mu 1999:24).

With regard to these monsoon patterns, the question of where the precipitation needed for increased glaciation comes from is not addressed. If monsoon winds decrease in the winter and simultaneously pull away from the desert, how can glaciers form? The answer may be the elevation of the Himalayas. If summer winds collect at the tops of mountains in an effort to carry moisture towards the Tāklimakan Desert during the summer monsoon, it could precipitate on the tops of mountain chains in a delicate system of cooling and warming, depositing rain or even snow, thus, feeding rivers and streams. This would be aided by summer monsoons during a colder neo-glaciations period.

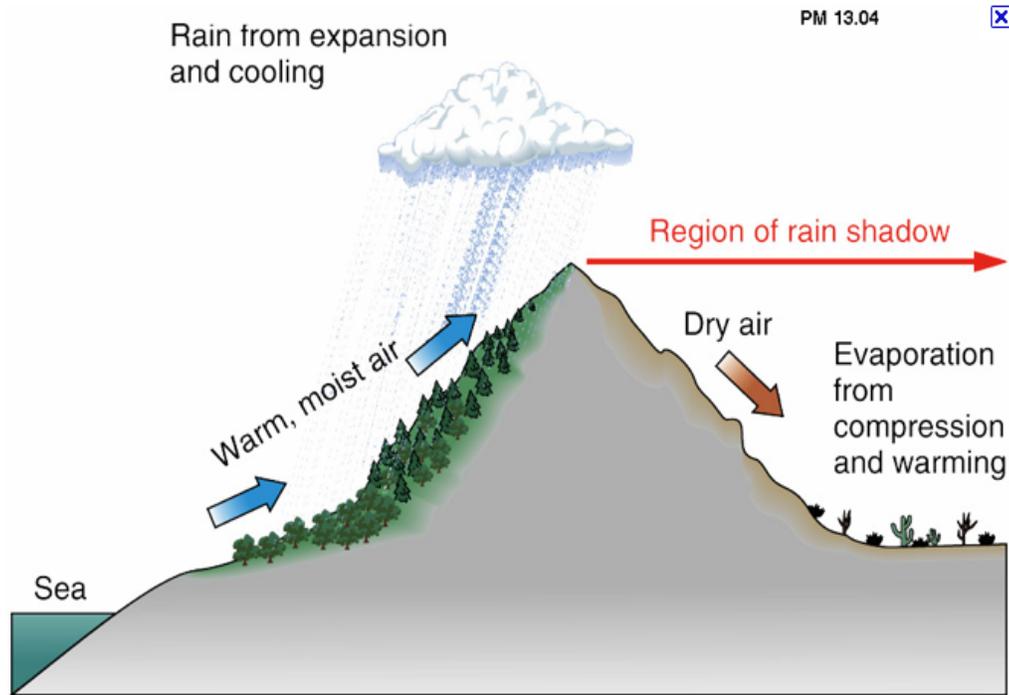


Figure 9. Diagram of moisture cycles as observed around mountain chains surrounding the Tarim Basin.⁹

However, these are not the only winds that deliver water to the Tāklimakan Desert. Toshiyo Hayashi's paper, "Sedentaries in the Nomadic State," offers concrete evidence on the origin of the precipitation responsible for the glacial melt water systems near Small River Cemetery No. 5. Hayashi points out accounts that record multiple oases along the southern face of the Tian Shan pass along the northern region of the Tarim Basin (Hayashi 1999:65). He states that the Tian Shan acts as a wall that prevents moisture from coming in from the north, so the southern slope is dry, while the northern slope captures much of the moisture forming a multitude of rivers and streams, as well as glaciers during colder seasons (Hayashi 1999:65) (Figure 9).

⁹ <http://www.indiana.edu/~geol116/Week11/rainshad.jpg>. Accessed March 20, 2011.



Figure 10. Satellite image of Lop Nor. Note the greener landscape on the northern slope of the mountain pass.¹⁰

If we revisit the physical evidence, we see verification that these glaciers contribute to water systems near Small River Cemetery No. 5. As Mair points out:

The Könchi River [near SRC5] first flows westward, then gradually turns south and finally eastward. The great Tarim River has its beginning near the western end of the Tarim Basin and flows eastward across the northern edge. At Yuli (or Weili, a town most confusingly now called Lop Nor for administrative purposes),

¹⁰ http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1f/Basin_of_Lop_Nur_90.25E%2C_40.10N%2C_Kum_Tagh_and_Astin_Tagh.jpg. Accessed March 20, 2011.

it parallels the Kōnchi to the north for about a hundred miles eastward, but then gradually veers off more toward the southeast until it disappears in the desert about 25 miles to the west of Small River. (Mair 2006:289)

This verifies that water does not fall abundantly in the form of precipitation. Instead, the peoples that built Small River Cemetery No. 5 relied on water flow from the East, as well as glacial melt from the Tian Shan Mountains. Hayashi's studies confirm that oases form mainly along these rivers and around alluvial fans (Figure 10).

Source Culture: Oases Building

Oases are clearly present, but appear to be subject to nature and climactic cycles. Can sustainable water sources be obtained as indicated by SRC5's evidence of agro-pastoralism and wood supply? Irrigation comes to mind, but is soundly discarded as a viable theory once more recent accounts are considered. "Shifting Sands and Shifting Rivers: The Ever-Changing Landscape of the Tarim Basin as seen by Past Present Travelers" by Hakan Wahlquist gives a laundry list of topographical features and geophysical phenomenon as observed through pictures and accounts by Sven Hedin (Wahlquist 1999:27–35). The migration of river streams is of key importance. Walquist relays Hedin's accounts on how river courses would shift within the same season; winds deposited sands and rivers naturally jumped course due to the basic properties of water erosion. Lewis Mayo has this to say on the topic of sand:

Sand's capacity to shift position surreptitiously, to accumulate and dissipate beneath the surface of the water, makes it foundationally unpredictable and seemingly treacherous. Like all forms of moving earth, it is something of a category violation: though solid, it partakes of the qualities that distinguish water and wind, the very elements which cause it to move. It is fluid and changeable. ...sand seems to mirror the mobility of human history in its capacities to shift around, build up and break down. (Mayo 2011: 24–25)

Expending labor on irrigation canals under such circumstances would prove to be in vain

if water paths were this unstable. Perhaps areas closer to more established river courses would be fine, but additional water sources would be needed as you extend away from main courses of larger rivers.

Nikolai Prejevalsky's work "From Kulja across the Tian Shan to Lop Nur" offers a stunning eye-witness account from the 1880's. He describes:

The Tarim banks are scattered marshes and lakes. These are for the most part artificially formed by the natives for purposes of fishing and pasturage. [...] the river itself assists in the irrigation of its own valley. Fine sand and dust driven by the wind-storm prevalent in spring are caught and retained by the trees, bushes, and cane-break growing on the banks, so as to gradually raise their level above that of the adjacent land, which is constantly diminishing under the influence of the same causes. Hence it becomes only necessary to bore through the bank for the water to pour out of the river and inundate more or less extensive tract of plain. (Prejevalsky 1969:57)

Prejevalsky then goes on to say these "inundated tracts of plain" quickly silt up and get choked by reeds (Figure 11), then "the operation is repeated" elsewhere (Prejevalsky 1969:57).



Figure 11. Eventual result of oases that are not maintained: sand fills in surface water.¹¹

¹¹ <http://www.resimler7.com>. Accessed March 20, 2011

The significance is staggering when compared to another model for water management: the foggara in the Sahara. Pietro Laureano observes that in the Western Sahara, an "oasis system has constituted the route of palms and crops, resting places and supply posts for the caravans trading across the desert" (Laureano 1986:67). The settlements and agriculture are not based upon a network of free-running surface waters, but rather upon the production of underground water by means of draining tunnels (foggara) and oases (Laureano 1985:37).

Every inch of land is claimed from the sands where the waters and crops seem to sprout miraculously. Maintenance work may never stop since it is impossible to block the steady action of wind and sand, elements against which any drastic opposition is destined for failure. The technique employed [makes] use of the natural processes themselves. Artificial barriers cause a buildup of sand, furthering the controlled formation of dune chains. By means of continually overlapping fences of woven palm leaves, the entire landscape is moulded and the dunes themselves, increasingly higher, constitute the crop protection system: unable to prevent the formation of dunes, man puts them to use through his own regulating intervention. (Laureano 1986:67)

This alludes to Mair's hypothesis on the function of the palisades. But a more surprising observation is achieved when the surrounding terrain of SRC5 is considered. Mair describes smaller "crescent" shaped dunes uniformly surrounding the burial site (Mair 2006:296). The basic structure described is a naturally occurring type of dune called a transverse dune (Blumler 1998:220).

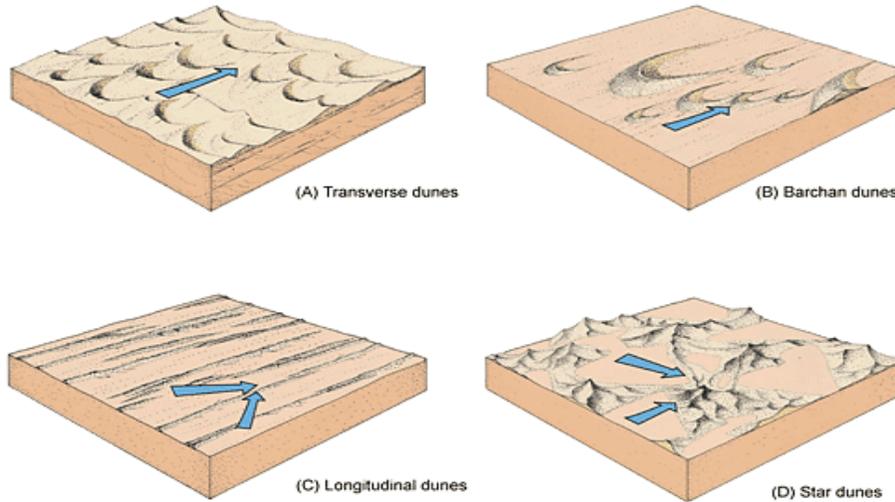


Figure 12. Illustration of a transverse dune (A) in relation to wind pattern.¹²

This implies steady winds in one direction, but what causes the crescent shape? Furthermore, why do these dunes not continue to grow larger? It is a matter of aerodynamics: when air travels over a risen surface, the slope of wind creates a low pressure point inducing “lift” (Figures 12, 13).

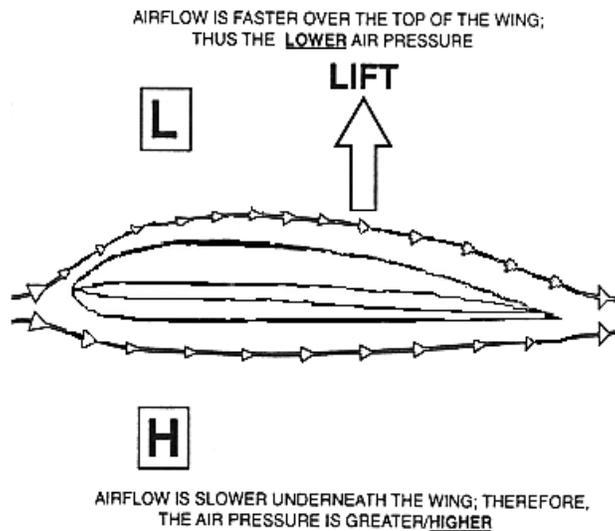


Figure 13. Illustration of aerodynamic flow.¹³

¹² Exploring the Planet Second Edition, <http://explanet.info/Chapter08.htm>. Accessed March 20, 2011.

¹³ NASA, <http://quest.nasa.gov/aero/planetary/atmospheric/lift1.html>. Accessed March 20, 2011.

Sand is fluid: it is scooped up with the air within this low pressure zone and a digging action occurs (Laureano 1986:71). This knowledge would be applicable to those who understand its basic principles. Plants or walls can be planted to create initial buildup for a dune to form. The scooping action that follows would create a crescent shaped transverse dune that continues to dig into the low pressure area created in front of it. If strategically placed where ground water is just below the surface, an oasis can be formed. Conversely, if placed near river streams, the basins mentioned by Prejevalsky can be formed and filled with water creating a stable supply regardless of river courses or stream volume, for alluvial fans and glacier melt supply the groundwater. Laureano explains:

In reality, the oasis, generally viewed as the explosion of vegetation in an arid environment, is the outcome of man's planning and architectural action. Anthropocentric action, aimed at the careful selection and utilization of resources for the most suitable exploitation of rare living factors, is at the root of the entire spatial organization: from the most simple architectural elements, to the settlement morphology, to the complex plumbing works, to the introduction of vegetal species and cultivation of crops. Man's regulating action is at the basis of environmental architecture, to such a point that it actually controls the dune complexes. (Laureano 1986:65)

However, the burial site of SRC5 does not exhibit the crescent shape expected. Furthermore, the plan views suggest that sand trails in the opposite direction the winds (which come from the north-east) that form the dunes around it (Figure 7). Satellite imagery sheds light on this problem. When viewed at a larger scale, there is indeed a trail of sand following the appropriate direction: from northeast to southwest.

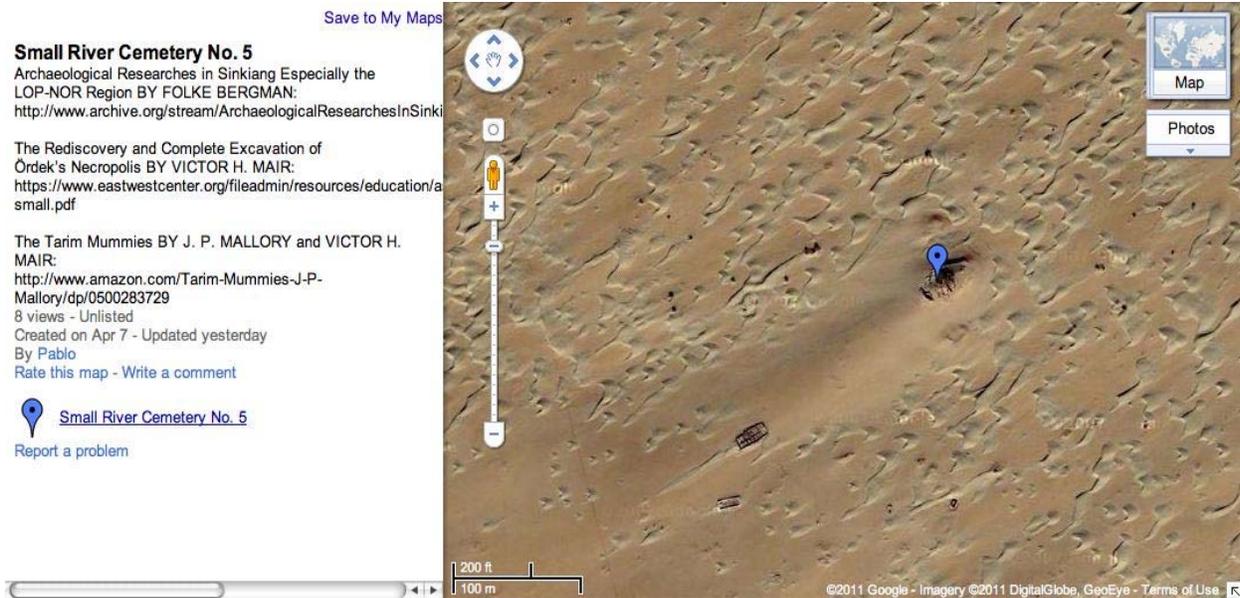


Figure 14. Satellite image of Small river Cemetery No. 5. Note the elongated sand trail as winds move over the mound from the northeast. The transverse dunes confirm the direction of wind flow.¹⁴

However, the mound is not crescent-shaped. Once again, Mair’s earlier point on the second, western palisade is of vital importance. Verification is obtained when the theme of aerodynamics is followed further. In order for the mound to exhibit this shape, a system called an “elevator” is employed (Figure 15).

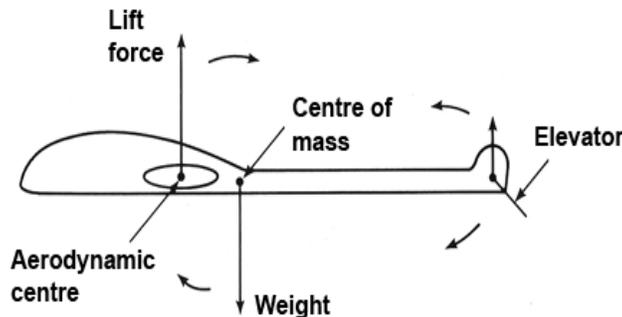


Figure 15. Elevator system that disrupts lift flow and causes air to circulate back down and in reverse of the flow. If the wind were replaced with Aeolian sand, we would observe a buildup and eventual stabilizing of sand resulting in arenose deposition.¹⁵ Due to stability requirements, aircraft design traditionally requires

¹⁴ Author’s image.

¹⁵ ADEX, <http://www.adexcop.com/industries/case-name/adaptive-autopilot-design-for-the-f-8-dfbw-nasa.html>.

that the center of mass be located between the aerodynamic centre and the elevator as represented. In this way, the torque originated by the lift force, applied in the aerodynamic centre, and the weight, applied at the centre of mass is compensated by the torque produced by the elevator position.

An elevator acts to disrupt lift causing a vortex of air to turn back on itself just as airflow is reaching its terminal downward shed.



Net vorticity in the flow domain is zero.

Figure 16. Downwash action that contributes to the digging action that forms a transverse dune illustrated by aerodynamic flow.¹⁶

The second palisade acts as this elevator. Instead of the airflow completing its downward shed, the second wall interrupts the process, forcing wind and sand back into the center of the space between the two palisades earlier than is normal (Figures 15, 16, 17, 18).

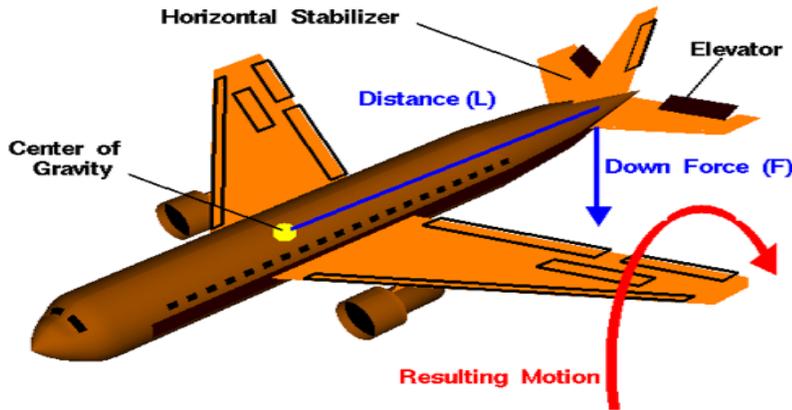
Accessed March 20, 2011.

¹⁶ NASA, <http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/K-12/airplane/shed.html>. Accessed March 20, 2011.



Horizontal Stabilizer – Elevator

Glenn
Research
Center



At the rear of the fuselage of most aircraft one finds a **horizontal stabilizer** and an **elevator**. The stabilizer is a fixed wing section whose job is to provide stability for the aircraft, to keep it flying straight. The horizontal stabilizer prevents up-and-down, or pitching, motion of the aircraft nose. The elevator is the small moving section at the rear of the stabilizer that is attached to the fixed sections by hinges. Because the elevator moves, it varies the amount of force generated by the tail surface and is used to generate and control the pitching motion of the aircraft. There is an elevator attached to each side of the fuselage. The elevators work in pairs; when the right elevator goes up, the left elevator also goes up. This slide shows what happens when the pilot deflects the elevator.

The elevator is used to control the position of the nose of the aircraft and the angle of attack of the wing. Changing the inclination of the wing to the local flight path changes the amount of lift which the wing generates. This, in turn, causes the aircraft to climb or dive. During take off the elevators are used to bring the nose of the aircraft up to begin the climb out. During a banked turn, elevator inputs can increase the lift and cause a tighter turn. That is why elevator performance is so important for fighter aircraft.

Figure 17. Illustration of how an elevator disrupts the low-pressure zone created by lift.¹⁷

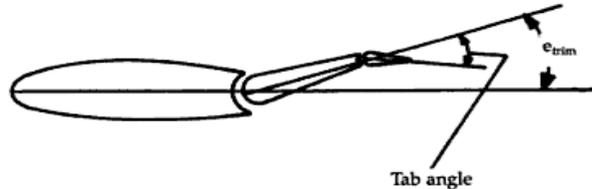


Fig. 6-11. Trim tab deflection forces elevator into required trim angle position.

Figure 18. Elevator on a wing as opposed to the tail fins of an aircraft providing additional control and stability at a smaller level. The properties operate the same as above but on a smaller scale showing consistency in principle and design.¹⁸

The long trail of sand stretching out from the center of the mound (Figure 14) is the streamlined air depositing a trail over the basic shape of the mound, much like the way the wake of air behaves behind an airplane. Once the mound achieves critical mass, the remainder of the sand begins to be swept away until it digs into the elevator again, beginning the process of

¹⁷ NASA, <http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/K-12/airplane/elv.html>. Accessed March 20, 2011.

¹⁸ Hubert C. Smith, *The Illustrated Guide to Aerodynamics* (Iowa: McGraw Hill Professional, 1992).

deposition anew, only at the later stages before the mound is "complete." This cycle of digging and building continues as long as there is airflow, which would explain why the smaller palisade is more severely sandblasted than the larger palisade (the latter would be buried the whole time while the former is constantly "working"). The walls can be lowered into the sand or lifted higher to adjust the height of the mound, thus enabling the creation of new layers as needed.

Aside from being an unusual application of airplane technology in 2000 BC, this technique has a practical use as well. Prejevalsky and Laureano noted the ability of plants to capture loess from winds during particular seasons so as to aid in increasing the amount of fertile soil present. Since the soil content is more saline, the ability to capture this loess is crucial for plant production. The loess is carried in from north central China, and the shape of the mound and the surrounding transverse dunes indicate that this is so. The conclusion is that this tactic of using an elevator must have been consciously employed on the mound, building on prior knowledge of "capturing" fertile aeolian soils within oases. The burial mound not only uses an elevator system to maximize sand deposition at the desired place, but the posts also help disrupt airflow and increase the rate of sand deposition. This would work at a similarly small scale if applied to a woven reed fence system with plants in between, like in an oasis.

Conclusion

Through aerial photography, historical ecology of landscape use can be determined through indications of water/air erosion and human shaping when investigating the possibility of a complex, far-reaching water management system. GIS tools, maps, and data on climactic changes over time augment analysis. In Saharan oasis regions, people have been producing water where apparently there is none, using it efficiently, and creating oases for millennia. They represent a perfectly eco-sustainable model comparable to what is observed in the construction of Small River Cemetery No. 5.

The mechanics of contemporary methods for controlling sand/snow deposition, when analogously compared to the palisade walls' function, satisfy the material evidence found. The wear on the exposed posts offers clues on wind direction and level of exposure. GIS tools, maps, and studies of wind pattern models help to explore theories on how the mound could have been

constructed and consequently functioned. With the combination of applied theory and material evidence to support those theories, further insights into how the peoples of the Tarim Basin interacted with the landscape four thousand years ago are advanced.

A more thorough examination of the process of selecting and developing analogues, combined with a comparative approach to their application, can improve our ability to explore the archaeological record (Stahl 1993:237). For this reason, it must be stressed that the methodologies and the sources for analogous comparisons should be laid out in such a way as to: 1) inspire an alternative methodology for examining the archaeological record of Small River Cemetery No. 5, and 2) invite criticism that can hopefully refine or replace the approaches illustrated.

The concept of *cultural landscape* is a meaningful way to organize data about human-derived places (Zedeño 1997; 2000). The cultural landscape approach expands the idea that a selected place can have dozens of cultural meanings. It develops from the notion that the land exists in the minds of inhabitants, and that imagery or knowledge of the land is both shared amongst them and transferred over generations. These places may derive their value from interactions between people and natural phenomena, as many cultural groups can hold different, even conflicting, images of the same land (Zedeño 2000). Tilley distinguishes between the concept of place and the concept of landscape, with the former emphasizing difference and singularity, and the latter encompassing commonalities or relationships among singular locales or events (Tilley 1994:34). A cultural landscape should make sense as a kind of culturally determined, single area defined by a common logic and composed of unique and connected places.

Landscape gives us a variety of material resources that peoples subsequently begin to exploit and inhabit. Philosopher Martin Heidegger's theories on dwelling contend that it is unhelpful to imagine that we must first build structures before we can begin to dwell; rather, dwelling is a condition that humans experience when they are at home in the world. Ideally, architecture should be an outgrowth and embodiment of this state of dwelling, rather than representing an imposition onto the material world of designs. For Heidegger, dwelling is a relationship with the world characterized by equanimity. "Dwelling is at once caring for and

being cared for, a reciprocal relationship that allows the physical world to reveal its sacred character" (Zedeño 2010:302).

With this in mind, further explorations about what it meant to be an inhabitant of the Tarim Basin can be conducted. Future research can benefit greatly from both more concise explorations of relationships at the microcosmic level, as well as an expanded scope that seeks to incorporate these findings into larger pictures of water management, sand control, and the consequences of climate.

Bibliography

- Anschuetz, K. F., R. H. Wilshusen, and C. L. Scheick. 2001. An Archaeology of Landscapes: Perspectives and Directions, *Journal of Archaeological Research* 9.2 (2001): 157–210.
- Ashmore, Wendy. 2004. Social Archaeologies of Landscape. In Lynn Meskell and Robert Preucel, eds., *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, 255–271. Blackwell: Oxford University Press.
- . 2008. Visions of the Cosmos: Ceremonial Landscapes and Civic Plans. In David Bruno and Julian Thomas, eds., *Handbook of Landscape Archaeology*, 167–175. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press.
- Blumler, Mark A. 1998. Biogeography of Land-Use Impacts in the Near East. In K. Zimmerer and K. Young, eds., *Nature's Geography: New Lessons for Conservation in Developing Countries*, 215–236. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Chiba, U. 2004. *Machhad to New Zealand*. Auckland: The Print Master.
- Erickson, Clark L. 2006. The Domesticated Landscapes of the Bolivian Amazon. In W. Balee and C. L. Erickson, eds., *Time and Complexity in Historical Ecology: Studies in the Neotropical Lowlands*, 235–278. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 2009. Agency, Roads, and the Landscapes of Everyday Life in the Bolivian Amazon. In J. Snead, C. L. Erickson, and A. Darling, eds., *Landscapes of Movement: The Anthropology of Roads, Paths, and Trails*, 204–231. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Press.

- . 2010. Amazonia: The Historical Ecology of a Domesticated Landscape. In R. W. Preucel and S. A. Mrozowski, eds., *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory: The New Pragmatism*, Second Edition, 104–127. Singapore: Willey-Blackwell
- Hayashi, Toshiyo. 1999. Sedentaries in the Nomadic State. In the Silk Roads Nara International Symposium '97, ed., *The Silk Roads of Sanzō-hōshi, Xuanzang: The Climate and His Foot-steps*. Nara, Japan: (Research Center for Silk Roadology) The Nara International Foundation Commemorating the Silk Road Exposition, Record no. 4.
- Hicks, D., and L. McAtackney. 2007. Introduction: Landscapes as Standpoints. In Dan Hicks, Laura McAtackney and Graham Fairclough, eds., *Envisioning Landscape: Situations and Standpoints in Archaeology and Heritage*, 13–29. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press.
- Ingold, Tim. 1993. The Temporality of the Landscape, *World Archaeology* 25.2 (1993): 152–174.
- . 2010 The Temporality of the Landscape. In R. W. Preucel and S. A. Mrozowski, eds., *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory: The New Pragmatism*, Second Edition, 59–76. Singapore: Willey-Blackwell.
- Knapp, Arthur B., and Wendy Ashmore. 1999. Archaeological Landscapes: Constructed, Conceptualized, Ideational. In W. Ashmore and B. Knapp, eds., *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives*, 1–32. Oxford: Blackwell Press.
- Lansing, J. Stephen, and James N. Kremer. 1993. Emergent Properties of Balinese Water Temple Networks: Coadaptation on a Rugged Fitness Landscape, *American Anthropologist* 95.1 (1993): 97–114.
- Laureano, Pietro. 1985. Wadi Villages and Sebhka Villages in the Saharan Ecosystem, *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 2 (1985):16–25.
- . 1986 The Oasis: The Origin of the Garden, *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1 (1986):65–71.
- Leckie, J. 2007. *Indian Settlers: The Story of a South Asian New Zealand Community*. Dunedin: Otago University Press.
- Llobera, Marcos. 1996. Exploring the Topography of Mind: GIS, Social Space, and Archaeology, *Antiquity* 70 (1996): 612–622.

- . 2007. Reconstructing Visual Landscapes, *World Archaeology* 39.1 (2007): 51–69.
- Low, Setha M., and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga. 2003. Locating Culture. In Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, eds., *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*, 1–48. Malden: Blackwell Press
- Mair, Victor H. 2006. The Rediscovery and Complete Excavation of Ördek's Necropolis, *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, 34 No. 3/4 (2006), 1–46.
- Mayo, Lewis. 2011. Prefects, Chiefs and the History of Sand: Systems of Pre-eminence, and the Pacific and Asian Pasts of the Manukau Harbour. In Paola Voci and Jacqueline Leckie, eds., *Localizing Asia in Aotearoa*, 24–49. Auckland, N.Z.: Dunmore Pub.
- Mu, Guijin. 1999. Environmental Change in Northwest China During the Last 2000 Years and Its Possible Influence to the Rising and Falling of the Silk Road. In the Silk Roads Nara International Symposium '97, ed., *The Silk Roads of Sanzō-hōshi, Xuanzang: The Climate and His Foot-steps*. Nara, Japan: (Research Center for Silk Roadology) The Nara International Foundation Commemorating the Silk Road Exposition, Record no. 4.
- Ono, Yugo. 1999. Paleoenvironmental Changes of the Tibetan Plateau and Himalaya. In the Silk Roads Nara International Symposium '97, ed., *The Silk Roads of Sanzō-hōshi, Xuanzang: The Climate and His Foot-steps*. Nara, Japan: (Research Center for Silk Roadology) The Nara International Foundation Commemorating the Silk Road Exposition, Record no. 4.
- Prejevalsky, Nikolai. 1969. *From Kulja Across the Tian Shan to Lop Nur*. Translated by E. Delmar Morgan. Introduction by Sir T. Douglas Forsyth. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Preucel, R. W., and S. A. Mrozowski. 2010. Landscapes, Spaces, and Natures. In R. W. Preucel and S. A. Mrozowski, eds., *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory: The New Pragmatism*, 51–58. Second Edition. Singapore: Willey-Blackwell
- Robin, Cynthia, and Nan Rothschild. 2002. Archaeological Ethnographies: Social Dynamics of Outdoor Space, *Journal of Social Archaeology* 2.2 (2002): 159–171.
- Sauer, Carl O. 1925. *The Morphology of Landscape*. *University of California Publications in Geography* 2 (1925): 19–53.
- Stahl, Ann B. 1993. Concepts of Time and Approaches to Analogical Reasoning in Historical Perspective, *American Antiquity*, 58.2 (1993): 235–260.

- Thomas, J. 1993. The Politics of Vision and the Archaeologies of Landscape. In Barbara Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspective*, 1–17. Oxford: Berg.
- Tilley, C. 1994. *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments*. Oxford: Berg.
- . 2010. Phenomenological Approaches to Landscape Archaeology. In David Bruno and Julian Tomas, eds., *Handbook of Landscape Archaeology*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press, 271–276.
- Wahlquist, Hakan. 1999. Shifting Sands and Shifting Rivers: The Ever-Changing Landscape of the Tarim Basin as Seen by Past and Present Travelers. In The Silk Roads Nara International Symposium '97, ed., *The Silk Roads of Sanzō-hōshi, Xuanzang: The Climate and His Foot-steps*. Nara, Japan: (Research Center for Silk Roadology) The Nara International Foundation Commemorating the Silk Road Exposition, Record no. 4.
- Whittlesey, Stephanie. 2009. Mountains, Mounds, and Meaning: Metaphor in the Hohokam Cultural Landscape. In M. N. Zedeño and Brenda Bowser, eds., *The Archaeology of Meaningful Places*, 73–98. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Zedeño, M. N. 2000. On What People Make of Places: A Behavioral Cartography. In M. B. Schiffer, ed., *Social Theory in Archaeology*, 97–111. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- . 2010. The Archaeology of Territory and Territoriality. In D. Bruno and J. Tomas, eds., *Handbook of Landscape Archaeology*, 210–217. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press.

“Weather” You Like It or Not:
The Effects of Macroclimatic Fluctuations on the Tarim Basin

Vivian Mingwei Chen

Man vs. Nature

Since the beginning of his time on earth, man has struggled against natural forces beyond his control. He has long realized that, in the constant battle against Mother Nature, she will inevitably triumph. As a result, man has learned to adapt and survive in the most adverse conditions. Indeed, his unrelenting spirit and ability to adjust have made him the unlikely victor, conquering nature by learning to live under her dictatorship and utilizing her resources to his advantage. Thousands of human inventions can be attributed to the need to overcome obstacles posed by nature. Many of the earliest technological advances were made to enable man to survive both the predictable seasonal and the unpredictable climatic changes, and to lead a more comfortable way of life.

We are still as vulnerable today as were our ancestors thousands of years ago, and still unable to fully predict nature’s erratic temperament. Natural resources and environmental factors still play a vital role in shaping progress and society. Global climatic effects and macro trends have a profound impact on the development of civilizations. We often forget that we do not control our destinies by ourselves, but are part of the greater fabric of the natural world. Climate and environmental phenomena dictate our lives, in ways that we often do not see or understand. What remains unchanged by time is man’s ongoing ability to adapt; it is the same today as it was four thousand years ago, when the ancient settlers conquered the harsh conditions of the Tarim Basin sufficiently to call it home.

I examine in this paper global macroclimatic trends and their impact on human society, through the use of various models related to temperature, glaciation, and precipitation, and the

interaction of these with other factors, in order to discuss the development of the unique geographical, geological, and climatologic conditions of the Tarim Basin.

The Tarim Basin in the Macroclimate Context

The region along the lower tributaries of the Tarim River is one of the most arid areas in the world. Water is of vital importance and determines life and death. Groundwater is the elixir of life for this otherwise inhospitable environment.¹ The oasis and the associated river networks are key ecological features, providing sanctuaries to sustain biological ecosystems and human existence. The area, however, was not always as parched as it has been in the recent few millennia. In fact, the Tarim was entirely underwater during the last epoch, about 12,000 years ago; only since the Holocene era has the lake been dry.

Scientific evidence shows that climatic shifts are not arbitrary, but are actually global cyclical fluctuations between periods of warming and cooling. Many climatologists believe that solar activity, sea-surface temperature pattern, CO₂ level, and other natural determinants affect climatic conditions such as precipitation, wind direction and speed, moisture, etc., and that these in turn determine the growth and kind of vegetation, predict modes of life, establish such geological features as rivers and lakes, as well as influence human economy, migration, science, religion, and art, and the rise and fall of civilizations.²

Climate Cycles and Civilizations³

The relationship between climate, geographical features, and human activity is complex and interdependent. Civilizations thrive during favorable times and suffer under hostile conditions.

¹ CHEN Yaning. "Analysis on the Ecological Benefits of the Stream Water Conveyance to the Dried-up River of the Lower Reaches of Tarim River, China," *Science in China Series D: Earth Sciences*, 2004–11–01.

² Global Temperature Trends Since 2500 B.C." Long Range Weather Trends, Weather Records and Extremes, Weather and Climate History, Daily Forecast Services. Web. 06 May 2011. <http://www.longrangeweather.com/global_temperatures.htm>.

³ M. Pidwirny, "Earth's Climatic History," *Fundamentals of Physical Geography*, Second Edition (2006). <http://www.physicalgeography.net/fundamentals/7x.html>

The period from two million to 14,000 years before the present is known as the Pleistocene, or, more commonly, the Ice Age. During this time, large ice sheets covered much of North America, Europe, and Asia. The end of this period finally occurred when the glaciers retreated, around 12,000 BCE (in a period called the interglacial).

A correlation exists between increased human movement and unfavorable climatic conditions. For example, the migration from Asia to North America via the Bering Strait took place toward the end of the Ice Age. Migration shows man's unrelenting spirit, since it is a dramatic tactic for dealing with natural forces beyond his control, though abandoning an adverse but familiar environment is perhaps a means of last resort in the struggle to survive.

What many people do not realize is that the most recent glacial retreat is still occurring. Our current temporal period is called the Holocene Epoch (12000 BCE). Study of ice cores has revealed that, since the beginning of the Holocene, alternating periods of warming and cooling have followed one another. Immediately following the onset of the Holocene, a period of rapid cooling known as the Younger Dryas (10,000–8000 BCE) emerged. This cooling episode was also referred to as the Big Freeze, in which conditions returned to glacial.⁴ The prevailing theory on the sudden occurrence of the Younger Dryas is that the freshwater trapped in the ice of North America was released into the North Atlantic Ocean. The phase immediately following the Younger Dryas is known as Climate Optimum (7000–3000 BCE), which offered conditions extremely favorable for human existence. During this time, global temperatures reached their maximum level and were on average about one to two degrees Celsius higher than today's. Some of earth's great ancient civilizations began to flourish under these conditions. The Nile was three times its present volume, and the planet had overall larger subtropical regions. Much of Central Asia was generally warmer and wetter than in modern times, and these favorable conditions actually changed the region into a semi-desert/temperate zone. The climate reversed itself to worsened conditions during Neoglaciation (3000–2000 BCE), and the cooling trend caused large drops in the sea level. A warming trend occurred briefly from 2000 to 1500 BCE before reverting again to the cold from 1500 to 750 BCE; this cold period caused renewed ice growth in

⁴ Wallace S. Broecker, "Was the Younger Dryas Triggered by a Flood?" *Science* 312 (5777) (2006): 1146–1148.

continental and alpine glaciers. From 750 BCE to 800 CE came another period of warming. The phase from 900 to 1200 CE has been dubbed Little Climatic Optimum, in which conditions were the warmest since the Climate Optimum. It was during this time that the Vikings settled Greenland and Iceland.⁵

It is important to note that, during stable and favorable conditions, civilizations thrived, and that during times of decreased temperatures, instability, migration, and strife dominated. The intimate relationship between climate and civilization is fully demonstrated in Central Asia. Xiaohé, one of the oldest sites discovered in the Tarim Basin that has Caucasoid mummies, dates to about 2000–1800 BCE. Is it possible that the foreigners migrated to the Tarim Basin during a prior cooling period (neoglaciation) as a way to seek a better life, before settling in the region when the conditions improved, around 3800 years ago? Another event that exemplifies the tightly knit connection between climate and human movement is the Bronze Age Collapse⁶ that occurred from 1300 to 900 BCE; the collapse corresponds to a period of cooling (1500–750 BCE), mentioned above. The cooling phase brought drought and increased desertification and forced populations to migrate around the globe. The collapse also coincided with the appearance of many new ethnic groups, including Indo-European tribes such as Phrygians, Thracians, Macedonians, Aramaeans, and others.⁷ Perhaps the mummies of the Tarim Basin shared ancestors with these Indo-Europeans.

Lop Nor

The Chinese government has recently amped up its efforts to develop the northwestern part of China in an attempt to assume more control over the predominately Uyghur region. The arid conditions of the region pose major problems, threatening future large-scale developments. The

⁵ M. Pidwirny, "Earth's Climatic History," *Fundamentals of Physical Geography*, Second Edition (2006) <http://www.physicalgeography.net/fundamentals/7x.html>

⁶ Brian M. Fagan, *The Long Summer: How Climate Changed Civilization* (New York: Basic Books, 2003)

⁷ See A. Stoia and the other essays in M. L. Stig Sørensen and R. Thomas, eds., *The Bronze Age – Iron Age Transition in Europe* (Oxford, 1989), and T. H. Wertheim and J. D. Muhly, *The Coming of the Age of Iron* (New Haven, 1980).

interactions of natural environmental factors and human activities have duly contributed to the drying up of the region. In order to gain any hope of restoring the region, scientists must first understand the area's geological history.

Lop Nor is a tail-end lake attached to the Tarim River, the largest inland river of China. The lake sits at the eastern end of the Tarim Basin, a remnant of the ancient Tarim Lake, where the most striking feature now is a structure that looks in satellite photographs like a giant ear. The Tarim Basin was entirely underwater during the Pleistocene, from about 2.5 million to 12,000 years ago. The current name was derived from the Tang dynasty, when the local people called it "Nafu Bo."⁸ The lake once supported Loulan, an ancient Silk Road city that flourished until around 330 BCE, when the lake evolved into a "wandering lake," then shrank as glacial melt water decreased; human exploitation further contributed to its demise.⁹

Recently the lake has received a great deal of international attention due to the increased interest in the ancient civilizations that arose in the area. Significant scientific evidence gathered in the past few decades has revealed that the region experienced climatic fluctuations and changes many times throughout its history.¹⁰ Plant coverage increased when the climate became humid and favorable and decreased when the climate cooled down. What scientists have gathered thus far are simply snippets of the whole picture. In order to fully understand the environmental evolution of the area during the past 10,000 years, more research needs to be conducted to provide deeper insight.

Lop Nor and Climate Cycles

Based on the information we have today, scientists conclude that there were seven major climatic periods in this region since the last pleniglacial. From the Last Ice Age to about 9500 years ago,

⁸ HE D. X., "Activities of Ancient People in Lop Nur Region," in Arrangement Group of the 254th Academic Symposium of Xiangshan Science Meeting, ed., *Environmental Evolution in Lop Nur Region and Future Development in Arid Areas in West China: The 254th Academic Symposium of Xiangshan Science Meeting*, 2005, 58.

⁹ Elizabeth Wayland Barber, *The Mummies of Urumchi* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), pp. 84–87.

¹⁰ Yuan Guoying, "The Relationship Between the Rise and Decline of Ancient Loulan Town and Environmental Changes," *Chinese Geographical Science*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1999), pp. 78–82.

the environment in the Tarim Basin was dry, with strong storms. Conditions improved between 9500 to 5000 years ago, with the global phenomenon of Climate Optimum. Conditions worsened again at about 4000 years before the present, aligning with the period of global neoglaciation. At about 1000 BCE, Lop Nor experienced drought and began to dry, which could be a consequence of the prior period of drought (Bronze Age Collapse). During the Medieval Warm Period (MWP) about 700 years ago, species of red willow were abundant around the region of Lop Nor, indicating generally favorable environmental conditions. A project by the School of Geographic and Oceanographic Sciences in Nanjing to reconstruct the climate and environment during the MWP in Lop Nor suggests that, around 2200 BP, when the Loulan Culture began to thrive, the west bank of Lop Nor experienced favorable conditions. The desiccation of the lake at the end of the Loulan Culture corresponds to a period of strong windstorms. Samples of coarse sand content from this period were analyzed and revealed that sand content was highest during the early and late period, but weak in the middle (at the time of the Loulan Culture) where the sand was the finest, indicating a period of calm and weak wind storms. Conditions returned to favorable during the Tang and Song dynasties, during which the storm effect subsided, rainfall increased, and the salty water of Lop Nor turned to fresh lake water, providing precious resources for the people residing in the region.¹¹

Tipping of the Basin

An interesting feature about Lop Nor is its easterly location at the tip of the basin. According to geologist Erik Norin, the beach line of the basin sloped eastward with a considerable gradient. He postulated that the basin was uplifted from below (warped or bowed), tipping the volume of the shrinking ancient Tarim Lake eastward, where it emerged with a new identity as Lop Nor.¹²

¹¹ MA Chunmei, WANG Fubao, CAO Qiongying, XIA Xuncheng, LI Shengfeng & LI Xusheng, "Climate and Environment Reconstruction During the Medieval Warm Period in Lop Nur of Xinjiang, China," *Chinese Science Bulletin*, vol. 53, no. 19 (October 2008), 3016–3027.

¹² Erik Norin, "Quaternary Climatic Changes Within the Tarim Basin," *Geographical Review*, vol. 22, no. 4 (Oct., 1932), pp. 591–598. Published by American Geographical Society. Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20881>

In fact, the Tibet Plateau has experienced four major tectonic uplifts since 2.8 Ma BP, and the Himalayas are undergoing a constant growth rate of about two inches per year, tipping the entire basin.¹³ The Himalayas essentially serve as a shield against the southwestern Indian Ocean monsoon winds, preventing precipitation from moving over its ranges and intensifying westerly wind circulation, which further decreases precipitation. Moreover, the basin's remote location does not allow it to benefit from the eastern Asian monsoon winds of the Pacific Ocean, eliminating another source of moisture. This type of configuration accelerated the environmental evolution in the Lop-Nor region, which is characterized by a cold-humid and hot-dry climate.¹⁴ According to Professor Yugo Ono of Hokkaido University, the majority of water sources in the Tarim are the result of seasonal fluctuations in glacial melt water levels and not from monsoon precipitation.

Mystery of the Two Lop Nors

Scientists believe that the lake has been divided into two parts since the middle Holocene: the East Lake and the West Lake, and that each lake has had its own evolutionary process. The lake that began to dry up around 1000 BCE is the more ancient East Lake; it then changes character and emerges as the West Lake. In fact, Chinese maps traditionally located the lake more than a hundred miles further to the south.¹⁵ Sven Hedin, the Swedish explorer, discovered that "the lowermost limb of the [Tarim] river oscillates backwards and forwards like a pendulum...the periodic time of each oscillation...[is] 1,500 years." The ancient Chinese maps used by Hedin showed the Tarim River flowing into Lop Nor, so he followed it eastward, but to no avail. Instead, Hedin found that the river turned sharply southeastward and emptied into a large lake,

¹³ "Mount Everest." Extreme Science | Science Technology | Earth Science. 2011. Web. 06 May 2011. <<http://www.extremescience.com/zoom/index.php/earth-records/79-mount-everest>>.

¹⁴ Yugo Ono, "Paleoenvironmental Changes of the Tibetan Plateau and Himalaya" The Silk Roads Nara International Symposium '97. The Silk Roads of Sanzō-hōshi, Xuanzang: The Climate and His Foot-steps (Nara, Japan: Research Center for Silk Roadology), *The Nara International Foundation Commemorating the Silk Road Exposition, Record no. 4*, 1999, p. 126.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Wayland Barber, *The Mummies of Urümchi* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), pp. 84–87.

Khara Kushun, in the southern part of the Lop desert. At the same time, Hedin also discovered an intriguing dry streambed, Kum-daria, or "Sand River," which continued due east at exactly the point the Tarim river took its sharp turn southeastward. Ördek, one of his carriers, followed the dry riverbed and came upon the ruins now known as Ördek's Necropolis. The 1,500-year oscillating cycle of the lake theorized by Hedin was proven true in 1921, when the Tarim River left its southeastward channel and returned to its northern channel, where it would reestablish Lop Nor.¹⁶ The fluctuation of lake levels is an indication of the region's sensitivity to climatic shifts. Lake levels are affected by warm-moisture conditions during interglacials, and during cold-moisture conditions during neoglacials.¹⁷ Perhaps one day the lake will once again regain its vitality. Global warming could potentially release glacial melt water from the surrounding mountains, refilling Lop Nor to some degree.

The Lag Effect

In examining the cyclical fluctuations of global temperature changes, it is hard to ignore the habitually occurring sudden cool-downs and sudden warming spots during a cycle. These seemingly sporadic climate drops and increases seem always to occur at predictable points along the bulge of the curve. Upon closer examination, scientists realized that these arbitrary changes might not be so sporadic after all. Perhaps there is a reason for these regular dips and swells within a cycle. In a study conducted by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the scientists discovered an intriguing lag effect between temperature and precipitation. Historic temperature and precipitation levels are recorded precisely and continuously in the glacial accumulation of the Guliya ice cores. Prior to this study, scientists were well aware of the correlation between temperature and precipitation levels, but the lagging effect was a novel discovery. The findings revealed that variations of precipitation lag behind variations of temperature by 50 to 100 years,

¹⁶ Sven Hedin, *The Wandering Lake*, trans. from the Swedish by F. H. Lyon (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1940), p. 19.

¹⁷ Zhong Wei, "Preliminary Study on the Holocene Environment Changes in Xinjiang Geologic Records and Sequence," Department of Geography, Xinjiang University, Urumqi 830046, PRC; *Chinese Geographical Science*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 166–176 (Science Press, Beijing, 1996).

and that this phenomenon holds true in both temperature increase and temperature decrease periods. The cause believed to lie behind the trend is the large specific heat of ocean water, whose reaction lags behind temperature change, which can cause a temporal discrepancy between evaporation intensity and warming intensity. This discrepancy eventually results in a temporal discrepancy between precipitation and temperature change.¹⁸

This significant discovery explains why the disappearance of Lop Nor, around 330 CE coincides with a point of sudden cool-down. At that specific point in the warming curve, the temperature had already passed the maximum, and at the same time as the temperature was on its downward trend, evaporation hit its maximum; all other conditions being right, this interaction completely dried up Lop Nor. (See Figure 2.)

Further Studies

This discussion has only just skimmed the surface of the complex and multifaceted aspects of climate and their impact on the planet and its people. It is important to examine these effects in a variety of ways through as many models as possible to obtain a complete picture of a time that we can no longer study through more direct methods. To understand the past is to understand our future; given the cyclical pattern demonstrated by the past tens of thousands of years, there are many deductions we can make about what lies ahead for man in terms of climatic fluctuations and how that will affect his existence. Man is becoming ever more powerful, however, and he is now more than ever playing an active role in shaping the environment. Just as the ancient people in the Tarim exacerbated the drying up of their environment through irrigation and consumption of water sources, our actions today will have an impact on our planet. We should take care not to anger Mother Nature.

¹⁸ YAO Tandong, "Variations in Temperature and Precipitation in the Past 2000a on the Xizang Plateau — Guliya ice core Record," in Chinese Academy of Sciences, *Science in China*, vol 39, no. 4 (Aug. 1996) www.scichina.com:8080/sciDe/fileup/PDF/

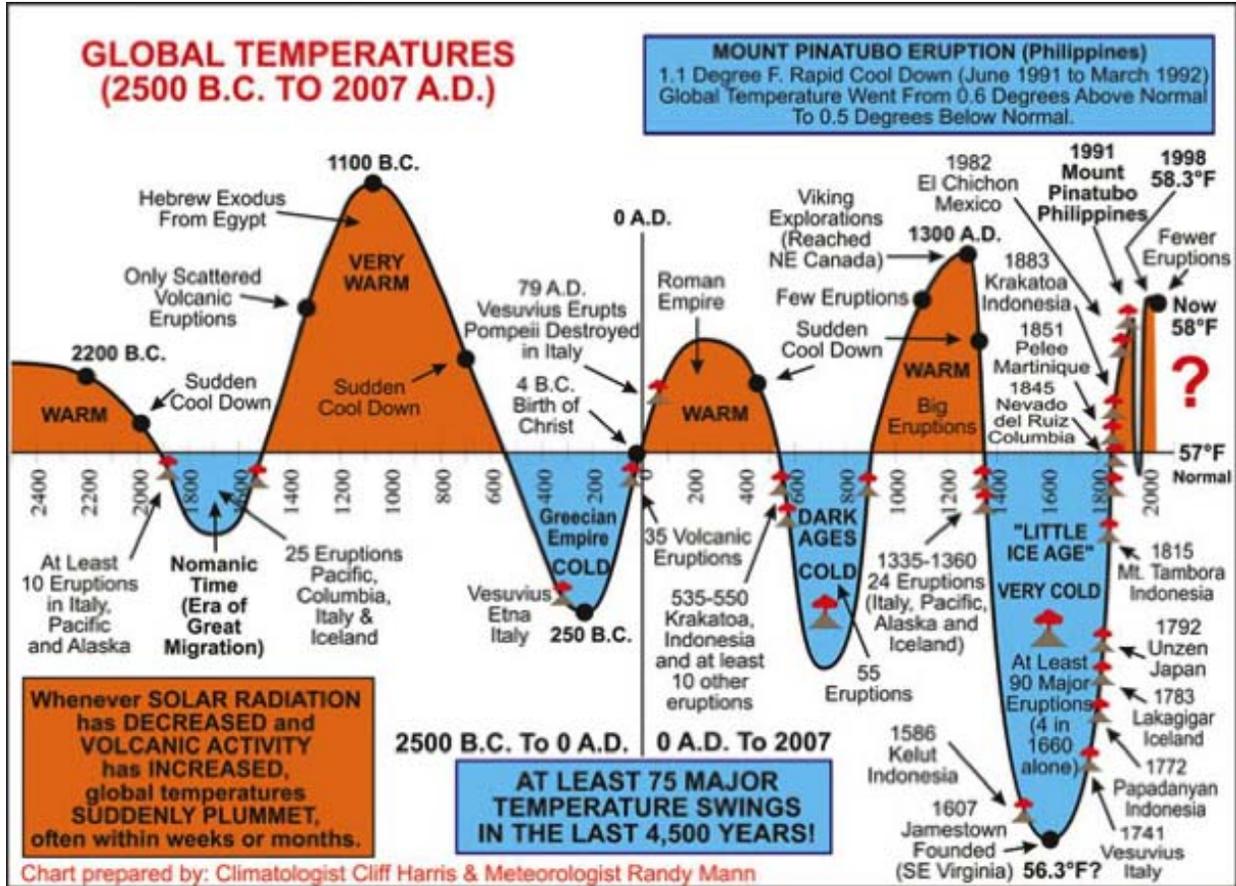


Figure 1

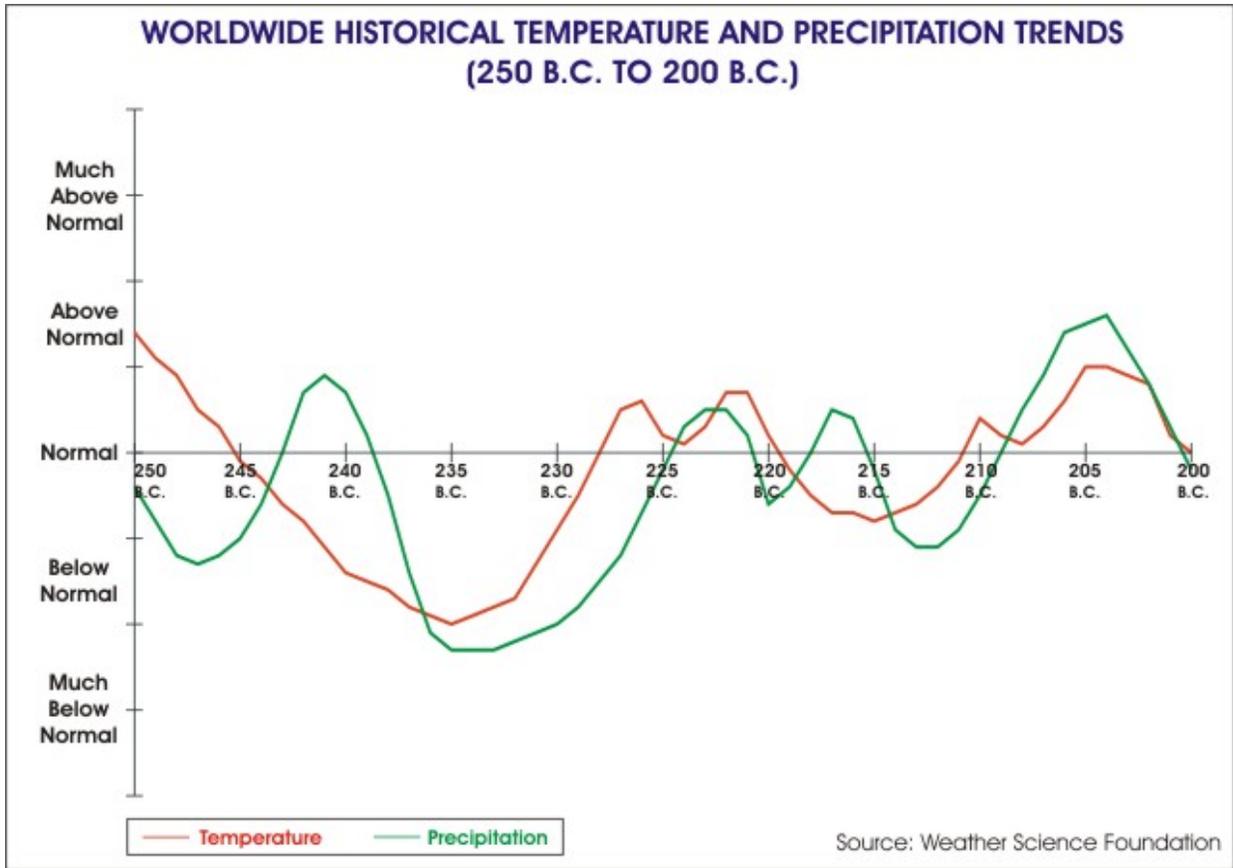


Figure 2

Ancient Felt Hats of the Eurasian Steppe

Amelia Williams

In the spring of 2011, a collection of remarkable objects traveled to North America for the first time. Crowds gathered to view artifacts from a remote world, a world four millennia and nearly ten thousand kilometers away in the arid lands of Central Asia. Some of these objects belied their far-flung origins. The exotic appearance of golden medallions, costumed figures on horseback, enigmatic masks, and communiqués in unidentifiable script enthralled visitors to the Bowers, Houston Natural History, and University of Pennsylvania museums.

But for many, their lasting impressions came from objects more familiar than foreign. Among the grave goods of Bronze Age oasis-dwellers, viewers recognized the careful swaddling on an infant mummy, not so different from our own, or the detailing on a wooden comb. They were arrested by familiar shapes and fabrics, like that of a simple woolen cap:

The [...] remarkable thing about this 2,500- or 2,200-year-old hat is how much it looks like other hats you've seen, though probably not like anything you've worn lately. It looks like Robin Hood's hat. It looks like Peter Pan's hat. It looks like the hats you see on garden gnomes. It looks like the alpine hats from *The Sound of Music*. (Patsy McLaughlin, *RealStyle*, April 2, 2011)

As journalist Patsy McLaughlin observes, part of the mystery surrounding the ancient people of the Tarim Basin, and the attraction of their possessions in the 2010–2011 “Secrets of the Silk Road” exhibition, is that certain artifacts remain so instantly relatable. The hat in question is a tall peaked cap, constructed of reddish brown felt, excavated from Tomb No. 3 in Zaghunluq, Chärchän, dated to the fifth-to-third century BCE.¹ McLaughlin likens it to a gnome

¹ Victor Mair, ed., *Secrets of the Silk Road: An Exhibition of Discoveries* (Santa Ana, Calif.: Bowers Museum, 2010), 137.

hat, or Robin Hood's hat, both popular images out of the medieval and renaissance folktales of Central Europe and the British Isles. Other hats from the Tarim, like that sported by the "Beauty of Xiaohe," a mummy discovered in Ördek's Necropolis, dated to ca. 2000 BCE, recall the traditional Tyrolean hats still worn today, including the colorful cords that decorate the base, and the plume of feathers attached to one side.

The visual connection is undeniable, and it is repeated time and again by visitors charmed by these simple felted hats. It has been alluded to and explored by Sinologist, archaeologist and philologist Victor Mair, as well as by archaeologist, linguist and textile expert Elizabeth Barber. The associative leap from the hats of ancient central Asia to the hats of the modern Alps may appear a parlous one. But this paper hopes to demonstrate that it is a justifiable and beneficial link in understanding the history of Bronze Age steppe cultures.

Let us first consider the types and constructions of hats found in the Tarim Basin. The two hats we have already mentioned, the brown felt hat of Zaghunluq (Table 1, item C) and the older felt hat of Ördek's Necropolis (Table 1, item B), bear a resemblance to each other, but have key differences in construction, as do many of the other hats from other sites around the Tarim. Table 1, below, classifies some of the hats described in this paper. Many of my descriptions of these hats are made from personal observation at the University of Pennsylvania Museum exhibition, "Secrets of the Silk Road"; high quality photographic reproductions of these items are available in the *Secrets of the Silk Road: An Exhibition of Discoveries*, edited by Victor H. Mair and published by the Bowers Museum, Santa Ana, Calif., 2010. All other data I gathered from secondary accounts, citations for which have been provided.

Table 1: Key Hats from the Tarim Basin

Item	Image	Date, Site	Type	Construction
A		<p>c. 2000 BCE</p> <p>Qawrighul and Kroran, Northwest shores of Lop Nor, Xinjiang</p>	<p>Hood</p>	<p>Hood. Natural-colored felt and some woven cloth. Two halves of fulled felt, cut and sewn together, and reinforced at top; sometimes a single piece folded over the head (as pictured). Engineered such that two flaps protect the ears and may be tied under the chin with cords.</p> <p>(Barber: <i>Mummies of Ürümqi</i>, pp. 72–73)</p>
B		<p>c. 1800–1500 BCE</p> <p>Xiaohu Cemetery 5, Charilik County, Xinjiang</p>	<p>Brimless, single peak</p>	<p>Tall, single peaked hat. Natural colored, pre-felted (unfulled) wool, red-dyed (sometimes undyed) decorative woolen cord, woolen cord chinstrap, plume of feathers at side, weasel pelt(s) around mid section. Created from a single piece of felt.</p>

C		<p>Fifth–third centuries BCE</p> <p>Zaghunluq, Chärchän, Xinjiang</p>	<p>Tall, single peaked, upturned brim</p>	<p>Two triangular pieces of brown felt, sewn with contrasting light colored thread. The brim is flipped up and secured with further stitching. The exaggerated tip is stuffed with pieces of wool to keep its shape. Formerly decorated with a sprig of feathers to one side, now lost.</p>
D		<p>Fifth–third centuries BCE</p> <p>Subeshi, Pichan, Xinjiang</p>	<p>Tall, tapered, single peaked, brim</p>	<p>This dark felt headdress is densely rolled and stitched to maintain its shape. Netting, presumably for the wearer’s hair, covers the piece.</p>

This table of samples demonstrates some of the diversity in hat form. Over time, simpler hoods and caps were joined by head ware fantastical in shape and dimension. A single grave might discover a multitude of hats, bespeaking a fondness for variety to rival our modern fashionistas.² However, more uniformity exists among the felt hats of the second millennia BCE, (fig. 1). These are the oldest hats in Central Asia, excavated from a series of related Bronze Aged sites around the shores of Lake Lop Nor on the western rim of the Tarim Basin. The gravesite Xiaohe (Small River) Cemetery 5, also referred to as Ördek’s Necropolis, is representative of this Lop Nor cultural complex. This group of oasis-dwellers was clearly very fond of hats — or more accurately, one particular style of hat. Nearly every burial included the same model hat, depicted

² E. J. Barber, *The Mummies of Ürümqi* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999), 33: “In Cherchen, a single excavation ... produced ten hats, each different.”

in figure 1, below, along with a set of grave goods that is fairly standardized within gender groups.



Figure 1. From *Expedition Magazine*, Winter 2010

These Lop Nor hats are constructed of loosely felted wool, molded into a single-peaked, conical shape. The wide mouth of the hat suggests that the hat was intended to snugly and fully encompass the wearer’s head; some burials show the cap pulled down almost to the eyebrows, covering or partially covering the ears. The high peak would thus extend vertically above the person’s head; as the hat extended the height of the wearer’s silhouette, the visual impact would be striking,

The characteristic fluffy texture of the hats indicates that they have not been completely “fulled” — the final steps in the felting process that gives felt greater tensile strength, and makes it more impervious to the elements, rain in particular. We may refer to un-fulled felt as prefelt. Fulling is more common in hats of the mid-first millennia, implying that, like dyeing, the fulling process was not as frequently practiced in the early Bronze Age. Despite this, the hats are decidedly robust garments, made of dense masses of wool, with a chinstrap to secure the hat to the head. Tall, conical felt hats such as these would have been useful both in the extreme cold and extreme heat of the Taklamakan and other arid regions. Air pockets in the felt and the body of the hat itself help to retain heat in cold temperatures, and the high peaked crown is much cooler than hats with low crowns in higher temperatures.

One last, perhaps most conspicuous feature of the hats is their decoration. The wool has been left in its natural color, yielding hats that range from light cream to gray to darker brown.

We may speculate that the dying technology that later produced the splendidly colored hats and garments of the first millennia BCE was not yet prevalent. Instead, the naturally gradated fibers produced by early domesticated sheep would have been carefully sorted by hand into separate batts for felting. This time-consuming process, that could sometimes involve picking out individual fibers of different color, underscores the care that went into the aesthetic appearance of the hats. Contrasting woolen cords, dyed red or left a natural cream in color, wind around the midsections of the hats in varying numbers, and feathers or small animal pelts provided further decorative options.

The uniformity of the hats, the care taken in their decoration, and their consistent inclusion in burials, imply that they were not just useful equipment for life in the Taklamakan, but also emblematic of a community identity. The various decorations then might carry important symbolic meaning, on the details of which we can only speculate. The cords are particularly enigmatic; were they representational, or simply an exuberant decorative element? It seems fair to say, however, that the animal pelts and bird feathers carry a theme of mastery over animals or prowess in hunting, or perhaps a respect for the wild beasts of the steppe that was shared in the later wide-ranging Scythian Animal Style. Certainly we may say that the Lop Nor people associated specific animals with specific qualities: consider, for example, small reptiles encased within phalluses also included in burials.³ But, again, to say what those qualities were is beyond our capacity at present.

What is truly strange about the hats of Xiaohe Cemetery is that their closest visual relatives can be found in modern Central Europe. If you were travel to the Alpine valleys of Tyrol and Bavaria today, you might encounter a burgher wearing a hat that looks awfully familiar: a brimless conical body of felt construction, wrapped around with woolen cord, with a feather plume stuck in one side (see fig. 2 for an illustration.) These mountain hats are as emblematic of Alpine life as yodeling or lederhosen; one might naturally assume that they were endemic to the region, and that this is just a coincidence.

³ See *Secrets of the Silk Road: An Exhibition of Discoveries* (Santa Ana, Calif.: Bowers Museum, 2010).



Figure 2. Tyrolean/Vagabond/Bavarian

But in fact there are a number of other caps that range across the Eurasia, whose similar construction and association with steppe-pastoralism strongly suggest consanguinity. In the ancient Mediterranean, another cap, the Latin *pileus*, from the Greek *πίλος*, meaning “felt,” is also a close visual relative to the brimless, tall, conical Lop Nor hat (fig. 3). The fact that in Classical Greece this hat was often associated with the Illyrians and other “barbaric” peoples from the north strengthens the association with the Eurasian steppe, and by extension the people of Central Asia.

The *Kalpak*, whose modern geographical distribution ranges across Eurasia, has also been popular since at least the medieval period. It is traditionally constructed of felt, rises vertically from the head in a tall stiff point, and often has corded decorations of its own in the form of panel embroidery (fig. 3a). This is a cap of the Eurasian steppe; variations of it are worn from Hungary and Bulgaria to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. It is a symbol of cultural identity for a diverse set of ethnic groups, and often the only commonality between these is an association with the pan-Eurasian steppe.



Figure 3. Shepherd in a *pilos* (πίλος), early fifth c. BCE. (Louvre Museum, Department of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities)



Figure 3a. A modern Kyrgyz man. Taken in Murghab, Tajikistan. Photo by Daniel Noll and Audrey Scott.

From these first associations, we may begin to sense the edges of a greater pattern of

exchange and interrelation across Eurasia. The transcontinental popularity of this kind of felt cap becomes clearer when one understands the ecological realities of the pan-Eurasian steppe. From as far west as the Alps to as far east as Manchuria, there stretches a mass of interlocking steppe lands. It is important to recall that this ecological region has shifted considerably over the years: for example, it is currently creeping further north as we enter into a period of global warming. However, it is clear that this band of grasslands formed a more or less consistent biome across Eurasia, providing the same opportunities and challenges for enterprising Bronze Age peoples willing to adapt to its rugged and often inhospitable terrain.

The pan-Eurasian steppe demands certain adaptations of its animal and human inhabitants. Climate can range from the fertile "meadow steppes," where steady water supplies and lower aridity allow grasses to grow in greater abundance, to the "true steppe," where the arid climate favors sturdy bunch grasses in sparser quantity.⁴ As such, a purely agricultural lifestyle is difficult to maintain. Furthermore, the large ungulate mammals capable of sustaining a human community must range great distances while foraging. By way of illustration, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries CE, Kazakh pastoralists reported traveling distances from 1000 to 1500 kilometers with their herds.⁵ In order to survive in the steppe, Bronze Age peoples needed to adopt a highly mobile lifestyle, that is to say, nomadism or pastoral-nomadism. By the time of the early Bronze Age, the three key inventions that gave human beings the mobility necessary to transition into the steppe zone had already been developed in Anatolia; the wheeled cart, the domesticated horse, and felted wool.

Those who study both modern and ancient nomads and their material culture have observed that felt is one of the several inventions essential to life on the steppe.⁶ One of the few textiles that does not require a loom, or indeed any specialized tools, felt can be made impervious to wind and water while remaining lightweight. All one requires in making felt is a supply of

⁴ SEMP, Biot Report 2009 <http://www.semp.us/publications/biot_reader.php?BiotID=670>

⁵ Vladimir N. Basilov, ed., *Nomads of Eurasia* (Seattle: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and University of Washington Press, 1989), 2.

⁶ Barber, *The Mummies of Ürümqi*, 37.

sheep's wool, warm water and some friction, and a little knowledge as to how to combine the three. Simple though these restrictions may be, they are vital clues in understanding how the people of the Tarim came to possess their felt caps and hoods.

In *The Mummies of Ürümqi*, Elizabeth Barber provides vivid descriptions of some of the artifacts of the Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology and the Ürümqi museums, along with thoughtful explanations as to how, why, and from where people immigrated eastward into the Tarim basin in the second millennium BCE. She notices that, "the migration had to postdate 4000 BCE, which is about when woolly sheep developed in the Near East from non-woolly ones."⁷ The difference in sheep is significant, for the ancient ancestors of today's woolly sheep produced a fiber far less useful for textile manufacture. These original sheep, domesticated sometime between 9000 and 7000 BCE, were principally for eating, and had they short, uncrimped hair, which would not felt nearly as well as later "woolly" fibers whose many kinks work themselves into a dense felt mesh.

Barber also uses linguistic inheritance of certain textile terms to speculate that the first émigrés on the banks of the Lop Nor "introduced weaving into the Tarim Basin," but picked up skills like felting from folks closer to its origin, namely the Anatolians.⁸ The earliest archaeological evidence for felt is in central Turkey, at Çatal Höyük, a Neolithic settlement from around 6500 BCE.⁹

The Anatolian region was, in essence, the heartland of felting, and it has retained a tradition of felt making through the centuries. As we shall soon see, ancient Anatolians were partial to tall felt hats of their own, and the reader familiar with modern Turkey may recall the steep felt hats of Qalandar dervishes (fig. 5a), and speculate, as Vladimir N. Basilov of the Institute of Ethnography in Moscow did, that "the shape of the cap...can be traced back to the headdresses worn by early nomads, and ... that the geometric patterns are an imitation of ancient

⁷ Barber, *The Mummies of Ürümqi*, 76.

⁸ Barber, *The Mummies of Ürümqi*, 127.

⁹ Willow Mullins, *Felt* (New York: Berg, 2009), 28.

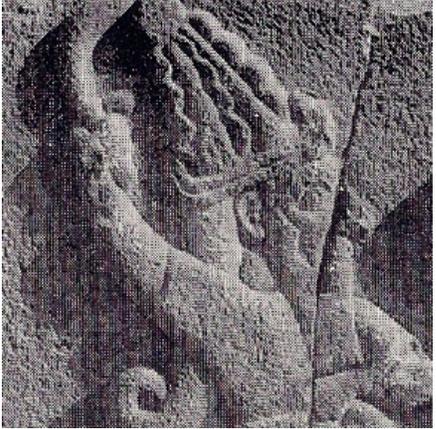
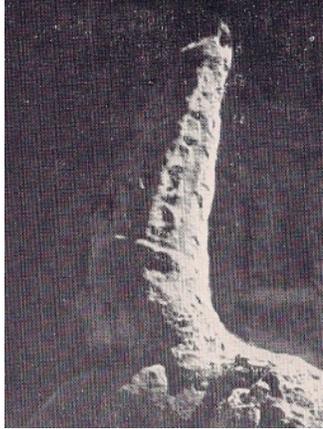
ornamentation.”¹⁰ Basilov is here referring to the costume of the Scythians and Sakians in the eighth through third centuries BCE who controlled Anatolia and most of central Asia. However, the tradition of tall, conical headdress can be taken even further back to the Hittites in Anatolia, contemporaries to the Bronze Age people of the Tarim. As we shall see, certain incredibly tall felt hats, from Hittite tradition of tall, ceremonial hats, may have a corollary in the tall felt hats from the first millennium BCE uncovered at Subeshi (fig. 5b).

Figure 5a. A modern dervish hat		Figure 5b. Fifth–third centuries BCE Subeshi, Pichan, Xinjiang	
---	---	--	---

The ceremonial hats of Anatolia and Subeshi

Engraved on the stone walls of New Kingdom palaces and temples, rows of Hittite dignitaries and gods march in solemn procession, towering hats perched on the tops of their heads. In these engravings, dated ca. 1500 BCE, the hats are an obvious focal point. According to Maurice Vieyra’s descriptions of various plates in *Hittite Art: 2300–750 BC*, deities wear the largest and most decorated hats. They are very similar to the brown hat of Zaghunluq (Table 1, item C) in that they are exceptionally tall and stand stiffly upright. They are however, clearly decorated. The weathered bas-reliefs show them sometimes studded, sometimes ribbed, and on at least one occasion appearing as if spangled with stars (Fig. 6–8). Whether these textures are meant to represent brocade, or perhaps cord detailing like that on the Tarim hats, or even a Carmen Miranda-style fruit display, is lost to the ages.

¹⁰ Basilov, *Nomads of Eurasia*, 170.

Figure 6. God from ancient site in Malataya, Turkey. (Vieyra, <i>Hittite Art: 2300–750 B.C.</i>)	Figure 7. God from Zincirli, Turkey. (Vieyra, <i>Hittite Art: 2300–750 B.C.</i>)	Figure 8. A modern costume piece
		

Although the king/priest figure is greatly diminished, even in physical size, when compared to the deities, he is permitted some millinery extravagance of his own. A bas-relief from the ancient site Zincirli in Sama'l, Turkey (Modern Gaizantep Province) depicts King Barrekub wearing a seamed cap with a single peak (fig. 9). This appears to be his crown of state, as he is shown wearing it while enthroned and holding court. In religious functions, he dons a high-crowned, horn-tipped hat that is very similar in construction to the hats of the Tarim. Without material evidence we can never be certain as to its construction, but we may yet uncover a linguistic clue, as with the previously mentioned Greek use of the word *pilos* for felt and the felt hat depicted in statuary. It also stands to reason that felt, with its sculptural qualities, was the only fabric suited to such ambitious hats. Moreover, we have already noted that central Anatolia was the birthplace of felt at least 5000 years prior to the Hittite empire; no doubt they had mastered the use of this versatile fabric.



Figure 9. King Bar-rekub at Zincirli, Turkey

Unbelievable though it may seem, we also have examples of similar felt hats from the ancient Taklamakan. In the fifth to third centuries BCE, three women were interred at Subeshi with a set of mysteriously tall hats (Table 1, item D). When considered in the pantheon of Tarim Basin hats, the Subeshi “witch hats” form a very distinct set, separate from the brown felt hat of Chärchän, or the Xiaohe/Qärwighul caps and hoods. The immediate association on the part of the modern Western viewer, is with the similarly shaped black witch hats that are worn every Halloween. One Subeshi hat that traveled to the University of Pennsylvania Museum was wrapped in netting, supposedly for hair, while another double-peaked hat measures to a full two feet.¹¹ We may say with some confidence that hats of this proportion are not objects of practicality, but are related to the social or perhaps religious state of the wearer.

What is the connection between these sky-high princess/priestess hats from Subeshi, and the deity hats of the Fertile Crescent? Perhaps it will be useful to note that a variety of other Bronze Age cultures also created very tall, conical ceremonial hats. The four *Goldhüte* of Bronze Age Central Europe are excellent examples. Ranging in dates from 1400 BCE to 1000 BCE, these “hats” are constructed of gold sheet, heavily embossed with abstract “roundel” patterns. The tallest of these, the Ezelsdorf-Buch hat, reaches 88 cm (2.88 feet) high.¹² (fig. 10). Whether

¹¹ J. P. Mallory and Victor H. Mair, *The Tarim Mummies* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 2008), 220.

¹² <http://www.landschaftsmuseum.de/Seiten/Lexikon/Goldkegel.htm>

or not these gold hats could or ever did actually rest on a person's head is doubtful, but their use was clearly ceremonial. However their textured surface and height clearly relate them to the Hittites and people of Subeshi.

The Kazakh *Säukele* (fig. 11) of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is an incredibly tall, conical hat of ceremony and status from central Asia. A stone grave marker dated between the twelfth and fourteenth century A.D. confirms that female figures wore *säukele* even in the Medieval Ages (fig. 12). The often lavishly decorated *säukele* "was worn for only a short time after its owner married, just until the birth of her first child, and the headdress was passed down from mother to daughter."¹³ Again the incredible height, at least 60 cm tall, and the embellished exterior hearken back to Bronze Age practices. The matrilineal inheritance is another possible connection to the female mummies of Subeshi.



Figure 10. Germanisches National
Museum, Nuremburg



Figure 11. *säukele* (Basilov,
Nomads of Eurasia)



Figure 12. tomb figure (Basilov,
Nomads of Eurasia)

Of further note are records of, "Hephthalite kings who wore 'a kind of horn 3 feet high,'"¹⁴ as well as this plate (fig. 13) from *Anatolia in the Second Millennium BC*, which depicts

¹³ Basilov, *Nomads of Eurasia*, 112.

¹⁴ Mallory and Mair, *Tarim Mummies*, 220.

Dolvek, the "smiting god," and Arapkir, the "peg god" of the Hittites. The sculptures are from ca. 1500 BCE.

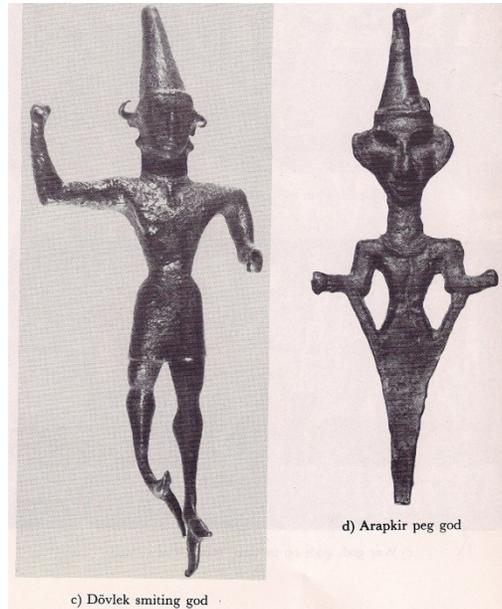


Figure 13. Dolvek (left) and Arapkir (right). (Loon, *Anatolia in the Second Millennium B.C.*)

These tall hats are not the working caps of herdsmen; they are in each case ceremonial, and owned by an elite group. The attraction to the tall hat can be reduced to the simplest terms — bigger is better, and taller more impressive. The religious symbolism may have been to extend the wearer upwards to the sky, the tapering hat acting like a conduit to higher power; or simply to increase the physical stature of important figures, and make them more imposing.

These observations need to be pursued further, but I believe the tall ceremonial hats described above derive from a single Indo-European tradition. As already mentioned, the oldest examples come from the Hittites in the center of Anatolia, with later examples in East Central Europe from the middle of the second millennium BCE, and in East Central Asia in the first millennium BCE. It follows that the hat was transmitted outwards from early Bronze Age Anatolia, in the same pattern of exchange that carried decorated caps, and people, eastwards and westwards across the steppe.

Who made the hats? Bronze Age collapse and Steppe exchanges

At approximately the same time stonemasons were carving rows of towering headdresses into Hittite walls, a group of intrepid settlers was moving from oasis to oasis deep in the Taklamakan, wearing tall felt hats of their own. What relation did these two groups of people bear to each other? They had shared the secrets of felt, and perhaps a respect for the utility and aesthetic of the single peaked hat. Elizabeth Barber wonders, "Did they obtain this hat through trade or gift giving? Or did all these folk share the same cultural inheritance?" That is the burning question, and the answer is inexorably linked with the methods by which people and their goods traveled across Eurasia.

As a settled, city-building people, the Hittites are not likely candidates for wide-ranging steppe travel. But they did conduct lively trade with their Iranian-speaking neighbors to the east and south, as well the many nomadic tribes of the Pontic steppe region just north of the Black Sea. It was through these pastoralists in the steppes and mountains that objects and ideas traveled outwards across Eurasia, like ripples from a point of central origin. When domestication developed in the Fertile Crescent around 8000 BCE, it spread outwards in all directions in a "ripple" effect in much this way. Four thousand years later, with what Andrew Sherratt calls the "Secondary Products Revolution," there was no doubt a second wave of sharing, and felt was one of the many technologies borne by that wave.

Or perhaps it is more accurate to say *born of* that wave. It is easy to imagine that, because felt had its locus in Anatolia, felt hats also emanated from Anatolian settlements out to neighboring pastoralists during the third and fourth millennium BCE. But too often we forget that waves of influence rarely travel in only one direction. Just as often as developments in the urban center impacted life on the steppe, innovations from pastoralist communities would bounce back to the settled communities. Consider, for example, the domestication of horses or the development of chariots. Elizabeth Barber situates the origin of felt within one of these pulsations between the steppe and Anatolia:

Around 3000 B.C., we pick up a pulse of intruders out of the Ukrainian steppes into western Anatolia, with the founding of Troy and other important sites, and

movement — domino-like? — into Crete from Anatolia. Our first surviving evidence for felt — another crucial ingredient in developing the life of the Eurasian nomad — occurs soon after, around 2600 B.C., at Beycesultan in Central Turkey.¹⁵

These invading pastoralists from Ukraine may well have carried the impetus for felt into the settlement of Beycesultan. This was hardly the last time there was a mass movement off of the steppe, and each new wave was bound to bring nomadic innovations with it.

There are potential ecological reasons for the cycles of migration that produced these steppe invasions. The Eurasian Steppe biome, despite its large surface area, is very sensitive to climactic change, rainfall in particular. Changes in temperature affecting precipitation will cause reliable pastures to suddenly lose viability, triggering a series of migrations and invasions. The Ukrainians and other pastoralists who surged into the settled areas of Anatolia in 3000 BCE were likely adversely affected by climactic changes that began in earnest in 2200 BCE, and decided to return to the stable regions of central Anatolia.

The Phrygians were in a similar position when they permanently overran the Hittite homeland in 1200 BCE. The entrance of these "barbarians" from the northern steppe into the Anatolian heartland marks but one of many migrations that resulted in the so-called Bronze Age collapse. By around 800 BCE, a number of other semi-nomadic groups, including the Thracians and the Scythians, had also crept in off of the steppe, from the west and east respectively. What is of interest to us is that these nomads off of the steppe are some of the best-known hat-wearers in Western history. Settled peoples embraced the "Phrygian Cap," which remains famous as a symbol of the French Revolution from the eighteenth Century, getting its connotations of freedom and liberation from the "red cap" given to manumitted slaves in the Roman Empire. At the start of the Iron Age, however, it was simply the peaked cap emblematic of the Phrygian people.

As with the Hittite hats, only artistic representations of the Phrygian hat remain to us. However, these hats bear a stunning resemblance to felt hoods found in Krörän and Qärwighul,

¹⁵ Barber, *The Mummies of Ürümqi*, 191.

another site considered part of the Lop Nor cultural complex. Archaeologists have uncovered a variety of felt hoods, such as fig. 13 from Grave 36 near Lop Nor, described as "a double-layered felt cap, pegged with two feathers on the left side and with ear-flaps that could be tied under the chin."¹⁶ The famous Beauty of Loulan wears a similar garment. If we compare the decorated hoods from Lopnur to depictions of Phrygian hoods, the resemblance is obvious (fig. 14–16). The connection to Xiaohu is also very apparent in this lovely hat (fig. 16) as the chords, feather plumes and small animal pelt are all incorporated as well. The burial habits of the two sites are clearly consanguine, but the merging of the two models of hat is particularly interesting to observe.

<p>Figure 14. Qawrighul and Kroran, northwest shores of Lop Nor, Xinjiang, c. 2000 BCE</p>	<p>Figure 15. Phrygian (Roman copy of Greek Original, Fourth c. BCE, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Eng.)</p>	<p>Figure 16. Lop Nor, Grave 36</p>
		

This basic hood/cap hybrid is perhaps the ubiquitous hat of the Bronze Age steppe. One may also see it in depictions of the Thracii and Dacii of the Balkans, the Scythians who ranged

¹⁶ Mallory and Mair, *Tarim Mummies*, 213.

from the Pontic steppe to the Altai Mountains, and Mongolians to the East. Constructed of hardy felt and including flaps to protect the ears, these hoods are adapted to Bronze Age life on the steppe. Perhaps then it was not the case that the pronounced tip of the Phrygian/Steppe hood was inspired by designs from central Anatolia, but that Anatolians copied the styling of neighbors and invaders from off of the steppe. The strong presence of single-peaked felt hats in settled and nomadic groups of greater Anatolia demonstrates that the cultural boundary between nomadic pastoralists and settled agriculturalists was from early in human history a permeable one.

Arriving in the Tarim Basin

We have established that the hats are a point of cultural confluence between settled and nomadic groups in Anatolia, but we still have not answered Elizabeth Barber's original question as to how these hats were transmitted across the Steppe, through nomadic groups — was it through short distance exchange between groups, or long distance migrations? The answer is probably both.

When the Ukrainians decided to move west into the settled areas during climactic changes around 3000 BCE, others who had expanded Eastward into the deep steppe during the warm, wet, "Edenic" period prior to 3000 BCE,¹⁷ decided to keep pushing on in hope of encountering new pastures. These people included a wide-variety of Indo-Iranian pastoral tribes, who were ultimately of the same cultural complex as the Scythians, a variety of Turkic groups, and also the Tocharians, an Indo-European people currently considered the most likely match for the Tarim basin mummies.¹⁸

When they arrived at the Tarim Basin, they already had certain versions of the peaked felt hat from Anatolia. But hats continued to circulate across the steppe and enter the Tarim Basin through trade; having reached the far eastern portion of central Asia, they were hardly isolated from happenings back west. Pastoralists across the Steppe regularly interacted each other, and a

¹⁷ <http://www.stanford.edu/~meehan/donnellyr/summary.html>

¹⁸ See "Tocharian Trekkers" and "Who Were the Mummies?" in Mallory and Mair, *Tarim Mummies*; also see E. E. Kuzmina's *Prehistory of the Silk Road* for more on Steppe ecology and its effect on Bronze Age migration.

certain cultural cohesion (hats included) began to emerge. This was helped in no small degree by the rise of the Scythians.

The Scythians dominated the Eurasian steppe in the first millennium BCE, from Siberia to the Pontic steppe. Herodotus described them as: "Having neither cities nor forts...and living not by husbandry but on their cattle, their wagons the only houses that they possess, how can they fail of being unconquerable, and unassailable even?"¹⁹

So it certainly must have seemed as the Scythians swept Eurasia. With murky origins and somewhat obscure relations to the many other Indo-Iranian tribes, it can be difficult to pin down exactly who the Scythians were; they seemed to have a finger in every cultural pot. Suffice it to say that during the fifth and third centuries BCE, the Scythians were not only in contact with Greece, Egypt and Anatolia, and also "shared a cultural unity with many other tribes living in the steppe region of Europe and Asia."²⁰ Perhaps we can view the Scythians not just as a political entity or an ethnic group, but also as a cultural phenomenon. The "Scytho-Siberian wild-animal style,"²¹ appeared in art and crafts from Hungary to China, as did a set of by now familiar Bronze Age hats.

The Scythian mode of dress is what we might today associate with quintessential nomadism. The tunics and trousers, an adaptation to equestrian life, remains the standard dress of the Steppe. Also common to the Scythian tribes was a high felt hat, described by Herodotus as "high caps tapering to a point and stiffly upright."²² The Sakas, immediate neighbors to the Tarim basin people in the first millennia, were particularly identified with these hats. The incredible "Golden Man" discovered at Issyk, (fig. 17) a burial site near Alma-ata is perhaps an example of this headgear. Dated to the fifth to fourth century BCE, the headdress is elaborate,

¹⁹ Boris Piotrovsky, ed., *From the Lands of the Scythians: Ancient Treasures from the Museums of the U.S.S.R.* (New York and Los Angeles: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1975), 8.

²⁰ Piotrovsky, *From the Lands of the Scythians*, 21.

²¹ Basilov, *Nomads of Eurasia*, 19.

²² Basilov, *Nomads of Eurasia*, 111.

tall, peaked, and highly reminiscent of the ceremonial wear from Subeshi and Hittite palace bas-reliefs.



Figure 17. The "Golden Man" of Issyk. From Basilov *Nomads of Eurasia*

Although the textile portions of this find have all deteriorated, it is a fairly safe bet that a considerable portion of the clothing, especially the hat, was of felt construction. Felt artifacts, such as delicate rugs and pillows, found at Pazyryk in the Altai Mountains demonstrate the Scythians to be consummate felters in the fifth century BCE. For more about this site and its many artifacts, please consider Sergei Rudenko's *Frozen Tombs of Siberia: the Pazyryk Burials of Iron Age Horsemen*.

Another Iron Age connection, a bas-relief from the Achaemenid palace of Persepolis that shows a group of Steppe pastoralists, allegedly Scythians, delivering tribute (fig. 18).²³ Not only is this an excellent depiction of the tall conical hat, but there is also a wonderful consonance in the fact that their tribute appears to be bundles of tunics and long trousers — clothing long associated with the needs of the mobile Steppe lifestyle, and horseback riding in particular. The fact that these tributaries bear clothing rather than livestock or some other bounty suggests that Steppe dwellers were looked to as a source of sartorial, and perhaps millinery, innovation.



Figure 18. Bas-relief depicting Scythians, 485–465 BCE, Persepolis. (Payne, et al., *The History of Costume*)

We also have some depictions of everyday Scythian hats, at least as seen through the eyes of the Greeks at Bospora, a colony founded in the fifth century BCE on the Black Sea. Described as “a gold bottle decorated with Scythians,” this artifact (fig. 19) from the tomb of a Bosporan

²³ Blanche Payne, Geitel Winakor, and Jane Farrell-Beck, *The History of Costume* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).

king²⁴ shows Scythians in the peaked hoods we have previously associated with Phrygia and Lop Nor. We can assume that this is the felt Steppe hood present amongst pastoralists since the second millennium. It is not the dramatic garment that Herodotus described on the heads of Saka horsemen, but modest gear, better suited to the everyday needs of a working man. The fact that the Scythians appear to be warriors or weapon makers is in keeping with this conclusion. The more fanciful tall hat of state we may associate with religious figures or aristocracy.



Figure 19. Bosphoran bottle, Fourth c. BCE, Kul Oba Kurgan, Crimea. Currently at State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. (Boris, *From the Lands of the Scythians*)

These may have been the influences and traditions that inspired an Iron Age Steppe-dweller to create the brown felt hat of Zaghunluq (fig. C, table 1) that first caught the eye of Patsy McLaughlin as she walked through the “Secrets of the Silk Road.” This felt hat, with its slightly re-curved tip, and obvious concern with maintaining a tall, upright shape, may be the only surviving hat of the same mold as the Saka caps Herodotus described, or that the Scythians wear on the walls of Persepolis. Or the nearby Sogdians, whose trade often brought them into the Tarim basin during the first millennium BCE.

By the Iron Age, the Tarim Basin had become an important hub of trade, and a cultural melting pot. It is possible therefore, that the owner of the brown Zaghunluq hat was a member of

²⁴ Piotrovsky, *From the Lands of the Scythians*, 112.

one of these ethnic groups, or a merchant, or indeed, a collector of hats! Elizabeth Barber notes, "The Chärchän people had such a fondness for clothes that they took piles of apparel with them to the next world. This single excavation, for example, produced ten hats, each different."²⁵ And a number of them are extremely whimsical. What for instance is the referent for this white felt hat (fig. 20) t, which appears to simulate two horns on the front? Is it the inheritance, nearly millennia later, of the horned deities of the Hittites (fig. 21)?

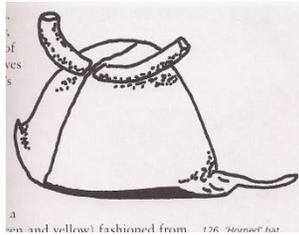


Figure 20. Horned Felt Hat, Zaghunluq. (Barber, *The Mummies of Ürümqi*)



Figure 21. Hittite Storm God, ca. 1000 BCE. From Hattusa, modern Yazilikaya, Turkey. Note horns on hat.

Centuries of playing "whisper down the Steppe" may actually have produced this horned felt hat from a Hittite antecedent central Anatolia.

In reflecting on the pervasiveness of Scythian costume across the Eurasian steppe, Vladimir Basilov supposes that, "we can only marvel at a single costume (with regional variations of course) was distributed from the shores of the Black Sea to the steppes and mountains of South Siberia."²⁶ The same is true of the distribution of the felt hat, but I maintain we can do much more than marvel at its pervasiveness. The Eurasian Steppe is incredibly large, but it is on an ecological and cultural level incredibly cohesive. Equipped with the same basic set

²⁵ Barber, *The Mummies of Ürümqi*, 33.

²⁶ Basilov, *Nomads of Eurasia*, 111.

of skills, people could survive in much the same way in Hungary as in Southern Siberia. Naturally, either through convergent adaptations or transmitted technologies, they developed similar lifestyles and products. In tracking the origins of the tools and behaviors of the people of the Eurasian steppe, we can determine crucial points of contact or consanguinity. The Iron Age Scythians, as a sort of cultural catchall on the Steppe, inherited the Bronze Age hats that travelled out of Anatolia and into the Tarim Basin. They also formed a matrix of pastoral connection across the steppe that continued the spread of hats old and new for centuries to come.

IV. Conclusions

Over the course of this paper, we have briefly surveyed the similarities amongst the hats of the Bronze and Iron Age Eurasian steppe. We have observed how across considerable geographical spans, strong trends in hat construction and form exist. In Anatolia, Bronze Age palace friezes and votive figurines depict a tall, heavily decorated hat of state; in the Tarim Basin, contemporary gravesites yield carefully interred conical hats, constructed of felt and decorated with animal pelts, feathers and strings; in Central Europe, Bronze Age peoples constructed imposing golden hats, with hammered decorations of roundels and curlicues. Our examples continue onward into the Iron Age, where the Greek *pilos* appears in statuary and ceramics, the Scythians and other fellow Central Asian rovers are identified with their peaked felt hats, and certain settlements near Turfan bury their women in tall, witchlike hats. If we include modern iterations of the peaked felt hat, we may say that it has survived at least four millennia and spanned the globe.

The Bronze and Iron Age proliferation of the conical hat across such a wide geographical range is an indication of the power of the Steppe — “a gigantic, continent-wide pasture that invited contact and exchange among all of its denizens.”²⁷ Through this network, a simple felt hat, mostly likely born of practical needs in the life of a roving shepherd, was sustained over millennia, taking on new meaning and form as it traveled outward from its point of origin.

²⁷ Victor Mair, “Stylish Hats and Sumptuous Garments from Bronze Age and Iron Age Eastern Central Asia,” *Orientalism*, May 2010.

Determining where this point of origin lies requires further research, however we can assume that the original felt hats must have predated the second millennia BCE, perhaps by a considerable period of time, since they first appear simultaneously in Hittite art and Tarim Basin gravesites around 2000 BCE. There is also strong reason to believe that the mass migrations of Bronze Age peoples across the Steppe were a principle factor in the spread of the felt hat.

In the final chapters of her work, *Mummies of Ürümqi*, Elizabeth Barber uses linguistic and textile artifacts to sketch the series of mass migrations that shaped the Bronze through Iron ages. One of the earliest of these dated to around 3000 BCE. A group of people speaking what Barber describes as proto-Indo-European, left the grassy plains of modern-day Ukraine and Hungary to enter central Anatolia. The next thousand years sees the creation of our first known example of felt at Beyce-Sultan, a site directly in the route of these northern interlopers, and the development of the tall hats we know today. Perhaps it is these earlier folk who first transmitted the technology of felt, and the peaked hat resulted. It is not inconceivable that some of these proto-Indo-Europeans decided to travel east along the steppe, towards the Tarim basin, rather than moving west and south into the settled Mediterranean. Certainly we know that the later waves of Indo-European and Indo-Iranian speaking peoples decided to venture in this direction. However the hat arrived, we can consider it a true product of the Eurasian steppe; born of necessity, and borne along the currents of expansion and intersection that form the ecological and cultural network of the steppe.

Nearly three millennia later, Central Asian people still wear ancient models of peaked felt hats, like the Kazakh *säukele*, and the *kalpak*. The ethnic identities of the people of the Eurasian steppe have shifted considerably over the years, but lifestyles (and the hats that go with them) have remained much the same. Other unexpected echoes of the Lop Nor felt hat, like the Bavarian hat, the fez, and the fedora, are testaments to the power and influence of the Steppe nomads of long ago. These ancient pioneers left traces of themselves left behind linguistically, genetically, materially; the peaked felt hat, in its many iterations across the globe, is a piece of that legacy.

Bibliography

- Barber, E. J. *The Mummies of Ürümqi*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999.
- Basilov, Vladimir N., ed. *Nomads of Eurasia*. Seattle: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and University of Washington Press, 1989.
- Landschafts Museum. "Goldene Hüte und Gewänder." Landschafts Museum, Archäologisches Lexikon. Landschafts Museum, 2010. Web. 06/12/11. <<http://www.landschaftsmuseum.de/Seiten/Lexikon/Goldkegel.htm>>
- Loon, Maurits N. Van. *Anatolia in the Second Millennium B.C.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985.
- Louvre Museum, Department of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities. "The Shepherd: Classical Greek Art (Fifth-Fourth centuries BC)." *Louvre Museum*, May 2012: web. <<http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/shepherd>>
- Mair, Victor. "Stylish Hats and Sumptuous Garments from Bronze Age and Iron Age Eastern Central Asia," *Orientalism*, May 2010.
- Mair, Victor, ed. *Secrets of the Silk Road: An Exhibition of Discoveries*. Santa Ana, Calif.: Bowers Museum, 2010.
- Mallory, J. P., and Victor H. Mair. *The Tarim Mummies*. London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 2008.
- McLaughlin, Patsy. "Old Hats," *Real Style*, April 2010.
- Meehan, Richard L. "Climate, Culture and Catastrophe in the Ancient World." Stanford University. Web. 06/12/11. <<http://www.stanford.edu/~meehan/donnelyr/summary.html>>
- Mullins, Willow. *Felt*. New York: Berg, 2009.
- Payne, Blanche, Geitel Winakor, and Jane Farrell-Beck. *The History of Costume*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.
- Piotrovsky, Boris, ed. *From the Lands of the Scythians: Ancient Treasures from the Museums of the U.S.S.R.* New York and Los Angeles: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1975.
- Sheng, Angela. "Textiles from the Silk Road," *Expedition*, Winter 2010.

Victor H. Mair, ed., "The 'Silk Roads' in Time and Space"
Sino-Platonic Papers 228 (July 2012)

Suburban Emergency Management Project (SEMP). "Eurasian Steppes: Origin and Evolution."

SEMP Biot Reports December 2009: web.

<http://www.semp.us/publications/biot_reader.php?BiotID=670>

Vieyra, Maurice. *Hittite Art: 2300–750 B.C.* London: Alec Trianti Ltd., 1955.

The Tarim Basin Beauties of Xiaohe and Krorän

Julia Becker

Introduction

The times of great archaeological wonders, such as for example Carter's discovery of Tutankhamun, seemed to be long gone. However, during the 1990s several spectacular finds caused excitement among scholars and laypeople alike.

In 1991, the un-icing of Ötzi in the South Tyrolean Schnals Valley not only captured the public's imagination, but also led to an advanced scientific investigation of Copper Age culture in the European Alps. The results obtained throughout twenty years of state-of-the-art mummy studies are remarkable.

Four years later, first publications on the incredible wealth of the cemeteries and mummies from the Tarim Basin in the Xinjiang region of northwest China marked another watershed. Given that other discoveries along the Silk Road had suggested that many east-west encounters must have taken place in ancient times, the unearthing of mummies with Europoid features caused a sensation. Two stunningly beautiful desiccated female corpses have been found at cemeteries that are believed to belong to a single cultural horizon.

It is now also commonly accepted that these remains, preserved at the Ürümqi Museum in Xinjiang, were the earliest inhabitants of the Tarim Basin. However, the puzzle of the earliest settlers in this unfavorable region is far from being solved, although over the past years more and more pieces have been revealed.

Generally speaking, this paper investigates the nature of the connections between the Copper Age Iceman of the Austro-Italian Alps and the Bronze Age mummies found in the Täklimakan desert. The purpose of this paper is to show how the study of ancient Bronze Age civilization in Eastern Central Asia (ECA) has reconfirmed recent theories on cultural

interrelatedness. In order to achieve this goal, I will provide a comprehensive, up-to-date overview of findings concerning the two Beauties. Later in this paper I will analyze the implications for our understanding of Bronze Age culture in ECA. Finally, drawing from the experiences of the Iceman’s scientific work-up, I will outline how lessons learned throughout two decades of Ötzi studies will help to solve more of the enigmas surrounding the two Beauties.

The story of the finds

And then we could finally see her in all her beauty — the queen of the desert, the lady of Loulan and Lop-Nor. She had been surprised by death while she was still young...

A smile that had not been erased by the turn of centuries still played around her lips, which made this mysterious creature even more attractive and likable.¹

This intriguing account of Swedish explorer Sven Hedin (1865–1952) captures the feeling that still arises when one for the first time sees such beautiful Tarim Basin mummies. The quotation is from his work in which he solved the problem of the changing basins of Lop Nor, one of the mysteries that the early explorers were facing. At that time, his research triggered more explorations, so that in the period 1886–1935, a series of groundbreaking geological and archaeological expeditions to the heart of the Tarim Basin were undertaken by Western scholars. As part of the large-scale investigations organized by Hedin, his Swedish countryman Folke Bergmann explored the desert area west to Lop Nor in 1934. His guide, Ördek, who previously had worked for Hedin, told him about a mysterious necropolis with more than a thousand burials. While searching for this famed place, Hedin came across a small waterway that he named “Small River” (MSM: Xiaohe). During his explorations, after having studied various other sites, with Ördek’s help he finally located the necropolis and named it “Small River Cemetery Number 5”

¹ Quoted after (Baumer 1996: 172). The original passage is taken from Sven Hedin, *Der Wandernde See* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1937). The translation from German is my own.

(SRC5). After his return to Sweden, Hedin published *Archaeological Researches in Sinkiang* in 1939 (Kamberi in Mair ed. 1998: 790; Mair 2006: 1–4; Baumer 1996: 172).

It would take almost a half century until, under the leadership of Wang Binghua, archaeologists re-entered the Lop Nor region in 1979 and 1980. Originally, the team was searching for SRC5 because the Japan Broadcasting Corporation was making a film series about the Silk Road. Although they failed to find SRC5 at this time, the expedition still proved to be highly successful. By a twist of fate, Wang's team discovered the Qäwrighul (MSM: Gumugou [“Gully of Ancient Graves”]) cemetery. In April 1980, an accompanying team, headed by Mu Shunying, came across another site next to the Töwän (MSM: Tieban [“Iron Board”]) River. The archeologists discovered two ancient tombs on the high dunes of a second terrace. In a shallow pit, only about 1 m deep, the very well preserved desiccated corpse of a woman was found, who was named “Beauty of Krorän” by the accompanying Japanese scholars (Wang 2001: 38; Mallory and Mair 2000: 136–140; Mair 2006: 39).

The corpse was laid directly on the ground with the face upward and limbs extended, its head pointing east. There was no coffin, but the face was protected with a large woven winnowing tray and the face and upper body were covered with three layers of branches and reeds.²

As reported by Wang, the arrangement of the grave allowed for good ventilation, hence the Beauty's corpse was in remarkably good condition.³ After the excavation, the mummies found at the Töwän and Qäwrighul cemeteries were taken back to Ürümqi (and later Shanghai) for further examination.⁴

² More precisely, the dimensions of the grave were measured at 1.74 m in length and 0.7 m in width. Above the winnowing basket that covered the mummy's face and upper body, there was a 30 cm layer of branches, then a 10 cm layer of reeds, then another 10 cm layer of branches (Mallory and Mair 2000, 183; Wang 2001: 38).

³ According to Mair, the observation of the muscle tissue and other scientific tests have revealed that the state of her preservation is comparable to or better than that of a body conserved in formaldehyde (Mallory and Mair 2000: 182).

⁴ In October 1979, forty-two graves were excavated at the Qäwrighul cemetery. Among them, there was another well-preserved female corpse, often referred to as “the beautiful maiden from Krorän.” After the Beauty of Krorän had been found in April 1980, the mummies were initially examined at the Xinjiang Medical College and the

According to the results of the x-ray analysis of her body, the Beauty of Krörän must have been 40–45 years old at her death, and radiocarbon dating (C-14) indicates that she must have died around 2000 BCE.

Based on her height, 1.52 m, and taking into account the shrinkage that had occurred, she must have measured 1.56 m when still alive. Her live weight is estimated to have been 47–52 kg, given that her dehydrated body now weighs 10.7 kg. Her physical appearance is characterized as Europoid because she possesses regular facial features, with a narrow, slightly raised forehead, raised cheekbones, and a high, narrow nose-bridge with a tilted nose tip (Wang 1996: 63).



Figure 1. Beauty of Krörän and two of her accompanying grave goods (woven basket, comb)

The skin, colored a reddish-brown tone, is still smooth and in very good condition, both epidermis and derma being well preserved. Her hair, parted in the center, is auburn-colored and about 30 cm long and was arranged in a headdress made of felt, decorated with two goose feathers. When her hair was studied through visual and microscopic examination, it was revealed that she must have suffered from head lice in the hair roots and pubic region; additionally, there were traces of nits found at the base of her eyelashes and eyebrows and at the fur of her leather boots. All lice were human head lice (*Pediculus humanus capitis*), which means that the lice

Xinjiang Institute of Archeology before they were sent to Shanghai so various analyses could be carried out under the auspices of the Anthropology Section of the Shanghai Museum of Natural Science. Later, the multi-disciplinary study team published a detailed monograph (Wang 2001: 39, Wang 1996: 60).

must have traveled from her hair on to her face and body. This finding hints at the fact that it was not possible for her to regularly wash or change her clothes.



Figure 2. Close up of the extremely well preserved Beauty of Krorän

The trace elements found in her hair also can help us to understand the condition of the environment, i.e. the characteristics of the water, air and other environmental factors (Wang 1996: 63). During the dissection, a large amount of granulated black powder was found in her lungs, attributed to the circumstance that she must have inhaled carbonized smoke particles from the fireplaces inside the houses and eolian sand particles in the outside air. This finding is also very illuminating, because we learn about the ecological environment and its development, as well as facts about the circumstances in which humans lived at the time. (Mallory and Mair 2000: 181; Wang 2001: 24–25)

Almost exactly 20 years later, in December 2000, during the course of the Zhongguo Xiyu Damo Xing (Expedition to the Great Desert of China's Western Region), the archaeologists of the Xinjiang Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo (Xinjiang Institute of Archeology and Cultural Relics) were finally able to relocate the fabled SRC5, 175 km west of the Töwän site and 60 km to the south of the middle reaches of the Kōnchi River (MSM: *kongque he* ["Peacock River"]).

Wang Binghua and the research team, led by the current Director of the Institute of Archeology and Cultural Relics, Idris Abdursul, excavated 163 of a total of 330 graves from 2002–2005. Thirty mummies were taken back to Ürümqi, one of them being a stunningly well-preserved female burial dated to 1800–1500 BCE.

Given her startling appearance, the woman found in grave M4 soon become to be known as “The Beauty of Xiaohé.” She had also been buried with her head pointing eastwards, but her remains, like most of the other burials at SRC5, were put in a bottomless boat-shaped coffin, measuring more than 2 m, covered by 3–4 cowhides. The analogy with an overturned boat comes to mind because several short planks had been put crossways on top of the burial, and in this way were used as a coffin cover.⁵ A later analysis of the coffins showed that it had been fabricated of poplar wood which, in order to be carved and fitted together in this convex manner, must have been extensively worked (Mair 2006a: 13–17).⁶

⁵ According to Mair, boat burials are not unusual in prehistoric cultures. Other examples include the Egyptian site at Abydos (ca. 3000 BCE), Viking burials in Sweden, and burials on islands close to Scotland (Mair 2006a: 17).

⁶ Wang has clarified that most of the wood used in the local cemeteries is diversiform-leaved poplar (*Populus diversifolia*), or *Euphrates poplar*, a fine-grained and hard wood (Wang 1996: 69).



Figure 3. Beauty of Xiaohé's boat-shaped coffin as discovered at SRC5

This reconfirms Wang's hypothesis that, starting from 2000 BCE, these areas of Xinjiang must have entered the Bronze Age one after the other. He argues that the undecomposed wooden planks of the coffins recovered during the excavations at Qäwrighul clearly show cut-marks that can only be attributed to the use of a heavy tool with a sharp blade, such as a metal axe.

Furthermore he claims that the number of samples recovered from these earliest burials

with a specific reoccurring pattern of cut marks is large enough to draw such a conclusion. Besides, Wang argues, marks with an average depth of 4–5 cm and sometimes even 10 cm could not have been made by copper or stone tools (Wang 1996: 68–70).

Generally speaking, most scholars now agree with Wang that the people found at the Qäwrihul, Töwän, and Xiaohe cemeteries belonged to the Bronze Age. However, there were no bronze vessels, and this lack of ore for local production means that they must have interacted with other cultures in order to obtain the bronze needed for the tools used for the felling and working of wood.⁷ Given that bronze was such a rarity, it was not possible to afford to bury large numbers of bronze tools with their dead (Mair 2006: 24, 36).

Much has been written about the favorable conditions of the Täklimakan, which allowed for natural mummification in the form of desiccation. The drying of the body tissue is the most common type of spontaneous mummification and frequently occurs in arid deserts.⁸ In the case of the Tarim Basin mummies, drainage, ventilation, aridity, cold, and salinity all contributed to the exceptional conservation of human bodies and other organic material. Although the mummification process was due to these special environmental conditions, the dead were still treated in a way that supposedly aided their preservation. The Beauty of Xiaohe and other mummies were found smeared with a milky paste that is believed to be a protein of some kind, for example a ghee-like substance. The fact that the paste had been spread over the entire body is an indication that its effect was intended.

Almost all mummies also had (plaited) straps (often attached to their felt hats) tied around their jaws in order to prevent the mouth from opening. In the case of the "Infant Mummy," tufts of wool had been stuffed into its nostrils and mouth, presumably in order to absorb some of the decomposition fluids.⁹ Although it is still premature to draw any conclusion about the burial

⁷ A number of small bronze elements and plaques were found in some of the graves at SRC5, but nothing made of iron (Mair 2006: 24, 36).

⁸ Mummies of desiccated corpses have also been found in other hyper-arid deserts such as the Sahara (Egypt), China (Gobi), Peru and Northern Chile (Atacama), and even the southwestern USA (Aufderheide 2002: 43).

⁹ The body of the infant, who must have been 8–10 months old at the time of death, was excavated from the Zaghunluq cemetery. It was dated to c. eighth century BCE (Mair (ed.) 2010: 140).

customs of the Bronze Age cultures in the Lop Nor region, there are hints that the conservation of the bodies might have been at least partially intended (Aufderheide 2002: 43; Mair 2006: 8; Barber 1995: 311).

In the case of the spectacular find(s) at SRC5, the environmental factors and mode of burial were extraordinarily favorable, so that at first sight the condition of this other desert Beauty seems to be unprecedented. However, unlike her rival from Tōwān, which is one of the most well researched of the Xinjiang mummies, we still await further results of a comprehensive analysis of the Beauty of Xiaohe, so the facts presented below will need to be amended once the final archeological report on the excavation of SRC5 is published.

From first preliminary examinations, however, we know that she is 1.52 m in height. Her symmetrical features, high cheekbones and prominent chin leave us with a strong impression of Europoid features. She has a straight, high nose bridge; her mouth is slightly opened and even her long eyelashes are still visible above her deep-set eye sockets. When she was first found, her thick flaxen hair, grown long to the chest, had been covered with a milky paste and some casings from maggots stuck to it. In a similar manner, her entire body was covered with an even layer of the aforementioned substance.



Figure 4. The Beauty of Xiaohe and her Europoid features

The Europoid features of our two Beauties constitute no exception. Physical anthropological studies carried out by Han Kangxin indicate that the earliest known inhabitants of the Tarim Basin were almost exclusively Europoid, with Mongoloid types appearing only later. Excavations of forty-two graves carried out by a field team from the Institute of Archeology of Xinjiang at Qäwrighul yielded eighteen skulls (eleven male and seven female). Another set of six skulls (three males, two females, and one youth) was collected during the 1979–1980 expedition on the two high terraces at the Töwän cemetery. Han describes the morphological characteristics of these skulls as elongated and narrow with a high cranial vault. Furthermore, the Proto-European looks are constituted by the relatively low and wide facial dimensions, and strongly projecting nasal bones (Han in Mair ed. 1998: 558–559).

This evidence confirms that Qäwrighul, Töwän, and possibly also Xiaohe (although no results of physical anthropologic studies have been published so far) had the same racial

characteristics; however, we need to keep in mind that not all early inhabitants of the Tarim Basin belonged to a single homogenous group.¹⁰

Clothing and paraphernalia

Certainly the corpses exhumed from the burials need comprehensive study, and fortunately the analysis of textiles and further accompanying grave goods is considered to be highly diagnostic for understanding where the residents of the Lop Nor region originated and what kind of ethnic customs they had 4000 years ago. Traditionally, grave gifts had three different functions. First, often they were simply the favorite belongings of the departed. Secondly, grave goods were offered so that the spirit of the deceased could comfortably reach and live in the next world. Thirdly, grave offerings were also intended to protect the living from the spirit of the departed (Mair 1998: 295; Wang 2001: 23; Barber 1999: 20–21, 161).

As already noted, the corpse typically was wrapped in a cloth and laid into the dry sand (with or without a bottomless wooden coffin), together with few burial gifts. This pattern is applicable to the burial of the two Beauties.

The Beauty of Krorän's burial goods were especially sparse. As mentioned previously, she was partially covered with a large, stiff, flat, oval basket called a winnowing tray. These were used to clean wheat of its chaff, and the fact the many other female burials also contained winnowing trays suggests that this was work usually carried out by women. Also, she was given a long, narrow, soft basket to accompany her in the afterlife. For the convenience of carrying it, a handle made of cord had been attached to the sides of the opening. Archeologists found several grains of wheat inside the basket, which implies that grain must have been essential to her diet (Barber 1999: 74–75, Mair ed. 2010: 74).

In addition, there was also a small part of a comb found with her, of which four coarse teeth remained. Elizabeth Barber assumes that it had originally been twice the size. In order to make a comb, a number of wooden spikes were bound together by weaving a string back and

¹⁰ Han distinguishes four basic skull types: Proto-European (the oldest), Pamir-Ferghana (next oldest), Mediterranean (next to youngest), and Mongoloid (youngest). For a detailed account of these very significant physical anthropological findings for ECA as a whole, please consult Han's works as listed in the bibliography.

forth around their middle (Mair ed. 2010: 73). Very interestingly, the form and its unrefined design closely resemble ancient combs found in the Near East. These combs had been used to pack the weft in tightly during weaving. Hence, the comb probably served as a dual-purpose device for both hair care and weaving (Barber 1999: 74).¹¹

Her clothing consists of a shroud made out of sheep wool that reaches to her knees, secured with a wooden pin. It is plainly woven, with extra weft forming many long loops on the surface, so that the insulation was increased. Underneath, she wears a mid-length leather skirt with the fur turned inside, also intended for protection from the cold. Her ankle-high moccasin boots consist of leather with fur on the outside. Her head was also covered with a hood like woolen cap. It is made of an underlay consisting of two pieces of dark-brown woolen cloth. The overlay is made of felt, which made it resistant to rain and wind. One of the edging cords runs around the base of the neck and could have been used to tie the cap to the chin with a rim.

Astonishingly, although it is such an early burial, she and her contemporaries must have already known how to dye wool, because the edging that runs around the face has been made of a plain brown cord as well as a second cord plaited of red and probably blue yarns. Overall, all pieces of her clothing indicate that she was very concerned to protect herself against cold weather, so most likely her time of death was during the winter season (Barber 1999: 72–73; Mallory and Mair 2000: 212).

The clothing and grave gifts of the Beauty of Xiaohe on the other hand are more diverse. Inside her coffin she was found covered with tamarisk branches; after these had been removed, the archaeologists could see that her entire body was wrapped into a wide, white wool cloth, with the exception of her head, calves, and feet. More precisely, this piece of apparel is rectangular, seamless, and fabricated in a tabby wave. Unlike the clothing at Töwän, no dyes were used, but the natural appearing lighter and darker shades of the wool were altered to create a pattern. Like all other female burials, the tassles of her cloth fanned outward around her neck and shoulders. Her shroud was closed from the left to the right with two engraved wooden pins. Underneath, she

¹¹ Folke Bergmann has also found several combs with that resemble this piece belonging to the Beauty of Krörän (Barber 1999: 74).

wore a string skirt, which is an undergarment made out of waistband with many strings of twisted wool attached to it to cover the pubic region (Mair ed. 2010: 74).



Figure 5. The Beauty of Xiaohe's clothing and grave goods

A striking and certainly one of the most interesting pieces of clothing is the Beauty's felt hat.¹² Made out of sheep fleece, its top peak is rounded.¹³ On the left side, two feathers are stuck to the head. Wrapped around the hat are two weasel pelts with their heads hanging down at the middle of the hat. At either side of the edge of the hat a cord to fit under the chin is attached so it was held securely in place. Not only the Beauty, but almost all the deceased at SRC5, when exhumed, were wearing these special hats (Mair 2010: 2).

Her feet were protected with a pair ankle-high fur-lined leather boots. Moreover, at chest level, two tamarisk sticks that have been burnt at the ends have been located. Attached to the right edge of her shroud, three small pouches, 5–6 cm in diameter, filled with ephedra, have been found. One of the bags is tied near the neck inside the cloak, whereas the other two are tied on either side of the wooden pins. Like other female burials at SRC5, a wooden phallus was also part of the Beauty's gender-specific grave goods.

Another similarity with other burials at SRC5 is that her grave also contained small pieces of bovine tendon (placed underneath the body) and small bits of ovicaprids. Other paraphernalia found with the Beauty of Xiaohe include a jade bracelet, a necklace made of twisted cord strings and decorated with a feather, a pelt, a cape used as a pad beneath her body, a decorative feather, and an additional basket of woven grass, placed on the right side of her head, with a simple handle attached for convenience in carrying it (Mair 2006: 15, 20–27; Mair ed. 2010: 171).

What do clothing and grave goods, such as for instance the baskets filled with ephedra, tell us about the Beauties and their people? What did the scholars engaged in the multidisciplinary research efforts to better understand prehistoric ECA culture conclude? Why is it so important to study textiles and burial goods so precisely?

First and foremost, given the abundance of material derived from the excavations, we can obtain a relatively concrete, rich and vivid picture of ethnic customs. For example, the

¹² Felt is mashed wool and was a chief alternative to weaving in ancient times (Barber 1991: 215).

¹³ Mair emphasizes that the felt hats at SRC5 are also to be considered gendered, given that the hats of female burials were broad and round, and decorated with fewer feathers, whereas the male burials wore higher and more peaked headdresses (Mair 2006: 27).

omnipresence of ephedra sheds light on the medicine and shamanism of the Bronze Age people of the Tarim Basin. *Ephedra sinica* twigs were placed on the chest, or beside the buried bodies of every burial uncovered at SRC5, or as in the case of our Beauty, together with wheat, millet or barley also inside the baskets accompanying the dead. All scholars agree that the ancient communities of ECA must have attributed special powers to this plant, also taking into consideration that almost every known grave of the Qäwrighul/Töwän/Xiaohe culture contained ephedra.¹⁴

In fact, the alkaloid ephedrine gained from ephedra twigs has both an anti-inflammatory and a stimulating effect. Besides, remembering the pulmonic condition endured by the Beauty of Krörän, ephedra could also be utilized as a nasal decongestant and as an early form of asthma medication. As people who were frequently exposed to smoky fires, wind-borne sand, and freezing temperatures, it is very likely that they enjoyed its relieving effect (Baumer 2011: 67; Mair 2006: 27).

Secondly, the baskets, woven of grass, straw or other plant material, found next to both of the Beauties also have important implications for the study of the local Bronze Age culture. Because no pottery has been found at any of the sites in the Lop Nor area, it is assumed that no suitable clays were available at the time. Hence baskets were used as substituting food containers or vessels and show us how creative, adaptable, and talented these early craftsmen were.

Due to the delicate, exquisite weaving style (and taking the ornate clothing of the dead into account), it has been argued that the Tarim Basin culture greatly cared about their appearance and skillfully combined attractiveness and practicality (Mair 2006: 25).

¹⁴ When Bergman first found SRC5 he also reported on the presence of ephedra twigs. In general, ephedra has long been a key component in both traditional Eastern and Western medicine. Both Mair and Reid speculated whether ephedra was used as an ingredient in ritualistic beverages in an attempt to confer immortality or induce euphoria (such as Indic *soma* or Iranian *haoma*). Barber also emphasizes that only Indic and Iranian speakers, the two branches of the Indo-European language family that ended up farthest to the southeast, knew about *soma* or *haoma*. This means that they only started to use it in a religious contexts after splitting off from other Indo-European tribes. Barber hence puts forward the hypothesis that this could very well mean that if the Tarim Basin settlers of the Bronze Age spoke a Indo-European language, it was not Tocharian, but rather Iranian or an Indo-Iranian (Reid 1999: 77; Mair 2006: 27; Barber 1999: 159–167).

Mummies as a world sensation: Ötzi and his relationship to the Beauties

The first time that news of graves in the Lop Nor desert captured the imagination of scholars around the world was in 1934, when Sven Hedin described SRC5 as follows:

“Though the site is badly ravaged due to the erosive effect of the strong winds and has been plundered by native treasure-hunters, it is still quite imposing. The top of the hills carries a “grove” of high poles or posts, probably erected to serve as funeral monuments. [...] There are also some oar-shaped monuments of various sizes. This site is most likely a clan cemetery. The dead rested in coffins of heavy curved boards fashioned after the size of the bodies. [...] The dead were buried fully dressed and had been furnished with a few objects such as funeral deposits. Such objects were small nicely plaited baskets, some long wooden pegs with two feather tufts, resembling arrow-shafts. Ephedra twigs, various bunches of grass, feather and sinew, and in some instances, some kind of indeterminable wooden objects which probably had some religious (shamanistic) function. [...] The entire dress as well as the whole outfit in the graves is very simple and primitive and thus fairly timeless. The gay colors of the materials, the peculiar arrangement with long, flowing fringes, and the feather ornaments on caps and shoes lend these garments an expression of strange and attractive beauty [...]” (Hedin, in Sylwan 1941: 10–11).

In 1939, he published his book *Archeological Researches in Sinkiang*, covering his observations and excavation of twelve burials, including a detailed report on the approximately two hundred artifacts he had recovered. However, in a similar fashion to other early explorers such as the German Albert Le Coq and British Sir Aurel Stein, his primary intention was also to find relics connected to the art and scriptures of ancient Buddhist shrines in Central Asia (Mallory and Mair 2000: 7–14).

Half a century later, newspaper headlines reported that “history [has been stood] on its head” (Cf. Mallory and Mair 2000, referring to Mail on Sunday 1994) because the sensational finds of mummies in Xinjiang were thought of as a “significant contribution to the world’s

catalogue of prehistoric mummies" (*Discover Magazine* 1994). Subsequent to this first wave of attention, in 2000, the rediscovery of SRC5 again caused exceptional excitement in academia and the broader public. In 2004, SRC5 was acknowledged as one of the "top ten archaeological discoveries in China."

The Europoid features of the mummies, captured by the authentic and artistic photographs of Jeffrey Newbury published by *Discover Magazine*, led to much speculation. Clearly, people are startled by the looks of the mummies, even more so in case of our Beauties, but the question remains: Why are those finds so exciting? It is probably impossible to find an accurate answer to this question, let alone to explain why the public is interested in mummies, however, I will try to categorize the most apparent reasons in this specific case.¹⁵

Although this paper is primarily concerned with only two finds, as a whole a significant number of mummies have been unearthed in the Tarim Basin that belong to early burials, such as the ones exhumed at the Qäwrighul and Töwän cemeteries. Expeditions in the first half of the twentieth century had primarily recovered corpses dating from the second century BCE to the second century CE. As Mair and others have pointed out, these early burials invite further research to better understand where the Europoid settlers in the Tarim Basin came from.

Moreover, the findings in the Tarim Basin bridge earlier debates among archaeologists and linguists about the origins of the Indo-Europeans given that they are most likely the members of the language family that spread farthest to the east (Mair 1995: 282–288).

Also, further new discoveries in other regions of ECA have triggered a vivid debate among scholars about the cultural connections and origins of the Bronze Age Tarim Basin inhabitants. For instance, the findings at Keriya made by a French team in 1994 indicate that there must have been settlements by at least the Iron Age (900–202 BCE).

Furthermore, textual sources that contain accounts of Europoid-looking individuals described as having long noses, beards, and red or blond hair now reappear in a different light.

What is more, present-day scholarship is increasingly interested and successful in proving how cultures influenced one another and turn out to be interrelated. The new confidence of

¹⁵ For a comprehensive overview of the history of mummy studies, please see (Aufderheide 2003: 1–23).

archeologists putting forward such arguments has led to more precise claims, which try to illustrate causal connections rather than mere adaptation. Ultimately, present-day research intends to answer questions such as whether the ancient ECA Bronze Age cultures were really responsible for the transmission of silk to northern Europe (sixth century BCE), the Mediterranean (fifth century BCE), and North Africa (1000 BCE).

Another factor that will help to better understand the web of cultural connections is the invention of new analytical techniques, e.g., the study of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), extracted from ancient corpses, and comparative techniques that utilize other classical genetic markers. Francalacci was the first to take samples from the tissue and bones of the mummies and other skeletal material. His findings and the later works of other scholars, such as Comas and Cui, reconfirmed a possible European origin of the corpses, meaning that a "human substratum of west Eurasian origin extended far into ECA and even East Asia in the prehistoric era, and the genetic evidence is abundantly corroborated by archaeological and historical evidence" (Mair 2004: 24).¹⁶

Last but not least, the attention caused by the Tarim Basin mummies is also related to other sensational finds such as the un-icing of Ötzi, the Copper Age mummy found in the Tyrolian Alps in 1991. Two hikers discovered the remains of this thermafrost mummy by chance in a melt pool at a glacier's edge in the second half of September 1991. First it was mistaken for a glacier body, i.e. a mountaineer who had fallen in a crevasse and as a result of glacial ice movement was then exposed to the surface again. It is now believed that the reason for the excellent state of Ötzi's preservation is related to the fact that immediately after his death the body was covered with snow and later with ice and hence protected from wild animals. More specifically, he was lying in a narrow 2–3 m deep gully, which allowed the ice to move over him.

After his remains and the accompanying artifacts had been taken to the University of Innsbruck by helicopter, it soon became clear that this body was exceptional.¹⁷ The research team

¹⁶ A study carried out by Cui worked with specimens from the Qäwriughul cemetery (10 out of 31 samples).

¹⁷ The recovery under the lead of Professor Henn from the University of Innsbruck's Institute of Forensic Medicine was documented by a film crew of the Austrian television station ORF.

under the lead of anthropologist Konrad Spindler could immediately tell from the blade of the axe, which was made out of pure copper, that the body must date to approximately 3000 BCE.¹⁸

A research protocol implemented to comprehensively study the mummy and the relics uncovered during further examination of the site pieced together archeological, medical, and botanical information to better understand the last weeks of Ötzi's life and the causes for his death. The 1.60 m tall man must have weighed around 50 kg (because, as in the case of the Tarim Basin mummies, this body is also dehydrated, so that it now weighs 50 kg and measures 1.54 m). The 9 cm long hair found on his clothes enabled the researchers to reconstruct that he must have had shoulder-length dark brown hair that he wore loose.¹⁹ A bone sample taken from his upper thighbone suggests an age of 46 at the time of death.

In 2000 Ötzi was defrosted for the first time since his discovery. An analysis of the pollen found in his large intestine reconfirmed earlier assumptions, based on previous samples and the dried fruit found in his birch-bark storage container, that he must have died in spring or early summer (Oeggl et al. 2007: 854).

Spindler had earlier based his "disaster" theory of Ötzi's cause of death on the fact that unfinished arrows and a half-completed bow had been found as part of the Iceman's equipment. Spindler speculated that Ötzi must have lost his weapons and hence he was in the process of replacing them. Fractured ribs, diagnosed during X-ray analysis, led the scholars to believe that shortly before his death Ötzi must have endured some physical damage and that he was fleeing to the Schnals valley, maybe because he was familiar with the region from summer transhumance (Spindler 1996: 249–263).

New forensic radiological investigations and the study of Ötzi's last meal now make a

¹⁸ C-14 dating later narrowed the dates to between 3350 and 3100 BCE (Fleckinger 1998: 21).

¹⁹ The mummy's sex could not be determined right away and required further examination carried out by the Anatomical Institute (Fleckinger 1998: 18). For a comprehensive overview of the scientific work-up of Ötzi that lies beyond the scope of this paper, please see the works of Spindler, Fleckinger, Oeggl and Bowler as listed in the bibliography. In addition, the homepage of the South Tyrol Museum of Archeology provides detailed information, as well as insight into recently completed (<http://www.iceman.it/en/milestones>) and ongoing research (<http://www.iceman.it/en/research%20projects>).

compelling case that Ötzi was murdered. A flint arrowhead was found in his left shoulder, and therefore it is likely that the Neolithic Icemen bled to death. This hypothesis is also confirmed by a head trauma and a skull fracture, which indicate a fall or attack.

Not only were scientists able to reconstruct the circumstances of Ötzi's death, but also there is a plethora of information that enables us to have a thorough understanding of what the Iceman's life was like. His equipment implies that Ötzi was an experienced mountain hunter, and the grains he carried with him in his birch bark-container indicate that he must have been a member of an agropastoralist society.²⁰ DNA-testing revealed that the Icemen belonged the European haplogroup K, and isotopic tracing of his teeth and bone also point to the fact that he was a native of the Vinschgau or Schnals valley (Oeggl et al. 2007: 854).

With the help of the *Römisch Germanische Zentralmuseum* in Mainz, it was even possible to reconstruct his clothing, which consisted of a brown bear fur cap and shirt, covered by a grass coat. Like some of the Tarim Basin mummies, he wore fur leggings with leather suspenders, a loincloth undergarment, and leather shoes.

Since March 1998, as a result of a conflict concerning ownership that evolved at the site, Ötzi is on display at the South Tyrol Museum of Archeology in Bozen, South Tyrol, and has since then attracted more than three million visitors.²¹

How is this all related to the focus of this work, i.e., the Bronze Age denizens of the Täklimakan Desert? First, as Mair has noted on various occasions, the discovery of Ötzi's mummy shortly after Mair had first come across the Europoid mummies in the Ürümqi Museum, inspired the initiation of the large-scale research project on the Bronze Age civilizations in ECA:

²⁰ The Iceman's equipment consists of the following items: Ax, bow, quiver containing two finished and twelve unfinished arrows, dagger, retoucheur, net, (parts of a) backpack, two birchbark containers, birch fungus, a tassel with a stone bead, and a net.

²¹ The site of Ötzi's discovery was close to the Austro-Italian border. Later it was determined that he was found 100 meters within Italian territory. A compromise was reached: the body and artifacts would be studied in Austria for five years, and after that Ötzi would be permanently transferred to Italy, where he is now on display in a specially manufactured cabinet to ensure the body stays frozen at controlled humidity.

Only a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach can do justice to the complexity of issues surrounding who the mummies were, where they came from, and what language(s) they may have spoken. Neither archaeology nor linguistics nor genetics nor textile studies nor any other field of inquiry alone is adequate for cutting through the thicket of enigmas enveloping the mummies (Mair 2004: 3).

But how are the mummy studies in the ECA justified in the first place? Traditionally, there have always been concerns about ethical issues. Whether the examination of human remains and their public display is disturbing the peace of the dead will continue to be discussed within academia and society.

In addition, both Ötzi and the Tarim Basin mummies have increasingly turned into a political issue. In Ötzi's case, resolution was found through a compromise between Austria and Italy as to who owned the remains; however, this was never an easy process. For example, the court proceedings to determine how high the reward for the German couple that first discovered the Iceman should be have been settled only recently.

Even more so, one could easily write another paper to capture even a portion of the political issues that still continue to evolve around the ancient Tāklimakans. The fact that the Beauty of Krorān has become a national icon of the Uighurs, with her face adorning posters to promote the Uighur cause, is only one example that illustrates how, sadly, an even more politically explosive situation could be created. In a similar vein, the recent scandal about the display of the mummies and artifacts at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology reminds us that presenting finds of such importance will always remain a delicate undertaking. Although this seems to be unavoidable to some extent, nationalism and politics are likely to taint scientific inquiry, and all efforts to ensure impartiality should be undertaken.

Leaving the aforementioned difficulties aside, mummy studies are highly advantageous in a broad array of academic disciplines. First of all, the Tarim Basin mummies and grave goods are relics of the Bronze Age culture in the early settlements (e.g., Gumugou Qāwriḡhul, SRC5) in ECA, and putting together the pieces of this complex puzzle will provide new insights in fields

such as anthropology, ethnology, linguistics, biology, genetics, (art) history and medicine. In addition, the mummies' soft and skeletal tissue holds a great residue of latent information. This may even eventually lead to a better understanding (and potential cure) of hereditary diseases. Exciting new fields of application for and the incredible potential of mummy studies have been vividly shown by two decades of ongoing Ötzi research.

Likewise, Victor Mair has commented on future prospects of the efforts related to the Tarim Basin mummies:

During the next 25 years, it will be genetics that reveals the most about the crucial role of the peoples of Eastern Central Asia in the human drama of the past four millennia. Studies of the haplotype distribution of both mitochondrial DNA and Y chromosomes will become increasingly extensive and finely detailed, enabling us to plot the movements of ancient groups with greater precision. The final result, I believe, will be a ringing affirmation of the interrelatedness of all human communities, with the earliest denizens of Eastern Central Asia being the linchpin that ties them tightly together. (Mair 2006: 34)

From Ötzi's case, it is evident that if meticulous and impartial inquiry into the origins and identity of the mummies is carried out, scientists will obtain a wealth of new data.

Status quo

Over the past twenty-five years, the large-scale multidisciplinary research project on the Bronze Age civilizations in the ECA has yielded many results. In a concerted effort to solve the enigma around the Tarim Basin mummies, several groundbreaking revelations and even more promising hypotheses have been made.

Because the Beauty of Krörän and other mummies from Qäwrighul are the first known occupants of the the Tarim Basin, we know that humans arrived relatively early in the region. This means they must have originated elsewhere, but where did they come from and what was the homeland of their ancestors? What were some of the mechanisms of cultural transmission? What language did they speak (Mair 2006: 2–4)?

For instance due to the wheat found in baskets and ox-skins that covered the coffins of the deceased, it is now commonly believed people of the Qäwrighul/Töwän/Xiaohe culture must have engaged in agriculture and stockbreeding.²² This means they were agropastoralists; keeping several domesticated animal species such as cattle, sheep, goat and later also horse and camel, and growing wheat (Kuzmina 2008: 14, 33; Mallory and Mair 2000: 138).

Furthermore Elizabeth Barber's analysis of the clothing and burial goods found with the Tarim Basin mummies has revealed that migration to the Tarim Basin must have happened later than 4000 BCE, because this was the period at which the woolly sheep had developed in the Near East from their non-woolly forbearers. In addition, the close resemblance of the hats to European alpine hats suggests that the Beauties' contemporaries were pastoralists whose economy was closely related to the raising of goats and sheep.²³

Also, the location of the sites along the Silk Road as well as the bronze found with the burials is in indication that part of the economic activity was related to trade.

In this context, J. P. Mallory has also speculated about which languages could already have arrived in the Tarim Basin, and which ones were native to the region at the time the Beauties were alive. So far no external sources of Tocharian are known, hence it is believed that it has been spoken over broad areas in the Tarim Basin since the Bronze Age.

At this point it is obvious that compared to Ötzi, we still know very little about the Beauties' life and death. Some of the theories concerning their cultural affinity, death cult, language, and clothing have already been refined and proven by a growing body of archeological evidence.

At the same time, many questions remain unanswered, e.g.: Who were they exactly? Was the Qäwrighul/Töwän/Xiaohe culture a matriarchal society with a fertility cult, as indicated by gendered burial goods? Which social class did they mummies belong to?

Furthermore, although we know that ephedra might been used in a religious context and a great emphasis was placed on burying the deceased, we still know little about the early

²² It is important to keep in mind that the bones of sheep and goats closely resemble each other (Barber 1991: 22).

²³ According to Mair, similar black felt hats are still worn in Shaoxing, Zhejiang, today (Mair 2010: 2).

Täklimakians' religion. Given the evidence from the Iron Age settlements of Keriya, it would also be immensely useful to better understand what housing and villages could have looked like in these Bronze Age communities.

Enigmas yet to be solved and desiderata

The findings of the Tarim Basin mummies offer a unique snapshot as well as the exceptional opportunity to ultimately better understand the Bronze Age civilizations at the heart of ECA. As indicated in the previous passage, given that there are still so many unresolved questions and taking into account the methodology employed by the researchers in Austria, a list of desiderata is included below. It is highly desirable that scientists:

1. Support the efforts of the Chinese archeologists to carry out excavations at sites such as the Northern Cemetery (MSM: Beifang Mudi), situated 600 km to the southwest of SRC5. The Chinese authorities should authorize further expeditions and scholars and institutions from abroad should continue to provide financial and scientific support.
2. Substantiate preliminary assumptions concerning the Northern Cemetery by a comprehensive analysis and the publication of a (preliminary) report. Until then, the most common characteristics found at the cemeteries of the Qäwrighul/Töwän/Xioahe/Beifang Mudi culture should be compared to the extent possible. (See Appendix: Checklist for Comparative Research on the Bronze Age Graveyards of Qäwrighul/Töwän/Xioahe/Beifang Mudi.)
3. Obtain C-14 dates for all bodily remains and other organic materials found at the burial sites. Detailed reports or ideally even a database containing the findings should be made accessible to all scholars.
4. Continue the systematic study of the early Täklimakians' craftsmanship, e.g., the weaving of woolen fabrics, felt-making, leather-working, and the carving of jade, bones and wood. Given that there are so many well-preserved wood samples, dendrochronological studies should be carried out.

5. Initiate and promote comparative research of ancient DNA (both mitochondrial and Y-chromosomal) samples taken from the Qäwrighul/Töwän/Xioahe and other Tarim Basin mummies.
6. Extend the anthropological studies of the skeletal materials and compare them with the findings of Han Kangxin and samples taken from sites further away along the ancient Silk Roads.
7. Carefully examine plants and animals found with the burials. As became obvious in Ötzi's case, tiny particles such as, for example, pollen sometimes have a significant story to tell.
8. Re-investigate the mummification process. The whitish substance that presumably had been applied to the dead in order to enhance their preservation, might have played another role in the burial practice, and it therefore needs to be scientifically analyzed.
9. (Re-)apply the latest dissection methods and radiological investigations in order to obtain the fullest picture possible of the mummies' potential causes of death. In Ötzi's case, years of scientific examinations have yielded many spectacular results, and some research milestones were not reached until recently.
10. Ensure that the Tarim Basin mummies do not continue to be a political and nationalistic football. Although it is understandable that conflicting interests complicate neutral research, compromises should be found.
11. Guarantee proper conservation. Although this is a difficult task to accomplish, it is crucial to preserve the remains with state-of-the-art methods, so that many more generations of researchers and lay people will be able to study the fascinating Tarim Basin mummies.
12. Most importantly, make the mummies known to the world! More than three million people have visited Ötzi the Iceman and learned about the Copper Age culture in the Alps. Because many people are still unfamiliar with the spectacular finds in the Tarim Basin, exhibitions such as the "Secrets of the Silk Road" should continue to be displayed around the world.

Bibliography

- Anthony, David. W. "Tracking the Tarim Mummies: A Solution to the Puzzle of Indo-European Origins?" *Archaeology* 54.2 (March/April, 2001): 76–48.
- Aufderheide, Arthur C. *The Scientific Study of Mummies*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Barber, Elizabeth Wayland. *The Mummies of Ürümchi*. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1999.
- Baumer, Christoph. *Geisterstädte der Südlichen Seidenstrasse: Entdeckungen in der Wüste Takla-Makan*. Stuttgart, Zürich: Belser, 1996.
- . "The Ayala Mazar-Xiaohe Culture: New Archeological Discoveries in the Taklamakan Desert, China," *Asian Affairs* 42.1 (2011), 49–69.
- Fowler, Brenda. *Iceman: Uncovering the Life and Times of a Prehistoric Man Found in an Alpine Glacier*. New York: Random House, 2001.
- Kuzmina, Elena Efimovna. *The Prehistory of the Silk Road*, ed. Victor H. Mair. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Mair, Victor H. "Genes, Geography and Glottochronology: The Tarim Basin during Late Prehistory and History." In Karlene Jones-Bley, Martin. E Huld, Angela Della Volpe, and Miriam Robbins Dexter, eds., *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual UCLA Indo-European Conference*. Los Angeles, November 5–6, 2004.
- . "The Rediscovery and Complete Excavation of Ördek's Necropolis," *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, 34.3–4 (Fall/Winter, 2006), 273–318.
- , ed. *The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Peoples of Eastern Central Asia*. 2 vols. Washington, D.C.: The Institute for the Study of Man; Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Museum Publications, 1998.
- , ed. *Secrets of the Silk Road*. Santa Ana, California: Bowers Museum, 2010.
- Mallory, J. P., and Victor H. Mair. *The Tarim Mummies: Ancient China and the Mysteries of the Earliest Peoples from the West*. London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000.

- Museum für Indische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany, ed. *Along the Ancient Silk Routes: Central Asian Art from the West Berlin State Museums*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982.
- Oeggl, Klaus, et al. “The Reconstruction of the Last Itinerary of ‘Ötzi,’ the Neolithic Iceman, by Pollen Analyses from Sequentially Sampled Gut Extracts,” *Quaternary Science Reviews* 26 (2007) 853–861.
- Reid, Howard. *In Search of the Immortals: Mummies, Death and the Afterlife*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001.
- Spindler, Konrad. *The Man in the Ice: The Preserved Body of a Neolithic Man Reveals the Secrets of the Stone Age*, trans. Ewald Osers. London: Phoenix, 2001.
- , ed. *Human Mummies: A Global Survey of Their Status and the Techniques of Conservation*. Wien: Springer, 1996.
- Sylwan, Vivi. *Woollen Textiles of the Lou-lan People*. Stockholm: 1941.
- Wang Binghua. “Xinjiang gushi fajue ji chubu yanjiu”, (The excavation of mummies in Xinjiang and their preliminary study) *Xinjiang wenwu*, 4 (1992), 80–88.
- , ed. *The Ancient Corpses of Xinjiang and Their Culture*. Trans. Victor H. Mair. Ürümchi: Xinjiang Renmin Chubanshe, 2001.
- Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu Bowuguan (Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum), Xinjiang Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo (Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology), eds. *Zhongguo Xinjiang Shanpula — gudai Yutian wenming de jieshi yu yanjiu* (Sampula in Xinjiang of China — Revelation and Study of Ancient Khotan Civilization). Ürümchi: Xinjiang People's Publishing House, 2001.

Appendix

Checklist for Comparative Research on the Bronze Age Graveyards of Qäwrighul/Töwän/ Xiaohe/Beifang Mudi

Item	Characteristic	Qäwrighul/Töwän	Xiaohe	Beifang Mudi
1	Coffins stacked on top of each other		x	
2	Boat coffins		x	
3	Coffins covered by ox-hides		x	
4	Sacrificial altars		x	
5	Paddle-shaped wooden post standing in front of male burials		x	
6	Torpedo-shaped wooden poles standing in front of female burials		x	
7	Small wooden figurines		x	
8	Standing wooden figures		x	
9	Ersatz-mummies		x	
10	Europoid mummies		x	
11	Faces painted red		x	
12	Ox skull with red paint		x	
13	Felt heads decorated with feathers		x	
14	Wooden phalli in female burials		x	
15	Wooden masks with large noses		x	
16	Miniature bows and arrows decorated with triangular shaped markings of the shaft		x	
17	Ephedra twigs as burial good		x	
18	Small bags tied to shrouds		x	
19	Jade bracelets		x	
20	No pottery in burials		x	

See Christoph Baumer, "The Ayala Mazar-Xiaohe Culture: New Archeological Discoveries in the Taklamakan Desert, China," *Asian Affairs* 42.1 (2011), 63.

The Loulan Coffin:
The Cultural Influence of Han Dynasty China
in the Tarim Basin

Kimberly M. Castelo



Figure 1. Loulan coffin found at a tomb northeast of site LE at Ancient Loulan City, third–fourth century CE.¹

The Tarim Basin has proven to be a treasure trove for archaeologists, yielding a plethora of ancient tomb artifacts and astonishingly well-preserved mummies in the harsh desert landscape. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin rediscovered the ruins of the ancient city of Loulan along the shores of the dried-up Lake Lop Nur, commencing years of

¹ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

subsequent expeditions to the region, which have generated fascinating discoveries. One of the most remarkable burial items found in more recent excavations is a painted wooden coffin (figure 1) that dates between the third and fourth centuries CE. Excavated from a tomb located twenty-three kilometers northeast of the site LE at Loulan, the coffin bears intricate motifs shared with Chinese funerary art dating to the Han dynasty.

During the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), Loulan maintained a strategic position along the route linking China to the western regions of Asia. The city was established during the second century BCE and became the eastern gateway to the Tarim Basin. As traffic along the Silk Road increased, it became important for the Han Chinese to protect the trade route from the Xiongnu nomads, who controlled the northern steppes. This ensued in various conflicts over control of Loulan. During the first century BCE, Loulan came under the control of the Han dynasty. As a result, many of the artifacts discovered in and around the ancient city provide evidence of the influence of Han dynasty culture on those inhabiting the city of Loulan. Although the political control that China extended over the region varied over time,² the influence of Han dynasty culture cannot be denied. Loulan prospered for centuries before it was abandoned in the sixth century CE, vanishing beneath the sands of the harsh desert. It was rediscovered by Sven Hedin in the year 1900, which spurred subsequent excavations that uncovered important artifacts, including Han dynasty coins, exquisite textiles, and pottery, many of which revealed Han dynasty cultural connections. However, it was not until 2003, through a salvage expedition, that archaeologists discovered one of the foremost examples of Chinese cultural influence in Loulan: an elaborately painted coffin found in a tomb located twenty-three kilometers from the ancient city.

Although it is believed that the painted coffin (referred to as "the Loulan coffin" throughout this study) was manufactured locally, its motifs indicate the influence of Han dynasty ideals regarding the afterlife. Focusing on a selection of tomb art dating from the Han period, this study will explore the correlation between the motifs depicted on the exterior surface of the Loulan coffin with Han ideology about death and the afterlife. Commencing with a close analysis

² von Falkenhausen 62.

of the coffin, this essay will define the motifs depicted and discuss the possible symbolic meaning of the iconography, referencing earlier artistic examples and literary sources from the Han period in China. Drawing on these remarkable comparisons, it will be suggested that the development of Loulan funerary motifs as seen on the wooden coffin was the result of Chinese influence that permeated the region via the Silk Road. There is indeed a possibility that the people inhabiting Loulan during the third and fourth centuries CE not only borrowed iconography from the Han dynasty, but also shared some of the Han beliefs about the afterlife. The implications of this foreign influence will be addressed further as the study explores the association of motifs and symbols with beliefs regarding the fate of the human body and soul post-mortem.

Constructed from wood, the Loulan coffin is rectangular in shape and stands on four small legs. The exterior of the coffin is brightly decorated with intricate designs against a white background. Each panel of the coffin is clearly outlined with a solid red border. Within these borders, the surfaces of each lid and wider side panels are decorated with long, red diagonal lines that intersect at yellow circles (figure 1a), which are shown with a circular perforation at the center and small geometric shapes interspersed around the rim. Between the diagonals, continuous curving lines are depicted with coiled accents in yellow, green, black and brown (figure 1b). On the two narrow panels of the coffin, the diagonals intersect at solid yellow roundels, which are imprinted with representations of a black crow (figure 1c) and a green toad (figure 1d). The lid of the coffin features a plant-like image, which is framed by the diamond shaped diagonals with spirals surrounding it. Each of the decorative motifs exhibited on the surface of the coffin are commonly found in Han dynasty funerary art and served specific auspicious purposes for the occupant of the coffin.



Figure 1a. Detail of Loulan coffin found at a tomb northeast of site LE at Ancient Loulan City, third–fourth century CE.³



Figure 1b. Detail of Loulan coffin found at a tomb northeast of site LE at Ancient Loulan City, third–fourth century CE.⁴

³ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.



Figure 1c. Detail of Loulan coffin found at a tomb northeast of site LE at Ancient Loulan City, third–fourth century CE.⁵

⁴ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

⁵ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.



Figure 1d. Detail of Loulan coffin found at a tomb northeast of site LE at Ancient Loulan City, third–fourth century CE.⁶

Han dynasty funerary practices were quite complex and ever evolving during the period. Information about Han dynasty beliefs regarding the afterlife derives primarily from artistic images that adorn the noble tombs constructed during the period in China. Interpretations of motifs and symbols vary widely, and scholars have searched through various literary sources related to Han dynasty conceptions concerning death and the afterlife in their attempts to identify images and theorize about their significance within the funerary context. Based on a variety of mythologies and cults, some of the motives behind their burial practices have not been definitively determined, and many subtleties found in tomb art continue to perplex scholars. Despite these uncertainties, scholars are convinced that many of these burial practices were designed to serve the needs of the physical remains of the body, while others were intended to

⁶ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

provide for an existence in another world.⁷ Funerary images were created for their symbolic functions rather than purely aesthetic purposes. Therefore, Han funerary symbols and motifs served auspicious purposes in providing for — and in some cases preserving — the physical remains of the deceased, as well as preparing the soul for its journey to the life hereafter. Within the scope of Han beliefs, the elaborate decoration on the Loulan coffin may have served similar purposes.

One of the main distinguishing features of the coffin is the spiraling line pattern that dominates the exterior surface. Embellished with colorful coils throughout, the spirals are reminiscent of a stylized cloud motif found in earlier Han tomb artifacts. The cloud motif was a popular Western Han dynasty design and was in widespread use in funerary painting. The motif likely derives from the decorative style of bronzes, jade items and ceramics of the period. A similar cloud-like pattern is depicted on a coffin that was excavated from Tomb 1 at Mawangdui, located in Changsha, Hunan province. Dating to 168 BCE, the Mawangdui tomb complex has produced some of the most famous examples of Han funerary art to date. Tomb 1 contained the remains of Lady Dai, wife of Marquis of Dai. Lady Dai was entombed in four intricately painted coffins of diminishing size. The second coffin (figure 2) is painted black with swirling lines that cluster at coiled loops that are reminiscent of cloud formations. The embellished coils are quite similar to those included on the Loulan coffin. It has been suggested that such cloud patterns, upon which mythological creatures are mounted, are metaphors of *qi*, or the energy force intrinsic in the celestial realm.⁸

⁷ Loewe, *Chinese Ideas about Life and Death*, 114.

⁸ Wu Hung 128.

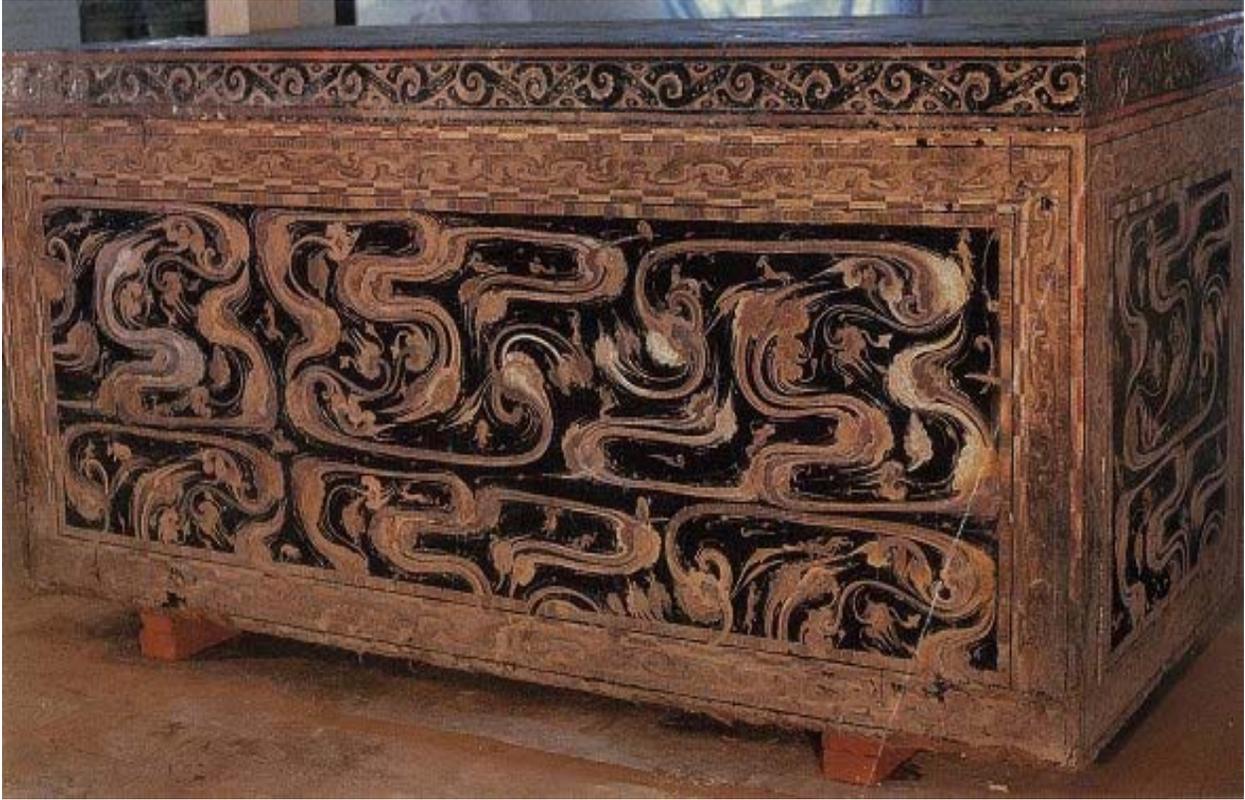


Figure 2. Second inner coffin found in Tomb 1 at Mawangdui, Changsha, 168 BCE.⁹

The cloud motif also appears in tomb reliefs from the Wu Family Shrine, which date between 147 and 168 CE. In a relief (figure 3) that depicts Ursa Major, or the Great Bear Constellation, there is a striking similarity between the spiraled patterns along the edges of the lines and the curvature depicted on the Loulan coffin. Much like the Mawangdui coffin, the figures on the Wu Family Shrine relief are shown ascending with the clouds. In this case, the spirals likely bear a symbolic meaning and are not purely decorative. The people of the Han dynasty believed that clouds could serve as vehicles by which humans ascended to the heavens and, subsequently, achieved immortality. On the Mawangdui coffin, immortal mythological beings are shown mounted on the clouds as if these are transporting them. The swirling lines emphasize the motive qualities of the clouds. If this is indeed the intention of the motif, the

⁹ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

clouds may be representative of the human soul's journey to a celestial realm, where the deceased person's soul will ultimately join the world of the immortals.¹⁰

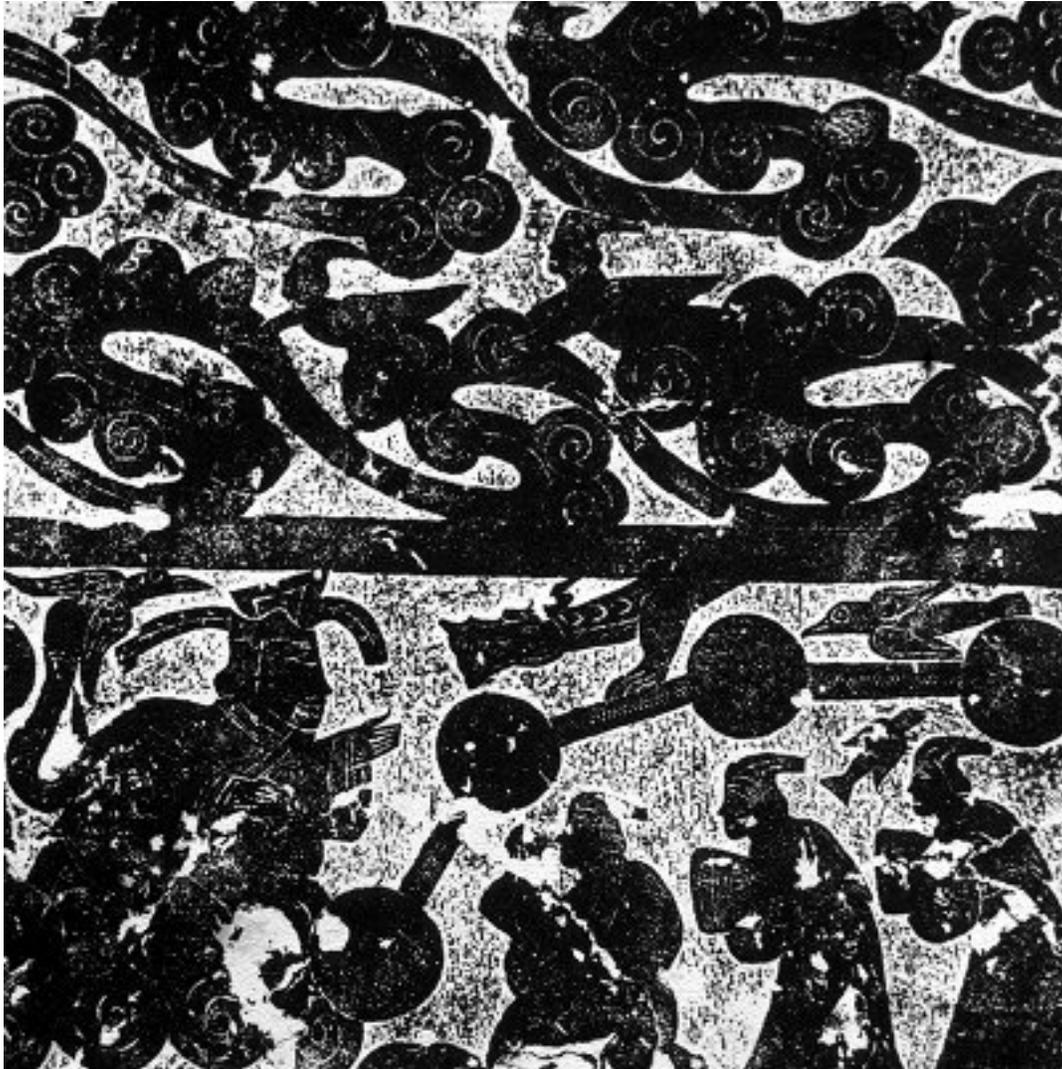


Figure 3. Rubbing of the Great Bear constellation relief at the Wu Family Shrine, Jiexiang, 147–168 CE.¹¹

The Han people believed in the soul as a two-pronged entity, which consisted of the *po* soul, the *yin* or female spirit, and the *hun* soul, the *yang* or male spirit. In life, the two partitions of the soul remained united, but after death they separated and parted ways. The *po* soul

¹⁰ Loewe, *Chinese Ideas About Life and Death*, 118.

¹¹ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

descended into the tomb with the physical remains of the deceased, while the *hun* soul prepared for a journey to the celestial realm. To accommodate the *po* soul, Han tombs would be outfitted with a diverse range of art and artifacts for the earthbound soul. The belief in the *po* soul may also explain why Han people went to great lengths to preserve the deceased body by using multiple coffins and chemical processes for embalment, evidenced in the tomb complex at Mawangdui, in an effort to ward off atmospheric effects on the body.¹² Based on the extraordinarily well-preserved corpses that have been found at burial sites in and around Loulan, there is a possibility that the people of the region believed that part of the human spirit remained with the physical body after death, whereas the decoration of the Loulan coffin is likely associated with the celestial-bound *hun* soul. In preparation for the *hun* soul's ascension, the art included in a Han tomb would bear symbolic images that were intended to guide and accompany the *hun* soul to the celestial realm.¹³ The journey to heaven was believed to be quite perilous, which resulted in providing the deceased with symbolic representations of protectors and talismans. The realm itself was frequently depicted in Han tombs, perhaps serving as a map for the *hun* soul to follow. The T-shaped painting (figure 4) from Mawangdui has been regarded by some scholars an illustrative map of the journey after death. Placed across the innermost coffin of Tomb 1, the silk painting with its complex narrative imagery has been interpreted as a guide through the two souls' journeys. The intertwined dragons that appear on the vertical section of the painting play a significant role in the pictorial representation of the soul's post-mortem journey and may have been intended to serve as guides for the soul's journey to heaven, which is depicted in the upper register of the painting.¹⁴ The clouds depicted on the Loulan coffin, paired with additional auspicious representations, may be indicative of the celestial realm to which the *hun* soul will journey after death.

¹² Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, 13.

¹³ James 60.

¹⁴ Bulling 161



Figure 4. T-shaped painting found in Tomb 1 at Mawangdui, Changsha, 168 BCE.¹⁵

Han tombs frequently bore representations of the celestial realm, described as the sphere in which “the sun, moon, stars and constellations reside.”¹⁶ The Han conception of the celestial

¹⁵ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

domain is depicted on a ceiling from a tomb near Xi'an (figure 5). In this mural painting, the celestial space is implied by cloud-like scrolls that spiral throughout the image, closely mirroring the cloud patternization of the Loulan coffin. In addition to the use of the cloud-scrolls to indicate celestial space, the Xi'an ceiling painting shares common representations of a toad (figure 5a) and a crow (figure 5b), which are placed prominently on the headboard and footboard of the Loulan coffin. In Han funerary imagery, animals functioned as important symbolic devices, and, in this context, the toad and the crow are symbolic attributes of the moon and sun, respectively. As previously mentioned, the celestial sphere was home to the sun and the moon, among other cosmic objects, making the toad and black bird also attributes of the heavenly realm. Representations of a toad and black bird, or crow, encircled in representations of the sun and moon have appeared in a multitude of examples of Han tomb art, including on a silk banner at Jinqieshan Tomb 9 (figure 6), in which a toad and crow are depicted at the top of the image providing allusions to the sky. According to fragments of notes associated with the Five Classics, attributed to Liu Xiang, a bird resides within the sun and a toad inhabits the moon, which may have spurred an artistic understanding during the Han period that encircled depictions of these creatures indicate the presence of the sun and the moon.¹⁷

¹⁶ Fong 11.

¹⁷ Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, 128.



Figure 5. Ceiling painting of the celestial realm at tomb near Jiatong University, Xi'an, first century BCE.



Figure 5a. Detail of ceiling painting of the celestial realm at tomb near Jiatong University, Xi'an, first century BCE.¹⁸

¹⁸ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.



Figure 5b. Detail of ceiling painting of the celestial realm at tomb near Jiatong University, Xi'an, first century BCE.¹⁹

¹⁹ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.



Figure 6. Illustration of a silk banner at Jinqueshan Tomb 9, Shandong, 202
BCE – 9 CE.²⁰

²⁰ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

The appearance of the bird in the sun can be traced in a number of examples of Han art. The mythological bird that inhabited the sun was believed to have had three legs; however, it is depicted with only two in the Loulan coffin and in many other examples of Han art, including in the painting at Mawangdui; therefore, it is unlikely that only the three-legged derivation of the bird is associated with the sun. The toad was also an important auspicious Han symbol and became associated with the beliefs surrounding the moon. During the Han period, the toad design was an auspicious symbol associated with good fortune and financial success, in addition to representing the moon.²¹ The toad may also allude to the mythological story of Chang E, who fled to the moon after stealing an immortality elixir that was intended for her husband, the archer Yi. There she became the goddess of the moon, accompanied by a toad and a hare. In Han tomb art, the moon is often shown with both a toad and a hare. Such is the case on the Mawangdui painting (figure 4a), but there are also several instances in which the toad is depicted as the sole attribute of the moon. In these Han representations, the toad is depicted in a manner similar to the Loulan coffin. In a fresco painting (figure 7) at the tomb of Bin Wang, which dates from about 220 to 190 BCE, a toad is shown from an aerial perspective with its limbs outstretched imprinted on a yellow circle that is outlined in red, much like the circle in which the toad appears on the Loulan coffin. While the toad in the Mawangdui painting is shown with a crescent moon, as opposed to a round one, the way in which the toad's rear legs are bent in a seated position emulates the Loulan toad. The crescent moon represents the birth of the two souls in the afterlife.²² The similarity between the Han toads and the Loulan version is quite striking and suggests the presence of Han artistic influence.

²¹ Berger 32.

²² James 15.



Figure 4a. Detail of the t-shaped painting found in Tomb 1 at Mawangdui, Changsha, 168 BCE.²³



Figure 7. View of fresco moon with toad, antechamber, Tomb of Bin Wang, Shanxi, 220–190 BCE.²⁴

²³ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

²⁴ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

With the figures of the toad and crow paired together, there may also be an association with the Chinese concept of *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* are two complementary forces of dark and light, rest and activity, cold and heat; together, they bring about the perpetual cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.²⁵ In ancient Chinese mythology, the animals themselves were closely associated with *yin* and *yang*.²⁶ The creatures appear in many different cases together on opposite ends of tomb art, including carved in relief on the door lintel of the Daobodang tomb (figure 8). In the case of the Mawangdui painting, the presence of the sun and moon as in the upper register has been interpreted as the *po* soul and *hun* soul returning to the "essence of their beings,"²⁷ as *yin* (moon) and *yang* (sun). Between the opposing images in both tombs, is a representation of the world of celestial beings, immortals, and mythological figures. The mythological figures of Fuxi and Nüwa may also have had some influence over the depiction of the sun bird and moon toad. Brother and sister, Fuxi and Nüwa played an integral part in the Han creation myth and it was believed that their marriage brought about the birth of humanity. At the Han tomb at Luoyang, an image of the toad encapsulated by the moon appears to be clutched by the curving tail of Nüwa (figure 9a). On the opposite end of the painting, Fuxi's tail takes hold of the sun, which bears an image of a bird (figure 9b). A similar scene is rendered in relief at a second century tomb at Chongqing (figure 10), in which the mythological figures are balancing the sun and moon with their hands. It is clear from these depictions that Fuxi and Nüwa were closely associated with the sun bird and toad moon, respectively.

²⁵ Loewe, *Chinese Ideas About Life and Death*, 39

²⁶ Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine*, 112.

²⁷ Bulling 69.



Figure 8. Door lintel, Dabaodang Tomb, 221 BCE – 220 CE.²⁸



Figure 9a. Detail of Nüwa with the moon, Han tomb at Luoyang, 202 BCE – 221 CE.²⁹

²⁸ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

²⁹ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.



Figure 9b. Detail of Fuxi and the sun with a crow, Han tomb at Luoyang, 202
BCE – 221 CE.³⁰

³⁰ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.



Figure 10. Brick with scene of Nüwa and Fuxi, Chongqing, second century CE.³¹

Although the Loulan coffin lacks any specific representation of mythological persons or creatures as often seen accompanying the clouds in other Han funerary art, there is a peculiar plant-like depiction on the lid of the coffin that may refer to Han mythology. Framed by the swirling clouds and placed between the two central diagonals, the image appears to have leaves and may be a representation of a tree. This tree may correspond to the *fusang* tree. The *fusang* tree played an integral part in the legend of the archer Yi, which is often representative of the concept of heaven.³² The archer Yi was the husband of the moon goddess Chang E, who was previously discussed as associated with the toad and the moon. According to the story, Yi discovered a large *fusang* tree that had ten golden birds blowing fire to form ten suns around it.

³¹ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

³² Wu Hung, "Myths and Legends," 74.

The destructive heat of the suns was burning all living creatures, so in order to save the world, Yi shot nine arrows striking all but one of the birds, subsequently melting them away. A representation of this myth appears on the upper register of the Mawangdui painting beneath the bird in the sun (figure 4). While the tree is obscured in the Mawangdui painting by other figures, *fusang* is clearly depicted on a stone carving from a tomb at Nanyang (figure 11). The tree in this image is fashioned in a similar way to the Loulan coffin with a long, thin and curving trunk and only a few branches extending from the tree. The tree has also been depicted on the lid of the Baozishan sarcophagus (figure 12). In this depiction the archer Yi is shown with bow and arrow aiming at the flocking birds. This composition corresponded to the east because of the sun and may have been associated with *yang*.³³ The *fusang* tree may have also been believed to be the vehicle by which the immortals travelled to the celestial realm, as it stood at the center of heaven and earth.³⁴ Because of the myth's association with the sun and the sky, it may have been painted on the lid of the Loulan coffin to symbolize an entrance into the celestial world. It may also be that this is intended to represent an auspicious plant called the *mingjia*. The Loulan plant bears a striking resemblance to the *mingjia* that appears on the ceiling of the Wu Family Shrine (figure 13). *Mingjia* is described as a plant that grows between steps and produces a new leaf each day.³⁵ It functions as an auspicious omen, growing when "the virtue of a ruler matches heaven and earth."³⁶ If this is indeed the intended symbolism, then perhaps the coffin entombed an important political figure. However, because of the presence of other symbols associated with celestial bodies, it seems more plausible that it may be associated with the myth of Yi and the celestial realm rather than an omen for a political figure.

³³ Wu Hung, "Myths and Legends," 157.

³⁴ Loewe, *Chinese Ideas About Life and Death*, 51.

³⁵ Wu Hung, *Wu Liang Shrine*, 238.

³⁶ Wu Hung, *Wu Liang Shrine*, 238.

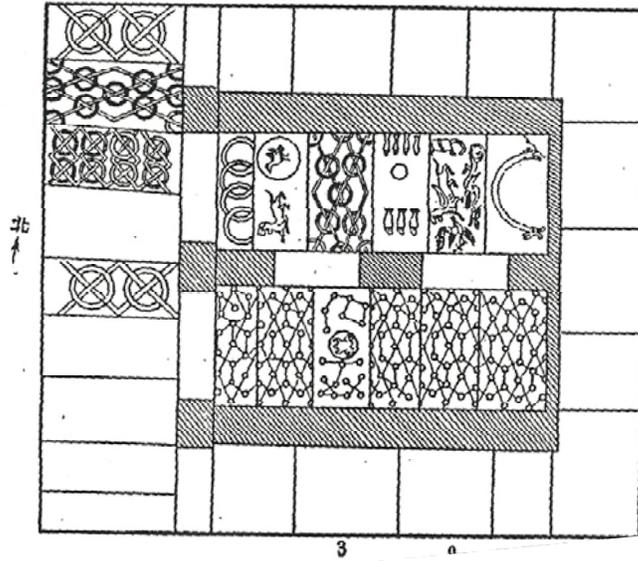


Figure 11. Ink rubbing, Nanyang, first century CE.³⁷

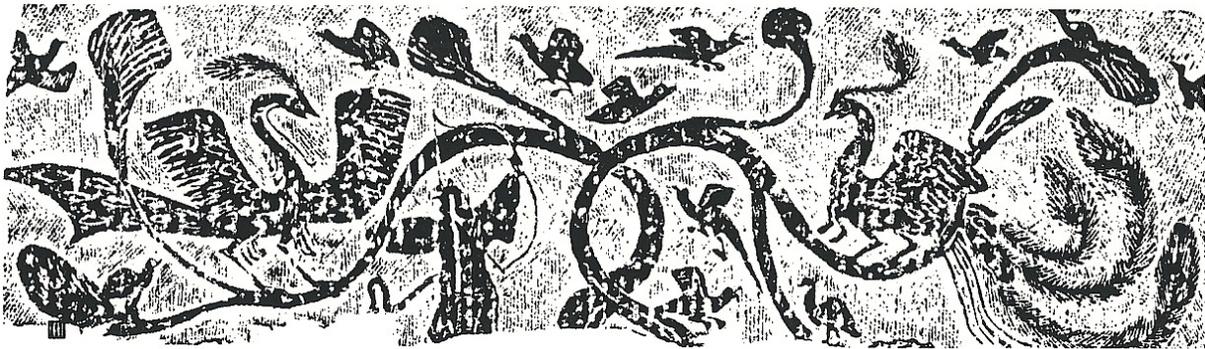


Figure 12. Ink rubbing, Baozishan sarcophagus, Sichuan.³⁸

³⁷ James 184.

³⁸ *Stories from China's Past* 157.

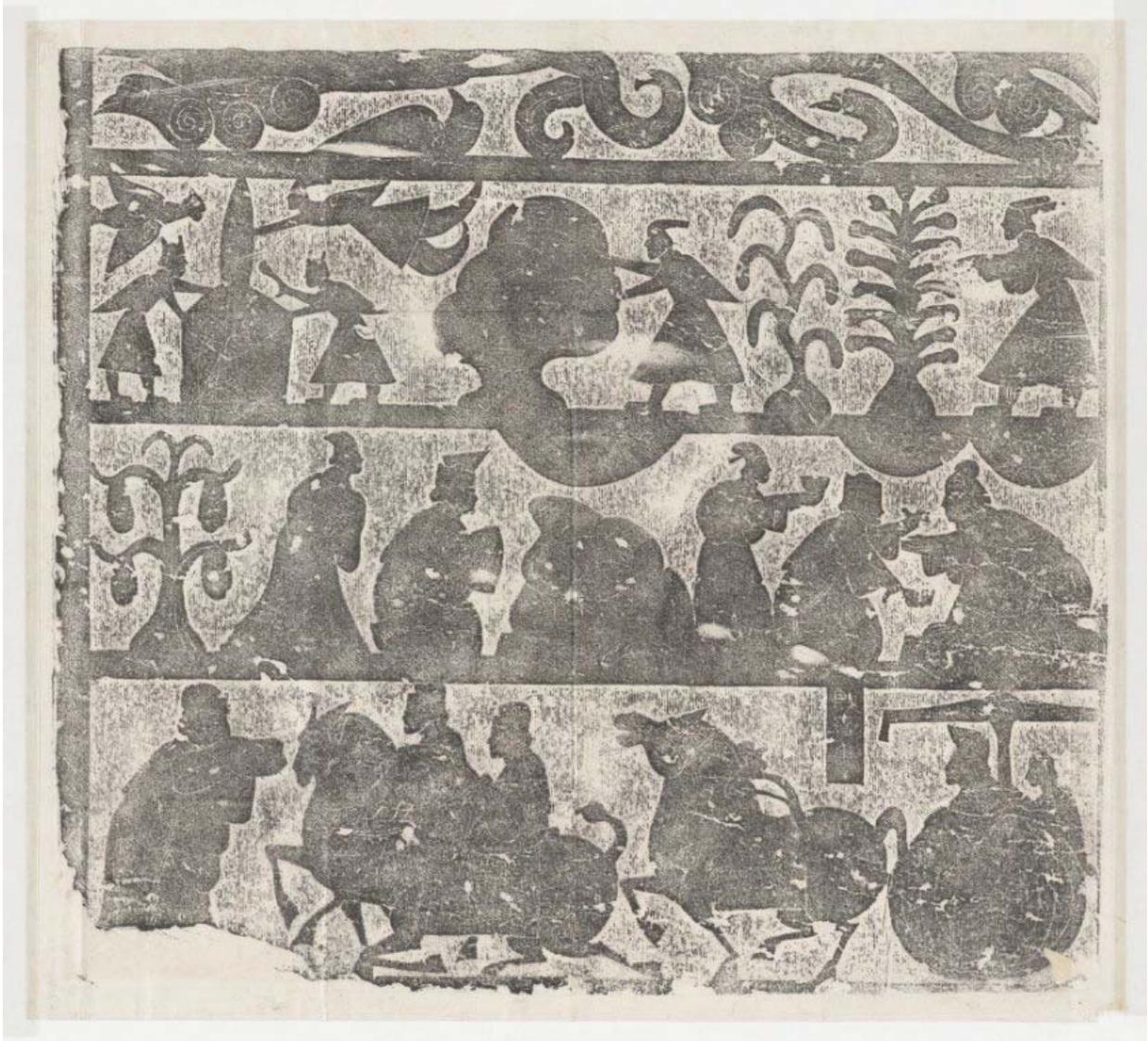


Figure 13. *Mingjia*, Wu Family Shrine, 147–168 CE.³⁹

The Loulan coffin also bears geometric patterns in the form of intersecting diagonals and circles at each of the intersecting points. The geometric patterns were introduced in later Han funerary painting, and likely derived from the geometric patterns found on earlier bronzes. A similar geometric pattern with diagonals and circles can be seen on the ceiling above the burial chambers at Zhenzhichang tomb in Nanyang (figure 14), dating to the first century CE. The ceiling of the north end of the antechamber has four beams covered with variations of a diamond–circle interlace. This chamber is covered with a multitude of stars joined by lines in a

³⁹ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

regular pattern mimicking the constellations. This is also seen again on the back wall of Xiaotang Shan Shrine (figure 15), also dating to the first century CE. Some derivations of these patterns denote the constellations, and it was not uncommon for Han tombs to bear representations of the sky on the ceiling above. The earliest cosmological representation found in China comes from the painted tomb at Luoyang (figure 16). On the vaulted ceiling, there are depictions of the sun, moon and a number of identifiable constellations, intermixed with representations of clouds. However, the precision of the diagonals intersecting at circles on the Loulan coffin may suggest another allusion. In terms of symbolizing creation or the unification of *yin* and *yang*, there are some instances where two figures are shown clinging to a circular device. At the center of the Mawangdui painting (figure 4), a bronze disc appears with two dragons weaving through it. The bodies of the dragons become intertwined at the opening of the disc, mimicking the intersection of the diagonals on the Loulan coffin. It has been suggested that the green dragon represents *yin*, while the red dragon is the embodiment of *yang*.⁴⁰ It is possible that the device was itself intended as a symbol of the union of *yin* and *yang*, or the unification of the *po* soul and *hun* soul, without which the process of birth and the journey of the souls after death could not be accomplished.⁴¹ There are also instances in which a jade disc is shown being clutched by Fuxi and Nüwa. In effect, this circle would represent the union of the two figures, which resulted in the birth of the human race, as told by the Han creation myth.⁴² It is possible that the diagonals signify the two figures coming together. Conversely, many Han reliefs are surrounded by a decorative border formed by a series of circles that are crossed by diagonal lines, therefore it is possible that this may be a decorative element, but based on the examples of Han funerary art that have been discussed thus far even decorative elements carry an auspicious purpose.

⁴⁰ Fong 11.

⁴¹ Loewe, *Chinese Ideas About Life and Death*, 66.

⁴² Loewe, *Chinese Ideas About Life and Death*, 66.

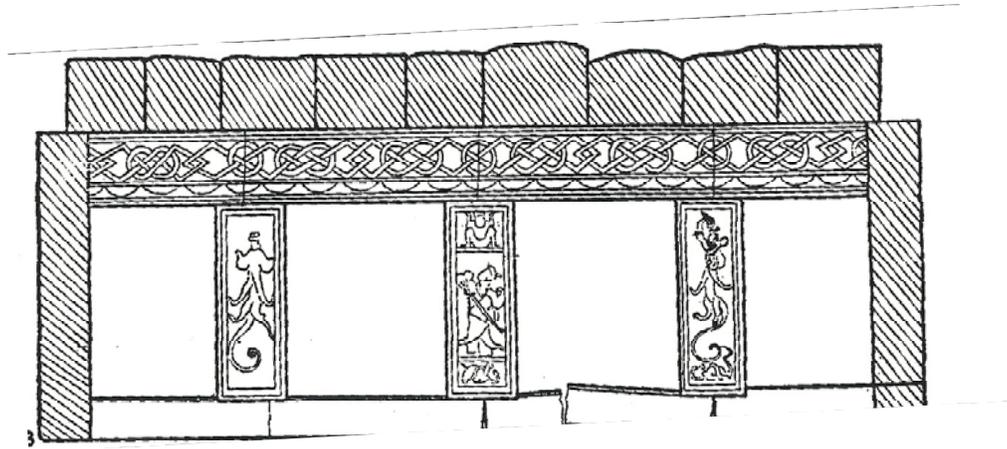


Figure 14. Zhenzhichang Tomb, Nanyang, first century CE.⁴³

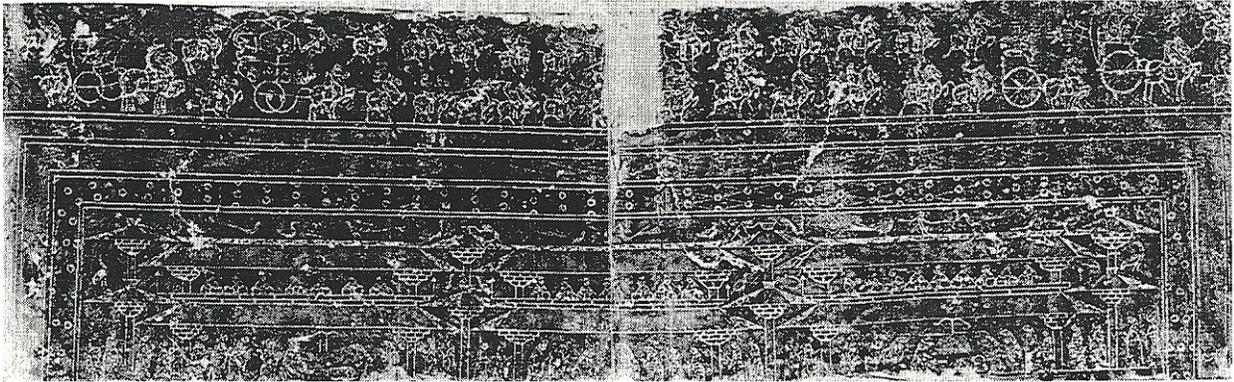


Figure 15. Xiaotang Shan shrine, Shandong, first century CE.⁴⁴

⁴³ James 159.

⁴⁴ James 208.

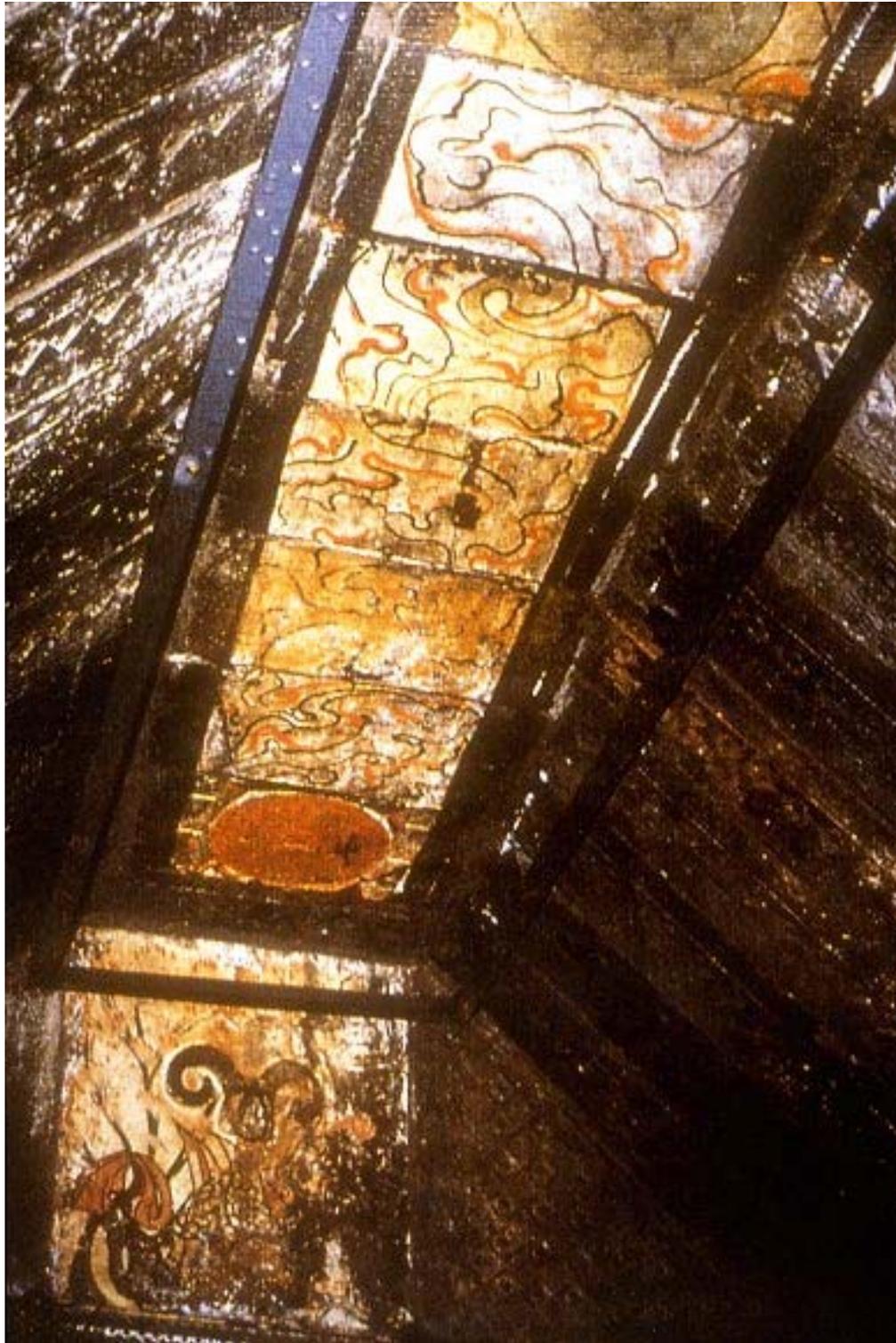


Figure 16. Han painted tomb at Luoyang, 202 BCE – 221 CE.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

The design of the circular disc requires additional analysis to ascertain its significance. The discs are painted in a yellowish hue, perhaps to appear bronze or gold, with geometric shapes cut out from the center and around the rim. These circles bear a resemblance to ritual *bi* discs, which may have served the purpose of a protective amulet. These discs, as seen in Han painting, were often symbolic representations of heaven and may signify a gateway in the celestial realm. The circles may also follow in the tradition of early Han bronze mirrors, which included decorative patterns, in low relief, which were geometrical and stylistic with no natural or animal forms.⁴⁶ The purpose of mirrors in Han burials has been debated and interpreted in a number of different ways. It has been suggested the mirrors functioned as a light source, reflecting light to illuminate the dark tomb, or would be utilized to deflect inauspicious forces that would keep the soul from traveling to celestial realm.⁴⁷ Like the *bi* discs, mirrors may have served the purpose of a protective amulet or provided a portal into the celestial realm of the immortals.⁴⁸ A bronze mirror that closely resembles Han era mirrors was excavated from a tomb in Niya (figure 17). The mirror features a circular knob at the center with a cloud pattern around the outer rim. Bronze mirrors likely made their way into the region along the Silk Road trade routes, perhaps influencing the design of the Loulan coffin's roundels.

⁴⁶ Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, 68.

⁴⁷ Brashier 202.

⁴⁸ Brashier 202.



Figure 17. Bronze Mirror, Niya, second–third century CE.⁴⁹

The concept of the circular heaven and square earth should also be addressed in relation to the circle and square designs along the rim of the roundels on the Loulan coffin. The belief that heaven was circular and earth was square formed some of the basic principles of Han cosmology,⁵⁰ and recurs in bronze mirrors. The motif of a square within a circle was most

⁴⁹ Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

⁵⁰ Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, 15.

prominent on the designs of so-called TLV mirrors, which attempted to combine these two views. TLV mirrors served the purpose of talismans that were included with funerary accoutrements providing a link between the earthly bound *po* soul and the heavenly bound *hun* soul, providing another means by which the deceased could achieve immortality in the celestial realm.⁵¹ TLV mirrors (figure 18) are characterized by prominent T, L, V markings and a square set within a circle representing the earth surrounded by the heavens, which may explain the squares along the edges of the circles. Many TLV mirrors feature an outer rim decorated with a cloud-scroll pattern much like the cloud pattern that dominates the surface of the Loulan coffin. Although the Loulan roundels do not exactly mimic the design of the TLV mirrors, it is possible that the purveyors of the coffin may have adapted some of the conceptual patterns depicted on the mirrors.

⁵¹ Loewe, *Chinese Ideas about Life and Death*, 53.



Figure 18. TLV Mirror, 206 BCE – 220 CE.⁵²

The imagery utilized in Han burials reveal some of the fundamental beliefs about the afterlife and appear to be an expression of the living assisting the deceased in preparation for their post-mortem journey into another realm. These images derived from different literary sources, creating a unique set of beliefs that incorporated various mythologies. Based on the iconography found on the Loulan coffin, it can be determined that the artist who decorated the

⁵² Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

burial vessel was influenced by the artistic traditions of Han funerary practices, which predated the construction of the coffin. Historically, the Han dynasty maintained political influence in the Loulan region as a result of trading interest; therefore, the people of Loulan were introduced to elements of Han culture that may have included concepts regarding the afterlife. In addition, due to the striking resemblance of the Loulan coffin's imagery to a number of common Han motifs, it has become clear that the purveyors of the coffin encountered Han artifacts that made their way to the region along the Silk Road, resulting in the adaptation of Han funerary motifs. The occupation of Loulan by the Han during the first century BCE may have further spurred the impact of the Han culture and subsequent adoption of Han beliefs and ideas.

Through the elaborate decoration, the coffin transforms a simple wooden funerary box by creating the illusion of a celestial world inhabited by the deceased in the afterlife. It is clear from the above analysis that the Loulan coffin bears imagery that was closely associated with Han beliefs in a celestial journey after death; however, this begs the question of whether the tomb occupant shared the beliefs surrounding this imagery. The combination of such specific motifs as the sun-bird, moon-toad, celestial clouds, and round amulets suggests that there was an understanding of the mythological concepts behind the imagery. Han funerary practices were the result of various beliefs and, sometimes, conflicting mythologies; therefore, the burial practices surrounding the use of the Loulan coffin may have adapted some Han funerary concepts and combined them with local beliefs. Thus, the coffin displays symbols that undoubtedly served an auspicious purpose in ensuring the occupant's happy existence in the afterlife.

References

- Berger, Patricia, and Jennifer Randolph Casler, eds. *Tomb Treasures from China: The Buried Art of Ancient Xi'an*. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1994.
- Bradford, Rosalind E. "The Guyuan Sarcophagus: Motifs and Explication." January 1, 2009.
- Brashier, K. E. "Longevity Like Metal and Stone: The Role of the Mirror in Han Burials," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, Vol. 81, Fasc. 4/5 (1995), pp. 201–229.
- Bulling, A. Gutkind. "The Guide of the Soul's Picture in the Western Han Tomb in Ma-wang-tui near Ch'ang Sha," *Oriental Art*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (1974), pp. 158–173.

- Bush, Susan. "Floral Motifs and Vine Scrolls in Chinese Art of the Late Fifth to Early Sixth Centuries A.D.," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (1976), pp. 49–83.
- Chaves, Jonathan. "A Han Painted Tomb at Loyang," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (1968), pp. 5–27.
- Fong Chow. "Ma-wang-tui. A Treasure Trove from the Western Han Dynasty," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 35, No. 1/2 (1973), pp. 5–14.
- James, Jean M. *A Guide to the Tomb and Shrine Art of the Han Dynasty 206 B.C.–A.D. 220*. Lewiston, Me.: E. Mellen Press, 1996.
- Karetzky, Patricia Eichenbaum, and Alexander C. Soper. "A Northern Wei Painted Coffin," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 51, No. 1/2 (1991), pp. 5–28.
- Loewe, Michael. *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death: Faith, Myth and Reason in the Han Period (202 BC–AD 220)*, pp. 72–81. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1982.
- . "The Imperial Tombs of the Former Han Dynasty and Their Shrines," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, Vol. 78, Livr. 4/5 (1992), pp. 302–340.
- . *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1979.
- Mair, Victor. "The Archaeology of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region." In *Secrets of the Silk Road*, pp. 26–54. Santa Ana: Bowers Museum, 2010.
- Mallory, J. P., and Victor Mair. *The Tarim Mummies*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2000.
- Rudolph, Richard C. *Han Tomb Art of West China: A Collection of First and Second-century Reliefs*. Berkeley: University of California Press 1951.
- von Falkenhausen, Lothar. "Notes on the History of the 'Silk Routes.'" In *Secrets of the Silk Road*, pp. 58–70. Santa Ana: Bowers Museum, 2010.
- Wu Hung. "Myths and Legends in Han Funerary Art: Their Pictorial Structure and Symbolic Meanings as Reflected in Carvings on Sichuan Sarcophagi." In *Stories from China's Past: Han Dynasty Pictorial Tomb Reliefs and Archaeological Objects from Sichuan Province*. San Francisco: Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco, 1987.
- . *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989.

Representations of Tocharians in Buddhist Paintings

Eiren Shea Warneck

Anyone studying the history of the Silk Roads, those trade routes that pass through the Tarim Basin on either side of the Taklamakan desert, will inevitably come across a group of people referred to as the Tocharians. We find scraps of their language across the northern oasis settlements of the Taklamakan, and allegedly see them depicted in Buddhist cave paintings in the same area. These mysterious people who spoke a language closely related to the western branches of the Indo-European language tree, inevitably elicit a number of intriguing questions. The most fundamental of these is who were they? What were speakers of a Western Indo-European language doing in Eastern Central Asia? Evidence for Tocharians from Chinese and Greek texts tell us that the Tocharians may have been anyone from the Yuezhi pushed out of the Gansu corridor by the Xiongnu in China to the Kushans found on the west side of the Oxus river, and a discussion or reassessment of these theories is beyond the scope of this paper.¹ Rather, this study will principally focus on depictions of Tocharians in the caves of Kizil, near Kucha, though paintings from other caves in the area and from other sites in Central Asia will also be used as evidence.

Rather than focus on the Buddhist ideology that lies behind the paintings in these Buddhist caves, I hope to reach a better understanding of who the Tocharians were by studying depictions of the local population through portraits of donors and representations of Tocharians within Buddhist narratives. Looking closely at depictions of the local population in a religious context will inevitably entail making some observations about Kuchean Buddhist art, but this too may help us better understand who these people were if we try to find specific scenes or

¹ J. P. Mallory and Victor H. Mair, *The Tarim Mummies: Ancient China and the Mystery of the Earliest Peoples From the West* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), p. 281.

representational techniques either unique to, or especially favored by, the Kucheans. What can favored modes of representation tell us about those who commissioned the works? Fundamentally, does studying these paintings tell us anything more profound than what we already know about the Tocharians from other sources?

Attempting to combine the linguistic, textual, and archeological evidence to prove the origins of the Tocharians is a veritable scholastic quagmire, which is why the focus here will be on learning more about the Tocharians who lived in the Tarim Basin through visual evidence. However, some linguistic and historical background will help in studying alleged depictions of these people. Though Tocharian and Indo-European specialists have not reached any definitive conclusions about who the Tarim Tocharians were, or where they initially came from, we nonetheless have some useful information about them, mostly from textual sources.

We know for example that there were at least two branches of the Tocharian language, Tocharian A and Tocharian B. Documents using Tocharian A have only been found in the eastern part of the northern oases, at sites such as Turpan (Figure 1), while evidence of Tocharian B has been found throughout the area.² Scholars hypothesize that Tocharian A may have been a liturgical language, meaning Tocharian B was for more quotidian use,³ in much the same way that Sanskrit and Prakrit were used in India as well as in Eastern Central Asia (in Khotan, for example).⁴ The linguistic evidence indicates that at least some of the writers of Tocharian B, those living near Kucha, for instance, called themselves Kucheans, while the writers of Tocharian A sometimes referred to themselves in texts as Agneans.⁵ Whether Kucheans and Agneans were also Tocharians is somewhat murky, and there were certainly mixed ethnic populations throughout the Tarim Basin. However, I assume that the depictions of non-Sinitic

² Mallory and Mair, p. 274.

³ Mallory and Mair, pp. 276–277.

⁴ Mallory and Mair, p. 253.

⁵ Mallory and Mair, p. 280.

peoples in Kizil and other caves frequently represent the Tocharian elite who dominated Kucha at the time.⁶

Historical references to Tocharian-speaking people can be found in Chinese historical annals. An excerpt from the *History of the Northern Dynasties* (Bei shi 北史) describing the people of Karashar (Qarashärär, or Yanqi 焉耆) is one such example:

Armaments include bows, swords, armor, and long spears. Marriage ritual is similar to the Chinese. Their dead are cremated and buried. Their mourning dress code is carried out for seven days. The men cut their hair to ornament their heads. Their writing is similar to Brahmic (*Poluomen*). They commonly serve heavenly spirits (*tianshen*) and the teachings of Buddha...they commonly prize grape wine and love music.⁷

Though Karashar and Kucha were not necessarily both ruled by Tocharians, this description fits representations of Tocharians in the paintings near Kucha quite well, especially the mention of their weapons, the hair styles of the men, and their taste for grape wine and music.

While we have good linguistic evidence for the presence of Tocharians, or at least for people who read and wrote Tocharian, along the northern oases of the Tarim Basin, the main context we have for the texts is Buddhist, meaning we have very little information about cultural practices or daily life. We confront the same problem with the paintings found near these northern oases, though in the paintings close observation can help us find evidence for cultural

⁶ Evelyn Haruye Nagai, “Iconographic Innovations in Kuchean Buddhist Art” (Berkeley: University of California Ph.D. Thesis, 1977), p. 1.

⁷ Translation based on that of Evelyn Nagai in “Iconographic Innovations in Kuchean Buddhist Art,” p. 13, Bei shi, 97, 5b. Nagai translates *Poluomen* as “India.” I have changed this to “Brahmic,” but this may refer to “India” more generally. She translates *tianshen* as “Sky god,” which I find misleading and have replaced with “heavenly spirits.” *Tianshen* 天神 also brings to mind *xianshen* 祆神, or “unorthodox gods.”

Original text: 兵有弓、刀、甲、槊。婚姻略同華夏。死亡者，皆焚而後葬，其服制滿七日則除之。丈夫並翦髮以為首飾。文字與婆羅門同。俗事天神，並崇信佛法也 ... 俗尚蒲桃酒，兼愛音樂。

From Li Yanshou 李延壽 (compiler), *Bei shi* 北史, Vol. 10, scroll 97, p. 3216 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997).

practices, dress, and favored Buddhist themes, which might give us more information about daily life than one might think when confronted with a Buddhist narrative or worship scene.

But before shifting our attention completely to the paintings, a brief overview of the history of Kucha is in order. We know something about the history of Kucha from both Buddhist texts and Chinese histories. Kucha was situated at a crucial point on the portion of the Silk Road that ran along the northern edge of the Taklamakan desert, both in terms of trade and the transmission of Buddhism from India and Central Asia to China. Kucha's strategic position was not unnoticed by the Chinese, and it was invaded several times between the first and seventh centuries before finally capitulating to the Chinese army in 658 during the Tang dynasty (c. 618–907), at which point it was incorporated into the Chinese protectorate of Anxi.⁸ Kucha may have welcomed Buddhist monks as early as the first century CE, and it was a flourishing Buddhist center by the fourth century.⁹ If we accept Su Bai's chronology of 300–650 CE for the painted caves of Kizil, then the apex of Kizil's artistic production coincides nicely with Kucha's time as a Buddhist center, from the fourth to seventh centuries.¹⁰

Along with Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and animism–shamanism existed in Kucha, but the abundance of Buddhist art reflects the fact that the ruling Tocharian elite adopted it as the state religion.¹¹ Buddhism probably began to be patronized by the ruling elite by the date of the earliest paintings in Kizil, the early fourth century — wealthy patrons probably helped finance the works. The coexistence of different schools of thought also applied to Buddhism in Kucha. The pictorial depictions in Kizil evince a preference for Hinayana themes, and Kucha was historically known as a Hinayana center; the monk Xuanzang described it as

⁸ Emanuelle Lesbre, "An Attempt to Identify and Classify Scenes with a Central Buddha Depicted on Ceilings of the Kyzil Caves (Former Kingdom of Kucha, Central Asia)," *Artibus Asiae*, (Vol. 61, No. 2 (2001), pp. 305–352), p. 307.

⁹ Nagai, p. 13.

¹⁰ Angela Howard, "In Support of a New Chronology for the Kizil Mural Paintings," *Archives of Asian Art*, (Vol. 44 (1991), pp. 68–83), p. 70.

¹¹ Nagai, p. 1.

such as late as 630.¹² However, both Hinayana and Mahayana existed in Kucha; the monk Kumarajiva, who may be the most famous Kuchean in history, and who was an early translator of Buddhist texts, converted to Mahayana in 356.¹³ It is important to keep in mind the multiculturalism and religious pluralism that existed in Kucha at the time that the paintings at Kizil were being produced.

Kucha's situation in the geographic center of a very important part of the Silk Road made contact, interaction with, and influence from other cultures inevitable. As is the case with other sites in the Tarim Basin that date from the first millennium, the most obvious artistic manifestation of cultural interaction is seen in the art of Buddhist cave sites. Scholars have studied the caves and the paintings and sculptures within them at sites near Kucha since the nineteenth century, and have all the while attempted to trace the origins of modes of expression, stylistic conventions, and themes and stories from Buddhist mythology used in this art. Teasing out which specific images and styles were transmitted from India relatively intact, which images show the influence of cultures through which Buddhism passed on its way to the Tarim Basin, and which images are local innovations, is a complex process and has been addressed by a variety of scholars, notably Alfred Grünwedel, Albert von le Coq, Monique Maillard, and Angela Howard, to name but a few.¹⁴ In addition to informing us about where specific mythology or conventions for depicting certain deities may have originated, this stylistic analysis has traditionally been the basis for dating the cave paintings, especially at Kizil. Angela Howard

¹² Howard, p. 72.

¹³ Nagai, p. 14.

¹⁴ There have been a variety of different studies undertaken to trace artistic transmission from West to East. For example, see Angela Howard "In Support of a New Chronology for the Kizil Mural Paintings," *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 44 (1991), pp. 68–83; Monique Maillard *Grottes et monuments d'Asie centrale: essai sur l'architecture des monuments civils et religieux dans l'Asie centrale sédentaire depuis l'ère chrétienne jusqu'à la conquête musulmane* (Paris: J. Maisonneuve, 1983); Albert von le Coq *Von Land und Leuten in Ostturkistan; Berichte und Abenteuer der 4. deutschen Turfanexpedition* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1928); Alfred Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan: Bericht über archäologische Arbeiten von 1906 bis 1907 bei Kuca, Qarasahr und in der oase Turfan* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1912).

addresses the problems that arise from this method of dating in great detail in her 1991 article "In Support of a New Chronology for the Kizil Mural Paintings." To summarize, beginning with Alfred Grünwedel in 1912, scholars have generally categorized the paintings at Kizil into two groups: those of an earlier date (*c.* 500 CE), which show Gandharan, or Indian, influence, and those of a later date (*c.* 600–650), which show Sassanian, or Iranian, influence (Howard, p. 68). However, later studies by the Chinese scholar Su Bai not only postulate an earlier date for the first stage of cave paintings (*c.* 300–395 CE), but also show that multiple painting styles were in use during given periods.¹⁵

The debate over what date to give as the beginnings of Buddhist art in Kizil has yet to be resolved, though there is general agreement that Gandharan and Iranian arts impacted those of Kizil. This is to be expected, given the route Buddhism took before arriving in Kizil, passing out of India and through modern-day Afghanistan and the Bactrian and Sogdian kingdoms before arriving in the Tarim Basin. The caves that allegedly depict Tocharians date from the last period of artistic production, the mid-sixth to mid-seventh century, while in earlier caves the characters depicted in Buddhist scenes have a much more explicit connection to India, especially regarding their dress. In spite of the general consensus of Gandharan and Iranian influence, the Kizil caves, which are the largest cave complex near Kucha with a total of 236 caves, of which 80 were used for worship, have nonetheless been described as manifesting a relatively "pure" Kuchean cultural identity.¹⁶ The Kuchean cultural identity, it seems, was derived of a mix of influences from other Central Asian peoples and customs specific to Kucha itself. Keeping this in mind, the remainder of this paper will be devoted to looking at how adjacent cultures may have impacted the Tocharians/Kucheans outside of a Buddhist context, before looking at specific themes in Kuchean art that are unknown in Buddhist art prior to these depictions. In addition, as the focus of this paper is depictions of Tocharians, it is the art of these later caves that explicitly show Tocharians that will be studied.

¹⁵ Howard, pp. 70–71.

¹⁶ Lesbre, pp. 307–308. Lesbre argument for attributing to the caves a "pure" identity is the lack of Chinese artistic influence seen in the paintings (p. 308).

One culture that noticeably influenced Kizil by at least the last phase of artistic production (the mid-sixth to mid-seventh century) was that of the Sogdians, a Middle Iranian group who lived in pockets all over the Tarim Basin into China, but whose cultural center was situated at Samarkand, in present-day Uzbekistan. The potential influence the Sogdians had on the Tocharians of Kizil has not been sufficiently explored. What is particularly interesting about this influence is that we see it most clearly impacting non-Buddhist cultural practices, especially dress and funerary practices. Sogdian or Iranian influence might also explain the predilection the artists of Kizil had for painting Maitreya.

The most straightforward way to approach the paintings is with an initial look at how so-called Tocharians are represented on the murals. One of the best-known depictions of Tocharians is the mural showing four male figures (Tocharian knights) from the Cave of the Sixteen Sword Bearers (cave 8, or Höhle der Sechszehn Schwetträger) now in the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin (Figure 2).¹⁷ The section in Berlin shows four standing figures, frontally oriented but with their heads turned to the lower left. They each wear a kaftan-type coat, each with a different pattern and color, as well as trousers tucked into boots. They strike the same pose, with their left hand holding the hilt of a dagger tucked into their belts, and their right hand raised. They also have a long sword hanging on their left.¹⁸ Their hair appears reddish and is cropped into a pageboy style cut that falls below their ears. This description may sound familiar as it echoes the one quoted above from the *Bei shi*, especially regarding the hairstyle. Scholars frequently comment on the "European" appearance of these figures,¹⁹ though apart from their hairstyle and color they are dressed more like Iranians, or more specifically, Sogdians.

¹⁷ These four figures are identified as "Tocharian knights" in many sources including Härtel and Yaldiz, *Along the ancient silk routes: Central Asian art from the West Berlin State Museums: an exhibition lent by the Museum für Indische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982), p. 168.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the potential connections the Tocharian long sword has to European arms, ie. the Hallstadt swords, see Ulf Jäger, "The New-Old Mummies from Eastern Central Asia: Ancestors of the Tocharians?" *Sino-Platonic Papers* no. 84 (1998), p. 3.

¹⁹ Jäger, p. 1.

A comparison between the four Tocharians and the banqueting Sogdian merchants depicted on wall paintings in Pendjikent illustrates this point (Figure 3). The scenes from Pendjikent are much more naturalistic and fluid, attention has been paid to the depiction of drapery on the sleeves of the merchants, and the figures turn and gesture to each other naturalistically. Though the artistic treatment is different, their garb is remarkably similar to that of the Tocharians from Kizil. They, too, wear kaftan-coats of different colors and patterns, as in Kizil the kaftans are decorated with a border design of a different pattern than the rest of the material. The designs used on the coats are comparable: we find a small pearl roundel, one of the most identifiably Iranian patterns in both paintings (Figure 4). The pearl roundel derived from metalwork, a good example of which is seen on a ring dating to the second to fourth century from Jarintay, Nilqa County (Figure 5), and was translated into textile design by around the time these murals were painted.²⁰ In addition, kaftans in both paintings show a similar dotted motif where the white dots are organized into grouped of four to resemble little flowers (Figure 6). In Kizil, in this and other depictions of Tocharian men, the kaftan is worn open at the throat, while in Pendjikent the kaftan is worn both open and closed at the neck (Figure 7). The Sogdian merchants, like the four Tocharians, all have daggers hanging at their belts, though no long swords.

The Kizil murals date from the late sixth and mid-seventh centuries, which indicates that the residents of Kucha were influenced by Iranian dress prior to this time. This is entirely feasible in light of the fact that Sogdian traders were traveling through the Tarim Basin and into China by the early fourth century, as attested to by a bag carrying Sogdian letters found by Aurel Stein near Dunhuang.²¹ The Pendjikent murals date from the eighth century, therefore later than

²⁰ Elizabeth Wayland Barber, "Early Textiles," in Mair (ed.), *Secrets of the Silk Road: An Exhibition of Discoveries from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China* (Santa Ana, Calif.: Bowers Museum, 2010, pp. 70–78), p. 78.

²¹ Jonathan Karam Skaff, "The Sogdian Trade Diaspora in East Turkestan during the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, (Vol. 46, No. 4 (2003) pp. 475–524), p. 481; W.B. Henning, "The Date of the Sogdian Ancient Letters," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, (Vol. 12, No. 3 / 4, Oriental and African Studies Presented to Lionel David Barnett by His Colleagues, Past and Present [1948], pp. 601–615), p. 601.

the Kizil knights, but a Sogdian funerary couch from the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577 CE) depicts the familiar kaftan with its decoration of pearl roundels (Figure 8), which shows this style of dress was common at least two centuries before the Pendjikent murals. In addition, although it is not entirely of the same style, the beautifully preserved sartorial shell of "Yingpan Man," from the third or fourth century, found at Yingpan in the Tarim Basin east of Kizil, might be seen as a precursor of these sixth- to eighth-century kaftans (Figure 9). Yingpan Man's coat is of a similar shape to the later kaftans, and he wears trousers beneath it. However, his coat is much more lavishly decorated with a symmetrical pattern of putti, goats, and trees. Yet another remarkable comparison is a silver cup said to be in "Sassanian style" which is decorated with an equestrian figure wearing familiar looking long kaftan, boots, and trousers, with bobbed hair (Figure 10).²² Although this figure carries a quiver in the place of a long sword, his resemblance to the Tocharian knights is astonishing and even more similar than the Sogdian representations.

A painting of donors from Kizil shows the male figure dressed in the same style as the four Tocharian knights (Figure 11). We see the hilt of his long sword peeking out from his left side, and on his right side a little purse hangs from his belt. If we accept that the four Tocharians are knights, then this male donor is probably a knight as well. In addition to donor knights dressed in fancy fabrics, armored warriors are also in evidence in Kizil. One famous example is the group of knights depicted in the "Cave of the Painter" (cave 207) (Figure 12). The armor of these knights looks like a chain-mail version of their kaftans and trousers with boots, with a stylish upturned collar to protect the neck and ornamented helmets with small animal figures on the top. This armor somewhat resembles Sogdian armor from the seventh century, as illustrated in a duel scene on a metal plate (Figure 13). Both types of armor have been made by assembling series of scale-like pieces of metal into lines, which gives the armor the appearance of being covered with horizontal stripes. In what might be a parallel to how the Sogdians and Tocharians wear their kaftans, respectively, the Sogdian knights are shown with their armor closed around their neck, much like their kaftans, while the Tocharian armor opens around the neck and

²² Albert von le Coq, *Von Land und Leuten in Ostturkistan; Berichte und Abenteuer der 4. deutschen Turfanexpedition* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1928), p. 43.

continues straight upward to provide protection. The stripy quality of Tocharian armor is emphasized in a painted depiction of an armored equestrian knight from cave 14 in Kizil (Figure 14) who has green and blue striped armor. This figure lacks a helmet and instead has a nimbus. In addition, he has no long sword, and he is riding a white steed, which has lead Jacques Giès to hypothesize that this knight is a representation of Prince Siddhartha, the historical Buddha, leaving the palace where he grew up to embark on a more spiritual life.²³

In addition to knights, we find depictions of female donors and other secular figures in Buddhist caves near Kizil. One example is of a female donor in Kumtura (Figure 15). Her hair falls in a braid down her back, though on first glance she appears to be coiffed in similar fashion to the male figures, with short bangs curling above her forehead. She wears a long, full dress with a short, cinched jacket with wide lapels. Her entire outfit is decorated with the pearl roundel motif. A nearly identical ensemble is worn by a lady donor in Kizil (Figure 11), though in this example the material of the skirt is covered in the small dotted motif seen on the coat of one of the Tocharian knights described above. Both women hold what might be a flower in their left hand, the Kizil female donor holds a *fleur de lys* while her Kumtura equivalent holds a tapered object that looks like it is attached to a rope or ribbon or string of pearls. The style of these women's dresses is certainly not Chinese in origin, and they weirdly seem to predict the styles of nearly one thousand years later in Europe of the Baroque period, down to the *fleur de lys* pattern (Figure 16). For the moment I am unaware of any depictions of Sogdian or other Central Asian women who wear similar dresses. In Pendjikent, girls and women are depicted wearing kaftans that might be plain or lavishly woven depending on the social status of the woman illustrated (Figure 17). As Boris Marshak remarks, "everyday [female] Sogdian dress was similar to the clothes of men."²⁴

There are other secular figures represented in these caves, though the predominance of knights and their ladies can probably be attributed to their roles as donors who financed the wall

²³ Jacques Giès, *Painted Buddhas of Xinjiang: Hidden Treasures from the Silk Road* (London: The British Museum Press, 2002), p. 76.

²⁴ Boris Marshak, *Legends, Tales, and Fables in the Art of Sogdiana* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2002), p. 63.

paintings. Non-elite figures were portrayed as well, including a pair of merchants about to dive off of a sinking boat (Figure 18), who are dressed in plainer clothing than the knights, namely unembellished and shorter coats and wide trousers. Two redheaded riders sharing a horse wear similarly unadorned coats and trousers tucked into their boots (Figure 19). All of these characters are found in cave 14 at Kizil. Neither the merchants nor the equestrians carry a long sword, though the riders appear to have daggers tucked into their belts; daggers were apparently a standard accoutrement for both Sogdian and Kuchean men. While merchants were one of the most successful classes amongst the Sogdians, warriors or knights, shown with long swords were the favored class amongst the fifth- to seventh-century Kucheans. Other professions are depicted, too: one of the most interesting figures is that of a painter (Figure 20) from the Cave of the Painter (cave 207, Höhle der Maler) in Kizil. The painter wears a shorter coat than the knight-donors, and its material, rather like that of the equestrians, is not decorated with elaborate motifs. He wears the coat in a similar fashion to other male Tocharians, open at the neck with wide lapels. In addition, his hair is long and dark in contrast with the cropped, reddish hair of the knights, reminding us once more that the inhabitants of Kucha did not belong to a uniform ethnic group.

Based on these examples, we have a good idea of what Tocharians and other Kucheans looked like in the sixth and seventh centuries, and it is clear that Sogdian fashion had a great impact in Kucha. Now we should turn to cultural practices expressed in Buddhist paintings that most likely have a non-Buddhist origin to learn something more about traditions that were adopted at an early date by the Tocharians. Perhaps clothing styles might be thought of as easily embraced — there may have been a fad for Sogdian-style clothing in the sixth and seventh centuries Kucha; this does not necessarily mean that there was a profound cultural relationship between Sogdians and Tocharians. However, cultural rituals are generally more conservative and less likely to change as frequently as clothing styles. Therefore, the presence of specific customs that are common to neighboring cultures may indicate a more meaningful relationship. One such practice is illustrated in the intriguing custom of face-cutting during mourning periods.

Mourning rituals in Kizil are depicted in lamentation scenes associated with the cremation of the Buddha. The clearest depiction of this is in such a scene in the Maya cave III

(cave 224, Mayahöhle 3 Anlage). The Buddha, surrounded by monks, lies swaddled in cloth in an opened wooden coffin that has been set on fire (Figure 21). The spectators, composed of the local population dressed in a similar manner to the Tocharian donors discussed above, look on from above the cremation and show their anguish at the Buddha's demise by throwing up their hands, wailing, pulling at their hair, and cutting their faces with knives (Figure 22). The practice of exaggerated lamentation, and especially mortification of the flesh in the form of cutting the face, ears, torso, and hair, is one found in many parts of Central Asia, attested to by both textual and pictorial evidence. We find a description of such rituals in a Manichean-Sogdian text fragment called TM 393 and translated by W. B. Henning:

For when the 'soul service' is performed, one... Kuyune steps forward...(Second page) purifying, without delay...he dismounts, and there take place spilling of blood, killing of horses, laceration of faces, and taking (cutting off?) of ears (?). And the lady Nan(a), accompanied by her women, walks on to the bridge, they smash the vessels, loud they call out, they weep, tear (their garments), pull out (their hairs), and throw themselves to the ground.²⁵

Henning describes this text as a "translation from Middle Persian or Parthian," which indicates the dispersal of these practices throughout Iranian communities of Central Asia.²⁶ Jacques Grenet observes that in this text, the Manicheans condemn such practices as "perversions of Zoroastrianism," a religion whose practices "Mani's adherents propose to restore to their primal purity."²⁷ Further indication for diffusion of these kinds of mourning rituals is found in Herat, where the *Vendidad*²⁸ set strict rules for the observation of mourning, limiting it

²⁵ W. B. Henning, "The Murder of the Magi," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 2 (Oct., 1944), pp. 143–144.

²⁶ Henning, "The Murder of the Magi," p. 135.

²⁷ Grenet, *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie Centrale sédentaire: de la conquête grecque à l'islamisation* (Paris: Editions du C.N.R.S., 1984), p. 267.

²⁸ The *Vendidad* is a collection of texts within the *Avesta*, the holy book of Zoroastrianism. The full texts of both the

to three days, and banning exaggerated lamentations, including hitting oneself, crying, and wailing.²⁹

There are several Central Asian representations of such mourning practices, including a scene at Pendjikent (Figure 23), and one at Mizdaxkan, a site in ancient Chorasmia located near the lower part of the Oxus (Amu Darya) River to the west in present-day Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (Figure 24). In Pendjikent, the scene depicted is a wall painting showing mourners cutting their faces and hair. Grenet distinguishes two "physical types...one Iranian, the other, Turk," noting that those of the Turkic physical type have scars on their faces, presumably from prior attendance at such rituals, which leads him to question whether these mourners may have been professionals engaged to mourn for the deceased.³⁰ According to Evelyn Nagai, such rituals in the Sogdian context of the Siyavush legend have a direct correlation to "the seasonal cycle of death in winter and rebirth in spring; and to the mysteries of Mithraism, in which Mithra must kill the bull to ensure that it, and life itself will be reborn in the Spring."³¹ This potential connection with Mithra is intriguing and will be elaborated upon below. The Mizdaxkan example, a painted scene from a ceramic vessel, does not show explicit face and hair cutting, but the figures clearly have cuts on their faces and chests, and they throw up their hands in a gesture of lamentation familiar from both Kizil and Prendizkent. An ossuary from Tokkala, a site situated near the upper part of the Oxus River to the east in present-day Uzbekistan, dating to the mid-eighth century (Figure 25) shows another lamentation scene, though the figures, who are not as finely painted as in the other examples, do not appear to be cutting their faces, but simply throw up their hands and tear at their hair.

English translation by James Darmesteter (1890 and 1898) and the German translation by Fritz Wolff may be found on the website Avesta Zoroastrian Archives. Here, the *Vendidad* is described as "an ancient collection of Zoroastrian myths, prayers, and religious observances, intended to defend against sources of infection and evil. Particular attention is given to disposal of corpses and other "dead matter" (*nasu*) to avoid polluting the earth, water, etc." Avesta Zoroastrian Archives, "Avesta: Vendidad" (http://www.avesta.org/vendidad/vd_tc.htm).

²⁹ Grenet, *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie Centrale sédentaire: de la conquête grecque à l'islamisation*, p. 40.

³⁰ Grenet, *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie Centrale sédentaire: de la conquête grecque à l'islamisation*, p. 261.

³¹ Nagai, p. 119.

Clearly, ossuaries and reliquaries are good sources for pictorial evidence of funerary practices. One of the most beautiful examples of these is a reliquary from Kucha, dating between the sixth and seventh centuries, depicting familiar-looking Kucheans/Tocharians, adults as well as children (Figure 26). This vessel, perhaps more than any other object or painted scene from Kucha, shows the multicultural quality of sixth- and seventh-century Kucha. The lid has a design of a winged putto playing a flute, enclosed in pearl roundels with a hairstyle corresponding to those of Chinese children, with the center part of the head shaved and tufts of hair above the forehead and the nape of the neck. With this figure alone we might trace influence to Sogdians, through the pearl roundel, the Classical Roman world through the putto figure (compare him to the putti on the robe of Yingpan man, Figure 9), and China through the hairstyle. On the body of the reliquary, rather than an explicit scene of lamentation, dancers wearing animal masks and colorful costumes perform a dance, while musicians, some of them children, accompany the dancers on flutes, large drums, and harps. Nagai points out that Chinese sources often speak of the importance of dancing and drumming in Turkic cultures, and believes this representation may have a connection with shamanism.³² This may be yet another representation of a pre-Buddhist ritual probably already well established in Kucha before the advent of Buddhism and subsequently absorbed into Buddhist practice.

Returning to the potential connection between Kuchean Buddhism and Mithraism mentioned above in relation to mortification of the flesh, it should be noted briefly that many scholars believe there is a connection between Maitreya and Mithra, and that Maitreya was the most frequently depicted deity in Kizil.³³ This is not the forum to embark on an in-depth analysis of Mithra iconography in Kuchean art, and I only wish to mention the connection to further demonstrate the influence Iranian elements had on the Tocharians of Kucha. Mithra is a difficult deity to define succinctly: he is associated with, among other manifestations, a Roman cult similar to that of Sol Invictus; Sassanian Zoroastrianism, where he is an assistant to the "supreme

³² Nagai, pp. 123–124. For more in-depth analysis regarding the reliquary, see Nagai, pp. 121–126.

³³ For example, Nagai, pp. 58, 68; Simone Gaulier, Robert Jera-Bezard, and Monique Maillard, *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), p. 12.

deity" Ahura Mazda; while in Iranian cults he is referred to in the Avesta.³⁴ Maitreya, on the other hand, in Buddhism is a Bodhisattva who is also the Buddha of the future.³⁵ The connection between the two is probably a result of the widespread nature of the Mithra cult in the Roman world as well as the Near East at approximately the same time that Buddhism was being spread from India into Central Asia. Nagai argues convincingly for the connection between the two, in which, among other things, she points out that Maitreya is referred to as "Mitrai" ("friend") in the Tocharian *Maitrisamit* and that Maitreya is given the epithet "unconquered" (*ajita*), which may correspond to Mithra-Invictus ("Mithra-Unconquered").³⁶ In addition, both Maitreya and Mithra are associated with the sun, and with their role as psychopomp, or conductor of souls to the afterlife.³⁷ The wall paintings at Kizil are not the only place where we find evidence for the association between the Mithra cult and Buddhism; indeed, more explicit depictions of Mithra were seen at Bāmiān in paintings dating to the second half of the sixth century (Figure 27).³⁸ Kuchean preference for depictions of Maitreya may show the influence of a Mithra cult already present in the area before the advent of Buddhism; the transfer of a well-established and familiar iconography may have been comforting in depictions of new deities. On the other hand, perhaps Mithra-like attributes were already associated with Maitreya in other Buddhist sites and were accepted along with other pictorial conventions during the transmission of Buddhism and Buddhist pictorial art to Kucha.

A discussion of Buddhist mythology in the caves near Kucha has not been a part of this paper, but when trying to define the character of the Tocharians or Kucheans who inhabited and

³⁴ A. D. H. Bivar, *The Personalities of Mithra in Archaeology and Literature* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 1998), p. 2.

³⁵ Gaulier et al., p. 11.

³⁶ Nagai, p. 68. For complete analysis of the similarities between Mithra and Maitreya, see pp. 68–81.

³⁷ Gaulier et al., p. 12.

³⁸ Frantz Grenet, "Mithra ii. Iconography in Iran and Central Asia," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, August 15, 2006, available at <http://www.iranica.com/articles/mithra-2-iconography-in-iran-and-central-asia>. Accessed April 28, 2011.

commissioned these Buddhist works, any evidence of themes particular to Kucha deserves to be mentioned. One such particular theme is the villainized, sinful woman in the art of the Kucha area as observed by Lesbre in her article, "An Attempt to Identify and Classify Scenes with a Central Buddha Depicted on Ceilings of the Kyzil Caves." The prototype of the lustful woman is shown in paintings such as the *Adulterous Woman Whose Son Perishes in the Well* from cave 171 which Su Bai dates to the fifth or early sixth century (Figure 28), and the *Unchaste Wife and Her Lovers' Basket* from the Cave of the Pot of Hell (cave 80, Höllentopfhöhle), from approximately the fourth century (Figure 29).³⁹ As she notes,

The illustration of stories with demonized women on the ceilings of the Kizil caves is somehow contradicted by the strikingly sensual images of women depicted in the royal couples on side-walls of the same sanctuary.... This pictorial and moral ambiguity is quite specific to the art of Kucha and apparently stopped at the Chinese border.⁴⁰

This contrast between the sinful women shown in Buddhist scenes and women donors gives the viewer a feeling of a society at once interested in secular pleasures, but perhaps reined in by the reminder of the consequences of sin, in what appears to modern viewers to be a much more current cultural phenomenon (think of young Stephen Dedalus in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* fighting between his urges for sensual experience and his upbringing in a strictly Catholic environment focused on sin). The "moral ambiguity" of the Kizil paintings, if nothing else, gives us a richer picture of the psychology of the population who inhabited Kucha between the fourth and seventh centuries.

Putting all of this patchy information gleaned from visual sources together does not give us a full picture of who the Tocharians were. Many of the issues addressed in this paper such as funerary practices, the connection between pictorial depictions of Mithra and Maitreya, and the morality evinced in the paintings, could easily be expanded upon. However, even without having

³⁹ Lesbre, pp. 341, 350.

⁴⁰ Lesbre, p. 350.

engaged in an in-depth study of any one of these issues, we still might be able to draw some preliminary hypotheses. The most evident of these is that elements such as the representations of pre-Buddhist practices shown in the paintings might indicate that the Tocharians had already inhabited the region for some time before the advent of Buddhism. Tocharians, linguistically a western Indo-European group, must have been in contact with Altaic and Iranian groups, especially the Sogdians, from an early enough date to have absorbed specific cultural practices that were probably not transmitted alongside Buddhism. However, the question of at what point these western Indo-Europeans came into the Tarim Basin still remains.

Images

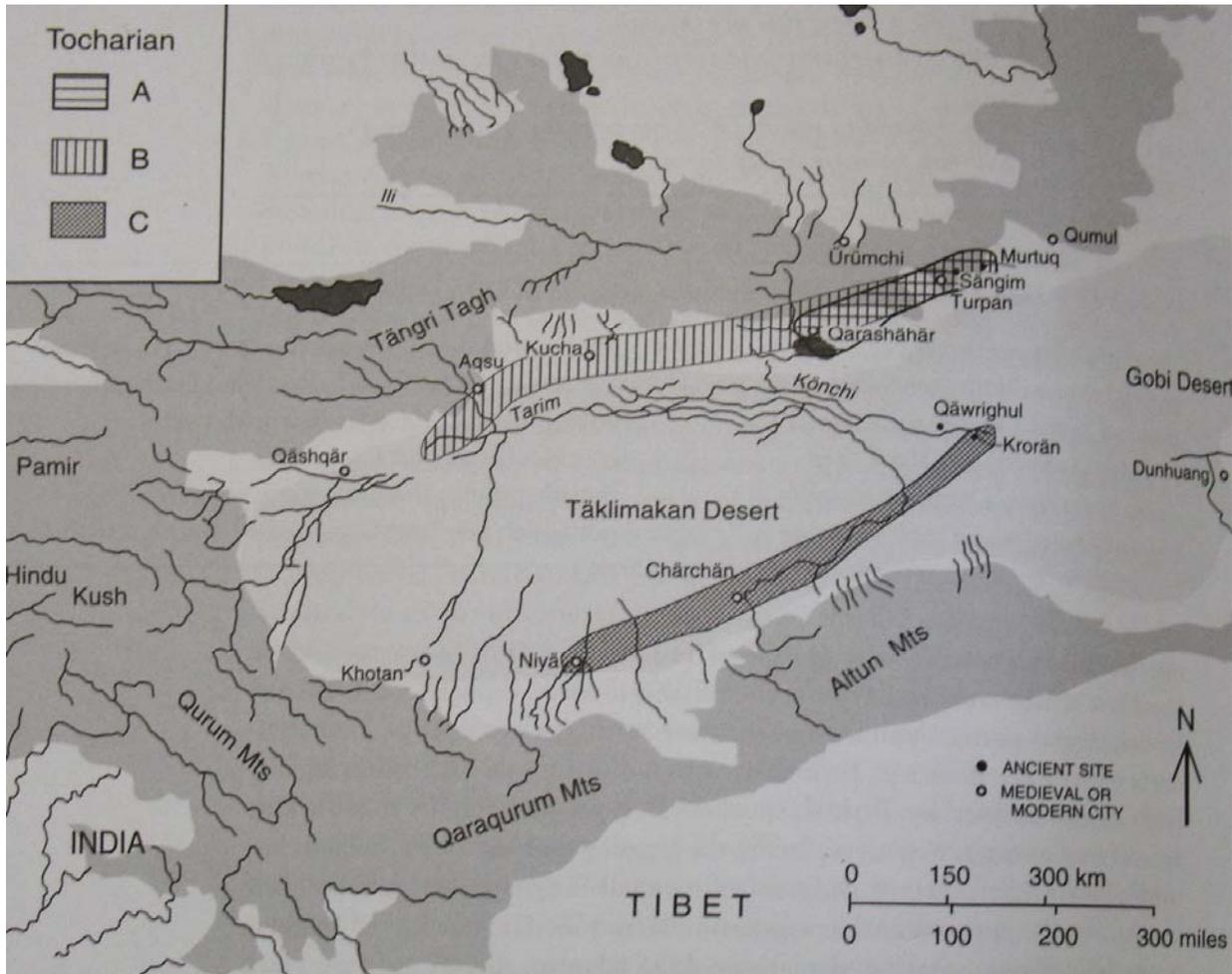


Figure 1. Map of the Tarim Basin showing sites with evidence of the Tocharian language. Source: Mallory and Mair, *The Tarim Mummies: Ancient China and the Mystery of the Earliest Peoples From the West* (2000), fig. 153, p. 274.



Figure 2. "Tocharian knights," Cave of the Sixteen Sword Bearers (cave 8), Kizil, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin. Published: Mallory and Mair, *The Tarim Mummies: Ancient China and the Mystery of the Earliest Peoples From the West* (2000), plate XII.



Figure 3. Merchants Banqueting, wall painting, c. eighth century, Pendjikent, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Published: Chauvin, *Les arts de l'Asie centrale* (1999), fig. 185.



Figure 4. Detail of pearl roundel motif (left) from Tocharian knights (Figure 2).



Figure 5. Gold ring, second–fourth century CE, Excavated from Jarintay, Nilqa County, Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology Collection. Published: Mair (ed.), *Secrets of the Silk Road: An Exhibition of Discoveries from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China* (2010), exh. no. 79, p. 193.



Figure 6. Detail of dotted flower motif from Merchants Banqueting (Figure 3).



Figure 7. Merchant Banqueting, wall painting, 100 × 110 cm, c. eighth century, Pendjikent, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Published: Chauvin, *Les arts de l'Asie centrale* (1999), fig. 186.



Figure 8. Panel of a Sogdian funerary couch from the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577), Limestone with carved narratives of Sogdian (Central Asian) scenes, 47 × 112 cm (18 1/2 × 44 1/8 in.), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Source: ARTSTOR



Figure 9. Sartorial Shell of “Yingpan Man,” Third–Fourth century, Excavated from Yingpan, Yuli (Lopnur) County, Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology Collection. Published: Mair (ed.), *Secrets of the Silk Road: An Exhibition of Discoveries from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China* (2010), exh. no. 80, p. 194.



Figure 10. Knight in folding garment, in Sassanid style, silver plate. (Reiter mit Klappenkragen, Sassanid. Silberschale). Published: Albert von le Coq, *Von Land und Leuten in Ostturkistan*, vol. 1 (Land and People in East Turkistan, vol. 1), plate 45.



Figure 11. "Tocharian" donor family, Kizil ("Tocharische" Stifterfamilie, Kyzil).
Published: Albert von le Coq, *Von Land und Leuten in Ostturkistan*, vol. 1
(Land and People in East Turkistan, vol. 1), plate 30.



Figure 12. Group of Knights from the "Cave of the Painter" (cave 207), from the right side corridor beside the main building of the cave, height and width of original mural: 1.5 3.5 m, c. Sixth–seventh century, Kizil caves, Xinjiang province. Published: Albert Grünwedel, *Alt-Kutscha* vol. 1 (1920), fig. 89, p. 235.



Figure 13. Plate with a duel scene, inlaid silver, seventh century, Sogdiana, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Published: Chauvin, *Les arts de l'Asie centrale* (1999), fig. 210.



Figure 14. Equestrian knight, wall painting, cave 14, Kizil. Published: Giès, *Painted Buddhas of Xinjiang: Hidden Treasures from the Silk Road* (2002), p. 77.



Figure 15. Image of a woman donor in "Tocharian" style, Kumtura. Tocharische" (Stifterdame Kum Tura). Published: Albert von le Coq, *Auf Hellas Spuren in Ostturkistan*, vol. 1 (Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan, vol. 1), fig. 36, p. 164.



Figure 16. Frans Pourbus the Younger (1569–1622), *Marie de' Medici, Queen of France*, oil on canvas , 307 × 186 cm, c. 1610, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Source: ARTSTOR.



Figure 17. *The Tale of the Old Man, His Daughter, and the Spirit of the Ocean*, wall painting, first register, room 41/VI, Prendzikent. Published: Marshak, fig. 31, p. 63.



Figure 18. Pair of merchants, wall painting, cave 14, Kizil, *in situ*. Published: Giès, *Painted Buddhas of Xinjiang: Hidden Treasures from the Silk Road* (2002), p. 122.



Figure 19. Equestrian duo, wall painting, cave 14, Kizil, *in situ*. Published: Giès, *Painted Buddhas of Xinjiang: Hidden Treasures from the Silk Road* (2002), pp. 124–125.



Figure 20. Painter ("Self-portrait of the painter Tutika"), wall painting, Cave of the Painter (cave 207), Kizil, c. Sixth century, *in situ*. Published: Pierre Chauvin, *Les arts de l'Asie centrale* (Paris: Citadelles & Mazenod, 1999), fig. 278, p. 230.



Figure 21. Cremation of the Buddha, wall painting, Maya Cave (cave 224), Kizil.
Source: University of Pennsylvania Fine Arts Library Image Collection.

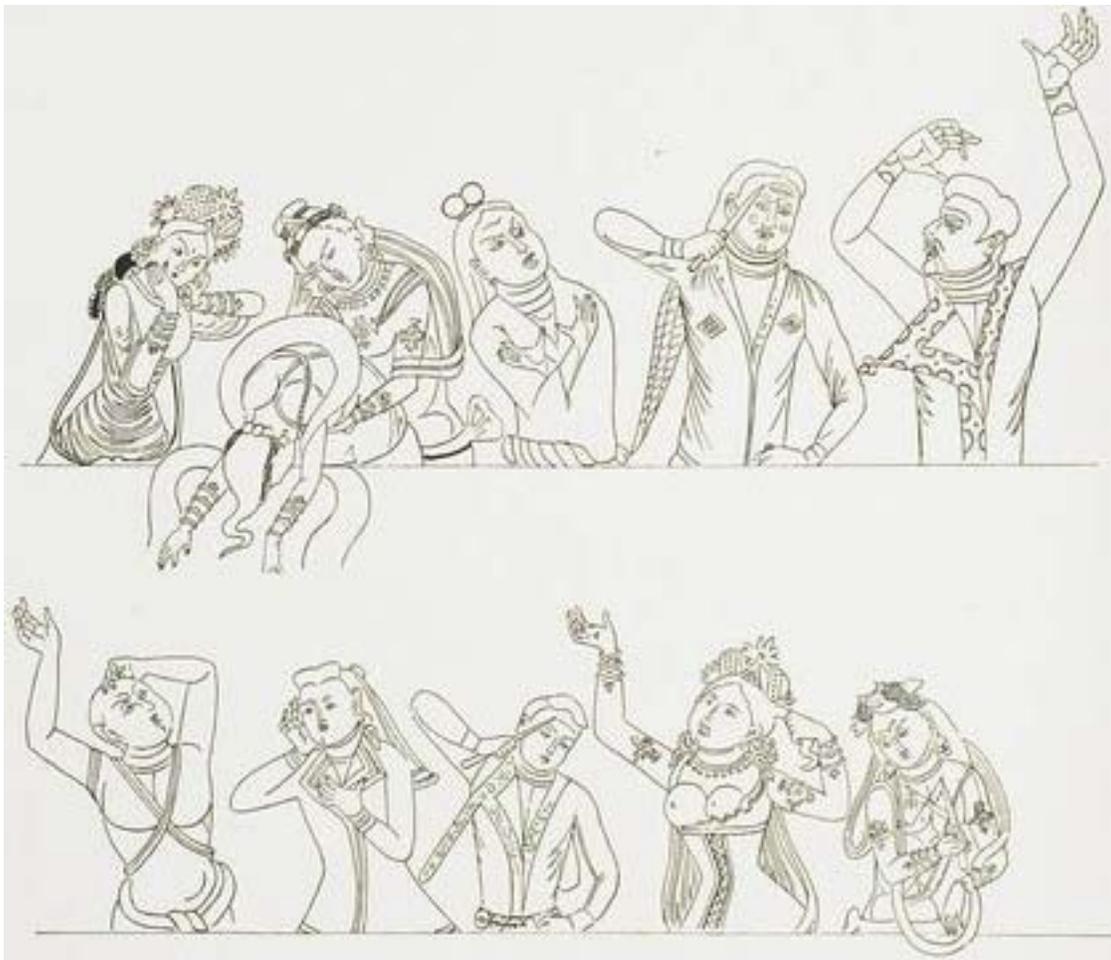


Figure 22. Mourning Indian princes over the cremation of Gautama Buddha, Maya Cave (cave 224), cross corridor g, opposite side of the Parinirvāṇa. Height of the figure in the original 15–20 cm. The two strips are to be set together. Published: Albert Grünwedel, *Alt buddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, vol. 1, Berlin: 1912, fig. 415, p. 186



Figure 23. Mourning scene showing face cutting, wall painting, Prendzikent.
Published: Grenet, *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie Centrale sédentaire: de la conquête greque à l'islamisation* (1984), pl. XLVII, a.

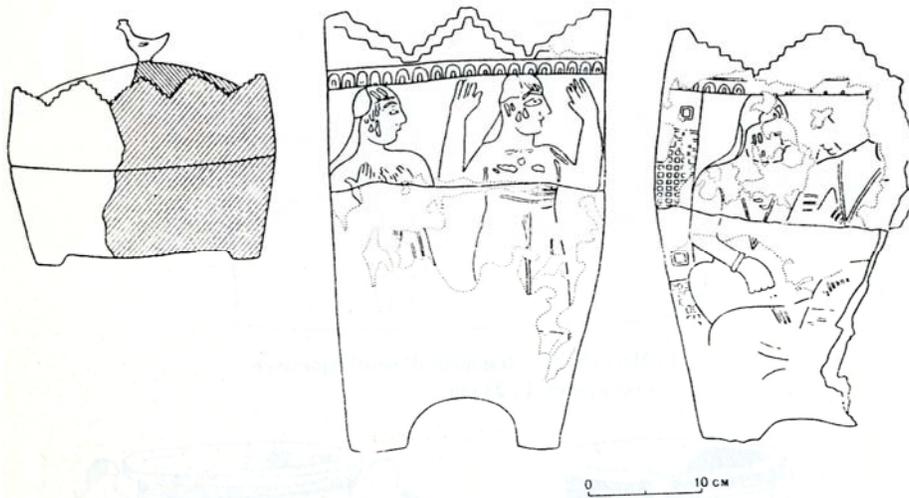


Figure 24. Mizdaxkhan, present-day Uzbekistan, Ceramic ossuary decorated with painted figures with cuts on faces and chest from the sixth century.
Published: Grenet, *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie Centrale sédentaire: de la conquête greque à l'islamisation* (1984), pl. XLIII.



Figure 25. Ossuary from Tokkala, present-day Uzbekistan, with a painted scene of lamentation over a deceased, mid-eighth century, painted plaster, 28 × 45 × 28 cm, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Published: Pierre Chauvin, *Les arts de l'Asie centrale* (Paris: Citadelles & Mazenod, 1999), fig. 228.



Figure 26. Reliquary, Kucha, c. sixth–seventh century, painted cloth applied to wood, diameter: 32.3 cm, Tokyo National Museum, Tokyo. Published: Pierre Chauvin, *Les arts de l'Asie centrale* (Paris: Citadelles & Mazenod, 1999), fig. 290.

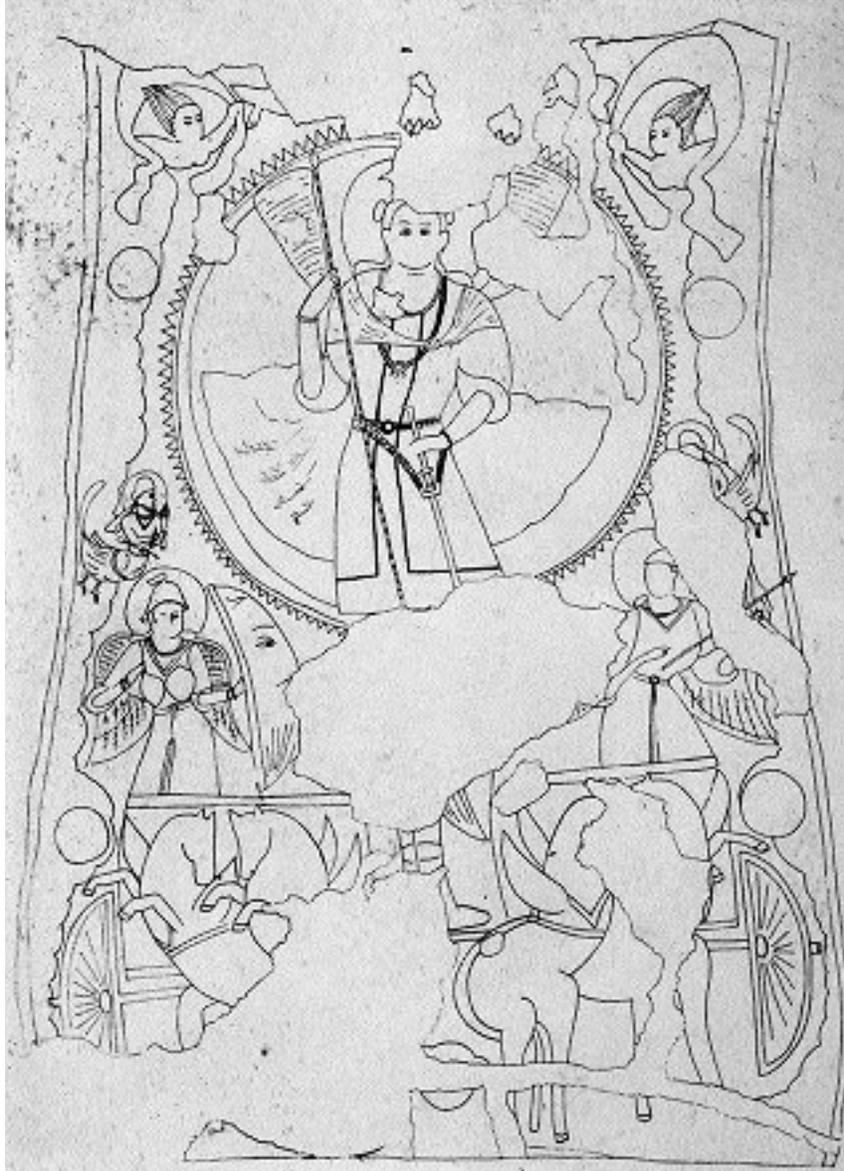


Figure 27. Drawing of the painting of Mithra formerly in the niche of the 38-meter Buddha at Bāmiān. Source: University of Pennsylvania Fine Arts Library Image Collection, Klimburg-Salter personal slide.

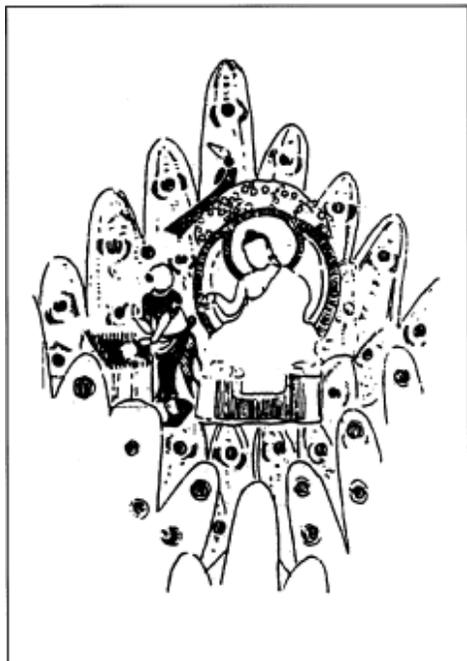


Figure 28. *The Adulterous Woman whose son perishes in the well*, wall painting, cave 171, c. Fifth–sixth century. Published: Lesbre, "An Attempt to Identify and Classify Scenes with a Central Buddha Depicted on Ceilings of the Kyzil Caves (Former Kingdom of Kucha, Central Asia)," *Artibus Asiae* (2001), fig. 25, p. 330.



Figure 29. *Unchaste wife and her lovers' basket*, wall painting, Cave of the Pot of Hell (cave 80, Höllentopfhöhle), c. fourth century. Published: Lesbre, "An Attempt to Identify and Classify Scenes with a Central Buddha Depicted on Ceilings of the Kyzil Caves (Former Kingdom of Kucha, Central Asia)," *Artibus Asiae* (2001), fig. 21, p. 329.

Bibliography

Books and Articles

- Bivar, A. D. H. *The Personalities of Mithra in Archaeology and Literature*. New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 1998.
- British Museum. *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum*. Tokyo: Kodansha International in cooperation with the Trustees of the British Museum; New York: Distributed by Kodansha International/USA through Harper and Row, 1982.
- Chuvin, Pierre. *Les arts de l'Asie centrale*. Paris: Citadelles & Mazenod, 1999.
- Gaulier, Simone, Robert Jera-Bezard, and Monique Maillard. *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976.
- Giès, Jacques (ed). *Arts de l'Asie centrale: la collection Paul Pelliot du musée national des arts asiatiques*, 1995.
- Giès, Jacques, et al. *Painted Buddhas of Xinjiang: Hidden Treasures from the Silk Road*. English translation. London: The British Museum Press, 2002.
- Grenet, Frantz. *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie Centrale sédentaire: de la conquête grecque à l'islamisation*. Paris: Editions du C.N.R.S., 1984.
- . "Mithra ii. Iconography in Iran and Central Asia." *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, August 15, 2006, available at <http://www.iranica.com/articles/mithra-2-iconography-in-iran-and-central-asia>. Accessed April 28, 2011.
- Grünwedel, Albert. *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan: Bericht über archäologische Arbeiten von 1906 bis 1907 bei Kuca, Qarasahr und in der oase Turfan*. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1912.
- Härtel, Herbert, and Marianne Yaldiz. *Along the Ancient Silk Routes: Central Asian Art from the West Berlin State Museums: An exhibition lent by the Museum für Indische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982.
- Henning, W. B. "The Date of the Sogdian Ancient Letters," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 12, No. 3 / 4, Oriental and African

- Studies Presented to Lionel David Barnett by His Colleagues, Past and Present (1948), pp. 601–615.
- . "The Murder of the Magi," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 2 (Oct., 1944), pp. 133–144.
- Howard, Angela. "In Support of a New Chronology for the Kizil Mural Paintings," *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 44 (1991), pp. 68–83.
- Jäger, Ulf. "New Old Mummies from Eastern Central Asia," *Sino-Platonic Papers* no. 84, 1998.
- Lesbre, Emanuelle. "An Attempt to Identify and Classify Scenes with a Central Buddha Depicted on Ceilings of the Kyzil Caves (Former Kingdom of Kucha, Central Asia)." *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (2001), pp. 305–352.
- Le Coq, Albert von. *Buried treasures of Chinese Turkestan*. London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1928.
- . *Von Land und Leuten in Ostturkistan; Berichte und Abenteuer der 4. deutschen Turfanexpedition*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1928.
- Li Guishan (trans.). *Frescoes and Fables: Mural Stories from the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang*. Beijing, China: New World Press, 1998.
- Li Yanshou 李延壽 (compiler). *Bei shi* 北史, Vol. 10, scroll 97, p. 3216. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997.
- Maillard, Monique. *Grottes et monuments d'Asie centrale: essai sur l'architecture des monuments civils et religieux dans l'Asie centrale sédentaire depuis l'ère chrétienne jusqu'à la conquête musulmane*. Paris: J. Maisonneuve, 1983.
- Mair, Victor (ed.). *Secrets of the Silk Road: An Exhibition of Discoveries from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China*. Santa Ana, Calif.: Bowers Museum, 2010.
- Mallory, J. P., and Victor H. Mair. *The Tarim Mummies: Ancient China and the Mystery of the Earliest Peoples From the West*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2000.
- Marshak, Boris. *Legends, tales, and fables in the art of Sogdiana*. New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2002.
- Nagai, Evelyn Haruye. "Iconographic Innovations in Kuchean Buddhist Art." Berkeley: University of California Ph.D. Thesis, 1977.

Pulleyblank, E. G. "Chinese and Indo-Europeans," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*. No. 1/ 2 (April, 1966), pp. 9–39.

Skaff, Jonathan Karam. "The Sogdian Trade Diaspora in East Turkestan during the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2003), pp. 475–524.

Stein, M. Aurel. *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1981.

Tarzi, Zemaryalia. *L'architecture et le décor rupestre des grottes de Bamiyan*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1977

Waldschmidt, Ernst. *Gandhara, Kutscha, Turfan: Eine Einführung in die Frühmittelalterlich Kunst Zentralasiens*. San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, Inc. (Reprint), 1976.

Website

Avesta Zoroastrian Archives. "Avesta: Vendidad." Accessed May 24, 2011.
http://www.avesta.org/vendidad/vd_tc.htm.

The Evolution of Sogdian Identity

Robert Glasgow

I. Pollen

The Silk Road or Roads were opened in the late second century BCE. This was due in part to the founding of two new empires, the Qin and the Xiongnu. The Qin's successor, the Han, waged a campaign against its western neighbor in its bid for western expansion.¹ Emperor Wu's decision to take control of the Hexi corridor in order to hamstring the Hans' Xiongnu opponents would prove to be one of the most momentous decisions taken by any Chinese emperor. Emperor Wu established a vital link between Central Asia and China that hitherto had not existed, and inadvertently founded the Silk Road.² Merchants would soon flood this corridor, bringing with them the wealth of Central Asia and even Europe to exchange for the treasures of East Asia. The name Silk Road or Roads is a modern conceit not in use when the roads were active. It was coined by Ferdinand von Richthofen in the late nineteenth century.³

The roads when active should not be imagined as a cohesive unit, according to Lothar von Falkenhausen, but rather as a series of relays in which merchants would travel along certain stretches, but not the entire Silk Road. Goods were bought and sold at each interchange, facilitating the movement of items from one end of the Road to the other. The relay-like nature, the difficulty of carrying bulky raw material goods, the expense incurred moving merchandise

¹ Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Notes on the History of the 'Silk Routes': From the Rise of the Xiongnu to the Mongol Conquest (250 BC–AD 1283), in *Secrets of the Silk Road*, ed. Victor H. Mair (Santa Ana, Calif.: Bowers Museum, 2010), 60.

² Falkenhausen, 62.

³ Daniel C. Waugh, "Richthofen's 'Silk Roads': Toward the Archeology of a Concept," *The Silk Road* 5-1 2007, 2.

over long distances, meant that luxury items were the most common trade items along the Silk Roads, and silk, one of the greatest of luxuries, lent its name to the routes.⁴ The manner in which the Sogdians had evolved in the period leading up to the fifth century CE was ideally suited to this mode of trade. At the heart of the Silk Roads was the concept of exchange.

The Sogdians embodied the spirit of the Silk Road perhaps better than any other people. The Silk Road functioned as a conduit for exchange of both ideas and goods. The Sogdians for hundreds of years served as an invaluable vehicle for that exchange. At the height of Sogdian influence, their merchants traveled from the Roman and Byzantine empires, the Silk Road's western terminus, to the empires of China, its eastern terminus. In their role as traders the Sogdians are credited with spreading religion along with their wares. The exact bounds of the Sogdian homeland are a matter of debate, but most agree that the Sogdian territory, named Sug(u)da by its Achmaenid conquerors, lay between the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers, just to the west of the Pamirs and the Tarim Basin. Its chief cities at the time of conquest were Samarkand and Marakanda.⁵ The boundaries the two rivers gave to the Sogdian state, however, should by no means be considered constant borders.

The history of the Sogdians is as much about surviving the rise and fall of the multitude of empires that came to dominate central Asia over the course of the Sogdians' history as it is of commerce. For centuries the Sogdians were able to navigate successfully the often turbulent and violent political waterways until eventually the Sogdians were swept under by the invading Arab armies. The Sogdians continued to exist as a distinct people under Arab rule for several centuries but gradually diminished until the twelfth century CE, by which time their homeland had been assimilated into the new culture of the invading Arabs, and their merchant colonies had melted into the surrounding population.⁶

Determining the origin of the Sogdians is more difficult than determining their demise.

⁴ Falkenhausen, 63.

⁵ Oswald J. L. Sezmerenyi, *Four Old Iranian Ethnic Names: Scythian, Skudra, Sogdian, Saka* (Vienna: Verlag der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980), 26.

⁶ Etienne de la Vaissiere, *Sogdian Traders: A History* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 300.

Due to their singular success as merchants, the Sogdians' history often seems to begin and end with an abacus and a tray of wares. Sogdian identity, however, is actually far more complex. Sogdian colonies gave rise to extensive trade networks across the Asian continent. Sogdian merchants traveled thousands of miles along the Silk Road encountering an untold number of cultures, some of which may never be known to present-day historians. Throughout the course of Sogdian history, waves of invaders and refugees swept into the Sogdian homeland bringing with them new languages, dress, religions, and goods for the Sogdian merchants to transport. Sogdiana and its expatriate communities acted not just as commercial links between the East, West, and South: they proved to be cultural links as well. The evolution of their identity, however, can be roughly sketched from their historical origins as supporters of the throne of Darius the Great.

II. Seeds

Before discussing the Sogdians' role along the Silk Road, it would be best to identify more exactly who the Sogdians were and where they originated. This is not as straightforward as it might seem. The first reference made to Sogdiana is an Achmaenid inscription found in Behistan and Naks-i Rostam.⁷ De la Vaissiere, however, is unconvinced by this, stating that the inscription "demonstrates the existence of an ethnic identity before the linguistic reality."⁸ The Behistan and Naks-i are not the only ancient Persian inscriptions to reference the Sogdians. Another inscription from the early Achmaenid period can be found in the tomb of Darius the Great (550–486 BCE). Thirty carved throne-bearers support Darius's stone throne. Each represents a different ethnic group, and each is labeled, identifying the group to which he belongs. Of the thirty bearers, one is designated as a Sogdian. The Sogdian, however, is indistinguishable from his Scythian and Skudra counterparts, also supporting Darius's throne, identifiable by his label

⁷ Richard N. Frye, "Sughd and the Sogdians: A Comparison of Archaeological Discoveries with Arabic Sources," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol 63, no.1 (March 1943), 15.

⁸ Vaissiere, 13.

alone.⁹ This encourages us to ask the question: was the title Sug(u)da indicative of an ethnicity or the residents of a specific province?

Sezmerenyi examines the names applied to the Scythians, Skudra, and Sogdians, and then asserts that they were in fact one people divided more by the linguistic labels given them by Achmaenid scholars than by authentic cultural differences. Sezmerenyi based his analysis of the names' etymologies on the assertion that all northern Iranian tribes were labeled *Skudra* or "archers" by the Achmaenids.¹⁰ The westward expansion of the *Skudra*, however, led to a split between the peoples. The westernmost people, who occupied the Pontic region, took the name Skula. The central group, which took up residence along the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers, took the name Suyḏa, which the Achmaenids changed to Suguda (in English, Sogdian). The easternmost group became known as the Saka. However, all the peoples of the non-settled areas were dubbed Saka by the Achmaenids, Saka meaning "to go or roam."¹¹ The Scythians and Skula are both known to be nomadic peoples. Based on Sezmerenyi's assessment, one could argue that the Sogdian depicted upholding Darius's throne is representative of a new ethnicity. In opting for a sedentary lifestyle, the Sogdians created a clear and very significant cultural difference between themselves and their fellow former *Skudra*.

Despite Sezmerenyi's detailed analysis, there are a few problems that could preclude the Achmaenid's Sughds from becoming the Sogdians. Boris Marshak potentially scuttles this theory by claiming, like Sezmerenyi, that the Sogdians were an Iranian people, but that they belong linguistically in the eastern branch of the family, linking them more closely with the Bactrians and Khorazmians, not with the Scythians and other *Skudra* descendents.¹² An analysis of the Sogdian language in order to determine its origin would be complicated by several factors. The texts at the researchers' disposal present a number of problems. They are limited in number and

⁹ Sezmerenyi, 25.

¹⁰ Sezmerenyi, 39.

¹¹ Sezmerenyi, 40.

¹² Boris Marshak, "Central Asia from the Third to the Seventh Centuries," in *Nomads, Traders and Holy Men along China's Silk Road*, ed. A. Juliano and J. Lerner (New York: Brepols Publishing, 2002), 13.

are of varying quality both in terms of preservation and the ability of the writer. This means extensive variations not only in handwriting, but more importantly grammatical and spelling mistakes, which, in a small sample, could befuddle attempts to reconstruct a standard version of the language in question.¹³ Aside from the variable skill of the documents' authors, the language itself contains significant inconsistencies.

The Sogdian language by the time of the authorship of the Dunhuang texts was already a mix of loan words and dialects. Sogdian had already incorporated a number of loan words, notably from Turkish¹⁴ and Gandhari sources.¹⁵ The linguistic exchanges among these people were not one-sided: Sogdian loan words are still extant in Old Turkic languages.¹⁶ The fact that in an earlier time there existed several Sogdian dialects further complicates the analysis. For instance, de la Vaissiere states that the writing of Bukhara in particular closely resembled one of its influence from Parthian.¹⁷ Since the extinction of the Sogdian culture in the thirteenth century, Sogdian writing has fallen completely into disuse; however, a descendant of that language persists into the present: a single known group living in the Yagnob Valley, located in the Pamir Mountains in Tajikistan, is believed to speak a language derived from Sogdian.¹⁸ Despite the difficulties, a linguistic analysis potentially could prove to be highly illuminating, but the research is beyond the scope of this paper. Sogdian writing and language highlight both the Sogdians' uniqueness and their connections with the other communities in the region.

The second problem lies in the unstable nature of the region. The Achmaenid invasion in

¹³ W. B. Henning, *Sogdica* (Hertford: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1940), 1.

¹⁴ W. B. Henning, "The Sogdian Texts of Paris," *Bulletin of the School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London* (Boston: Cambridge, 1946), vol. 11, no. 4, p. 723.

¹⁵ Vaissiere, 84.

¹⁶ Richard N. Frye, "The Merchant World of the Sogdians," in *Nomads, Traders and Holy Men Along China's Silk Road*, ed. A. Juliano and J. Lerner (New York: Brepols Publishing, 2002), 72.

¹⁷ Vaissiere, 18.

¹⁸ Susan Whitefield and Ursula Sims-Williams, eds., *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War, and Faith* (Chicago: Serindia Publishing, Inc., 2004), 109.

the sixth century BCE is merely the first of many such intrusions in the historical record. Alexander the Great conquered Sogdiana in 329 BCE. He and his generals maintained control only until 247 BCE, when the Greco-Bactrians revolted against Seleucid control, prizing Sogdiana away from the empire, in addition to Bactriana.¹⁹ Sogdiana remained in their possession until it was conquered by, first, the Yuezhi and, again, by the Dayuan in 124 BCE.²⁰ The question is whether the population alluded to on Darius's statue could have survived repeated invasions, rather than simply being replaced by an invading Iranian population.

Several factors indicate that the population labeled Sogdians by the Achmaenids was indeed able to persist in spite of the repeated invasions. The impact of Achmaenid culture on the Sogdian population over which they ruled appears to have persisted for centuries. The Sogdians adopted both their Zoroastrian calendar and their script. Ilya Gershevitch points to the fact that the calendar underwent changes in which names were altered to fit with the Sogdian culture, as evidence of a strong culture that had been established prior to the Achmaenid invasion.²¹

The Zoroastrian faith imparted to the Sogdians by the Achmaenids is one of the elements persistent throughout Sogdian history. Zoroastrian temples are found in both the Sogdian homeland and in the Sogdian colonies. The Achmaenid script was employed by the Sogdians until the seventh century CE, five to six hundred years after the development of the Sogdian writing system.²² The persistence of the Persian calendar, religion, and script illustrate an element of cultural continuity between the potential Sogdians of the Achmaenids, one that must have been deliberately fostered given the emergence of an alternate writing system in the first or second century of the Common Era.²³

¹⁹ Vaissiere, 17.

²⁰ E. G. Pulleyblank, "Chinese and Indo-Europeans," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1/2 (April 1966), 26.

²¹ Ilya Gershevitch, "Zoroaster's Own Contribution," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Jan. 1964), p. 22.

²² Vaissiere, 17, 18.

²³ Vaissiere, 18.

This is not to imply that the Sogdians maintained these cultural features out of any sentiment for the fallen Persians. The Sogdians' motives cannot be known. It does, however, highlight common cultural characteristics linking the Sogdians of the Achmaenids with the Sogdians of the medieval period. Although admittedly sparse, this archaeological and textual evidence indicates that there was not a cultural break which would indicate a new culture had moved into the region between the time of the Sogdian representative supporting Darius's throne and the time of those who would later attempt to topple Xuanzong's throne. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, based on the elements of cultural continuity and the Achmaenid use of the term "Sogdian," although they are admittedly somewhat circumstantial, I will refer to the people first mentioned in the Achmaenid inscriptions as being both Sogdian ethnically and geographically. Even at their point of origin, the Sogdians are a mix of cultures, with their religion, Zoroastrianism, and their script initially borrowed from the Persians.

III. Fire (Preparing for New Growth)

The armies that routinely swept across Central Asia played a key role in the evolution of the Sogdian people. Each wave of invasion brought with it a new culture. The Achmaenids brought with them Zoroastrianism and writing. The Greco-Macedonian forces of Alexander brought a wealth of literature to add to the stores already provided by Indian merchants. The Bactrians brought a mercantile culture. The invasions and the rise and fall of brief empires obscure the history of the Sogdians until the close of the second century BCE, when the Sogdians appear to have been brought under the aegis of the Kangju kingdom.

Another in a string of invasions enabled the Sogdians to establish links with the Chinese empire. The Kangju, by the time of the Houhanshu, had incorporated Sogdiana into their territory.²⁴ As part of the official missions from Kangju, the Sogdians began trading on a low level with China in the last century BCE.²⁵ Marshak asserts that it is also around this time that the Sogdians began migrating out along the northern branch of the Silk Road, due to

²⁴ Vaissiere, 37.

²⁵ Vaissiere, 38.

overpopulation.²⁶ Until approximately 300 CE, trade with China was conducted via the southern trade route which passed to the south of Sogdiana and was dominated by Indian and Bactrian merchants, limiting Sogdian influence and their relative share of the Chinese market.²⁷ Although small at first, the Sogdian trade network grew to span the entirety of the Silk Roads.

The fourth century CE marks the beginning of another particularly turbulent period in Central Asian history, but also the beginning of the great Sogdian trading empire. The Sogdians would expand this network until it reached the Roman/Byzantine Empire at the western end of the Silk Road, but once again it would be a series of invasions that would enable the Sogdians to establish their network. The Hunnic invasions in the fourth century CE were brought about by only the first of several peoples who attempted to establish kingdoms and empires throughout Asia and Europe. The Sogdians too came under attack from Hun armies. The Sogdians' ability to successfully navigate the Hunnic invasions and subsequent invasions from other would-be powers enabled them to expand their commercial power, as their one-time rivals were unable to cope with the waves of invaders.

By 313 CE Sogdiana had been overrun by the Huns, who established a new dynasty at Samarkand. Marshak notes that this period is marked archaeologically by destroyed settlements.²⁸ In the wake of the Hunnic invasions, a number of peoples set out to create empires in the power vacuum. Brief empires in Central Asia, including those of the Kidarites, Sasanians, and Hephthalites, maintained control over significant portions of Asian, but quickly fell. Despite the turmoil engulfing both Sogdiana and the surrounding area, Marshak points to the continuity found in Sogdian coinage to assert that Sogdiana itself managed to maintain its identity and a high, albeit somewhat diminished, level of prosperity, despite repeated invasions and political instability in the region.²⁹ This relative stability of Sogdiana laid the foundation for a quick recovery.

²⁶ Marshak, 13.

²⁷ Vaissiere, 37.

²⁸ Marshak, 14.

²⁹ Marshak, 15.

The recovery of Sogdiana from the invasions is remarkable. Beginning in the fifth century CE, the population of Sogdiana mushroomed.³⁰ The increase in population was fueled not by an increase in Sogdiana's birthrate, but by an influx of refugees, the first of whom likely originated in Syr Darya.³¹ The population boom precipitated a wave of urbanization across Sogdiana lasting from the fifth century to the seventh.³² Panjikent, Bukhara, and Paykent in particular developed quickly during Sogdiana's recovery, with Bukhara ranking alongside Samarkand as one of Sogdiana's chief cities. Agricultural output kept pace with the development of cities, as Sogdiana was transformed into "the principal center of agricultural wealth and population in Central Asia."³³ The fortunes of Sogdia's neighbor to the south, Bactria, proceeded down a completely different track after the invasion of the Huns.

Although the extent of the damage caused by these invasions is difficult to determine for any region, Bactria, Sogdiana's neighbor to the south, appears to have suffered more than the Sogdians during the invasions. Excavations have revealed burned city after burned city. At Chaqalaq-tepe, 11 km south of Kunduz, three layers of burning date from the end of the fourth to the beginning of the fifth centuries. Significant defenses including double ramparts were breached in the sacking of Chaqalaq-tepe. An examination of the ceramics of Bactria reveals that many of longstanding population centers were abandoned.³⁴ The archaeological evidence indicates a state that had been gutted by war. The devastation inflicted on Bactria was such that it would take Bactria centuries to recover. When Xuanzang visited the region in the seventh century, he noted that one of Bactria's former major cities, Balkh, was "well fortified," but "thinly populated."³⁵ With Bactria thoroughly demolished, its people's dominance over its trade routes ceased to exist, giving others, such as the Sogdians, the opportunity to claim these for their own.

³⁰ Vaissiere, 104.

³¹ Vaissiere, 107.

³² Frye, "The Merchant World," 76.

³³ Vaissiere, 106.

³⁴ Vaissiere, 102.

³⁵ Vaissiere, 103.

The Sogdians were, in a sense, aided by the Bactrians themselves in the development of the Sogdian state and trade empire, and in their assumption of the role of Asia's premier traders, a role once filled by the Bactrians. During the short-lived Kidarite Empire, a branch kingdom of the Huns, Sogdiana and Bactriana were reunited, likely in the 440s CE. Under the new government's direction, populations from Bactriana were removed to Sogdiana, integrating these new populations and their culture with the native Sogdian culture by planning cities such as Panjikent, Bukhara, and Paykent. The construction of these cities with an eye to defense, combined with a stable political environment, Vaisseire posits, is what enabled the inhabitants to resist the Sassanid and Hephtalite incursions that destroyed Bactriana.³⁶ The measures taken to save Sogdiana were successful on the whole; however, the Turks, in alliance with the Sassanids, conquered the Sogdian region in the mid-500s, precipitating a wave of Sogdian emigration. This wave of emigration, as Frye states, served as a vital part of the foundation of the Sogdians' future wealth.³⁷ The Sogdian émigrés in time would provide vital hubs linking the Sogdian commercial empire.

The destruction of Bactriana ultimately turned to Sogdiana's gain. The influence of the Bactrians can also be clearly seen in the murals decorating the palaces in newly founded cities such as Panjikent.³⁸ The new building methods the Bactrians brought with them under the rule of the Kidarites served to limit the damage Sogdiana experienced while its neighbors burned. As highly successful traders, the new Bactrian immigrants brought with them both the knowledge of trade routes and the commercial practices needed to manage extensive long-distance trading. The Bactrians brought with them not only the tools to build defenses to preserve the country, but also the tools to build the trade networks that would make the country prosper.

³⁶ Vaissiere, 109.

³⁷ Frye, "The Merchant World," 76.

³⁸ Vaissiere, 110.

IV. Blossoms

Sogdian commerce rapidly expanded at two points in history. The first expansion coincides with the invasions of the Huns during the fourth century CE and the decline of Bactriana. Between the fourth and seventh centuries CE, the Sogdians established themselves in the trade routes of the Indus passes, and became the primary merchants linking the South Asian states with the Central and Eastern Asia.³⁹ Petroglyphs found in the foothills of the Pamir Mountains showing written Sogdian script not only represent some of the oldest extant sources of Sogdian writing, they also offer proof of Sogdian traders using the route.⁴⁰ Over 650 of these Sogdian language inscriptions have been found since 1979 along the Northern Indus River valley in Pakistan.⁴¹ The texts recovered at Mount Mugh give further evidence supporting Sogdian–Indian trade links, as two of the recovered fragments appear to be Indian medical texts.⁴² The Dunhuang letters also contained three medical recipes, possibly of Indian origin: a purgative, an aphrodisiac, and an emetic.⁴³ Rose indicates many of the goods obtained in India could have been intended for sale in China based on the names found carved into the rocks along the southern route. During the fourth century CE trade items sold to the Chinese listed in the Ancient Letters included camphor and pepper, which could only have been obtained from India.⁴⁴ Copies of the Sanghatasutra as well as other Buddhist writings were found at Dunhuang and Mugh. Nicholas Sims-Williams believes the translation of the Sanghatasutra found is likely a free translation from an as-yet undiscovered

³⁹ Marshak, 14.

⁴⁰ Susan Whitefield and Ursula Sims-Williams, 14.

⁴¹ Jonathon Karam Skaff, "The Sogdian Trade Diaspora in East Turkestan During the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 46, no. 4 (2003), 501.

⁴² Nicholas Sims-Williams, "The Sogdian Fragments of Leningrad," *Bulletin of the School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London*, vol. 44 no. 2. (Boston: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 235.

⁴³ Henning, "The Sogdian Texts of Paris," 713.

⁴⁴ Jenny Rose, "The Sogdians: Prime Movers Between Boundaries," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, vol. 30, no. 3 (2010), 412.

version.⁴⁵ Although the Sogdians' primary focus would be on trade with China, its Indian routes enriched both their coffers and culture.

As previously discussed, there is evidence the Sogdians had been engaged in trade with China since the last century BCE as part of the Kanju kingdom. Allowing for some possible interruptions due to invasions and changes of government, Sogdiana had been trading on a limited level with the Chinese world for several hundred years, when in the mid-500's the commercial links expanded greatly. This was due to a convergence of multiple factors. As shown earlier, the Bactrians' influence had significantly declined, creating more opportunities for involvement in trade with both China and India. Sogdiana's rapid recovery from the invasions which began in the three hundreds placed them in a unique position to do this.

A third key factor that contributed to the Sogdians' success was the return of stability to both Central Asia and China. The Turkish domination of Inner Asia after 567 CE greatly decreased the war and invasions waged across the region and allowed wealth once put towards fielding armies to be put towards commerce and production. China since the fall of the Han in 221 CE had been experiencing a time of political instability. China became a battleground on which various tribes and noble families fought to carve as large an empire out the legacy of the Han as possible. The reunification of China, albeit a brief one, under the Sui in 589 CE signaled a long period of relative stability and prosperity for China.⁴⁶ Although the Sui would only control China for a brief period, they played an important role in laying the foundation for China, and therefore for the Sogdians' prosperity. The construction of the Great Canal by the Sui allowed the government based in the north to better harness the vast resources of the south.⁴⁷ Due to its brevity, the rulers of the Sui dynasty would not enjoy the benefits of the Grand Canal for long; however, the Canal played an important role in the viability of their successors, the Tang (618–907 CE).

⁴⁵ Nicholas Sims-Williams, "The Sogdian Fragments of Leningrad," 234.

⁴⁶ Skaff, 483.

⁴⁷ Harold M. Tanner, *China: A History* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. Inc. 2009), 169.

The situation in which the Sogdians found themselves was therefore ideal. They had managed to survive the invasions that had crippled their nearest trading competitors, and even managed to incorporate some of these into their country. In the late sixth century, the Sogdians were able to procure a treaty with Byzantium, giving them trade routes with the remnants of the Roman Empire.⁴⁸ This route gave the Sogdians a valuable source of glass they could then sell in China. Equally important to the Sogdian trade network was the spread of Sogdian colonies particularly to the east, towards China. A Sogdian presence in Dunhuang dates back at the latest to the early fourth century CE. Several Sogdians are reported to have fallen victim to starvation in Luoyang during the fall of the Western Jin.⁴⁹ Sogdian merchants in China were also captured during the fall of the Northern Liang in 439 CE, and later ransomed by a Sogdian King.⁵⁰ Despite the strained conditions in which these Sogdians have been found, one can infer that trade with China had become an important part of the Sogdian economy. The merchants' desire to stay in China amidst severe political upheaval, could only have been motivated by a desire for profit, or threat from strong political power. The fact the Sogdian merchants were in fact ransomed by a Sogdian king indicates the nobility were closely bound with Sogdiana's commercial operations, either on a personal level or, due to its importance to the state. As a whole these records indicate trade between Sogdiana was persistent and valuable, at least to Sogdiana prior to the unification of China in the sixth century.

V. Transplantation

Sogdian colonies, in addition to increasing the stability of the region, enabled the vast expansion of Sogdian commerce during the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries CE. By the fifth century CE, Sogdian colonists had begun moving west toward China. Shash was one of the first areas colonized, followed by Semireche, and then others followed until the Sogdians reached the

⁴⁸ Rose, 412.

⁴⁹ Skaff, 481.

⁵⁰ Skaff, 481, 483.

Gaochang kingdom located in present-day Xinjiang.⁵¹ In the former Gaochang kingdom, what would become the Western arm of the Tang Empire, a colony was established at Dunhuang, and in the Kingdoms of Khotan and Loulan.

A mid-eighth-century source gives an account of the founding of a Sogdian colony in the region of Loulan. The document states a 'Great Chief' of the Sogdian's Kang Yandian 康艷典, settled in the area of Loulan during the reign of Emperor Taizong (r. 627–49 CE). More Sogdians followed him, creating Dianhecheng 典合城. Afterwards he is said to have founded several other colonies in the vicinity of Loulan, including Xin 新 and Putao 葡桃. Sogdian documents have been found at Loulan dating to the fourth century CE, but any inhabitants are likely to have left well before the reign of Taizong, as the city had "faded into oblivion" due to desertification by 500 CE.⁵² The settlements mentioned in the document must therefore have been new settlements constructed after the area had become a desert.

While these colonies were of vital importance to the Sogdian trade network, they do not appear to have been founded with the goal of furthering Sogdiana's economic interests. Vaissiere cites the short distance between the settlements, at times less than 12 km, and the fact that they are situated on "virgin" territory well suited for agricultural pursuits. The larger sites are also clustered around present-day Biskek and Issyk Kul.⁵³ Nor should their purpose be misconstrued as meaning the Sogdian leadership was unaware of the importance of commercial links with China. In 658 CE, Samarkand and its neighbors accepted Chinese sovereignty, but did not relinquish their own. Marshak postulates this was done in part in the hope that it would give Sogdian merchants better access to Chinese markets.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Vaissiere, 112–117.

⁵² Victor H. Mair, "The Archaeology of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region," in *Secrets of the Silk Road*, ed. Victor Mair (Santa Ana, Calif.: Bowers Museum, 2010), 37.

⁵³ Mair, 115.

⁵⁴ Marshak, 19.

If, as Vaissiere states, these colonies may not have been intended to function as "steps on the 'Silk Road,' they still could have been intended to play an important role in commerce.⁵⁵ The Sogdians were well known for their agricultural products. As early as the fourth century BCE, Sogdian merchants were importing wheat into China. Grapes and wine produced in Sogdiana proper were also famous throughout China. Fodder for horses such as alfalfa was also grown in Sogdiana and imported into China.⁵⁶ Items such as these may not have represented high value, but China's large population, limited amount of farmland particularly in the north, and limited distribution capabilities, likely ensured that demand for agricultural products such as these remained steady. Agricultural colonies played a significant role in building the Sogdian trade network whether they were intended to or not, but the colonies within China were the most critical.

Sogdian colonies in China, as was the case with those outside, were not designed with only trade in mind. Sogdians were involved in nearly every aspect of life in town. Residents of Turfan bearing Sogdian surnames were active as farmers, leather workers, publicans, smiths, artists, etc. This sort of social structure was far from unique to Turfan. Based on a register of corvée labor for a Sogdian colony, Conghua Township, dating to 751 CE, the majority of the population labored as farmers.⁵⁷ Further evidence of the diversity of professions found among the Sogdian colonists is given by E. G. Pulleyblank, as he hypothesizes a corps of elite Sogdian warriors from Hami serving under the Northern Turks during Xuanzong's reign.⁵⁸ A more in-depth examination indicates the Sogdian colonies, colonists, and perhaps the Sogdians in general were not a nation of merchants, but rather a nation in which merchants prospered, but were hardly the majority.

⁵⁵ Vaissiere, 115.

⁵⁶ Rose, 413.

⁵⁷ Vaissiere, 130.

⁵⁸ E. G. Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony in Inner Mongolia" *T'oung Pao*, Second Series (Boston: Brill, 1952), vol. 41, p. 349.

These colonies served as more than simple waypoints for traders. They were fully functioning communities. They contained their own religious centers and political structures. Sogdian colonies in excess of one or two hundred people were led by a *sabao* who generally ranked alongside a mandarin.⁵⁹ The social structure found in the Sogdian homeland could be found in the colonies as well. It can be broadly divided into four categories: nobility, merchants, workers, and slaves.⁶⁰ An aspect of Sogdian culture brought with them into China that potentially placed them at odds with their Tang rulers, was the practice of polygyny, though few instances of its occurrence in China have been recorded.⁶¹

One case brought before the Tang courts provides insight into the workings of the Sogdian colonies. Sogdian residents were known by several surnames and these linked them to their city of origin: An 安 was linked to Bukhara, Cao 曹 to Kabudhan and Gubdan, He 何 to Kushaniya, Kang 康 to Samarkand, Mi 米 to Maimurgh, Shi 史 to Kesh (Sharisabz), and Shi 石 to Chach (Tashkent).⁶² Valerie Hansen relates a court case from 762 CE in Turfan. In the incident a Kang 康⁶³ lost control of his ox cart and injured a young girl from the Cao 曹 and a young boy from the Shi 史 who had been playing in front of an inn.⁶⁴ The mixture of names, and therefore likely origins, indicates that although Sogdiana was never likely unified under Sogdian rule, operating more as a collection of city-states,⁶⁵ its people were able to cooperate as colonists outside of Sogdiana.

⁵⁹ Rose, 417.

⁶⁰ Skaff, 477.

⁶¹ Skaff, 500.

⁶² Valerie Hansen, "The Impact of Silk Road Trade on a Local Community: The Turfan Oasis 500–800" in *Les Sogdiens en Chine*, ed. Étienne de la Vaissière and Éric Trombert (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2005), 287.

⁶³ Hansen notes it is also possible the driver was not Sogdian, but rather a Chumi tribesman.

⁶⁴ Hansen, 297.

⁶⁵ Marshak, 13.

The colonies within China present a different cultural makeup from those in Shash and Semireche. After visiting Shash and Semireche in approximately 630 CE, Xuanzong believed them to be a part of Sogdiana, so thoroughly had they adopted Sogdian culture.⁶⁶ This would not be a mistake Xuanzong would make regarding the Sogdian colonies in China. While in China, the Sogdian communities mixed with Turkish immigrants. The degree of this mixture resulted in the coining of a new term to refer to Sogdians and those primarily of Sogdo-Turkic origin. From 630 CE onwards *zazhong huren* 雜種胡人 or *zahu* 雜胡 "mixed barbarians" was often used to refer to Sogdians by the Tang, perhaps referring to their mixed ethnic nature. As the term was first used to refer to the Sogdians living in Hami in 630, Pulleyblank surmises the Sogdians of the area had already become mixed with the Turkic population by the seventh century.

An Lushan, leader of the An Lushan rebellion, stands as an important example of a *zahu*.⁶⁷ An Lushan's father Yanyan, eulogized as a general by An Lushan, was a Sogdian.⁶⁸ His mother was from the high-ranking Turkish Ashihte clan. As Pulleyblank notes, it is quite likely Yanyan was of high stature himself, given his wife's illustrious background. The nature of the An family also highlights different tacks that could be taken within a single Sogdian family. An Yanyan 安延偃 and An Lushan 安祿山 appear to have kept their Sogdian names, Yanyan and Lushan being transcriptions of Sogdian names. However, Bozhu 波住, Yanyan's brother, appears to have adopted a Chinese name. His sons Sishun 思順 and Yuanzhen 元貞 both adopted what appear to be purely Chinese names.⁶⁹ An Lushan's branch represents Sogdians who were perhaps undergoing a process of Huicization, mixing and fusing with other Hu communities in China. Bozhu appears to have embarked on the process of Sinicization, attempting to blend with Chinese society. This was a choice that all Sogdians needed to make, whether to mix with the local populations or attempt to maintain their identity.

⁶⁶ Vaissiere, 116, 117.

⁶⁷ Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony," 351.

⁶⁸ Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony," 332.

⁶⁹ Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony," 333.

VII. Growth Patterns

The Sogdian colonies provided important spheres of interaction for diverse peoples. The variety of religions found in Sogdiana and its colonies perhaps better illustrates the cross-pollination that occurred along the Silk Roads than the goods shipped across it. This interaction could have profound effects on the people involved. In Sogdian colonies Zoroastrianism, practiced in Sogdiana since the arrival of the Achmaenids, Manichaeism, Christianity, and Buddhism were practiced side by side during the middle ages. Religious written materials for all of these faiths were translated into and proliferated in Sogdian. Although the materials are in Sogdian, this does not mean that all who used them were Sogdian. Manichean texts written in an adapted Sogdian script were used in the Tianshan region by the Karluks and the Yagmas.⁷⁰ Christian texts in Sogdian from the Turfan area mostly originate from Shuiping.⁷¹ All four religions appear to have flourished in the colonies, though not all of the colonial religions seem to have made an impact on Sogdiana proper.

The ancient Sogdians likely learned of Zoroastrianism from the Persians well before the Common Era. The introduction of Zoroastrianism, however, does not seem to have eliminated all elements of prior Sogdian beliefs as Sogdians modified the Zoroastrian calendar, seemingly to synchronize with their own beliefs. Medieval Sogdians in the homeland were likely predominantly Zoroastrian, but despite the influence of the religion, gods outside the Zoroastrian religion maintained a high position in the Sogdian belief system.⁷² Ossuaries found in family vaults in Samarqand, Pankjikent, and Er-Kurgan in Sogdiana proper contain remains of family members after they had been exposed, attesting to the widespread practice of Zoroastrian.⁷³ Further archaeological evidence shows they brought this religion with them to the colonies, as a

⁷⁰ Larry Clark, "Manichaeism among the Uyghurs: The Uyghur Khan of the Bokug Clan," in *New Light on Manichaeism: Papers from the Sixth International Conference on Manichaeism* (Boston: Brill 2009), 70.

⁷¹ Nicholas Sims-Williams, "Sogdian and Turkish Christians in the Turfan and Dunhuang Manuscripts" in *Turfan and Tun-huang, the Texts: Encounter of civilizations on the route*. Ed. Alfredo Cadonna (Florence: Istituto Venezia e l'Oriente, 1990), 42.

⁷² Marshak, 21.

⁷³ Rose, 415.

Zoroastrian temple located 500 meters east of Dunhuang is recorded in the Dunhuang manuscript S.0367.⁷⁴ Despite, or perhaps because of, Zoroastrianism having the strongest religious presence in Sogdiana, unlike Manichaeism, Christianity, and Buddhism, there seems to be no Zoroastrian-related missionary activity.

Manichaeism was also prevalent in Sogdiana, but it does not seem to have enjoyed the same degree of popularity as Zoroastrianism. W. B. Henning states that generally Manichaeist Sogdian writings are superior to their Buddhist and Christian counterparts in regard to the quality of their translations. Henning derides the result of Buddhist and Christian efforts characterizing their work as a "miserable stammer" compared to the fluidity of their Manichaean counterparts.⁷⁵ Although it is uncertain, the superior quality of Manichaean translations could have been a significant factor in regards to Manichaeism's popularity surpassing that of Buddhism and Christianity. The texts found at Mt. Mugh are described by Nicholas Sims-Williams as "Rich in fragments of tales and parables most likely of Mani origin," indicating the popularity of the religion within Sogdiana's borders.⁷⁶ Manichaeist passages also seem to have been used as scribal exercises. Sogdian Manichaeists also projected their religion abroad, notably converting Bugu Khan (759–770), who proclaimed Manichaeism the state religion.⁷⁷ While the exact number of practitioners cannot be known, Sogdian Manichaeists had a profound effect on the region.

Marshak states that in Sogdia proper Buddhism was a minority religion, however, in Sogdian colonies in Tang territory, Buddhism flourished⁷⁸ perhaps as part of the Sinicization process. Most of the Buddhist Sogdian manuscripts have been discovered at the Thousand

⁷⁴ Hung Wu, "What Is Dunhuang Art?" in *Nomads, Traders and Holy Men Along China's Silk Road*, ed. A. Juliano and J. Lerner (New York: Brepols Publishing, 2002), 9.

⁷⁵ W. B. Henning, "Sogdian Tales." *Bulletin of the School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London*, vol. 11, no. 3. (Boston: Cambridge University Press, 1945), 465.

⁷⁶ Nicholas Sims-Williams, "Sogdian Fragments of Leningrad," 236, 235.

⁷⁷ Clark, 61.

⁷⁸ Marshak, 20.

Buddhas Cave at Dunhuang well outside of Sogdiana proper and are Sogdian translations of Chinese texts.⁷⁹ The fact they are translated from Chinese, rather than the original language, into Sogdian and the manner in which some of the texts were translated indicates a lack of familiarity with the texts or the languages on the part of the translators.⁸⁰ Therefore the advent of Buddhism among the colonists is likely due to recent Chinese influence and not derived from the Sogdian homeland or prior contacts with Buddhist civilizations such as Bactriana or Ghandhara. Even with limited membership, Sogdian Buddhist missionaries played a key role in propagating the faith. Kang Seng Hui, a Sogdian Buddhist monk, is thought to have been the first to introduce Buddhism into China's Nanjing region.⁸¹

Christian manuscripts in the Turfan area are primarily in Sogdian or Syriac; however, texts in Uygur Turkish and Pahlavi, have also been discovered.⁸² Nestorian and Melkite churches were established in Sogdiana by the 700s, but no Christian texts have been found in Sogdiana itself. Christian remains in the area bear Syriac script; for instance, an ostracon in Panjikent was found inscribed with Psalms 1 and 2, but it appears to have been part of a writing exercise. The Christian population in Samarkand and the surrounding area was likely significant as a Nestorian see had been founded in the city by the early 700s. Travelers passing through Samarkand reported the presence of Christians there, as attested by Ibn Hawqal (tenth century CE) and Marco Polo (thirteenth century CE). Nicholas Sims-Williams also cites several Sogdian inscriptions found in Semirechiye as evidence of Christian Sogdian missionary activity in the area.⁸³

The distribution of religions throughout the Sogdian communities illustrates the diversity found among the Sogdian people. Sogdians on the whole appear to have been tolerant of other religions, but this does not mean there was not an element of conflict or ill will between the

⁷⁹ Henning, "Sogdian Texts of Paris," 713.

⁸⁰ See Henning's characterization in "Sogdian Tales."

⁸¹ Rose, 414.

⁸² Nicholas Sims-Williams, "Sogdians and Turkish Christians," 43.

⁸³ Nicholas Sims-Williams, 44.

various religions. For instance, a Sogdian-language Nestorian document contains strong criticism of the Mahakala cult's practice of image worship.⁸⁴ Religion was undoubtedly important to the people of Sogdiana; however, it is also important to note that Sogdiana was one of the few areas in Central Asia where nonreligious art is found. For example, in Panjikent (Tajikistan) material depicts stories ranging from Aesop's fables and the exploits of Rustom from the West, and the Panchatantra from the South. In Samarkand one can also see eastern influence on Sogdian art in a wall painting dating to the seventh century CE that depicts the Tang emperor hunting leopards, and Chinese court ladies in a boat.⁸⁵ This implies that although important, religion before the Arab conquest did not dominate the lives of most Sogdians or their rulers. Sogdiana and its colonies represent a great confluence of Eastern and Western religions and a space in which, prior to the domination of the Arabs, they were able to coexist more or less peacefully. Sogdians' religions also highlight the reciprocal nature of cultural exchange along the Silk Road.

VI. Withering

The relationship between the expatriate Sogdians with their new government was not always a harmonious one. During the rebellion of the Six Prefectures in 721, although the participants are all dubbed *hu* 胡, usually a term meaning Western Barbarians, five of the leaders named appear to be of Sogdian origin based on their names: Kang Daibin 康待賓, An Murong 安慕容, He Heiniu 何黑奴, Shi Shennu 石神奴, and Kang Tiedou 康鐵頭.⁸⁶ All five bear common Sogdian surnames. The Rebellion of the Six Prefectures serves to highlight the at times unstable and at times violent relationship between the immigrant communities and the Tang government. As the eighth century progressed, the Tang would be faced with an increasing number of threats to its stability. As the Sogdians would no doubt discover, this loss of stability would contribute to the Sogdians' loss of status.

⁸⁴ Hans J. Klimkeit, "Christians, Buddhists, and Manicheans in Medieval Central Asia," *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, vol. 1 (University of Hawaii Press, 1981), 47.

⁸⁵ Marshak, 22.

⁸⁶ Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony," 336.

In July of 751, a Tang army was defeated at the battle of Talas at the hands of a Turgesh-Arab alliance. The defeat effectively ended the Tang's ability to intervene in Asia beyond the Tarim Basin.⁸⁷ This defeat and the Tang's subsequent inability to project force beyond the Tarim Basin played an important role in the downfall of the Sogdians as the Arab invasions themselves. With the Tang military held behind the Pamirs, the Tibetans moved to occupy the passes leading into China and into Kashmir, creating a chokehold on valuable trade networks the Sogdian merchants depended on for their livelihoods. Campaigns in 747 CE and 753 CE served to ease these Tibetan holds on the passes, but relief was only temporary.⁸⁸ The Tang loss at Talas freed the invading Arabic forces to take control of Central Asia as well as weakening the Tang's ability to cope with longstanding enemies closer to home.

The situation for both the Sogdians and the Tang was only going to worsen. Taking advantage of the inner turmoil caused by An Lushan's rebellion, Tibetan troops marched on and captured Chang'an in 763 CE. Rather than attempting to hold the city the Tibetans gradually withdrew along the Gansu corridor. Movement up this major trade artery by a hostile army could only have disrupted the Sogdian's trade network, which was already likely in poor condition due to rebellions and the depredations of preceding armies. As the Tibetans withdrew they occupied the cities they encountered along the way, taking first Liangzhou (764) in the east and eventually Hami (781–782) in the west.⁸⁹ At least two key Sogdian colonies at Hami and Chang'an, would have been seriously damaged by the rampaging Tibetans.

It is also quite likely that throughout their operations in China, Sogdian wealth would have proved a tempting target for looting by invading armies such as the Tibetans or rebelling generals. The Tibetan occupation of the passes restricted any influx of Sogdian immigrants into China to bolster the reeling Sogdian communities. With China wracked by invasions and

⁸⁷ Luciano Petech, "The Silk Road, Turfan, Tun-huang, in the first Millennium A.D." in *Turfan and Tun-huang, the Texts: Encounter of Civilizations on the Route*, ed. Alfredo Cadonna (Florence: Instituto Venezia e l'Oriente, 1990), 8.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Petech, 9–10

rebellions, their Chinese colonies in ruins, the mistrust of the Sogdian people by the Tang due to the rebellion of An Lushan, and their homeland occupied by invading armies, the Sogdian trade network and nation could not but have suffered grievously. Previously the Sogdians had shown a remarkable ability to escape destruction, but the combination of forces besieging them eventually proved too great.

VII. Rejuvenation

Sogdians in the homeland under direct Arab rule gradually came under the influence of Islamization. Revolts such as that of Rafi b. Layth, ultimately proved to be unsuccessful.⁹⁰ Attempts at allying with various warring Arab and Iranian armies proved to be of little use as well.⁹¹ Throughout these new waves of invasions the Sogdian economy was ravaged by hostile armies, further hampering any attempts at resistance.⁹² Gradually the main identifiers of Sogdian culture vanished, language, religion, methods of commercial and political organization, and world view. The seemingly pluralistic society of the Sogdians, which embraced multiple religions, world views, and even governments, was replaced by a monistic culture, emphasizing a single unitary government, underpinned by a monolithic religion and world view. Sogdians in China faced a similar decline, but under different circumstances.

Tibetan pressure on the Sogdians did not end with the occupation of Hami. Four years after Hami's occupation by Tibetan forces, the Sogdians were forced to move permanently from the Ordos region in 786 to Shuo Zhou in northern Shanxi, due to continued Tibetan incursions. Despite their new location, the Sogdians were still deemed one of the Six Hu.⁹³ After their exit from the Ordos, the Sogdians would undergo significant changes. Trade networks forged over hundreds of years were no longer open, once fertile fields were scorched, and old allies had fallen. A new identity had to be created among the Sogdian colonists.

⁹⁰ Vaissiere, 266.

⁹¹ Vaissiere, 266, 267.

⁹² Vaissiere, 268.

⁹³ Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony," 341–342.

In 809 while in Shanxi, the Sogdians were joined by the Shato, a Western Turkish tribe that had defected from the Tibetans and sought refuge in China.⁹⁴ The Shato appear to have gained ascendancy over the refugees of the Six Hu over time. In 837, Chinese records refer to the people of the region as the "Three Tribes of the Shato." Aside from the eponymous Shato, the three tribes were composed of the Sage 薩葛, and the Anqing 安慶.⁹⁵ According to Pulleyblank's analysis, the Sage are the Sugde. The evidence is in the names of the chief and the tribe itself. The chief is surnamed Mi 米, a common Sogdian surname, and in fact one unique to the Sogdians. The name of the tribe appears to be a close transcription of the name of the Sogdians, which, as Pulleyblank points out, is disyllabic in Sogdian.⁹⁶ Pulleyblank speculates the Anqing could be Sogdians as well, due to the fact that their chief's surname was Shi 史; however, as this term is also used as an abbreviated form of the royal Turkish surname Ashina, the link is less certain.⁹⁷ The Sogdians as part of the Shato likely continued to play a significant role in Tang history.

Pulleyblank's depiction of the fate of the Six Hus people provides an alternate explanation of the fate of Sogdians in China. The disappearance of the Sogdians in China is often attributed to Sinicization. Ultimately they simply blended into Chinese society losing their unique identity. The Sogdians of the Six Hu may have undergone a process of cultural assimilation; however, during the Tang they do not appear to be wholly Sinitic, at least. In addition to the fate of the Six Hu, marriage records from the Tang indicate marriage between the Sogdian and Chinese populations was extremely limited. Only three marriages are recorded between a male Sogdian and a female Chinese. The three Sogdians in question were exceptionally high-ranking and would appear to be exceptions rather than the rule. The only recorded pairings between female Sogdians and male Chinese seems to have come about through

⁹⁴ Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony," 342.

⁹⁵ Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony," 343.

⁹⁶ Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony," 344.

⁹⁷ Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony," 345.

older Chinese males buying young Sogdian female slaves.⁹⁸ Therefore Sinicization via intermarriage seems somewhat unlikely to have occurred during the Tang.

The fusion of Sogdian and Turkic peoples as well as the lack of intermarriage between Sogdians and Chinese would argue that, rather than undergoing a long process of Sinicization, the Sogdians may have undergone Huicization, simply blending with other Hu peoples in the area. It is possible Sogdians in later dynasties intermarried with Chinese families more frequently; but it seems likely they would have already lost their identity as Sogdians before that time, while the Huicization process had already begun during the Tang. This need not be a case of either/or, nor is there necessarily a single answer. Processes of Huicization and Sinicization can coexist with one another. As we have seen with An Lushan's family, even brothers can have widely divergent views of their host state and how to live their lives within it.

VIII. In a Nutshell

The Sogdians represent the Silk Road as do no other people. As merchants they traveled from one end to the other spreading their goods as well as both the cultures of those they encountered and their own. The true origin of the Sogdian people is murky. As with all peoples, after their birth they began to evolve, learning from other cultures they encountered, such as the Persians, and adopting elements of these cultures into their own. The Sogdians were shaped by the invasions that swept across Central Asia. It is due to the first recorded invasion of Sogdia that their history begins. Their history begins and ends with invaders from the West, as they succumbed to the Iranian and Arabic peoples of the eighth century. Their identity was evolving and complex, and always that of a diverse people. Given the constant invasions, it is hard to imagine it was possible for the Sogdians to remain in any way ethnically pure. Their subsequent history shows little desire to develop any pure "Sogdian" culture, especially given their intermarriage with other Hu peoples in China and their embrace of a multitude of religions.

The trade network they were able to forge due to the destruction of the Bactrians was truly impressive. The colonies that supported it and enabled it to flourish, however, were not

⁹⁸ Hansen, 300.

necessarily intended to do so. The colonies highlight the complexity of the Sogdian identity. They were ethnically, religiously, and economically diverse, and served as key points of cultural exchange between Central and Eastern Asia. Buddhist and Christian missionaries of Sogdian and other origins, bent on spreading their faith, traveled to and from these points, taking new world views with them. The impressive trade network painstakingly developed and nurtured was an important facet of Sogdian culture, but it too often overshadows the great diversity of the Sogdian people.

The Sogdian culture fell as the result of invasions, just as invasions provided it with an opportunity to prosper. Arab invasions from the West, combined with Tibetan depredations in Central Asia, cut off Sogdiana from its colonies and its colonies from their trade routes. The occupation of Sogdiana by a people who supported a more monistic view than the pluralistic one espoused by the Sogdians created a conflict of cultures they had hitherto not experienced and ultimately could not defeat or integrate into their society while still preserving the latter. The colonies isolated in foreign lands increasingly mixed with other immigrant populations until they became fused, creating a hybrid that was no longer truly Sogdian, but something new.

Hidden Dragon: Indo-European, Near Eastern, and Chinese Poetic Themes

Joel Dietz

井蛙應謂無龍窟

The welled-up frog would well declare,
“There is no such thing as a dragon lair.”

—Awakening to Reality (悟真篇)

Despite a growing literature pertaining to common Indo-European poetic elements and mythology, virtually nothing has been written about the influence of these elements on the development of the Sinitic poetic tradition. The primary difficulty is a relative lack of data in the formative period of mythological elements, making it difficult to identify proto-myths and analogous themes in the different traditions. In this paper I focus on one area where there is a single clearly identifiable theme in Indo-European myth and a comparatively large amount of data in the Sinitic tradition. I then deal as comprehensively as possible with the various sources from different traditions in order to identify as well as possible the proto-myth, as well as various means by which the myth was changed or forgotten.

Considerations pertaining to Indo-European influence on Chinese poetic forms can be divided into three general categories: form, content, and conveyer. My form is meant the structure of the poem, both customary divisions (stanzas and rhyme) as well as meter. By content is primarily meant the literary motif and themes contained therein. By conveyer is indicated the poet himself or herself. A fourth category, which will be mentioned only occasionally, is the usage of the poems in the broader community.

Though examining probable influence of the Indo-European poetic tradition on the

Chinese, equal time will not be spent on all of these categories. The conveyer will be dealt with insofar as there is information to be inferred from available literature. Form will be almost entirely neglected, since the topic of meter is quite complex and there is little literature examining the early evolution of meter in early Chinese poetry with respect to Western metrical forms. Content will be treated very extensively, since there is more material accessible on this topic and it has the potential of elucidating some of the primary differences.¹

One additional consideration is the differing textual basis that impels our comparisons. From the Chinese tradition we are primarily dealing with the classical tradition. The earliest strata consists of the *Book of Odes*, *Elegies of Chu*, and the presumably poetic fragments that served as the basis for the *Book of Changes*, and we are able to do little more than work with the received texts (with some consideration of the Guodian manuscripts). There are also many fragmentary myths that can be found in traditional repositories including the *Shan Hai Jing*, *Huainanzi*, *Shuo Yuan*, and others. On the Indo-European side, we have available to us the work of numerous scholars who have attempted to outline the contours of proto-Indo-European culture and poetics from scattered and fragmentary texts. Here we have a much wider, if fragmentary, body of evidence that later reaches a fuller manifestation in the Greco-Roman classical tradition (not to mention Sumerian epics or the fragments found in the Hebrew biblical tradition, which are not Indo-European in the strictest sense but also have common elements).

The result of the more extensive scholarly literature and wider body of evidence on the proto-Indo-European side means that we will start by examining the summaries of Indo-European poetic form, content, and conveyer as provided in the masterful studies by Calvert Watkins, M. L. West, J. P. Mallory, and Douglas Adams. After providing a summary of these topics as they exist in the Indo-European world, we will attempt to discuss analogues where found in early Sinitic literature, with some consideration of later topics. Obvious analogues, especially the concept of the dragon, will be examined more thoroughly.

There are two additional considerations that bear mentioning. It may be dangerous to specify transmission of a poetic form or content if independent origination is also possible,

¹ M. L. West's book also includes both "Poetry" and "Myth" in its title.

potentially because of human universals.² For instance, J. P. Mallory and Douglas Adams note that it is not unreasonable to expect that the worship of smith gods would accompany the development of metallurgy.³ They also note the Greek (Orphic) myth by which a widowed husband journeys to the Otherworld to retrieve a lost husband is attested in similar form in North America, a correspondence that has troubled folklorists as well as historians.⁴ Ways by which we can distinguish between these two possibilities will be considered, but our considerations are preliminary and cannot be regarded as definitive.

Our second consideration is morphological. Our sources on Indo-European culture are of "very various character and very various date" and have frequently been obscured because of lost or edited texts in eras less friendly to epic poetry.⁵ Also, the ability of the Vedas and Indo-Iranian traditions to reflect an uncorrupted Indo-European culture, as attested by earlier scholars, has more recently been drawn into question. Additionally, widespread presence is not sufficient to establish an early date. The myth of the Sun's horse-drawn chariot is widely attested, but archeological evidence indicates that the chariot first appeared after the dispersal of Indo-European peoples in around 2100–2000 BCE. Doctrines like metempsychosis and vegetarianism, though exclusively found in Indo-European cultures, are not present in the earliest strata of literature but appear in both Greece and India around the sixth century BCE⁶ These and other examples suggest transmission of evolving cultural ideas between Indo-European culture, a "devastating result" for those who would seek to identify the earliest strata of forms, myths and motifs.⁷ For the purposes of this study, which aims to examine certain common themes at greater length, morphological considerations, including the possibility of reverse euhemerization, are of

² J. P. Mallory and Douglas Adams, *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 425.

³ The metallurgic example is also found in Mallory and Adams, *Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European*, 425.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Martin L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 12.

⁶ West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, 37.

⁷ West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, 24.

considerable import.

The common mythological themes of proto-Indo-European (presumably although not necessarily exclusively transmitted via poetic means) identified by J. P. Mallory and Douglas Adams consist of several distinct types. First, there are various deities, of which the sky god is probably the best attested, along with gods serving various functions.⁸ There is also the myth, found in Indic, Roman, Scandinavian, and Celtic sources, of a virgin who secures a king's survival by producing the correct offspring.⁹ Another common theme is the war of the foundation, the articulation of which largely derives from Dumézil's famous trifunctional theory. Attested in Roman and Germanic variants, as well as less reliably in Greek and Indic, representatives of the first two functions of the society (military and sacral) battle the representatives of the third (fertility, economic), until the representatives of the third function are able to secure themselves via trickery.¹⁰ There are very widely attested eschatological myths of a final battle in which all gods and/or heroes are slain.¹¹

While not a specific myth, there is considerable evidence for beliefs regarding an afterlife, including a journey over a body of water, and additional waters in the Otherworld serving a purgative or wisdom-endowing function.¹² Another example is a divine being representing fire that dwells in water, sometimes associated with kingship.¹³ Creation myths, while varied among Indo-European peoples, indicate a proto-myth by which the universe was created by the sacrifice and dismemberment of a giant — the various parts of his body identified with different elements of nature.¹⁴ These elements also have standard associations, among them: flesh with earth, blood

⁸ Mallory and Adams, *Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European*, 431–432.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 437.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 436.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 439.

¹² *Ibid.*, 439.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 438.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 435.

with water, eyes with sun, mind with moon, and breath with wind.¹⁵ Certain characteristics of the hero are also well attested. Nick Allen has recently argued that similar parts of a hero's journey are found not only in the tale of Odysseus and Arjuna, but also of the Buddha in early Buddhist texts, and early Irish heroic literature.¹⁶ The most central motif is the slaying of the dragon, found by Calvert Watkins in the phrase "hero slays serpent," across Indo-Iranian, Hittite, Greek and Germanic.¹⁷

For the purposes of this study, the presentation by Mallory and Adams has two major shortcomings. First, they rely exclusively on modern scholarship. Besides a passing mention or two of Dumézil, they neglect virtually all literature on these topics before 1970. This leads to their second shortcoming, an inability to relate mythic themes. This is likely related to their comparative neglect of fuller forms (often found in classical literature), a flaw not found in the other book length studies by Martin West or Joseph Fontenrose. For example, in their discussion of the hero and serpent, they do not discuss Apollo and Python, Zeus and Typhon, Marduk and Tiamat, not to mention the biblical YHWH and the Leviathan. While this might be acceptable for their stated ends of identifying common Proto-Indo-European culture, it is less acceptable when attempting to establish the interrelation of common themes (in this case watery serpents, combat, chaos, and creation), given the fragmentary nature of the texts.

This theme is dealt more extensively by Calvert Watkins, focusing on linguistic patterns, and Joseph Fontenrose, in a book also not mentioned by Mallory and Adams, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and its Origins*. According to Fontenrose's extensive research, chaos and water were unequivocally identified with the serpent, while creation was identified with the triumph of the hero. As he states:

¹⁵ Ibid., 435.

¹⁶ As cited in Mallory and Adams, *Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European*, 440.

¹⁷ Discussed briefly by Mallory and Adams, *Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European*, 436, and more extensively in Calvert Watkins, *To Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 92.

Chaos was not merely a dark and watery mass.... These people saw it as a gigantic and monstrous being.... To this demon of disorder they opposed the sky god as champion of order, which could not be won until Chaos was vanquished or killed. So the victor god was dragon slayer and creator in the same act.¹⁸

Fontenrose also identifies many key features that appear across surveyed myths (what follows is substantially abbreviated; please consult Appendix A for Fontenrose's full list): The enemy was divine in origin, potentially the son of the mother (associated with the earth and/or chaos) or a chaos demon. He had a distinct habitation, often watery and associated with the dwelling space of monsters and demons. The enemy was gigantic and monstrous, potentially with many limbs and fiery breath or killing glances. The enemy was greedy and gluttonous, plundering, robbing, and creating disorder. His greed extended to water, which he blockaded from humans or drained because of his great thirst. He also was vicious, ruling as a despot. This enemy also conspired against heaven, because of his greed wanting to rule the world. A divine Champion appears to fight him, often some proxy of the sky god or the sky god himself. This champion was often a boy. He engaged in a great battle. He suffered setback, potentially including seduction and/or death. The enemy was outwitted and/or powerful magic was used against him. The champion celebrated his victory by imprisoning the enemy in a lower world and instituting a new cultus.

Somewhat problematically, Fontenrose uses the English word "dragon" to apply to "any kind of monster of animal or mixed shape."¹⁹ As he notes, Zeus' opponent Typhon was not entirely reptilian and had more than one snake within it. Nonetheless, the Greek word here is δράκων a word which clearly does not have the same association in the original context as in the modern English equivalent. Although no etymology of this word is provided by Fontenrose, it means both "dragon" and "serpent" and likely derives from the mythical killing glance of the

¹⁸ Joseph Fontenrose, *Python: A Study of Delphi Myth and Its Origins* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), 217.

¹⁹ Fontenrose, *Delphic Myth*, 70.

monster rather than its form.²⁰ Given that it was also used as the name for a fish, we can assume that despite various flourishes, its standard form existed on a continuum between a fish and serpent, rather than the flying creature of contemporary imagination.²¹ This term “dragon” will be used to refer to some sort of creature on this continuum.

A curious feature frequently appears here which requires more elaboration — the dragon may have a feminine complement with implied gentleness. The female chaos spirit, mentioned as a potential complement to the dragon (potentially with a chaos demon consort) is often associated with the earth or mother goddess. This secondary characteristic also appears in the earliest Sumarian myths — Marduk’s enemy Tiamat even had a gentle side.²² This linkage with a possibly subterranean origin for the dragon and an earth mother also likely has sexual implications. Eliade notes that the Babylonian term *pû* means both “vagina” and “source of a river,” with analogues in Hebrew and Egyptian.²³ Caves especially were used in initiation rites associated with a “mystic return to the mother.”²⁴ For example, the *delph* of “Delphic” used by Fontenrose in his title means “uterus.”²⁵

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the institution of a cultus that is mentioned by Fontenrose at the defeat of the dragon, some variant of this myth constituted the foundation of the national religion in many contexts, including Mesopotamian, Canaanite, Egyptian, and Indic (Vedic) cultures. This is thematically counterpoised to the foundation myth outlined by Mallory and Adams, in which lesser spirits contest and win a space for fertility and the economic sphere via attrition. Rather, in this myth the heroic male representing the sky god (and potentially also fire)

²⁰ Robert Beekes (with the assistance of Lucien van Beek). “δράκων” in: *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*. Indo-European Etymological Dictionaries Online, ed. Alexander Lubotsky (Brill, 2011). Brill Online. April 27, 2011 < <http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:8758/dictionaries/lemma.html?id=gr1953> >.

²¹ Ibid.

²² M. W. de Visser, *The Dragon in China and Japan* (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1913), 256.

²³ Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 41.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

conquers the chthonic watery elements. This introduction could also correspond in some way to the advent of metallurgy, since extreme heat would be necessary to apply to ores extracted from the earthly caves, and the produced weapons could likely lead to military conquest. This symbolism also would later be central to alchemical pursuits given the identification of ore with the uterus and accompanying gendering of objects.²⁶

However, if such a pattern identified by Watkins as "hero slays dragon," frequently is also the foundational myth of the state as claimed by Fontenrose, then presumably when the ruling cultus decays (and is replaced by another order), such mythological correspondences are not maintained or the stories are lost. A pertinent example is provided by Strabo, who states that the otherwise reliable Greek historian Ephorus claims that:

When [Apollo] set out from Athens to Delphi he went by the road which the Athenians now take when they conduct the Pythias; and that when he arrived at the land of the Panopaeans he destroyed Tityus, a violent and lawless man who ruled there; and that the Parnassians joined him and informed him of another cruel man named Python and known as the Dragon, and that when Apollo shot at him with his arrows the Parnassians shouted "Hie Paean" to encourage him (the origin, Ephorus adds, of the singing of the Paean which has been handed down as a custom for armies just before the clash of battle); and that the tent of Python was burnt by the Delphians at that time, just as they still burn it to this day in remembrance of what took place at that time.²⁷

Although Strabo comments that it is ridiculous to take what is clearly a myth and historicize it, it is equally clear that the Greek Ephorus did not find this to be the case. He took two myths (the slaying of the dragon Python and Titan Tityos) and transformed monsters within them into ordinary people just as he also transformed the description of those monsters, "dragon," into a title of one of the newly created men. Though euhemerization, the re-writing of history as

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Horace Leonard Jones, *Strabo: Geography v. IX* (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1930), 3.11–12.

myth, is more typically and traditionally ascribed to the Greeks, instances such as this indicate reverse euhemerization, the transformation of what is clearly myth into dubious history, a pattern that is equally clear in other instances that we will soon consider.

Although Fontenrose spends little time on the Hebrew tradition, there is substantial material to be gathered here, both inside and outside the canonical tradition. Although many of these references to primordial monsters (e.g. the Leviathan) are quite obscure, Alexander Kulik draws on the Hebrew apocalyptic tradition during the Second Temple Period (515 BCE – 70 CE) as well as some texts preserved in rabbinic lore to elucidate some of the more obscure points. For instance, the Hebrew, *לִיָּתָן*, translated as *δράκων* in the second century BCE Septuagint, is attested in Isaiah, Ezekiel and the Psalms. The word *תנינים*, translated as *δράκωτες* is in the Psalms and Job. The same Hebrew word is found in Gen. 1:21 but is (presumably erroneously) translated as “great fish [pl.]” The Leviathan, or “Crooked/Pole Serpent,” is found in Isaiah, Psalms, Job, 1 Enoch, 2 Baruch, and 4 Ezra.²⁸

These monsters have several features in common. The dragon “is in the sea” (Isaiah 27:1) or “in the midst of his rivers” (Ezekiel 29:3). The Leviathan is located in the sea and sometimes controls it. There is combat, in which the “heads of the dragons on the waters” are smashed by God (Psalm 74). As with other traditions, it has a connection with an Otherworld (Sheol/Hades). In fact, Sheol/Hades is frequently personified throughout these texts and occasionally is identified with belly of the beast.²⁹ Notably for our purposes, virtually all of these, at least within the canonical tradition, are poetic works that, likely because of difficult and obscure subject matter, were subject to a long history of misinterpretation and mistranslation, a problem compounded by distance from the original texts. As Nicolas Kiessling notes in his study of various translations, certain words corresponding to dragons were later translated as vices (e.g. pride) and even as early as the Septuagint there is a shift in meaning whereby “the dragon

²⁸ Alexander Kulik, “‘The Mysteries of Behemoth and Leviathan’ and the Celestial Bestiary of 3 Baruch,” *Le Muséon*, vol. 122, no. 3–4 (2009), 316.

²⁹ Kulik, “Behemoth, Leviathan and Celestial Bestiary,” 321, 327, 328.

becomes a metaphor of internal disorder."³⁰

One lost feature of the dragon is its previous function, stated by Kulik to be "regulating the world water system by swallowing superfluous waters."³¹ This potentially has an eschatological purpose, preventing an earth destroying flood.³² For instance, the Baba Batra section of the Talmud preserves a statement where at creation "the Prince of the Sea" was ordered by God to "Open your mouth and swallow all the waters which are in the world!" After refusing he was slain.³³ A similar function is attested in 1 Enoch, 3 Baruch and other Talmudic sources. For example, the Pesiq contains a fairly full statement of such a concept:

Were it not that he [Leviathan] lies over the abyss [תְּהוֹמוֹת] and presses down upon it, it would come up and destroy the world and flood it. But when he wishes to drink, he is not able to drink from the waters of the Ocean, since they are salty. What does he do? He raises one of his fins and the abyss comes up, and he drinks, and after he drinks, he returns his fin to its place, and it stops up the abyss.³⁴

Another seemingly lost feature is the association of the belly of the serpent with fire. The well-attested fire in the Otherworld (e.g. hell) is frequently combined with the imagery of a dragon.³⁵ For instance, the Egyptian Book of the Gates has a dragon named "Great fire" that lives in an Otherworld (a fiery lake) and torments the humans there by means of fire. Similar concepts are found both in biblical and apocalyptic texts, as well as the Mandaean tradition.³⁶

³⁰ Nicolas Kiessling, "Antecedents of the Medieval Dragon in Sacred History," *Journal of Biblical Literature* Vol. 89, No. 2 (Jun., 1970), 167, 174.

³¹ Kulik, "Behemoth, Leviathan and Celestial Bestiary," 323.

³² Kulik in fact refers to "ecological" instead of "eschatological," although I'm uncertain what he means since the usage appears to be figurative rather than literal; "Behemoth, Leviathan and Celestial Bestiary," 323.

³³ Kulik, "Behemoth, Leviathan and Celestial Bestiary," 323.

³⁴ Pesiq. R. 48.3, as cited and translated by Kulik, "Behemoth, Leviathan and Celestial Bestiary," 323.

³⁵ Kulik, "Behemoth, Leviathan and Celestial Bestiary," 30.

³⁶ Kulik, "Behemoth, Leviathan and Celestial Bestiary," 330.

As for the morphology of the myths in question, there are several ambiguous aspects. In the case of the common depictions of these texts, reverse euhemerization does not seem to play a large role. Rather, texts with explicit descriptions were comparatively neglected or lost, and the poetry that emphasized these myths was gradually de-emphasized or excluded from the mainstream of the tradition. Whether or not certain associations of the monster, including its regulative system or fiery belly, were part of an original proto-myth is unclear.

Dragons in the Chinese tradition are frequently described as gentler, more benevolent versions of their Western cousins, potentially even representing some harmony with nature.³⁷ Fontenrose claims that in the Chinese tradition, although there is often incidental damage from dragons fighting each other, when there is combat between dragon and man, it is likely that the man is at fault. Moreover, he states, following de Visser, that there appear to be no tales of combat between divine champion and monster before the Buddhist influx.³⁸ As will be discussed, more recent work has rendered these conclusions questionable.

What the Chinese word for dragon, *long* 龍, refers to is sometimes unclear. Despite some commonly listed characteristics, there is fairly wide disagreement about what exactly constitutes a dragon in China, as both textual and archeological sources contain a wide range of visual depictions. As Robert Bagley summarizes, "the literature of Chinese archeology commonly applies the label 'dragon' to almost any imaginary animal and then takes it for granted that the animals so labeled, because they are all dragons, are all related... the problem of actual relationships has therefore hardly been addressed."³⁹ Chang Kwang-chih also notes a number of different dragon-like creatures that are not "dragons" according to the Chinese usage, including

³⁷ Statements to this effect abound in standard accounts; for instance, several essays in *Myths and Rituals of the Yangtze River Civilization*, especially that of Arakawa Hiroshi, "The Dragon: A Monster Born of Great River Civilizations" (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 2002), or the source book on mythological research, Malcom Smith, ed., *Mythical and Fabulous Creatures: A Source Book and Research Guide* (Greenwood Press, 1987).

³⁸ Fontenrose, *Delphic Myth*, 492.

³⁹ Robert Bagley, "Shang Archeology," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 149.

the Tao-T'ieh, Fei-yi, K'uei, and Ch'iu.⁴⁰ However, despite what may ultimately be a conflation of types and exclusion of others, there are certain themes and visual depictions that are clearly dragon-like.

Xu Shen 許慎 in the 說文解字 *Shuowen Jiezi* gives this definition:

鱗蟲之長。能幽，能明，能細，能巨，能短，能長。春分而登天，秋分而潛淵。从肉，飛之形…凡龍之屬皆从龍。

It is longest among the scaly animals. It is capable of appearing and disappearing, contracting and expanding, shortening and lengthening. It ascends to heaven at the spring equinox and hides in the deep at the autumnal equinox. Its form consists of flesh and flying... all of those things classified as "dragon" come from this dragon.⁴¹

A considerably longer (and earlier) exposition is found in the compendium by Wang Chong 王充, the *Lun Heng* 論衡. Wang Chong cites contemporary folk wisdom that dragons reside in trees, which he attempts to reconcile with older traditions, which refers to a watery abyss as the dwelling place of the dragon and some special relationship between Yu the Great and a dragon.⁴² These differences and what seems certainly an evolution of the concept of the dragon are not especially problematic, given that various obvious patterns emerge.

For instance, one of the phrases cited by Wang Chong as from a commentary also appears in a number of different places including the *Huainanzi*:

山致其高，雲雨起焉；水致其深，蛟龍生焉

⁴⁰ Kwang-chih Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 58–59.

⁴¹ Mostly following Qiong Zhang except for the last part, which he does not translate. "From Dragonology to Meteorology: Aristotelian Natural Philosophy and the Beginning of the Decline of the Dragon in China," *Early Science and Medicine* 14 (2009), 41.

⁴² As found in CHANT (Chinese Ancient Texts) database, Institute of Chinese Studies.

Mountains reach their heights and clouds and rain arise there;
water reaches its depths and sea serpents and dragons are born there⁴³

In the next few verses that follow there are not only references to yin and yang, but also to floods and Yu's leveling and ordering of the water:

水為民害。禹鑿龍門，辟伊闕，平治水土

Water [floods] harmed the people. Yu dug out Longmen (Dragon Gate), and walled in Yinque. He leveled and ordered the water and soil.

There are multiple analogous references in the Heavenly Questions poem in the Elegies of Chu:

洪泉極深何以寘之

地方九則何以墳之

河海應龍何畫何歷

鯀何所營禹何所成

The floody abyss was extremely deep —

How did [Yu] fill it in?

Nine were the regions of square earth —

How did he pile them up?

What did the respondent dragon draw on the ground?

Where were the lakes and rivers channeled off?

What was it that Kun had managed? What was it that Yu completed?⁴⁴

Both Hawkes and Mair translate the third line cited here as two separate clauses with

⁴³ John Major, Sara Queen, Andrew Meyer, and Harold Roth, *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 727 (18.6).

⁴⁴ Victor Mair, ed., *Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 375.

either "winged dragon" or "respondent dragon" as the subject of the first clause, and seas and rivers as the subject of the second, rather than what would seemingly be the more straightforward reading of a dragon of the rivers and seas.⁴⁵ Anne Birrell instead translates, "Over the rivers and seas what did the Responding Dragon fully achieve and where did he pass?"⁴⁶ Whereas Mark Lewis has "the Responding Dragon of the rivers and the seas, / What did it completely pass through?"⁴⁷ Regardless of the differences, the close link between Yu and the dragons and waters is quite clear.

There are also the fragments of an ancient deluge myth in the *Shu Jing*. Henri Maspero claims that the so-called deluge legend is in fact, a myth of primeval waters, in which The Lord of Heaven sent a minister to put the earth in order. After the first minister failed, a second minister was dispatched, who succeeded in making the earth fit for mankind. This hero-god became the prime ancestor and taught mankind cultivation.⁴⁸ Maspero describes four later versions of the myth, here paired with the theses of Fontenrose (see Appendix A for the details):

1. Kun made dikes to hold back the waters and thus was killed by the Celestial Lord. Yu sprang from his corpse, and was told to set the world in order. He vanquished clouds and rain on Rain-Cloud Mountain, and, importantly, no longer attempted to dam the waters. (Ths. 3A, 3B, 10A).
2. Gong Gong, a dragon-like monster, ruled the earth. After a failed attempt, he was defeated by a second heavenly minister. In his flight he caused a flood. (Ths. 5A, 8A, 7F, 4A)
3. Nü Gua put the world in order at a time when there was a giant flood (often coupled with 2) (Ths. 4D, 4C)
4. Chi'ih yu, apparently a river god, pursued the Yellow Emperor, who employed a winged

⁴⁵ David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South* (Reading, U.K.: Penguin, 1985), 128.

⁴⁶ Anne Birrell, *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 148.

⁴⁷ Mark Lewis, *The Flood Myths of Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 40.

⁴⁸ Henri Maspero, "Légendes Mythologiques Dans Le Chou King" 1924, Édition complétée le 25 octobre 2004 à Chicoutimi, Québec.

dragon to fight him. In his fight, the dragon gathered waters and flooded the earth. (Ths. 2E,7F)⁴⁹

Fontenrose claims that the Chinese might have followed a similar path as the Hebrews, in that a newer religious idea, namely Confucianism, shaped traditional myths and excised traditional elements of them. In this case, the Lord of Heaven was moved and raised to a position where he could not be considered in relation to the chaos. The vital corollary is that the world no longer begins in watery chaos; the flood as it appears is more limited in scope. Consequently, as the hero is sent to free the earth from the waters, the fundamental act is reduced from creation to cultivation.

Further evidence for this extensive euhemerism is provided by Boltz in a discussion of in a key text related to the Gong Gong myth, the *Yao Dian* 堯典 in the *Shang Shu* 尚書. The reason for this remarkable lacuna in previous comparative literature may be a seeming mistranslation by James Legge of Gong Gong, the name of a dragon-like creature, as simply "Minister of Works." As he translates:

帝曰：“疇咨若予采？”歡兜曰：“都！共工方鳩僝功。”帝曰：“吁！靜言庸違，像恭滔天。”

The emperor said, "Who will search out for me a man equal to the exigency of my affairs?" Hwan-tow said, "Oh! there is the Minister of Works [Gong Gong], whose merits have just been displayed in various ways." The emperor said, "Alas! when unemployed he can talk; but when employed, his actions turn out different. He is respectful only in appearance. See! the floods assail the heavens."⁵⁰

While Legge explains in his notes that Gong Gong appears in the next book as a criminal, he nonetheless states that it is the name of his office, as in the next book (*Shun Dian* [舜典])

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ James Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 3, (London: Trubner, 1861–1872), 23–24.

"Shun calls Ching to the same."⁵¹ Boltz to some degree follows a similar but more extensive line of reasoning when he (citing personal communication from Professor Paul L-M Serruy) suggests that the first character of Gong Gong may be derived from *hong* 洪 and thus be appropriate translated as "flood worker." Boltz also attempts to reconstruct the name of Gong Gong's son as presented in the Zuo Zhuan and Tian Wen Keng found in Mencius, claiming that all are semanticizations of an original etymon meaning 'wanton disorder.'

Boltz also cites a few of many passages related Gong Gong in the Huainanzi and Liezi, for instance:

顓頊嘗與共工爭矣...共工為水害，故顓頊誅之

Zhuan once battled with Gong Gong ... Gong Gong brought about a watery catastrophe, and for this reason Zhuan Zhu executed him (HNZ 15.1–2)⁵²

Interestingly, in this passage Gong Gong is explicitly associated with water in contrast to fire. There are also passages from the *Shan Hai Jing* 山海經 suggesting a conflict between an official of Gong Gong's and Yu:

An official of Gonggong [no. 314] is called Minister Liu. He has nine heads and consumes the sustenance provided by nine mountains. The tracks of his collision with the landscape became lakes and streams. Yu the Great killed Minister Liu.⁵³

Additionally, he mentions a statement regarding "a Mountain Where Yu Attacked the Land of Gonggong," in the entry on Gong Gong in the *Shan Hai Jing*.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Huainanzi 15.1–2. I have amended Boltz's translation in William G. Boltz, "Kung Kung and the Flood: Reverse Euhemerism in the Yao Tien," *T'oung Pao* 67, nos. 3–5 (1981) to refer to a "watery catastrophe" instead of a flood, since there is the contrast between this and the fire in the preceding line.

⁵³ Richard Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 176 (s. 244).

⁵⁴ Strassberg, *Bestiary*, 215 (315).

These additional pieces of evidence, even if late, bolster the case of Boltz and Fontenrose that, that, in the words of Boltz, the original forms of these myths are "buried under layers of orthodox Juist (= "Confucian") euhemerizing interpretations, even to the point where seemingly seminal characters, such as Gong Gong, do not appear at all in the versions given us by Mencius, or are transformed into uncooperative officials."⁵⁵ Given that according to Shaughnessy, scholarly consensus has the Yao Dian emerging at during the late Zhou dynasty, this euhemerization must have taken place at an early date.⁵⁶

Boltz concludes with a strong but optimistic statement:

If the Greeks can be said to have mythologized their history, the Chinese historicized their mythology. Through detailed analyses of the pre-Han texts we can try to reverse this process, and uncover a fair part of a buried mythological tradition that has lain for centuries under heavy layers of interpretation and reinterpretation based on the prevailing doctrines of the dominant Juist orthodoxy.⁵⁷

These sorts of interpretations, relying on all of cryptic statements in the early poetic record, euhemerized historical records like the Yao Dian, and whatever mythic fragments available elsewhere, indicate that there is an analogous combat myth in the Chinese record in which dragons served much the same function as in Indo-European poetry and myth.⁵⁸ However,

⁵⁵ Boltz, "Kung Kung and the Flood," 141.

⁵⁶ Edward Shaughnessy, "Shang Shu" in Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Society of Early China, 1993).

⁵⁷ Boltz, "Kung Kung and the Flood," 142.

⁵⁸ *The Book of Changes* is indisputably a rich source not covered here due to lack of space. Edward Shaughnessy ("Composition of the 'Zhou Yi'" [Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1983]) discusses the figure of the dragon in the first hexagram fairly extensively (it can be in a watery abyss or flying), yet states that, contrary to tradition, it most likely originates in and refers to the movement of a constellation over the seasons. Although some aspects of his presentation seem likely, his strongest proof is an unsourced diagram of the changing of star positions that he created himself. He does not consider the possibility of the relation of this dragon to other

the nature of the euhemerization and the more extensive textual tradition could also indicate that, like the Semitic tradition, something was also preserved regarding the original regulative notion of the dragon.

These also shed light on various other attempts to find the origins of the Chinese dragon. For example, M. W. de Visser claimed the Chinese dragon has at least two antecedents, the Indian Naga by way of Buddhism and another form that potentially originated within China (or at least pre-dated the Buddhist conceptions). These Naga reside in "waters of the world of men" and have among them great lords, which when they feel insulted, bring calamities of various kinds on humans.⁵⁹ While the Nagas are not mentioned in the Vedas, they belong to Indian popular belief and were extended by brahminic religion. Though there is also no mention of the Nagas in the Jataka tales (and presumably anything else which belongs to the earliest strata of Buddhist texts) eventually they are represented by the Mahayana school of Buddhism as gods of rain.⁶⁰ Unlike later Western counterparts they are "beings wholly dependent on the presence of water and much afraid of fire, just like the dragons in many Chinese and Japanese legends."⁶¹ However, even if a substantial part of later dragon images derive from both indigenous folk traditions in China or non-Buddhist Indian traditions brought over along with Buddhist influence, the very early dates of the evidence considered necessitates some sort of transmission of mythological frameworks that pre-dates their Warring States redaction.

The evidence presented indicates that the foundational myth of the Chinese state is a combat myth including a hero and dragon. Like Indo-European and Semitic counterparts, the dragon is associated with watery chaos brought to an end by a hero's intervention. Like Semitic counterparts, this dragon appears to have had some sort of unperformed regulative function that necessitated the combat. Other related themes, like the interplay between fire and water, also

dragons or to related combat myths.

⁵⁹ Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, cited in de Visser, *Gruenwedel, Buddhistische Kunst in Indien*, 2, p. 187, cited de Visser 4.

⁶⁰ de Visser, *Dragon in China and Japan*, 10, 17.

⁶¹ de Visser, *Dragon in China and Japan*, 13.

appear to be present in various elements and very likely relate back to Indo-European ideas of fire, just as with also frequently occurring sexual metaphors.⁶² Indeed, although the evidence at this stage is merely suggestive, it may be that all of the different components of the combat myths outlined by Maspero derive from a single myth that was gradually obscured and replaced by Ruist orthodoxy. However, although various elements are clearly found throughout the Indo-European tradition, there is not enough evidence to say for certain that this is originally an Indo-European myth. Elements that seem to be preserved better in Levantine traditions may indicate a Near Eastern origin, as suggested by Fontenrose.

This process is also suggestive insofar as detailed study of a single mythological theme including aspects in other cultures indicates the various ways in which a myth might be transformed or obscured given on the disposition of the people, and likely includes an explanation for why China never developed an indigenous tradition of epic poetry including these mythological elements — her original mythological tradition was so obscured that later poets were unable to recover the original “creative” aspects. Thus, this situation is just what Maspero noted, citing the numerous attempts of generations of Chinese scholars to excise mythological elements from the Yao Dian:

Le lien établi entre Kong-kong et l'inondation saute aux yeux, avec la répétition de la formule « les eaux débordées assaillent le ciel ! » [像恭滔天], et les érudits chinois n'ont pu manquer de le voir ; mais dans leur désir d'éviter la conclusion déplaisante que le Chou king fait allusion à une légende mythologique, ils se sont efforcés de trouver des explications ; les diverses écoles en ont imaginé de différentes suivant les époques ... Mais, tandis qu'en ce qui concerne les légendes grecques, ce mode d'interprétation évhémériste est abandonné depuis longtemps,

⁶² There is not space here to discuss the torch dragon 燭籠 of the Heavenly Questions or the fire frequently associated with Yandi 炎帝 (another staple of combat myths), nor the possibility that Huangdi was originally also a dragon.

pour la Chine on continue trop souvent à s'en servir, et à affirmer, contre tout bon sens, que toute cette mythologie est de l'histoire dégénéré.⁶³

In attempting to untangle this mess of threads, we hope that the fire of the intellect serves its purpose in preventing new Hydra heads from arising from the mess of the Gordian knot — a problem potentially arising every time the Occident meets the reputedly unfathomable Orient — potentially leaving in its wake a multiplicity of categories that serve to further obscure rather than elucidate. Though there is a history here of systematic neglect and misinterpretation such that formative elements linger in obscurity, this is hardly unique to the Chinese. As examined, a similar situation continues to exist with respect to passages in the biblical Psalms that continue to serve as an inspiration despite a long history of misleading translations. Undoubtedly numerous other works of this type in the Indo-European tradition have been entirely lost or are only partially reconstructed due to their dependence on oral tradition and unfavorable circumstances. At least from the perspective of contemporary mythographers, Confucius may have been doing the myths a favor by serving to ensconce the mythical sage kings in popular memory. Though certain elements have been indisputably lost or corrupted, many have also been retained that likely would be entirely lost. Thus, even if the emphasis was changed from creation to wall-erection and cultivation, this may nonetheless have been a source of culture and societal inspiration. As Stephen Owen notes in his study of Chinese poetry, there is a link between the idea of creation and poetic creativity modeled on this act.⁶⁴ This allows the poet's act to be both mimetic and creative; it is mimetic with respect to an original creative act, and creative via inspiration through it.

⁶³ Maspero, "Légendes Mythologiques Dans Le Chou King" (digital edition).

⁶⁴ Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 82.

Appendix A: Common Themes Identified by Fontenrose

1. The Enemy was of divine origin.
 - A. He was son of the primordial mother: chaos demoness or earth goddess.
 - B. He was son of a father god: chaos demon or deposed father god or ruling father god
 - C. He had a wife or female companion of like origin and character
2. The Enemy had a distinctive habitation.
 - A. The feature of geographical correspondence: The Enemy lived in a region in which myth tellers were wont to place the dwelling of monsters and demons in general
 - B. He lived in cave, hut, or tree.
 - C. He occupied a god's temenos.
 - D. He was guardian or spirit of a spring.
 - E. He lived in sea, lake, or river.
3. The Enemy had extraordinary appearance and properties
 - A. He was gigantic
 - B. He had nonhuman form: most often that of a snake but also lizard, crocodile, scorpion, fish, hippopotamus, boar, lion, wolf, dog, horse, bull, eagle, vulture, hawk, etc.; sometimes a mixed form of various combinations of bestial and human members
 - C. He had several heads, arms, legs, etc.
 - D. He sent death by fire, glance, or breath; fire from his nostrils, mouth, or eyes, death-dealing glances from eyes or countenance, poison-laden breath from nostrils or mouth
 - E. He could change his shape at will.
 - F. He was a death spirit, evil demon, specter, rising from the lower world.
 - G. He was wind, flood, storm, plague, famine, draught
4. The Enemy was vicious and greedy.
 - A. He plundered, robbed, murdered, made war
 - B. He was a despotic ruler or master who oppressed his subjects and imposed tribute.
 - C. He carried off the young of man and beast.
 - D. He was gluttonous, devouring whole herds, and a man-eater.

- E. He was a lecher and ravisher, demanding that maidens be offered to him.
 - F. He commanded a road and killed travelers upon it, often in a contest that he forced upon them.
 - G. He blockaded rivers or springs to keep men from water; or he drained rivers in his thirst
5. The Enemy conspired against heaven.
- A. He wanted to rule the world.
 - B. His mother or wife or female companion incited him.
6. A divine Champion appeared to face him.
- A. The weather god or sky god went forth to fight him.
 - B. It was his first exploit; he was then a boy or youth.
7. The Champion fought the Enemy.
- A. The Champion, using his favorite weapons, fought and killed the Enemy.
 - B. He had to use numerous missiles; for the Enemy was formidable, or had an invulnerable hide.
 - C. The other gods were panic stricken; they appeased the Enemy or fled.
 - D. The Champion's sister, wife, or mother helped him.
 - E. The Champion was helped by another god or hero.
 - F. The Enemy fled during the combat.
 - G. The combat was the central encounter of a gigantomachy.
8. The Champion nearly lost the battle.
- A. He suffered temporary defeat or death.
 - B. The Enemy removed a potent organ from his body or took a potent object from him.
 - C. The Enemy overcame him after luring him to a feast.
 - D. The Enemy's consort seduced the Champion to his destruction, or entered into a liaison with him (Venusberg theme).
 - E. The dead champion was lamented.
9. The Enemy as finally destroyed after being outwitted, deceived, or bewitched: he was especially susceptible to lures of (a) food and (b) sex; he was easily taken in by (c) disguise; (d) magic was employed against him.

10. The Champion disposed of the Enemy and celebrated his victory.
- A. He punished the Enemy, even after killing him, by imprisoning him in the lower world or under a mountain, or by mutilating or cutting up or exposing his corpse.
 - B. He celebrated his victory with a banquet and other festivities; he was cheered by god and men.
 - C. He was purified of blood pollution.
 - D. He instituted cult, ritual, festival, and built a temple for himself.¹

Bibliography

- Bagley, Robert. "Shang Archeology," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Beekes, Robert (with the assistance of Lucien van Beek). "δράκων" in: *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*. Indo-European Etymological Dictionaries Online. Edited by Alexander Lubotsky. Brill, 2011. Brill Online. April 27, 2011 < <http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:8758/dictionaries/lemma.html?id=gr1953> >.
- Birrell, Anne. *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- Boltz, William G. "Kung Kung and the Flood: Reverse Euhemerism in the Yao Tien," *T'oung Pao* 67, nos. 3–5 (1981).
- Chang, Chung-yuan. *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art and Poetry*. London: Jessica Kingsley, 2011.
- Chang, Kwang-chih. *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983.
- Charlesworth, James. *The Good and Evil Serpent: How a Universal Symbol Became Christianized*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Fontenrose, Joseph. *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and Its Origins*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959

¹ Fontenrose, *Delphic Myth*, 9–11.

- Hawkes, David. *The Songs of the South*. Reading, U.K.: Penguin, 1985.
- Jones, Horace Leonard. *Strabo: Geography*. Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1930.
- Kiessling, Nicolas. "Antecedents of the Medieval Dragon in Sacred History," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (Jun., 1970).
- Kulik, Alexander. "'The Mysteries of Behemoth and Leviathan' and the Celestial Bestiary of 3 Baruch," *Le Muséon*, Vol. 122, No. 3–4 (2009).
- Legge, James. *Chinese Classics*. London: Trubner, 1861–1872.
- Lewis, Mark. *The Flood Myths of Early China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.
- Liu, James. *The Art of Chinese Poetry*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- Mair, Victor, ed. *Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Major, John, Sara Queen, Andrew Meyer, and Harold Roth. *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
- Mallory, J. P., and Douglas Adams. *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Maspero, Henri. "Légendes Mythologiques Dans Le Chou King" 1924, Édition complétée le 25 octobre 2004 à Chicoutimi, Québec.
- Owen, Stephen. *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
- Shaughnessy, Edward. "Shang Shu" in Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*. Society of Early China, 1993.
- . "Composition of the 'Zhou Yi.'" Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1983.
- Smith, Malcom, ed., *Mythical and Fabulous Creatures: A Source Book and Research Guide*. Greenwood Press, 1987.
- Strassberg, Richard. *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas*. Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Strickmann, Michael. *Chinese Poetry and Prophecy: The Written Oracle in East Asia*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005.

de Visser, M. W. *The Dragon in China and Japan*. Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1913.

Watkins, Calvert. *To Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

West, Martin. *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Zhang, Qiong. "From Dragonology to Meteorology: Aristotelian Natural Philosophy and the Beginning of the Decline of the Dragon in China," *Early Science and Medicine* 14 (2009).

Jia Yi's Proposal of
the "Three Exemplifications and Five Means of Allurement"
and the Han–Xiongnu Relationship
in Early Western Han Period

ZHOU Ying

Introduction

An essential issue that has aroused great concern and intense debate throughout the pre-dynastic and dynastic history of China was, how to understand and handle the relationship between the Chinese states (or empires) and the political entities made up of other ethnicities adjacent to and in frequent contact with the Chinese people. During its early history, from Eastern Zhou to Eastern Han, the relationship of China with the Xiongnu tribes and later with the Xiongnu political confederacy was preeminent among the issues concerning the foreign relations of the Chinese empire with all the minority states. The threat of Xiongnu was especially urgently felt during Western Han, when the Chinese empire tried various military, political, economic and cultural means to appeal, curb or utilize the Xiongnu so as to eliminate its threat. Thus, how to deal with the Xiongnu naturally became a topic for both court debates and the memorials, or political treatises, written by many of the scholar officials, among them Jia Yi 賈誼 (200 BCE–169 BCE), who was uniquely noted for his daring memorial to Emperor Wendi, in which he proposed a stratagem called "the three exemplifications and five means of allurements, *sanbiao wu'er* 三表五餌." Although Jia Yi's proposal gained favorable evaluation neither from his contemporaries nor from latter-day historians, nor was it seriously considered by his ruler, Emperor Wendi, his strategies were nonetheless largely carried out during Emperor Wudi's reign. At the same time, the cultural and political ideas underlying the policies he proposed also exerted great influence on the dynastic history of China. Therefore, this paper will closely examine Jia

Yi’s proposal on the policies dealing with Xiongnu, against the background of the Han–Xiongnu relationship in the early Western Han period, with a focus on its cultural and ideological origination as well as latter-day influences.

Part I. Who was Jia Yi?

Jia Yi was a famous scholar official in Emperor Wendi’s court, known both for his literary talents and his insightful political propositions. His biography is preserved both in *The History of the Former Han*¹ and the “Biographies on Qu Yuan and Jia Sheng” in the *Records of the Great Historian*.² Like the great poet Qu Yuan, he is commonly regarded as an upright minister whose loyalty and talents were not properly appreciated by his ruler and contemporaries.³

Three aspects of Jia Yi’s political propositions are particularly worth notice: 1) He condemned the harsh policies of the Qin dynasty, advocating for a moral and humane way of ruling. In the essay “Criticizing the Qin” (*Guoqin* 過秦), he claims that the powerful Qin empire was destroyed solely because it was not able to employ humanity and righteousness.⁴ At the same time, he wishes that the Han rulers could draw on the lessons of the Qin so as to be able to maintain a long, stable and prosperous reign.⁵ 2) He was strongly for maintaining the authority of the central government and lessening the power of local vassal rulers. In his memorial to Emperor Wendi, he analyzed the situation of the vassal kingdoms enfeoffed by the Han court and concluded that the more powerful and resourceful a vassal kingdom was, the more likely it was to rebel against the Han court. Based on this observation, he proposed to divide the vassal kingdoms into smaller ones, saying, “nothing is more efficient than multiplying the vassal states so as to reduce their power, if one wishes all under the Heaven to be ordered and secure. 欲天下

¹ Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), pp. 2221–2267.

² Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) pp. 2497–2504.

³ Yu Ying-shih, “Han Foreign Relations” in Denis Twitchett and Micheal Lowe, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 1, The Ch’in and Han Empires, 221 BC–AD 220* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 108.

⁴ Jia Yi 賈誼, *Xinshu jiaozh u* 新書校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 2000), p. 3.

⁵ Jia Yi, p. 17.

之治安，莫若眾建諸侯而少其力”⁶ 3) He harshly criticized the policy of appeasing the Xiongnu carried out by the Han court. His proposal on solving the Xiongnu problems, which was preserved both in his bibliography in *The History of the Former Han* and in the chapter on “Xiongnu 匈奴” in the *Xinshu* 新書,⁷ will be discussed in detail in the later part of this paper.

To sum up, Jia Yi’s political propositions are both idealistic and practical. Although often considered a Confucian scholar, in his political stance Jia Yi actually successfully blended the Confucian arguments for the humane way of ruling and the propositions of Han Fei 韓非 and Shen Buhai 申不害 for adopting various stratagems of statecraft in order to maintain the power and authority of the ruler. The best evidence for the fusion of the two trends can be found in his memorial to Emperor Wendi, in which it is stated “benevolence and righteousness, as well as the abundant love and kindness are the sharp blades of the ruler; power and high position, as well as the standards and regulations, are the axes of the ruler. 夫仁義恩厚，人主之芒刃也；權勢法制，人主之斤斧也。”⁸ Jia Yi’s policies on handling Xiongnu affairs, as will be discussed later, are also a perfect demonstration of the successful mixture of the two tendencies.

Part II. The Xiongnu and their relationship with the Han court

The Xiongnu, or Huns, were the militant nomadic people living on the steppes of central Asia. They had been constantly at war with the Chinese ever since the Eastern Zhou period. In the late warring states period, the states of Yan 燕, Zhao 趙 and Qin 秦⁹, which were adjacent to the Xiongnu, had great walls built to defend against them. During the Qin dynasty, the Xiongnu were

⁶ See Ban Gu, p. 2237. This proposition was later adopted by Emperor Wudi in the form of “Edict on extending the benevolence of the Emperor” *tui'en ling* 推恩令, and it proved to be very effective in reducing the power of the vassal states. For more discussion on the *tui'en ling*, see Yue Qingping 岳慶平 “Questioning the statement of ‘princes and their sons all became vassal rulers’ after the strategy of ‘extending the benevolence of the emperor’ proposed by Zhufu Yan” “主父偃獻策推恩後 ‘王子畢侯’ 質疑” in *Qilu xuekan* 齊魯學刊, issue 05 (1985), p. 67.

⁷ Jia Yi, pp. 134–152.

⁸ Jia Yi, p. 461.

⁹ These states also learned a lot from the cavalry of the Xiongnu. King Wuling of Zhao, for example, was noted for reforming his armies by having his men wear Hu clothes and ride on horseback.

defeated by General 蒙恬 Meng Tian and driven further north. Emperor Qinshihuang 秦始皇 also ordered the old great walls to be rebuilt and linked together to keep off the Xiongnu.¹⁰

In the early years of the Han dynasty, the loosely organized Xiongnu tribes became more unified under the powerful leadership of Maodun 冒頓, a fierce, capable and ruthless Chanyu 單于 who came to the throne through murdering his father. Maodun also defeated some of his hostile neighbors, such as the Donghu 東胡 in the east and Yuezhi 月支 in the western regions.¹¹

Ever since its establishment, the Han Empire was constantly threatened by the confederacy of the Xiongnu under the leadership of Maodun. After Emperor Gaodi's 高帝 attempt to attack the Xiongnu ended in a defeat at Pingcheng 平城¹², the Han, who considered themselves to be much more culturally and ethically superior to the Xiongnu "barbarians," had to face the humiliation of offering the Heqin 和親 treaty (marrying the Han princesses to the Xiongnu, and sending lush gifts to them) in order to appease them and to affirm their alliance. However, the Xiongnu's appetite seemed to be insatiable, and the reconciliation made by the Han could not prevent them from constantly harassing the Han frontier areas. The weakness of the Han only caused the Xiongnu to behave more contemptuously toward the Han court.¹³

The following two diplomatic letters, preserved in the "Biography of the Xiongnu" in the *History of the Former Han*, will serve to illustrate how arrogant the Xiongnu were toward the Han. The first was sent by the *Chanyu* of Xiongnu to Empress Dowager Lu 呂后, the widow of the first emperor of Han. It says:

孤僂之君，生於沮澤之中，長於平野牛馬之域，數至邊境，願遊中國。陛下獨立，孤僂獨居。兩主不樂，無以自虞，願以所有，易其所無。¹⁴

¹⁰ For more on the Xiongnu and Han relationship before the Han dynasty, see Ban Gu, pp. 3743–3795.

¹¹ Yu Ying-shih, pp. 383–405.

¹² Ban Gu, pp. 3743–3795.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ban Gu, pp. 3754–3755.

I am a lonely widowed ruler, born amidst the marshes and brought up on the wild steppes in the land of cattle and horses. I have often come to the border of China wishing to travel in China. Your majesty is also a widowed ruler living in a life of solitude. Both of us are without pleasures and lack any way to amuse ourselves. It is my hope that we can exchange that which we have for that which we are lacking.¹⁵

Empress Lu was so enraged by this extremely provocative and insulting letter that she wished to attack the Xiongnu immediately upon receiving it, but then she changed her mind after being reminded by her minister Ji Bu 季布 of the setback Emperor Gaodi had received at Pingcheng.¹⁶ Thus she ended up writing the following letter in reply, in which she assumed a very humble position, pleading for the Chanyu to spare her country and people.

退日自圖，年老氣衰，髮齒墮落，行步失度，單于過聽，不足以自汗。弊邑無罪，宜在見赦。¹⁷

My age is advanced and my vitality is weakening. Both my hair and teeth are falling out, and I cannot even walk steadily. The Chan-yu must have heard exaggerated reports. I am not worthy of his lowering himself. But my country had done nothing wrong, and I hope he will spare it.¹⁸

During the reign of Emperor Wendi 文帝, successor to Empress Dowager Lu, the Xiongnu empire became even more provocative. The second year after their Wise King of the Right, whose army came to harass the areas south of the Yellow River, was defeated and driven back, the Xiongnu sent an envoy to the Han court with a letter claiming the Chanyu to be the

¹⁵ Translation by Yu Ying-shih; see Yu Ying-shih, p. 387.

¹⁶ Ban Gu, pp. 3743–3795.

¹⁷ Ban Gu, p. 3755.

¹⁸ Translation by Yu Ying-shih; see Yu Ying-shih, p. 387.

Heavenly-established Emperor (tian suoli da chanyu 天所立大單于).¹⁹ In this letter, the Chanyu claimed that in order to punish the Wise King of the Right, who had disrupted the Han–Xiongnu relationship, he sent him to fight with the tribes in the western regions. His real intention, however, was to threaten the Han into resuming the Heqin package through revealing that the western regions were already defeated by the Wise King of the Right and were now under the control of the Xiongnu. Emperor Wendi again surrendered to the threat of the Xiongnu and sent Chanyu a large quantity of luxurious gifts, including silk, brocade, goldware and many other items.²⁰ To conclude, throughout the early years of the Western Han, both the Han rulers and ministers, being frightened of the military power of the Xiongnu, tried to employ diplomatic means to appease them.²¹

Part III. Analysis of Jia Yi's tactics called the "three exemplifications and five means of allurements"

Against the background previously described, Jia Yi sent his memorial to Emperor Wendi and put forward his proposal of the "three exemplifications and five means of allurements." Lamenting the fact that the Han Empire was acting like a vassal state to the barbarian Xiongnu, paying homage and tribute to them incessantly, Jia Yi was very confident that the Xiongnu could be checked through the implementation of his proposal, which could at once gain the hearts of the Xiongnu people through being sincere and faithful to them, loving and respecting their customs, and recognizing their skills, and corrupt and estrange the Xiongnu people by enticing them with the highly developed material culture they could offer, such as fine clothes, delicate food, music, grand buildings and beautiful ladies.²²

On the whole, by exerting the three exemplifications, Jia Yi is advocating for extending the humane way of ruling to the "barbarian" Xiongnu, which implies that he believes the

¹⁹ Ban Gu, p. 3758.

²⁰ Ban Gu, pp. 3759–3760.

²¹ Ban Gu, pp. 3743–3795.

²² Jia Yi, pp. 135–137.

Xiongnu can also be subject to the moral transformation carried out by the sage rulers. Such a belief can actually be traced back to Confucius's belief that the difference between the Chinese and barbarians was not so insurmountable that there is no common ethical ground for them. The Analects 9.14 reveals much about Confucius's attitude toward the people of other ethnicities who were scattered among and around the Chinese states in the Eastern Zhou period:

子欲居九夷。或曰：“陋，如之何！”子曰：“君子居之，何陋之有？”²³

The Master expressed his wish to go and dwell among the nine barbarian tribes of the east. Someone said: "How could you bear the uncouthness there?" The Master said: "If a gentleman lives there, what uncouthness would there be?"²⁴

This passage shows that Confucius does not necessarily look down upon the "nine barbarian tribes." It's true that they are vulgar and culturally unsophisticated, but they might be innately good and thus easy to civilize. Therefore he is very confident that a gentleman of superb moral strength is able to transform the uncouth barbarian areas into pleasant dwelling places by demonstrating the virtuous way of living through his words and actions.

On the other hand, Confucius is very aware of the cultural difference between the Chinese and the "barbarian" tribes. For him the Chinese are definitely superior to the barbarians in terms of both cultural and ethical practices.

子曰：“夷狄之有君，不如諸夏之亡也。”²⁵

Confucius says, "The Yi and Di barbarians, though having their rulers, are not as good as the various Chinese states without rulers."²⁶

This passage suggests that even if there is no ruler to bind the various Chinese states, the

²³ Cheng Shude 程樹德, *Lun yu ji shi 論語集釋* (Collective Commentaries on the Analects) (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1990), pp. 604–605.

²⁴ Translation by the author.

²⁵ Cheng Shude, p. 147.

²⁶ Translation by the author.

people may still demonstrate relatively more virtuous behaviors because of the lingering effect of the ritual and cultural rules that have been handed down from the three dynasties. Whereas for the barbarians, due to the lack of the accumulation of such cultural refinement, a ruler may play little role in putting the people in an orderly state. It is because of this belief (or bias) that Confucius is constantly on guard against the disruptive effect of the "barbarian tribes" and is willing to praise any historical figure who has contributed to maintaining the Chinese states. This mentality to a large extent shaped his evaluation of Guan Zhong 管仲:

管仲相桓公，霸諸侯，一匡天下，民到于今受其賜。微管仲，吾其被髮左衽矣。豈若匹夫匹婦之為諒也，²⁷

Guang Zhong acted as prime minister to Duke Huan, made him leader of all the vassal rulers, and united and rectified the whole kingdom. Down to the present day, the people enjoy the gifts which he conferred. But for Guan Zhong, we should now be wearing our hair unbound, and the lappets of our coats buttoning on the left side.²⁸

Here the threat of the barbarians to the Chinese culture might not be imagined, for there are several accounts in the *Annals of Spring and Autumn* and its *Gongyang Commentary* on the cases of Chinese states being destroyed by the Di barbarians. In these records, Guan Zhong's ruler, Duke Huan of Qi is depicted as the one who tries his best to rescue the smaller Chinese states or to restore them after their destruction by the "barbarians."

齊師、宋師、曹師次于聶北，救邢。救不言次，此其言次何？不及事也。不及事者何？邢已亡矣。孰亡之？蓋狄滅之。曷為不言狄滅之？為桓公諱也。曷為為桓公諱？上無天子，下無方伯，天下諸侯有相滅亡者，桓公不能救，則桓公恥之。²⁹

²⁷ Cheng Shude, p. 989.

²⁸ Translation adapted from that of James Legge. See Legge, *The Chinese Classics, Confucian Analects* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), p. 282.

²⁹ Xu Yan 徐彥, *Shisanjing zhushu (zhengli ben) Chunqiu gongyang zhuan zhushu* 十三經注疏 (整理本) 春秋公羊

In the first year of the reign of Duke Xi: The armies of Qi, Song and Cao were stationed to the north of Nie to rescue the state of Xing. According to the normal method of Chunqiu recording, to station the army should not have been mentioned in the case of rescuing a state. Why is the stationing of the army mentioned here? [It is to indicate] that the rescue was not carried out in time. Why was the rescue not carried out in time? Because the Xing was already destroyed. Who destroyed it? It is probably the Di barbarians who destroyed it. Why it is not mentioned that the Di barbarians destroyed the Xing? [It is to] cover up the disgrace for Duke Huan. Why is there a need to cover for Duke Huan? Because in a world with no Son of Heaven above and no dukes and nobles below, there were cases of the vassal states destroying each other. Since Duke Huan was not able to rescue [those being destroyed], he felt ashamed of it.³⁰

僖公二年：二年春，王正月，城楚丘。孰城之？城衛也。曷為不言城衛？滅也。孰滅之？蓋狄滅之。³¹

In the spring of the second year of Duke Xi, the first month of the King, the city of Chuqiu was build. Why was this city built? Because [there was a need] to build a city for the state of Wei. Why it is the building of a city for the state of Wei not mentioned? Because Wei had been destroyed. Who destroyed it? It was probably the Di barbarians that destroyed it.³²

It is also worth mentioning that, in the “Biography of Wei Xian 韋賢傳” in the *History of the Former Han*, Confucius’s comment on Guan Zhong is quoted in the memorial to Emperor Aidi 哀帝 by Wang Shun 王舜 and Liu Xin 劉歆³³, in which they explain the necessity for

傳注疏 (Beijing: Beijing da xue chu ban she, 2000), pp. 232–233.

³⁰ Translation by the author.

³¹ Xu Yan, p. 240.

³² Translation by the author.

³³ Ban Gu, pp. 3101–3133.

keeping all the temples and sacrifices for Emperor Wudi, since the grand achievements made by Wudi in eliminating the Xiongnu threat have earned him a position equal, if not superior, to that of Emperor Gaodi and Wendi. This is because the barbarians (the Xiongnu being the most powerful) have long been a serious threat to the safety and even the existence of the Chinese people ever since the power of the royal house of Zhou diminished. As a result, those who defeated or conquered the Barbarians deserve the highest praise and worship. In the memorial, Wang Shun and Liu Xin argue that, from the fact that Confucius not only forgives Duke Huan for his horrible behavior in murdering his elder brother in the struggle for the ducal throne, and Guan Zhong for not protesting against such an atrocity, but he also highly praises them for the role they played in protecting the Chinese states against the intrusion of the barbarians, people can infer that the sage Confucius must be attaching great importance to the preservation of the Chinese empire and Chinese culture.

Jia Yi has largely inherited Confucius belief in the superiority of the Chinese over the "barbarians," as is revealed in the passage below:

凡天子者, 天下之首也, 何也? 上也。蛮夷者, 天下之足也, 何也? 下也。海内之势, 如身之使臂, 臂之使指, 莫不从制。³⁴

The Son of Heaven should be [universally regarded] as the head of all under Heaven. What is the reason for this? It is because the Son of Heaven is superior. The Man and Yi barbarians are the feet of all under Heaven. What is the reason for this? It is because they are inferior. The situation within the four seas should be like the torso moving the arms and the arms moving the fingers. None of them does not obey the order [from the superior].³⁵

However, in spite of the clear demarcation drawn between the Chinese and the "barbarian tribes," there does exist in late Eastern Zhou and early Western Han period an intellectual trend that considers the essential difference between the two groups as a cultural and ethical one

³⁴ Jia Yi, p. 463.

³⁵ Translation by the author.

instead of an ethnical one. Consider the following passage from the *Gongyang Commentary to the Annals of Spring and Autumn*.

夏，六月乙卯，晉荀林父帥師及楚子戰于郟，晉師敗績。大夫不敵君，此其稱名氏以敵楚子何？不與晉而與楚子為禮也。³⁶

In summer, on the Yimao day of the sixth month, Xun Linfu of Jin commanded his army to fight with the Viscount of Chu at Bi. The Jin army was defeated. [In the regular way of recording of the Annals of Spring and Autumn], the minister won't be recorded as fighting with a lord. Why in this piece of recording are the minister's given name and family name both mentioned, and he is recorded as fighting with a lord? This is to show the Annals' condemnation of the Jin and praise for the Viscount of Chu as being ritually appropriate.³⁷

It is worth pointing out that the Chu 楚 was traditionally considered a "barbarian state," and it was once the target of a "punitive expedition" led by Duke Huan of Qi. The *Gongyang Commentary* on the *Chunqiu* record in the fourth year of Duke Xi 僖公 described this event and labeled the Chu as a "Yidi 夷狄 barbarian."

僖公四年... 楚有王者則後服，無王者則先叛。夷狄也，而亟病中國，南夷與北狄交。中國不絕若線，桓公救中國，而攘夷狄，卒帖荊，以此為王者之事也。³⁸

Chu would submit after the appearance of a true king, and rebel first if there were not a true king. It is the Yidi barbarian that were repeatedly causing trouble to the Chinese states. The Yi barbarian in the south and the Di barbarian in the north contacted each other, and the fate of the Chinese states was like a line about to break. Duke Huan of Qi rescued the Chinese states by repelling the Yi and Di

³⁶ Xu Yan, p. 240.

³⁷ Translation by the author.

³⁸ Xu Yan, p. 247.

barbarians. He eventually made the Jing (a derogatory term for Chu, indicating it being a "barbarian state") submissive and, by doing this, he brought the undertakings of the true king to a completion.³⁹

The above-mentioned items of the *Gongyang Commentary* can serve as a good illustration of the Gongyang commentators' attitude toward the Chu state: on the one hand, they condemn the Chu for threatening the existence of the Chinese states. On the other hand, they praise its ruler for being able to observe the Chinese rituals. Such a change of attitude demonstrates that the Gongyang commentators would like to judge a ruler or state not on the basis of their original ethnicity but on the moral status underlying their behavior patterns.

The idea that the strong barbarian Chu state could eventually be assimilated into the circle of the Chinese culture may also to a certain extent indicate the cultural superiority of the Chinese states. It might be reasonable to conclude that the Chu were eventually conquered not by the military power of Duke Huan of Qi but by the moral strength and cultural refinement of the central states. As a matter of fact, Confucius also believes that the best means for a ruler to conquer is through refining one's culture and cultivating virtue:

故遠人不服，則修文德以來之。既來之，則安之。⁴⁰

Therefore, if remote people are not submissive, all the influences of civil culture and virtue are to be cultivated to attract them to be so; and when they have been attracted, they must be made contented and tranquil.⁴¹

A closer examination of Jia Yi's "three exemplifications" will reveal that his proposal is a natural extension of the intellectual trend reflected in the *Analects* and the *Gongyang Commentary to the Annals of the Spring and Autumn*. Jia Yi's first exemplification is to demonstrate that the Han emperor is faithful to his words:

³⁹ Translation by the author.

⁴⁰ Cheng Shude, p.1137.

⁴¹ Translation by James Legge; see Legge, p. 309.

臣且以事勢諭天子之信，使匈奴大衆之信陛下也，爲通言耳，必行而弗易。夢中許人，覺且不背其信，陛下已諾，若日出之灼灼。故聞君一言，雖有微遠，其志不疑，仇讎之人，其心不殆，若此則信諭矣，所圖莫不行矣。一表。

42

Your subject will make explicit the faithfulness of the Son of Heaven by using the situation of the common affairs and thus cause the multitudes of the Xiongnu to believe in your Majesty. For even if [your Majesty] has uttered but ordinary words, you will surely carry it out without changing it; even if you make a promise in a dream, you will not go back on it upon waking up. The promise made by my emperor is like the bright and luminous sun coming out. Therefore, once hearing one word from my emperor, even the one who is estranged would not be dubious in his intention, and the one who is filled with hatred would not send any anger out of his heart/mind. Through showing [the Xiongnu] these facts, the faithfulness of my emperor will be made explicit, and what we aim at will be carried out smoothly. This is the first exemplification.⁴³

Xin 信 (faithfulness or sincerity), as a virtue, is often used to describe the moral principle binding two equal parties, or the proper means for the ruler to treat his subjects. In the *Analects*, there are such expressions as "If in the personal relationship with his friends, one can be sincere and truthful to his words... 與朋友交言而有信"⁴⁴ and "If the superior loves sincerity, then the people would not dare not to show their true essence. 上好信，則民莫敢不用情"⁴⁵. Therefore, to demonstrate *xin* to the Xiongnu people indicates that the Han ruler is embracing the Xiongnu as his own people and treating them on an equal basis. According to Jia Yi, not only should the

⁴² Jia Yi, p. 135.

⁴³ Translation by the author.

⁴⁴ Cheng Shude, p. 30.

⁴⁵ Cheng Shude, p. 897.

Han emperor show his sincerity, he should also demonstrate his love and compassion for the Xiongnu people.

臣又且以事勢諭陛下之愛，令匈奴之自視也，苟胡面而戎狀者，其自以為見愛于天子也，猶弱子之遭慈母也，若此則愛諭矣。一表。⁴⁶

Your subjects will also demonstrate [to the Xiongnu] their love of your majesty by using the situation of common affairs, leading the Xiongnu to reflect on themselves and to realize that the faces of the Hu people and the appearance of the Rong people are both loved by the Son of Heaven. [Thus] they will welcome [my lord] as the young son welcoming the kind mother. If [the situation] is like this, then the love of my emperor will be made explicit. This is the second exemplification.⁴⁷

The advocacy for extending love to the Xiongnu is especially commendable, taking into consideration the inimical relationship between the Xiongnu empire and the Han dynasty and the long-lasting wars between the two.⁴⁸ At the same time, the analogy of the mother–son relationship also reveals the haughtiness of the Han empire — the Xiongnu are forgivable because they are like unruly children who lack proper training; they could be moved to repentance if the “mother state” continuously shows them love and compassion without contemplating their appearance, habits or lifestyles.

Besides mutual trust and love, Jia Yi thinks it is also essential to demonstrate the Han emperor’s respect for the merits of the Xiongnu:

⁴⁶ Jia Yi, p. 135.

⁴⁷ Translation by the author.

⁴⁸ For more commentary on the second exemplification, see Ma Xiaoli 马晓丽, “Jia Yi’s Thoughts on the Han–Xiongnu Relationship 贾谊的民族关系思想” *Yantai daxue xuebao* 烟台大学学报(哲学社会科学版), 119 (2006), pp. 200–202.

臣又且諭陛下之好，令胡人之自視也，苟其技之所長與其所工，一可以當天子之意，若此則好諭矣。一表。⁴⁹

Your subjects will further reveal the approval of your Majesty, leading the Hu to reflect on themselves and to realize that what they are adept and good at can fit the mind of the Son of Heaven. If [the situation is] like this, then the approval of your Majesty will be made explicit. This is the third exemplification.⁵⁰

Here Jia Yi clearly recognizes that the Xiongnu people have certain advantages that the Han does not possess. Although he does not specify what skills Xiongnu are adept at, it is easy to infer that these skills must include horse-riding and crossbow-shooting, which were adopted by the King Wuling of Zhao and helped to increase the military power of the Zhao state greatly during the Warring States period. This also reminds us of the famous slogan of "emulating the advanced skills of the foreign people so as to check them 師夷長技以制夷"⁵¹ put forward by Wei Yuan 魏源 in the late Qing 清 period. Throughout imperial China, the mentality underlying the relationship between the Chinese and people of other ethnicities seems never to have changed: the Chinese may admit their technical or military inferiority, but will always proudly hold that they are culturally and morally superior and think that it is they who will eventually be able to transform the foreigners in the long run.

However, Jia Yi's insight into handling foreign relations was never properly recognized throughout dynastic history. In the comments attached to Jia Yi's biography in the *History of the Former Han*, Ban Gu 班固 attaches little importance to Jia Yi's proposal, saying "As to his attempt to try establishing subordinate states and to exert the five means of allurements and three exemplifications, these methods are indeed coarse and shallow. 及欲試屬國，施五餌三表以系單于，其術固疏矣"⁵² If the above-mentioned schemes of moral transformation constitute

⁴⁹ Jia Yi, p. 135.

⁵⁰ Translation by the author.

⁵¹ Wei Yuan 魏源, *Haiguo tuzhi 海國圖志* (Pictorial Records of the Nations Overseas) (Changsha: Yuelu shu she, 1998), p. 1.

⁵² Ban Gu, p. 2265.

the whole of Jia Yi's proposal, then Ban Gu may rightfully criticize Jia Yi as pedantic or impractical. However, the innovative part of Jia Yi's methods lies largely in the "five means of allurement." As mentioned in the previous part of this paper, Jia Yi was influenced not only by Confucian thoughts but also by the thoughts of Han Fei, who was noted for his emphasis on the adoption of proper tactics to manipulate others so as to maximize one's own power and interest. Similar to Han Fei's stratagems, Jia Yi's five means of allurement are largely strategic rather than moral. Its ultimate purpose is to estrange the ruler of the Xiongnu and his subjects, and its method is mainly to attract the Xiongnu with the splendid material culture of the Han, so as to cause Xiongnu generals and soldiers to surrender to Han and the Xiongnu people to abandon their original nomadic style of life and adopt the sedentary agricultural lifestyle of the Han people.

故牽其耳，牽其目，牽其口，牽其腹，四者已牽，又引其心，安得不來下胡抑扞也。此謂五餌。⁵³

Therefore [these methods] are to attract the ears, eyes, tongues and bellies of the Xiongnu. Once the above-mentioned four organs have been attracted, we again draw the hearts of them. [By using these means] how could the Hu barbarian not be attracted to our empire? The Hu people would come as the meteors falling down. These are the so-called five means of allurement.⁵⁴

To be specific, the implementation of the five means of allurement mostly involves the correct ways in which to treat the Xiongnu who had surrendered. According to Jia Yi, the Han emperor needed to reward the surrendered Xiongnu heavily, with fine clothes, luxurious carriages and delicate decorations to corrupt their eyes; to offer them all kinds of delicious food to corrupt their tongues; to arrange for elegant ladies to sing, dance and perform on musical instruments for them, to corrupt their ears; to build spacious houses with stables and storehouses for them and to furnish them with horses, servants and attendants, making sure that the material

⁵³ Jia Yi, p. 137.

⁵⁴ Translation by the author.

comforts they enjoy at Han should far exceed what they could attain in the Xiongnu empire. What is more, the Han emperor should even personally demonstrate his favor to the Xiongnu, letting them feel being highly valued by the Han court so as to win over their hearts.⁵⁵

Jia Yi himself was very optimistic about the effects of his strategies, claiming that if his proposals were adopted, the Xiongnu subjects would be estranged from their ruler to such an extent that they would all flee to Han:

其貴人之見單于，猶迂虎狼也，其南面而歸漢也，猶弱子之慕慈母也。其眾之見將吏，猶噩迂仇讎也，南鄉而欲走漢，猶水流下也。將使單于無臣之使，無民之守...⁵⁶

For the Xiongnu nobles, meeting the Chanyu would be like to be confronted with the tigers and wolves. And they would flee south to surrender to the Han like the young son longing to return to the kind mother. For the Xiongnu multitudes, seeing the generals and soldiers would be like being confronted by deadly enemies. And they would flee south to come to the Han like water flowing downward. [Therefore] this would cause the Chanyu to have no ministers to employ and no people to guard him.⁵⁷

Unfortunately, Jia Yi was slandered at the court by many influential ministers, demoted from the central court and never allowed a chance to carry out his grand plans. On the other hand, Jia Yi has also greatly underestimated the strength of the Xiongnu empire and the complexity of the situation. As is pointed out by Wang Zijin,⁵⁸ Jia Yi's estimation of the Xiongnu army of 60 thousand cavalymen was far below the number of 300 thousand offered in Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian*. What is more, it is not easy to make the vast number of Xiongnu people

⁵⁵ Jia Yi, pp. 136–137.

⁵⁶ Jia Yi, p. 138.

⁵⁷ Translation by the author.

⁵⁸ Wang Zijin 王子今, "On the Preparations for the Changes of Yuezhi and Guanyu 論賈誼新書備月氏、灌窳之變" *Social Sciences 社會科學* Issue 3 (2010), pp. 151–160.

abandon the nomadic lifestyle, which best fits their environmental niche. The decades of war with the Xiongnu during and after Emperor Wudi's reign⁵⁹ can probably illustrate how difficult it was to solve the Xiongnu problem. Actually, if not for the disintegration of their political confederacy and the great famine, the threat of the Xiongnu to the Han would not have been so readily eliminated.⁶⁰

However, although they exerted little influence during Emperor Wendi's reign, Jia Yi's strategies for attracting Xiongnu leaders into surrender were largely adopted in Emperor Wudi's court. For example, on the second year of the Yuanshou reign period, Emperor Wudi ordered the sending of twenty thousand chariots to welcome the surrendered Xiongnu king Hunxie 渾邪. The Han minister Ji An's complaint about the way Emperor Wudi treated King Hunxie and his men is actually the best illustration of how Emperor Wudi was carrying out Jia Yi's five means of allurement:

渾邪率數萬之眾來降，虛府庫賞賜，發良民侍養，譬若奉驕子。⁶¹

King Hunxie of Xiongnu led an army of several tens of thousands to surrender to the Han. The Han emptied the storehouse to reward them and sent the law-abiding people to serve and nourish them. [The way we treated these surrendered Xiongnu] was like [a father] serving the arrogant and spoiled son.⁶²

On the one hand, the ideal of eliminating the threat of the Xiongnu through cultural and strategic means instead of military means was carried on and made more applicable by Chao Cuo 晁錯. In one of his memorials to Emperor Wendi, Chao Cuo stated:

兵，凶器；戰，危事也。以大為小，以彊為弱，在俛仰之間耳。夫以人之死爭勝，跌而不振，則悔之亡及也。帝王之道，出於萬全。今降胡義渠蠻夷之

⁵⁹ For more discussion on the wars with Xiongnu, see Yu Ying-shih, pp. 389–443.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Sima Qian, p. 3109.

⁶² Translation by the author.

屬來歸誼者，其眾數千，飲食長技與匈奴同，可賜之堅甲絮衣，勁弓利矢，益以邊郡之良騎。令明將能知其習俗和輯其心者，以陛下之明約將之。⁶³

Weapons are inauspicious vessels, and wars are dangerous undertakings. The change between the greater and smaller, the stronger and weaker can take place within a few minutes. In trying to gain victory at the cost of the lives of the people, if [the state] failed and could not recover, then it would be regretful beyond retrieving. The Way of the emperor grows out of making sure there will not be any loss. Now the surrendered Hu and other barbarians who have been attracted to the righteousness of the Han are numbered by the thousand. They now share their habits of diet and skills with the Xiongnu. We can endow them with strong armor, sturdy arrows and sharp bows, and with the fine horses of the prefects along the borders. Let the wise general who could understand their customs and gain their hearts command them, with the clear order of Your Majesty.⁶⁴

If Jia Yi's proposal focused mainly on how to attract the Xiongnu officials and people to the Han, then Chao Cuo went one step further, with a proposal regarding the way to fully utilize the surrendered Xiongnu soldiers in the warfare against Xiongnu. To a certain extent, Emperor Wudi's policies of attracting and utilizing the surrendered Xiongnu were quite successful. According to the study of Yan Shengguo 閻盛國, throughout the wars with Xiongnu during Wudi's reign, there were twenty-two occasions on which Xiongnu generals surrendered to the Han, and many of them were later employed in the battles against Xiongnu.⁶⁵

To conclude, the notion of cultural assimilation that underlies Jia Yi's proposal of the three exemplifications and five means of allurements clearly demonstrates the author's insight and ingenuity. Not only was his proposal inspirational to Chao Cuo and Emperor Wudi, who to a certain extent put some of Jia Yi's strategies into practice, but also his confidence in the capacity

⁶³ Ban Gu, p. 2267.

⁶⁴ Translation by the author.

⁶⁵ See Yan Shengguo 閻盛國, "Discussion on the Han Strategies to Attract the Xiongnu Surrenderers 漢朝招降匈奴策略述論," *Junshi lishi yanjiu* 軍事歷史研究 Issue 2 (2004), pp. 148–149.

of the Han culture to assimilate the people of other ethnicities adjacent to the Han was proved to be correct, as proved by many cases throughout the dynastic history of China.

Bibliography

- Ban Gu 班固. 1962. *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Former Han). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Cheng Shude 程樹德. 1990. *Lunyu jishi* 論語集釋 (Collective Commentaries on the Analects). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Jia Yi 賈誼. 2000. *Xinshu jiaozhu* 新書校注 (Collated Commentaries on the Xinshu). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Ma Xiaoli 馬曉麗. "Jia Yi's Thoughts on the Han–Xiongnu Relationship 賈誼的民族關係思想" *Yantai daxue xuebao* 煙臺大學學報(哲學社會科學版, No. 119 (2006), 199–207.
- Sima Qian 司馬遷. 1959. *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Great Historian). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Twitchett, Denis, and Micheal Lowe, eds. 1986. *The Cambridge History of China: The Ch'in and Han Empires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wang Zijin 王子今. "On the Preparations for the Changes of Yuezhi and Guanyu 論賈誼新書備月氏、灌窳之變" *Social Sciences* 社會科學 Issue 3 (2010): 151–160.
- Wei Yuan 魏源. 1998. *Haiguo tuzhi* 海國圖志 (Pictorial Records of the Nations Overseas). Changsha: Yuelu shushe.
- Xu Yan 徐彥. 2000. *Shisanjing zhushu (zhengli ben) Chunqiu gongyang zhuan zhushu* 十三經注疏(整理本)春秋公羊傳注疏 (The Gongyang Commentary to the Annals of Spring and Autumn, with Subcommentaries). Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe.
- Yan Shengguo 閻盛國. "Discussion on the Han Strategies to Attract the Xiongnu Surrenderers 漢朝招降匈奴策略述論" *Junshi lishi yanjiu* 軍事歷史研究 Issue 2 (2004): 148–154.
- Zhang Jue 張覺. 2010. *Hanfeizi jiaoshu* 韓非子校疏 (Collated Commentaries on Hanfeizi). Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.

A Misinterpreted Transmission:
The Kang Poem in Dunhuang Manuscript S. 5381
and the Kong Poem in *Benshi shi*

Rebecca Shuang Fu

Abstract

A poem attributed to a certain Lady Kang (Kang Daniang 康大娘), given the title “Yishu yidao 遺書一道” (A Deathbed Letter) by the compilers of *Yingcang Dunhuang wenxian* 英藏敦煌文獻 (The Dunhuang Manuscripts in the British Library), is found in Dunhuang manuscript S. 5381.¹ Three out of the five lines of this poem are remarkably similar to a section of a poem attributed to Lady Kong (Kong shi 孔氏) in *Benshi shi* 本事詩 (*Poems with Their Actual Occasions*).² *Benshi shi* was compiled by Meng Qi 孟啟 (fl. 841–886), a minor official in the late Tang.³ It consists of forty-one entries of narrative poems in seven *juan*, and some of its entries have received broad reception and significant status in the study of Tang poetry.⁴ Consequently, several scholars have suggested that the Kong poem must have been circulated in Dunhuang and its peripheral area before the Kang poem was composed, and therefore that the

¹ Xu Jun 徐俊 names this poem “Kang Daniang yishu shi 康大娘遺書詩” (A Poem Composed by Lady Kang on Her Deathbed). See Xu, *Dunhuang shiji canjuan jikao* 敦煌詩集殘卷集考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), p. 92.

² The poem in S. 5381 will be abbreviated as “Kang poem,” and the poem from *Benshi shi* will be abbreviated as “Kong poem” in the remainder of this paper.

³ Meng’s given name was also recorded as “榮.”

⁴ For example, the back stories of Wang Wei’s 王維 (701–761) poem “Lady Xi” (Xi Furen 息夫人), Cui Hu’s 崔護 (d. 831) “Poem of Peach Blossom,” and Li Bai’s 李白 (701–762) nickname “Banished Immortal” (*zhe xianren* 謫仙人), which originated from this collection, are all famous cases in the history of Chinese literature.

Kang poem found in the Dunhuang caves was, in fact, a transcription, made by local Dunhuang residents, of the Kong poem found in *Benshi shi*.⁵ Yet, upon closer examination, one can find no sound evidence to bolster this assertion. What is needed, then, is a closer examination of both poems, and of the characteristics of folk culture and multi-ethnic groups in Dunhuang. Both poems present distinct features of orally transmitted folk literature, and it seems possible that the two poems in fact share the same origin. Moreover, it is also reasonable to further conjecture that Kang poem was originally composed by a sinicized Sogdian woman in the Dunhuang area. Meng Qi seems to have picked it up from other sources, perhaps strictly oral, which have not been preserved.

I. Two similar poems

To trace the ways in which the relationship between the two poems has been misread, let us begin our exploration by first examining the Kang poem in S. 5381. This poem reads:

The sun sinks behind western hills,
I leave my orphan boys.
Scissors and the willow rulers,
I will bring them with me.
As for the remaining cosmetic powder in the chest,
Please keep it for the one after me.
If you cherish our love, take care of our children, please,
If you are heartless, it depends on you.
There is no time when the yellow paper money for the dead will be used,
And it will become light dust in vain.
My gentleman, make your efforts please.

—Kang Daniang

⁵ The scholars who hold this idea are mentioned below.

日落西山昏，
孤男留一群。
剪刀并柳尺，
賤妾隨身口。
盒里殘粧粉，
留且與後人。
有情憐男女，
無情亦任君。
黃錢無用時，
徒勞作微塵。
君但努力

康大娘⁶

In S. 5381, the poem is immediately followed by a change in one character's size, and then by a short paragraph, which reads:

This is a letter at a deathbed. I heard that time flies, even spring and autumn have their beginning and ending time, and one's fortune is unpredictable. This is the way to death for me, an old ghost...

遺書一道。吾聞時光運轉，春秋有生煞之期，命無常。我老鬼死亡之路……⁷

⁶ For a copy of the original manuscript of S. 5381, see *Yingcang Dunhuang wenxian* 英藏敦煌文獻(Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1990), 7.39. The original manuscript contains some mistaken characters, and reads: “日落西山昏，孤男流一群。剪刀并柳尺，賤妾隨身口。盒令殘粧粉，流且與後人。有情憐男女，無情亦任君。黃錢無用時，徒勞作微塵。君但努力，康大娘。”“口” stands for a character which cannot be recognized or that was omitted by the transcriber hereafter.

⁷ Ibid. The original text was transcribed like this: “遺書一道。吾聞時光運轉，春秋有生煞之斯，命無常，我老鬼死亡之路。”

This line has been accepted by some scholars as a narrative attached to the poem.⁸ As a result, this poem was named "Yishu yidao" (A Deathbed Letter), or "Kang Daniang yishu yidao 康大娘遺書一道" (A Deathbed Letter by Kang Daniang).

The Kang poem reads as though written by a dying woman lamenting her misfortune and worrying about her underage children. However, its parallel in the fifth *juan*, "Zheng Yi 徵異" (Revealing Bizarreness), of *Benshi shi*, becomes a poem composed by Lady Kong, a ghost mother, in order to lament her children's sufferings and admonish her husband. The whole entry with both the poem and the back story is as follows:

During the Kaiyuan era (713–742), there was a General of the Guards in Youzhou whose family name was Zhang. His wife, who came from the Kong family, had given birth to five children and died unfortunately afterwards. [Zhang] then married another wife, a woman from the Li family. She was hot-tempered and brutally violent. Also, she abused the five children, and even flogged them every day. The five children could not bear the suffering, so they went to their mother and cried there. Suddenly the mother rose up from the tomb. She soothed her children, grieved for a long time, and then she wrote a poem on her white scarf, which was to be given to Zhang. It reads:

I cannot bear to be the deceased wife,
I hide the tears that every time filled my scarf.
Now we are separated in life and death,
And will not have a chance to see each other.
As for the remaining powder in my cosmetic box,
Please keep it for the one after me.
It is of no use in the Yellow Springs,
How I hate to be dust in the grave!
If you cherish our love, please take care of our children.

⁸ See, for example, Xu (2000), p. 893.

If you are heartless to them, that is your fault.
If you want to know where my heart breaks,
The bright moon shines on my lonely tomb.

The five children took the poem and showed it to their father. Their father cried with grief and reported this to the Aggregate Commander, who then submitted it to the emperor. He decreed that Li receive one hundred floggings and be banished to Lingnan. Zhang was suspended from his official duties.

開元中，有幽州衙將姓張者，妻孔氏，生五子，不幸去世。復娶妻李氏，悍怒狠戾，虐遇五子，日鞭箠之。五子不堪其苦，哭於其葬。母忽於塚中出，撫其子，悲慟久之，因以白布巾題詩贈張曰：

不忿成故人，
掩涕每盈巾。
死生今有隔，
相見永無因。
匣裏殘妝粉，
留將與后人。
黃泉無用處，
恨作塚中塵。
有意懷男女，
無情亦任君。
欲知腸斷處，
明月照孤墳。

五子得詩，以呈其父，其父慟哭，訴於連帥。帥上聞，敕李氏杖一百，流嶺南，張停所職。⁹

⁹ Meng Qi, *Benshi shi* (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), p. 12.

The two poems have been compared, and their similarities have been noticed by some scholars. For example, as early as in 1983, Liu Mingshu pointed out that the Kong poem from *Benshi shi* was not only collected in the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, but also kept in the Dunhuang caves. He believed that the Kang poem should be part of the poem contained in entry 5.1 of the *Benshi shi*, and had simply been abbreviated.¹⁰ Xu Jun also reveals the similarity between the two poems. In his “Dunhuang Xuelang Shi Zuoze Wenti Kaolue,” Xu accepts Liu Mingshu’s opinion on the two poems.¹¹ Given the similarity in pronunciation of “Kang” and “Kong,” he reaches the further conclusion that the “Kang” poem is in fact a mistaken attribution for the “Kong” poem.¹² Xu’s conclusion implies that he considers the Kong poem to be the authentic original and the Kang poem to be its transcription, with some errors and mistakes.

However, it must be admitted that none of the ideas above are supported by sound evidence, and it is not difficult to figure out the reasoning behind these scholars’ conclusions. First, among Dunhuang manuscripts, there are a great number of transcriptions, with some discrepancies from the original texts, of Confucian canon and classic literary works.¹³ As a result, when it comes to a Dunhuang text that is similar to a classic literary work, it may be taken for granted that the former must be taken as a transcription and the latter as the original. Second, manuscript S. 5381 has been sealed for almost one thousand years and was not given attention until the 1980s.¹⁴ However, compared to its parallel, the Kong poem in *Benshi shi*, as well as its back story, has attracted much attention and received wide circulation since the Song. This entry in *Benshi shi* was included in the *Taiping guangji*, compiled in the early Song. Also, this poem

¹⁰ Liu Mingshu 劉銘恕 (1911–2000), *Dunhuang yishu congshi* 敦煌遺書叢識 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan zhongguo shi yanjiu chubanshe, 1983), pp. 420–421.

¹¹ Xu Jun, “Dunhuang Xuelang Shi Zuoze Wenti Kaolue” 敦煌學郎詩作者問題考略, *Wenxian* 文獻 (2)1994, p. 21.

¹² Xu (2000), p. 893.

¹³ See, for example, the manuscripts of *Shi jing* 詩經 (in P.2129, P.2506, S.10, S.134, etc.), *Sou shen ji* 搜神記 (in S0525, S2071, S 6022, P2656, P5545, etc.), *Wen xuan* 文選 (in P2527 and 2528).

¹⁴ Among extant materials, Liu Mingshu’s article, mentioned above, is the first scholarship that provides a somewhat detailed analysis of this poem.

was collected into the 886th *juan*, "Gui shi 鬼詩" (Ghosts' Poems), of the *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (hereafter *QTS*). The Qing dynasty compilers of the *QTS* attributed this poem to "Lady Kong," the ghost mother. At the same time, they also included the back story from *Benshi shi* as the lesser preface of this poem. In addition, the ghost poem has been taken to be the origin of Su Shi's 蘇軾 (1037–1101) famous lyrical couplet:

I suspect that what makes me heartbroken every year
is your grave on the hillock among short pines, in the bright moonlight.

料得年年斷腸處，
明月夜，短松崗。¹⁵

Obviously, it is natural enough to consider that the canonical entry from the *Benshi shi* is the authentic original: once a work is canonized in its acceptance history, any work close to it will be taken to be a transcription or adaptation. However, if the Kang poem is taken as a transcription of the Kong poem, a series of questions emerge, such as, why is the back story of the Kong poem in *Benshi shi* not found in the Dunhuang manuscripts? Why was only this poem selected, and why did the other entries in *Benshi shi* not interest the presumed Dunhuang transcribers?

In addition, I have found some evidence that might lead to a conclusion contradicting earlier scholars' views. As Liu Mingshu correctly points out, S. 5381 does not contain a specific date of composition.¹⁶ The composition dates of the preserved manuscripts in the Dunhuang caves have been dated to as early as the fourth year of the Tai'an 太安 reign in Northern Wei (458), and no later than the first year of the Zhidao 至道 reign in the Northern Song (995). Most of the literary works were transcribed or composed in the Tang (618–907) and the Five Dynasties (907–960).¹⁷ Because of the information above, if we have to date the poem in S. 5381, it can

¹⁵ *Su Shi cixuan* 蘇軾詞選 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1986), 30.

¹⁶ Liu (1983), p. 420.

¹⁷ See Zhang Xihou 張錫厚, *Dunhuang wenzue yuanliu* 敦煌文學源流 (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 2000), p. 6.

only roughly be dated to the Tang and the Five Dynasties period. Nevertheless, the Kang poem is included not only in S. 5381, but also in S. 361v, among several miscellaneous transcriptions. The poem in S. 361v is extremely close to that in S. 5381, but with a number of mistaken characters and lacking the line “有情憐男女，無情亦任君。” It reads:

日落影西山，
孤男留與君。
剪刀□柳尺，
賤妾且隨身。
盒里□粧粉，
留□與後人。
黃泉無用處，
徒勞作微塵。
君但努力

康娘¹⁸

Moreover, S. 361v clearly presents three specific dates. The three dates reveal that some transcriptions were finished on a day in the second year of the Qianfu era (乾符二年歲次乙未□□廿日) (875), and the others were made on either the twenty-second day of the third month in the second year of the Qianning reign (乾寧二年歲次乙卯三月廿二日) (895) or on the twenty-third day (乾寧二年歲次乙卯三月廿三日) (895). As its preface reveals, *Benshi shi* was compiled in 886.¹⁹ If the Kang poem was transcribed in 875, eleven years earlier than the

¹⁸ *Yingcang Dunhuang wenxian*, 1.155. The original text is transcribed thus: 日落影西山，姑男留與君。煎刀□摟尺，煎妾且遂身。含礼□庄糞，留□與後人。黃泉無用處，度蘭作微陳。君但努力，康娘。Since this poem is extremely close to the poem in S. 5381, I will not repeat the English translation.

¹⁹ See the preface of *Benshi shi* by Meng Qi:

“Written in the eleventh month of the second year of the Guangqi reign (886) while the imperial chariot is in Baozhong. [Signed] the former Director of the Bureau of Merit Titles in the Department of State Affairs and recipient of a purple and gold insignia pouch. Meng Qi.” The translation is from Graham Sanders, “Poetry in

compilation of *Benshi shi*, there is no way that it could be a transcription of the Kong poem. Even if the poem was transcribed on S. 361v in 895, only nine years after the completion of *Benshi shi*, it is not necessarily a direct transcription from *Benshi shi*, for nine years might not be enough for *Benshi shi* to have been transmitted from Chang’an 長安, where it was compiled by Meng Qi, to Dunhuang.

In short, as S. 361v reveals, it is entirely possible that the Kong poem had already been composed or circulated in Dunhuang before *Benshi shi* was compiled. The later sections of this paper will pursue this conjecture and will provide a new interpretation of the relationship between the two poems.

II. Entry 5.1 in *Benshi shi*

The Kong poem, as well as its back story, is included in entry 5.1 of the *Benshi shi*, which differs in nature from other entries. In the preface to the *Benshi shi*, Meng Qi emphasizes the authenticity of the entries that he has selected:

For the entries drawn from “strange tales and bizarre records,” I am suspicious of their veracity and therefore have omitted them. As for those of rude and vulgar quality, I have not kept them either.

其有出諸異傳怪錄，疑非是實者，則略之；拙俗鄙俚，亦所不取。²⁰

It is not difficult to discover how strictly Meng Qi followed this principle during the compilation of this collection, and how dedicated he was to presenting the “actual” occasions of those selected poems. Most of the poems in *Benshi shi* were attributed to people who are historically real and even have biographies in official histories. Moreover, a number of the back stories in this collection overlap some records from official histories. But in the *Benshi shi* there

Narrative: Meng Ch’i (fl. 841–886) and “True Stories of Poems (Pen-shih shih)” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1996), p. 184. As for the original Chinese text, see the preface of *Benshi shi* (Taipei: Yiwen yishuguan, 1965). The Chinese text reads: “時光啟二年十一月，大駕在褒中，前尚書司勳郎中賜紫金魚袋孟榮序。”

²⁰ See the preface to *Benshi shi*.

are still six out of forty-one poems said to be written by historical but anonymous figures, and the poem in question is one of these. Also, the story of the ghost mother in entry 5.1 cannot be counted as historically “real.” Evidently, this narrative is not to be taken literally: a dead woman could not emerge from her tomb, let alone compose a poem. One may argue that, in ancient China, the ghost and supernatural power were taken as real existences. Nevertheless, another matter calls for our attention: the emperor, no matter how wise and lenient, could not have been expected to pay attention to such a trivial happening from such a humble origin. In short, it is much closer to bizarre anecdotes circulating among the common people than to works created by the literati.

Moreover, entry 5.1 differs from any other entry in *Benshi shi* in other respects. First, most of the poems in the *Benshi shi* are “real,” that is, they are recorded in other literary collections or anthologies, and their origins can be traced and determined. For example, a table in Graham M. Sanders’s dissertation reveals that among forty-one entries in the *Benshi shi*, the poem sources in twenty-one entries have been identified.²¹ Evidence shows that some were probably drawn from certain poetic collections and anthologies compiled before the time of Meng Qi, such as Yin Fan’s 殷璠 *Heyue yingling ji* 河嶽英靈集 and Rui Tingzhang’s 芮挺章 *Guoxiu ji* 國秀集, *Souyu xiaoji* 搜玉小集, *Song Zhiwen ji* 宋之問集, *Baishi Changqing ji* 白氏長慶集, *Han Changli wenji* 韓昌黎文集, etc.²² This indicates the possibility that the poem that we are considering was not written by literati, but rather arose from a vernacular origin, and was circulated among commoners, and perhaps heard and then revised by Meng Qi or someone else. Second, the anecdotes themselves can also be found in antecedent works, and no evidence exists that Meng Qi made up any of them. According to Sanders in Table A of his dissertation, the anecdotes in thirty-four of the forty-one entries can be found in antecedent sources, such as *Da Tang xinyu* 大唐新語, *Minghuang zalu* 明皇雜錄, *Suitang jiahua* 隋唐嘉話, *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎, *Nan shi* 南史, etc. Nevertheless, entry 5.1 seems to be an exception, for no antecedent source has been found, and only succeeding works that draw upon this entry can be traced. In

²¹ See “Table A: Individual Entries in True Stories” in Graham Sanders’s dissertation (1996), pp. 178–179.

²² *Ibid.*

short, the analysis above hints that the Kong poem in entry 5.1, as well as its background story, is a distinct and different entry in the *Benshi shi*, most of whose poems were composed by famous literati, and most of whose stories are related to the literati's experiences.

Furthermore, the back story of the Kong poem reveals the conflict between stepmothers and stepchildren, a common theme dating back to ancient times. For example, in the chapter "Remarriage" (Zai Qu 再娶) of the *Yanshi jiaxun* 颜氏家训 (Family Instructions by Master Yan), Yan Zhitui 颜之推 (531–591) warns his offspring that there are countless examples in which stepmothers brutally abuse stepchildren and alienate family members, and therefore one must be cautious, for the sake of the children left by the deceased wife, when he makes a decision regarding remarriage. He writes:

Those who abuse orphans, and alienate relatives, and those who are heartbroken,
Are countless. Be cautious! Be cautious!

假繼慘虐孤遺，離間骨肉，傷心斷腸者，何可勝數。慎之哉！慎之哉！²³

Extant records from the Tang also reveal to what extent orphans were mistreated by their stepmothers. For example, the epitaph of Wang Wan 王婉 (d. 696) says:

The women of today rarely have wise insight. Therefore the children of deceased wives are often disliked and resented (by their stepmothers).

時俗婦人，罕有明識，前妻之子，多被憎嫌。²⁴

According to this statement, most orphans could not escape the maltreatment inflicted by their stepmothers. More interestingly, the official histories suggest that Wang Wan was herself

²³ For the original Chinese text, see Yan Zhitui 颜之推, "Remarriage" 后娶, in *Zhuzi jicheng* 諸子集成 (Shanghai: Shanghai shu ju chubanshe, 1986), 8.4.

²⁴ See "Dazhou Gu Nayan Bochang Xian Kaiguo Nan Wei Fujun Furen Langya Jun Taijun Wangshi Muzhiming 大周故納言博昌縣開國男韋府君夫人瑯耶郡太君王氏墓志銘," in Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良 and Zhao Chao 趙超, eds, *Tangdai muzhi huibian xuji* 唐代墓志匯編續集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2001), p. 350.

suspected of abusing her stepson. Both in *Old Tang History* and *New Tang History*, Wang Wan treated her stepson Chengqing 承慶 extremely harshly and sometimes even punished him by flogging.²⁵ This social situation helps explain why a great number of noble women in the Tang were highly spoken of as virtuous and dedicated stepmothers in their epitaphs. Their praises (in some cases exaggerated flatteries) illustrate, by supposedly contradicting the norm, the fact that the abuse of stepchildren was considered a serious social issue in the Tang dynasty.²⁶

The stepchild abuse problem addressed above was frequently conveyed by stories of commoners in the Ming–Qing vernacular, *xiaoshuo* 小說, during the heyday of ancient Chinese vernacular literature. This indicates that the problem existed not only among the nobles but also in ordinary families, and that it possibly was reflected in vernacular literature, which had a broad reception among the people, and that the poem may even have been originally composed by an unknown commoner in a much earlier time, such as the Tang dynasty.

We may, then, conclude this part of the discussion by declaring that all the evidence suggests that the Kong poem, with its markedly vernacular features, was originally created by a commoner rather than by a literatus, that it circulated among the people, and that Meng Qi

²⁵ See "Wei Sili Zhuan" 韋嗣立傳 in the *Old Tang History* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 9.2865. The story reads: "Sili was Chengqing's younger brother by a different mother. Their mother, Lady Wang, treated Chengqing very strictly. Every time when [Chengqing] was punished by flogging, Sili must take off his top and ask to replace it. His mother did not listen to him, and thereupon he flogged himself in secret. His mother recognized this, and gradually came to treat [her stepson] with affection." Below is the original Chinese text: 《舊唐書·韋嗣立傳》“嗣立，承慶異母弟也。母王氏，遇承慶甚嚴，每有杖罰，嗣立必解衣請代，母不聽，輒私自杖，母察知之，漸加恩貸。”

²⁶ For more information on this issue, see the following articles: Wan Junjie 萬軍杰, "Tangdai Zaiqu Xisu Zhixia Jishi yu Qianshi Zi Guanxi Tantaoyu 唐代再娶習俗之下繼室與前室子關係探討," *Wei jin Nanbei Chao Sui Tang Shi Ziliao* 魏晉南北朝隋唐史資料 24(2008): 165–178; Wang Nan 王楠, "Tangdai Nuxin zai Jiazu zhong Diwei de Bianqian 唐代女性在家族中地位的變遷," in *Zhongguo Shehui Lishi Pinglun* 中國社會歷史評論, vol. 3 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), pp. 135–165; Yao Ping 姚平, "Muqin de Xingxiang yu Diwei 母親的形象與地位," in *Tangdai Funu de Shengming Lichen* 唐代婦女的生命歷程 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2004), pp. 257–287; Zhang Guogang 張國剛, "Lun Tangdai Jiating zhong Fumu de Juese jiqi yu Zinu de Guanxi 論唐代家庭中父母的角色及其與子女關係," *Zhonghua Wenshi Luncong* 中華文史論叢, 3(2007): 207–249

picked it up and included it in the *Benshi shi* with some adaptations. The next section will provide a possible theory for its origin.

III. A Sogdian Writer

As I have already pointed out, Xu Jun agrees that the Kang poem is a transcription of the Kong poem, and points out that, given the closeness of Kang and Kong, Kang must be the mistaken pronunciation of Kong. It must be admitted that even in ancient Chinese, Kang and Kong were remarkably similar in pronunciation. They are still closer in some modern Chinese topolects. Below is a table which gives the pronunciations of Kong 孔 and Kang 康:²⁷

	Old Chinese	Medieval Chinese	Modern Taiwanese	Modern Cantonese
Kang 康	Khaŋ	khaŋ	Khoŋ	Hoŋ
Kong 孔	Khoŋ	khuŋ	Khoŋ	Huŋ

However, the closeness in pronunciation can be explained in another way, that is, Kong may be the mistaken pronunciation of Kang, and therefore the Kong poem was perhaps an adaptation of the Kang poem.

Actually, the surname Kang not only indicates that the Kang poem may have had the same origin as the Kong poem, but also provides more information about the Kang poem itself. In her article "Dunhuang xieben zhong renming de wenhua neihan 敦煌寫本中人名的文化內涵," Hong Yifang examines all the surnames that illustrate the characteristics of the local culture in Dunhuang. There are around one hundred and thirty surnames recorded, and, according to the

²⁷ The old Chinese pronunciations are from <http://www.eastling.org/OC/oldage.aspx>, and the medieval pronunciations are from <http://www.eastling.org/tdfweb/midage.aspx>, both accessed May 5, 2011. The modern Taiwanese spellings were provided by my classmate Sophie Wei (a Taiwanese native speaker), and the modern Cantonese spellings were provided by my friend Alice Kuang (a Cantonese native speaker).

frequency with which these names appear in Dunhuang scrolls, Hong lists one hundred family names in a chart in descending order. In this chart Kang 康 appears seventy-one times, ranking fifteenth.²⁸ Actually, the high frequency of Kang in Dunhuang manuscripts is not unexpected, since this surname is one of the Nine Zhaowu Surnames (Zhaowu Jiuxing 昭武九姓), which itself reveals its Sogdian origin. As early as the 1950s, Edwin G. Pulleyblank published his detailed research on the Nine Surnames and made some sound conclusions that are still employed today:

The Sogdians were known collectively as the "Hu of the Nine Surnames" (Chiu-hsing Hu 九姓胡). The significance of the "Nine Surnames" is not quite clear, but at least we find the following used by Sogdians in China: K'ang (Samarkand), An 安 (Bukhara), Shih 石 (Tashkent), Shih 史 (Kish), Mi 米 (Maimargh), Ts'ao 曹 (Kabudhan) and Ho 何 (Kushaniya). All of these surnames except Mi can have a non-Sogdian origin but, particularly in the case of An and K'ang, we can usually suspect Sogdian origin when we find these surnames occurring in texts of the T'ang period. The occurrence of any of them together with the ethnic description *hu* may be taken as a certain indication of Sogdian origin.²⁹

The surname Kang in the Dunhuang manuscript indicates the Sogdian ethnicity of the writer. In the Tang dynasty, Kang families belonged to "Nine Zhaowu Surnames" and mainly resided in northwest China, including Dunhuang and today's Xinjiang. This reveals the distinct local feature of this Kang poem, and therefore it is reasonable to conjecture that the Kang poem is not a transcription, but was created by a local Sogdian woman, most probably in the Dunhuang area.

An analysis of the first name of the attributed author, Lady Kang, may tell us more about this poem. The given name Daniang shows that this woman was the eldest among her siblings. In

²⁸ Hong Yifang 洪藝芳, "Dunhuang Xieben Zhong Renming de Wenhua Neihan 敦煌寫本中人名的文化內涵," *Dunhuang Xue* 敦煌學 (1998): 80.

²⁹ Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony in Inner Mogolia," *T'oung Pao* 41 (1952): 320.

her article, Hong Yifang also highlights the rural nature of Niang by revealing that this name was employed widely among women living in a rural area such as Dunhuang, during the Tang. They were simply named "Niang," which indicated their female gender, preceded by a number indicating their seniority among brothers and sisters in their maiden family. She cites evidence from Yu Yue's 俞樾 (1821–1901) *Chunzao tang suib i* 春早堂隨筆 (Casual Notes Composed in Spring Morning Hall). In this anthology, Yu mentions that when he visited Yu Temple (*Yu si* 禹寺) in Kuaiji 會稽, he happened to see a *wangsheng bei* 往生碑 (a tablet indicating the names of those who are reborn in another world), which was dated to the fifth year of the Kaicheng 開成 era (840), in the Tang dynasty.³⁰ On this tablet, the names of thirty deceased rural women were carved, and all of these followed the pattern "surname + number + Niang," such as Xu Shiyi-niang 徐十一娘, Lu Sanniang 呂三娘, Chen Sayi-niang 陳卅一娘, Liang Shiyi-niang 梁十一娘, Zheng Daniang 鄭大娘, Gao Erniang 高二娘...

Based on Hong's study of the Dunhuang manuscripts, besides some given names in distinctly religious tones, female residents in Dunhuang in most cases were also named in this same way. A statistical analysis provided by Hong shows that forty-one females mentioned in Dunhuang manuscripts were named "Niang," preceded by a number that gives their relative seniority among siblings, for example: Li Daniang 李大娘, Huo Daniang 霍大娘, Linghu Daniang 令狐大娘, Lu Erniang 盧二娘, Fan Erniang 范二娘, Yin Erniang 陰二娘...³¹ This indicates that the identity of Kang Daniang (Kang Niang), the claimed writer of the poem in both S. 361 and S. 5381, is probably a female commoner, residing in a rural area. Despite her Sogdian origin, her parents chose a typical Han Chinese name for her. This indicates that, due to the long-time influence of Chinese culture, the Sogdian residents were highly sinicized. This can also help explain why a Sogdian woman could neatly compose a poem in Chinese.

³⁰ In most cases, this term is used in reference to the attainment of rebirth in a positive sense, such as rebirth into a pure buddha-realm, or into a heaven, etc. In colloquial writing however, it can refer simply to the notion of death. It is most commonly used in Pure Land texts, indicating rebirth into Sukhāvātī or some other pure realm based on virtuous behavior and religious practices in the present lifetime.

³¹ Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony in Inner Mogolia," p. 88.

IV. Conclusion and further conjecture

In conclusion, it is possible to posit that the Kang poem was perhaps composed by a Sogdian woman named Kang, and that she was probably a resident in the locality of Dunhuang. The poem may have been orally transmitted, and it is entirely possible that it shares the same origin as the Kong poem. Meng Qi seems to have picked it up from other sources, perhaps entirely oral, which have not been preserved.

The exploration in this paper is far from leading to a final conclusion. The significance of my study lies in its stimulus to future discussion and research. For example, it is even possible that the poem was originally composed in the Sogdian language and later translated into Chinese by a Chinese Dunhuang resident who was touched by both the poem and its story. Also, given the proximity of Youzhou 幽州 (the area around today's Beijing) and Yizhou 伊州 (today's Turfan in Xinjiang 新疆), it is possible that the posited writer, Lady Kang, did not reside in Dunhuang, but was from Yizhou, also a habitat of the Sogdians in the Tang.³² It may not be possible to find any absolute proof for any of these conjectures. However, one has to admit that the influence of both literary works by local Dunhuang residents and ancient vernacular literature have been undervalued. There is no doubt that vernacular literature affected the literati's creative writing to an extent beyond our expectations.

³² Yizhou was first named "Xi Yizhou 西伊州" in the fourth year of the Zhenguan 貞觀 reign (630). His name was changed to Yizhou in the sixth year of the Zhenguan reign (632). The name was changed to Yiwu Jun 伊吾郡 during the Tianbao 天寶 reign (742–756) and the Zhide 至德 reign (756–758). The last name was in use until Yizhou was captured by the Tibetans in 762.

The Northwestern Muslim Rebellions

Rashon Clark

The Northwestern Muslim rebellions of the Late Qing, sometimes known as the Hui Insurrection or the Dungan Revolt, are often footnotes in the grand narratives of modern China. Often overshadowed by the more dramatic rebellions in China's heartland, such as the Taiping Rebellion and the Nian Rebellion, or even the Late Qing's other Muslim rebellion in Yunnan, these social conflagrations across China's former "Silk Road" are often left un-spotlighted in the history of China. Despite the remote locales of these rebellions, their influence actually reverberated across the entirety of the Qing realm. Beginning in 1862, territory from Xi'an to the outer edges of Xinjiang was slowly riled into active opposition to imperial authority, with twenty years passing before the entire region could be quieted. In some areas of northwestern "China Proper" the violence developed out of local disputes and maintained itself in regional pandemonium. Farther out west, in the Qing's unincorporated "New Territories," the imperial court had to wrangle with an actual revolt and a splinter state. Every stratum and component of the region's diverse society was affected. Chinese Muslims (Hui), Han, Turks, and Mongols — all contributed to and were victimized by the violence, and the Qing "re-conquest" of the region was by any measure a brutal affair. By the end of the successful rebellion suppression campaign, Qing officials estimated that out of the original 700,000 Muslims of Shensi, "no more than 60,000" survived the violence.¹ The administrative aftermath even convinced the Imperial Court to fully incorporate its frontier territories across the empire, raising both Xinjiang and Taiwan to the status of province in the 1880s.² As one strand of the unraveling fabric of the Qing Empire,

¹ Michael Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement, and Sects* (Surrey, U.K.: Curzon Press, 1999), p. 60.

² Ho-dong Kim, *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864–1877* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 15.

these Northwestern rebellions can be a window into both local and national transformations in nineteenth-century China.

The northwestern rebellions are often elusive in accounts of Chinese history because they are so difficult to categorize. They are integral to an understanding of Imperial China's eventual dissolution, yet they defy simple categorization into the standard narratives of the period. Many scholars have mimicked contemporary Imperial authorities in classifying the various social conflagrations of Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, and later Qinghai and Xinjiang, in the 1860s and 1870s as Muslim rebellions; however, it is extremely difficult to ascribe the movements a single label. Between 1862 and 1878 northwestern China experienced nearly every variety of human conflict — traditional rebellion, ethnic struggle, religious sectarianism, class warfare, rioting and looting, and even civil war. Furthermore, although violence in the region may have been enflamed by tensions between Muslim and Han villagers, the resulting conflicts over the following decades cleaved northwestern Chinese society into often-unpredictable groupings. Neither religion nor ethnicity was a guarantor of a unifying cause, and anti-Qing sentiment masked a variety of motivations.

There is even a lack of consensus on the actual limits and boundaries of these movements. With Muslim revolts erupting in 1856 in Yunan³ and a string of isolated Muslim rebellions and mutinies in Xinjiang beginning in 1863 and lasting into the late 1870s, one could easily situate the northwestern rebellions as only parts of a larger whole that spanned nearly half a century. As much of China was experiencing rebellion in this period, tides of unrest easily ebbed and flowed across large swaths of territory. Rebels, stragglers, and refugees roamed the countryside further augmenting local disturbances and initiating new rounds of violence.⁴ Therefore rebellion was fueled as much by religious ideology as by human privation. The Qing response was similarly expansive, as regional economic rehabilitation and administrative reorganization was coupled with more traditional military suppression. Hobbled by Western intervention and internal

³ Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard J. Smith, "The Military Challenge: The North-west and the Coast," *The Cambridge History of China* (15 vols.), Vol. 11, ed. John K. Fairbank and Kwang-Ching Liu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 212.

⁴ Liu and Smith, p. 221.

disturbances at the time of the Northwestern rebellions, China's Manchu rulers and Han elite groped for an innovative and effective method to pacify their realm, and finding the correct solution offered the opportunity for a new beginning. China's northwest was a microcosm of the complexity of local and national social transformations.

Before reviewing the conflict's developments and internal mechanisms, there needs to be a basic introduction to Islam in China, and its relationship to traditional Chinese culture. After its inception in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century, the Islamic faith quickly spread to the coastal areas of China through seaborne trade.⁵ Later, with the rule of the Mongols and their expansion across Central Asia, Islam was given a more fluid passageway into northwestern China through the migrations of Islamic peoples as well as the teachings of Mohammed.⁶ This area would become the region with the heaviest concentration of Muslims, of all ethnic groups. Scholars usually designate the Ming dynasty as the period when a particularly Chinese Muslim ethnic group began to form.⁷ In this period communities of Muslims began to become acculturated to Chinese society (and certain Chinese began to become Muslim). Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski note "They revealed their accommodation to Chinese culture in their adoption of Chinese names, speech, and dress but lived in segregated villages and neighborhoods, followed their own religious leaders, and eschewed the consumption of pork."⁸ Before the Ming dynasty the Chinese character for Muslim, "回" (*Hui*), variously denoted amorphous peoples from the West of China. As with knowledge of the West during this period, the term was imprecise. It could mean Muslims in general, people from a specific area such as Persia or Arabia, or simply a certain type of foreigner.⁹ Following the coalescence of distinguishable Chinese Muslim communities in the Ming and Qing dynasties, this group began to be known as

⁵ Dillon, pp. 11–12.

⁶ Dillon, p. 15.

⁷ Dillon, p. 27.

⁸ Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 187.

⁹ Dillon, pp. 12–13.

Hanhui (漢回), which distinguished them as a pseudo-ethnic group distinct from other Muslims in the empire, who may have been Turks, Tibetans, or Mongols.¹⁰

Although sharing a common religion, the predominant non-Chinese Muslim group in the empire, the Turks, also viewed themselves as separate from Chinese Muslims. Turkic peoples in Xinjiang described themselves as simply *musulman* (Muslim), while labeling the Chinese Muslims as *Dungan*. The Qing often incorporated this term in their official documents when referring to the Chinese Muslims. They transcribed the Turkic sound as *donggan*, and this is the label from which the Dungan Revolt derives its name. The Qing differentiated the Turkic Muslims from the *Dungans* by the term *chantouhui* (纏頭回), which means "Muslims with turban." When referring to Islamic people in a more generic, inclusive denotation, they used the term *Huimin* (回民).¹¹ Differing labels represented not only cleavages in society, but differing policies of administration by the Qing authorities. As with the Qing strategy of governance in other frontier areas, rivalries and divisions between religious and ethnic groups were encouraged to preempt the rise of a powerful resistance movement.¹² Rivalries also came from within as groups competed for resources and adherents. These differences developed throughout the Qing reign and influenced the nature of the conflict in the 1860s and 1870s.

Although the climax of the conflict occurred in Xinjiang and included many of China's ethnic and religious minorities, its beginnings were much more humble and circumscribed. The Northwest's earliest disturbances began in the spring of 1862, on the borders of Dali (大荔) and Weinan (渭南) counties in the greater hinterland of Xi'an along the Wei River.¹³ Qing sources observe that the violence began in the administrative center of Huazhou (化州) when a financial dispute between Hui soldiers and a Han merchant came to blows. Several Hui were killed in the incident, and the local populace became polarized into Han and Hui militias. A chain reaction of assaults and counter-assaults on villages spread wider and wider until the whole region became

¹⁰ Kim, p. 2.

¹¹ Kim, p. 214.

¹² Naquin and Rawski, p. 186.

¹³ Dillon, p. 62.

engulfed in the conflict.¹⁴ For months tensions had already been high in the area as rebels were active in the area, fostering Han suspicion that there was a conspiracy between the Hui and the Taipings.¹⁵ In an account of the incident, historian Michael Dillon observes, "The Huazhou militia burned down Hui villages and made off with Hui women and property. Provoked by this humiliation, the Huazhou Hui revolted, followed by other Hui people on both banks of the Wei river. The Hui of the Weinan region took up arms in their thousands and sent representatives to liaise with Chen Decai [a rebel commander associated with the Nian and Taipings]."¹⁶ Ironically, the preemptory violence of the Han militias drove the Hui into the rebel's arms. The tensions of Hui anger was further exacerbated by the fact that the Huazhou militia was funded and organized by local Han landlords and officials. Under the recommendation of provincial authorities, these forces were originally established to combat the numerous rebel groups that might move into the region, but they quickly showed their utility in local disputes when the ire of the local Hui was raised.¹⁷ As a large percentage of local imperial forces had been transferred to handle other disturbances in the Qing realm, these two antagonistic forces came to fill the military power vacuum.

Although this conflict developed out of decades of contention between Han and Hui settlers, the initial catalysts probably came from without. Additionally, the dispute between the Hui and Han was not a unique phenomenon in nineteenth-century China. Chinese intra-ethnic violence proliferated during this period and, relatively speaking, northwestern China was probably one of the calmer regions of the empire in the previous decade. The rest of the Qing realm already had been tearing itself asunder for nearly ten years. In 1850, the Taiping rebellion similarly developed out of local feuds and rebel alliances in Guangxi and Guangdong. The Taipings quickly expanded their influence into Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi and Anhui. Soon they

¹⁴ Dillon, p. 62.

¹⁵ Dillon, p. 61.

¹⁶ Dillon, p. 62.

¹⁷ Dillon, p. 62.

captured the ancient capital of Nanjing in 1853 and held the city for nearly a decade.¹⁸ Further afield, on the southeastern coast of China, the British took the search of an English ship as a pretext to initiate a series of military campaigns to gain greater trade privileges. Beginning in Guangdong in 1856, by 1858 Western forces had quickly assessed northeast China as a worthier target. The subsequent campaigns around Beijing led to the capture of Tianjin and the infamous burning of the summer palace in 1860.¹⁹ The northeast was also riveted by internal disturbances as traditional-style banditry and rebellion coalesced into the Nian rebellion in 1856. Their military movements, which formed at the juncture of Anhui, Henan, Shandong, and Jiangsu provinces, lasted until the late 1860s and peaked with a march on the Qing capital.²⁰ Finally, in China's extreme southwest in Yunnan, Muslim rebels in 1855 created a small splinter kingdom, which was only fully suppressed in 1873.²¹ The northwestern rebellions need to be put in the context of this widespread unrest. With the Qing's Eight Banners, and the Green Standard Army busied by an empire-wide rebellion suppression campaign, and local elite and peasantry fielding their own bands of irregulars for self-protection, the militarization of Chinese society was almost a forgone conclusion.

Noticeably, the initial violence in Weinan County was devoid of any explicit religious overtones. Although Islam was ostensibly the distinguishing feature between the Hui and the Han, this fact conceals greater local distinctions between the two groups. Indeed, the Weinan Hui attempted to ally themselves with the Han Nian and Taiping armies in the region, demonstrating that neither ethnicity nor religion was an entirely resonating influence. Violence in the northwest was more an indicator of the systematic breakdown of society occurring across the Qing realm, especially in frontier regions with mixed populations and lax imperial authority. In their contribution to the *Cambridge History of China*, historians Susan Mann Jones and Philip A. Kuhn observe of the Late Qing, "it was generally in areas that had experienced this steady

¹⁸ Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990), pp. 174, 177.

¹⁹ Spence, p. 183.

²⁰ Spence, p. 186.

²¹ Spence, p. 190.

human influx since the early eighteenth century that rebellion most readily began... [The social characteristics of these areas include] an intense sub-ethnic consciousness, sharpened by the heterogeneous origins of the border-region populations and often reinforced by linguistic differences; and a high degree of militarization, made necessary by banditry or communal strife in the unstable border region."²² In such diverse and antagonistic societies, a broad "interest group" held the highest relevancy.

These interest groups were the associations that best ensured the survival and maintenance of military advantage. Religion, ethnicity, class, language or native place could provide the unifying interest, but conflicting connections could and easily did sever ties. This was especially true when the conflict spilled over into Gansu, Qinghai, and Xinjiang and involved Mongols, Tibetans, Turks, and Han rebels or refugees. Historian Lanny Fields notes, "One's allegiance to a particular interest group could be complex in motivation and subject to change. If Muslim rebels scored many early successes against the government or if the government indiscriminately massacred Muslims then the Holy War call carried great appeal. Victories by the regime's forces on the other hand might cause Muslims to desert and return to their native towns or tribal groups."²³ The Han had similar calculations when deciding between upholding the Manchu-led Qing dynasty and supporting the rebel movements across the realm. Permission to establish local armies, such as that of the Huazhou militia, may have been part of an imperial initiative to forestall such a decision.

Therefore, although the labels "Hui insurrection" or "Muslim rebellion" are useful, they are something of a misnomer for the earliest stages of the conflict. With the mass of the centralized Qing military authority displaced into areas of more vigorous rebellion, the Hui of Shaanxi were originally not amassed in an anti-Qing jihad, rather they were defending themselves against Han cementing and exercising their newfound authority. These were the

²² Susan Mann Jones and Philip A. Kuhn, "Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion," *The Cambridge History of China* (15 vols.), Vol. 10, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 132.

²³ Lanny B. Fields, *Tso Tsung-T'ang and the Muslims: Statecraft in Northwest China, 1868–1880* (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1978), p. 54.

conditions of the years directly preceding the incident in 1862. During that period Qing military forces in the area were particularly depleted as Chinese forces amassed outside of Nanjing in preparation for the final confrontation with the Heavenly Kingdom of the Taipings.²⁴ Busied with greater matters, the Manchu lacked the means to remain the arbiter of local society. They had to delegate to local Han, who in turn utilized their influence to the disadvantage of Hui. Predictably, when disputes between Hui and Han came to a head, Han officials and landlords typically sided with the Han plaintiffs. In a previous period, this would have simply meant influence in economic and land disputes. The Han elite and officials would have played middleman between Hui disputes and Manchu-led military retribution. With the Manchus increasingly out of the picture in the 1850s, the Han could directly influence events through military action.²⁵

In the spring of 1862 the violence was brutal, but largely confined to the area of the Wei River northwest of Xi'an. The conflict did not spread to the provincial capital and its environs until a rural Han elite led a militia on a campaign of razing and looting. This time the target was Hui villages in Chang'an County, located close to Xi'an. Predictably, the Hui response was to organize militia for defense and revenge. The situation was pushed beyond negotiation when the Hui murdered a local commissioner and officials responded with the proclamation that all Muslims were "to be killed without further inquiry."²⁶ The Hui responded by laying siege to the provincial capital. In July, they complemented their siege with attacks on numerous towns and villages in region, plunging the whole of Shaanxi into conflict.²⁷ The true rebellion had begun. Again, it is important to put this opening period of rebellion in the context of the empire-wide strife largely precipitated by the Taipings. As ethnic struggle pulsed near Xi'an in May of 1862, a 50,000-man-strong Taiping army was attempting to finalize its grand march on Shanghai, being

²⁴ Philip A. Kuhn, "The Taiping Rebellion," *The Cambridge History of China* (15 vols.), Vol. 10, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 308.

²⁵ Fields, p. 55.

²⁶ Liu and Smith, p. 217.

²⁷ Dillon, p. 64.

repulsed by Western and Qing forces only in June.²⁸ Obviously, this gave the Hui a relatively free hand in their revenge campaign. The assault on Xi'an may even have been a move to elicit support from other rebel groups lingering in the area. The Taipings and Nian already had flirted with forming an alliance. With antagonistic militia backed by elite Han razing their villages and Qing authority unraveling across the realm, the Hui perhaps decided to throw their lot in with other rebel groups.

To recount the chronology of the developments: Taiping forces entered Shensi April 9, followed by other rebel armies in mid-April. The mutual suspicions this caused initiated ethnic violence in mid-May, followed by a united Taiping–Nian siege of Xi'an on May 17. The rebels were quickly repulsed, but the Hui took up their effort in June, and broadened their campaign to the rest of Shensi in July.²⁹ This may seem like an unnecessarily close view of the events, but these details are needed to demonstrate the nature of the rebellion, and the progression of its evolution in its later incarnations in Gansu, Qinghai, and Xinjiang. It continued largely unfettered until a year later when the rebels were pushed westward by newly reorganized Qing forces in March of 1863.

As total war waged in Shensi, Gansu also experienced an eruption of violence. Unlike the situation in its neighbor province, this was a true insurrection. In the fall of 1862, Gansu Chinese Muslims responded to the anti-Muslim violence and policies in Shensi with preemptive strikes against militia and government forces in the province, initiating another round of riots, massacres, and ethnic fighting. This was an actual organized rebellion lead by a loose coalition of Hui leaders, who feared anti-Muslim forces would move into the province.³⁰ In the following years centers of Hui resistance would arise across the region with focal points in Eastern Gansu, Northern Ningxia, Xining (now in present day Qinghai), and in the oasis cities at the northern end of the Gansu corridor.³¹ Although the contemporaneous conflicts in Shensi and Gansu both

²⁸ Kuhn, p. 306.

²⁹ Yu-wen Chien, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 470.

³⁰ Liu and Smith, pp. 218–219.

³¹ Dillon, p. 66.

turned into Muslim rebellions, there are substantial differences between them. The insurgents of Gansu were overtly religious. Many of them were adherents to a sect of Muslim Sufism known as the New Teachings (新教). Founded a hundred years earlier in the 1760s, its origins had initiated religious sectarianism among orthodox Muslims as well as a later rebellion against Qing authority. Forced underground for the interregnum, the sect was only able to return to the surface with the weakening of Qing power in the area in the 1850s.³²

Testament to its influence in the 1860s rebellion was the central role of Ma Hualong, leader of the New Teachings sect. Lanny Fields notes "Ma Hua-Lung's considerable religious and economic influence began to assume a definite political character at a time when signs indicated that the Ch'ing dynasty had declined significantly" and that the time "seemed to present the possibility of permanently seizing territory to create a regional kingdom."³³ Ma Hua-Lung influence was derived from his status as a religious leader. For Ma's followers, his power was near absolute. As with all the leaders of the New Teachings sect, Ma was considered to be a saint who could perform miracles, cure illness, and foretell the future.³⁴ This ambitious religious leader may have seized on the opportunity presented by the rebellions in Shensi (and across the empire) to solidify and expand his power. A religious-motivated Muslim rebellion was the perfect vehicle for such purposes. Fomenting a Muslim rebellion was simply a part of this plan. Indeed, in 1863 the imperial authorities in Beijing even issued an edict to emphasize its "principle of nondiscrimination" towards Muslims in hopes of soothing tensions in the region.³⁵ Nonetheless, the rebellion progressed unimpeded.

Ironically, a combination of the catalysts for the Shensi and Gansu rebellion ignited another revolt in Xinjiang in 1864. The two rebellions directly influenced the developments in Xinjiang as the loss of stability in Gansu and Shensi severed logistical connections between

³² Fields, p. 67.

³³ Fields, pp. 70, 71.

³⁴ Liu and Smith, p. 214.

³⁵ Liu and Smith, p. 218.

Xinjiang and the rest of the empire.³⁶ Brought under the control of Manchu rule barely a hundred years earlier, the region's control by the Qing was already tenuous. This is why, despite having a connection with the other rebellions, the nature of the conflict was inherently different in Xinjiang. Unlike Gansu and Shensi, which were located in China Proper and under traditional Chinese civil administration, the "New Territories" were ruled by proxy, with Manchu rule simply conferring authority and status on local leaders. Moreover, a majority of the population was an indigenous Turkic people, rather than Han or Hui. A Qing governor-general based in Ili oversaw this situation, illustrating that Qing rule was essentially a military, colonial endeavor.³⁷ One could image the root causes of the rebellion were somewhat more predictable than that of Gansu and Shensi.

Therefore it was almost against conventional thinking that the Xinjiang rebellion was initiated by Hui Chinese in Kucha. On the night of June 3, 1864, hearing of the problems in Gansu and Shensi, Hui Muslims were riled into slaughtering the town's Han population. They then took the city after capturing the internal Manchu fort and executing all of its soldiers and Qing officials.³⁸ This action elicited support from Turkic insurgents, who began to surge into the city from the surrounding hinterland. The Hui were the initiators of the rebellion, but the indigenous and predominant Turkic population had the most to gain from the removal of Qing power. Although the Manchus had an ambiguous relationship with the Hui, Qing power certainly validated their existence in the region. Conversely, Xinjiang's Turkic populace had to suffer under the Qing military administration, which privileged the fealty of unscrupulous loyal leaders over effective and benevolence governance. Historian Kim Ho-dong observes, "it was as if the Tungans [Hui] were the little fuse that had exploded the larger powder keg of Turkic Muslim discontent."³⁹ A pan-Muslim rebellion was workable for the initial maneuvers against Qing authority, but ethnic differences in the post insurrection chaos quickly cleaved the movement into

³⁶ Kim, p. 31.

³⁷ Kim, p. 15.

³⁸ Kim, p. 36.

³⁹ Kim, p. 36.

antagonistic factions. This would further complicate the development of the rebellion and its relation to the conflicts in Gansu and Shensi.

In his discussion of the insurrection's beginnings, Kim Ho-dong argues that it arose when Hui in the area became frightened by news of government atrocities against Muslims in Shaanxi and Gansu. Rumors had spread that the Qing planned to preempt any rebellion in Xinjiang through the massacre of Muslims.⁴⁰ Although many of the local Han administrators had harbored violent plans to forestall a Muslim rebellion, it certainly was not a prominent strategy of the Imperial court (as demonstrated by its edict to the Gansu Muslims). Additionally, not only did the Qing lack the manpower and resources to enact such a policy, but many of their troops in the region actually were Muslim. Kim argues that these rumors were probably spread by leaders like Ma Hualong who were looking to increase their power vis-à-vis the Qing. Rumors of a Qing conspiracy certainly served the Muslim leadership in Gansu by further destabilizing the region and the imperial power base. The ringleader of a subsequent revolt in Urumchi, Tuo Ming, had connections to Ma Hualong and even named him commander of Ningxia once he rose to power in the city.⁴¹ After the revolt in Kucha, insurgents quickly fanned out east and west of the city, igniting rebellion across the whole region. Within in a few months the various ethnic groups of the region had most of Xinjiang under their control, including the cities of Turfan, Hami, Urumchi, Ili, Kashghar, Yarkand, and Khotan.⁴² These groups were largely united by their anti-Qing fervor rather any lasting bonds.

In the narrative of the northwestern rebellions, this development may well have been considered the climax. The entirety of the former Chinese Silk Road was enflamed in rebellion, insurrection, and ethnic conflict. The imperial court now had to wrangle with a charismatic religious leader, riotous natives, and a compromised society. With Qing authority already weakened by Western intervention, internal disturbances, and the slow deterioration of its military prowess, the pacification of its realm called for much more than the standard re-

⁴⁰ Kim, p. 6.

⁴¹ Kim, p. 63.

⁴² Kim, p. xx.

conquest. What was needed was a reformation of the relationship between society and the state. The following government campaign for pacification will show a nearly decade-long experiment in solving these problems.

Before the Qing could redirect resources to its northwestern problems it was first necessary to address its catalyst, the Taiping rebellion. As insurrection waged in its northwestern corner in 1864, Chinese generals were staging their final battle with the Taipings in Nanjing. When the city finally fell in July 1864, the court was at last able to free up leadership and resources to pacify the rest of the realm. The final suppression of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom came none too soon, as both Russia and Britain were making swift advances in Central Asia. The Russians had long been making their westward and southward push across Asia, and now it was on the approach to Chinese territory. By 1865 Tashkent and Samarkand had both fallen under the suzerainty of Moscow, and Bukhara followed in 1868. The British had also been making feints into the region to protect its crown jewel of India from Russian expansion.⁴³ Drawn into the "Great Game" of the Central Asian Empire, it was imperative that the Qing quickly bring the situation into hand.

The re-conquest of Xinjiang may have been even more important than the pacification of Gansu and Shensi. Although troubling, the rebellion in Gansu and Shensi was largely an internal affair. As with the other rebellions across the realm, the solution was simply about waiting until enough force could be brought to bear. Moreover, much of the rebelling Muslim population had been loyal subjects until the outbreak of ethnic conflict. The situation in Xinjiang was quite different. As the region was managed by military government, loyalty could only be maintained through the threat or application of force. More importantly, the loss of Xinjiang would threaten the security of China Proper. Without Qing power to stem the Russian advance in Central Asia, China would soon find its position compromised not only in the coastal treaty ports, but also in its interior provinces. Although much has been made of China's weakness in its seaboard territories, throughout the Qing period the Chinese gaze has always been on its northern and western frontier. These security concerns were the original motivations for the Qianlong Emperor

⁴³ Liu and Smith, p. 224.

expansion of the Qing's boundaries.⁴⁴ This in mind, in 1866 the Imperial Court appointed one of the leaders of its successful campaign against the Taipings, Zuo Zongtang (左宗棠) to suppress the rebellions in the Northwest.⁴⁵

Originally, after the defeat of the Taipings in 1864, the Qing intended Zuo to serve as the governor-general of Zhejiang and Fujian. He was to establish dockyards in Fuzhou to improve China's coastal defense.⁴⁶ This decision was quickly modified when the first suppression campaign in Gansu began to go awry. Initially, two Manchu commanders had been appointed the task. Their march on Ma Hualong's base in 1866 had even resulted in his defection; however, this was quickly shown to be a pyrrhic victory. The fact that the Qing accepted an alliance with a previous defiant leader illustrates their weakness in the region. Therefore, it was probably unsurprising that the move was revealed to be a ruse to free Ma's hand. Afterwards Muslim rioting in Gansu expanded, despite assurances to the contrary.⁴⁷ Incensed, the Imperial Court summoned Zuo to apply his expertise to a complete pacification of the territories. In 1867 he assumed the governor-generalship of Shaanxi–Gansu to begin his fateful campaign.⁴⁸

Zuo Zongtang is an interesting figure in late Qing history. Because he led successful pacification campaigns against the Taipings, Nian, and Muslims, he and his cohort can be considered one of the main reasons the Qing dynasty survived into the twentieth century. Without their leadership and military organization, the deteriorating Eight Banners and Green Standard Army would have been unable to shore up the empire. Born in Hunan in 1812, Zuo witnessed the numerous administrative reform experiments in the Yangtze valley regions, especially in Hunan. As a career *muyou* (幕友), he mingled with many of the progressive Qing officials of the period, such as Lin Zexu (林则徐), Li Hongzhang (李鸿章), Zeng Guofan (曾國

⁴⁴ Peter Perdue, "Introduction," *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

⁴⁵ Fields, p. 77.

⁴⁶ Fields, p. 78.

⁴⁷ Liu and Smith, p. 220.

⁴⁸ Fields, p. 78.

藩), and Wei Yuan (魏源).⁴⁹ In the chaos of the 1850s, he quickly rose through the ranks of the military establishment, finally becoming a major commander in the Taiping campaigns. His appointment as governor-general of Zhejiang and Fujian represented a culmination in a career-long rise in status, and an imperial reward for his valiant service. Having cut his teeth on the administrative reforms in central China and suppressing rebellion, Zuo was the perfect candidate to return the Northwest region to normalcy. Zuo's talents were in such demand that in 1867, in transit to Lanzhou to assume his new governor-generalship, he was summoned by court to suppress the renewed Nien rebellion. After taking a year to quell yet another rebellion, Zuo was finally able to attend to his job in suppressing the Muslims in the Northwest.⁵⁰

As Zuo was preparing for the struggle ahead in China's Northwest, another prominent figure had entered the scene in Xinjiang. The man was Yaqub Beg, a Central Asian adventurer and "soldier of fortune" who eventually came to rule most of Xinjiang. Originally he had served as a local leader in present-day Kazakhstan, functioning in Tashkent, Bukhara, and Samarkand. With the Russian capture of these city-kingdoms in the 1860s he was pushed to Khoqand kingdom, and then finally to Kashgharia in 1865.⁵¹ Yaqub came to the Kashghar as an emissary of the Khoqand state, which hoped to maintain its economic influence in the region after the deterioration of Qing authority. For decades Khoqand had harassed the Qing position in Kashgharia, and now the newly empowered Muslim rebels of the region were the only groups obstructing their suzerainty. After a series of pitched battles, Yaqub Beg's forces gained momentum and defeated Hui and Turkic rebels for supremacy in Xinjiang. He captured Kashghar and Yarkand in 1865, Khotan and Lucha in 1867, and Turfan and Urumchi in 1870, and then consolidated the region into a Muslim state under his rule.⁵² These new developments began to turn the wheels of the Great Game. Russia, fearing the new Islamic state in Xinjiang would threaten its newly acquired Central Asian possessions, sent an expedition to Zungharia

⁴⁹ Fields, p. 21.

⁵⁰ Fields, p. 78.

⁵¹ Kim, pp. 81, 83.

⁵² Kim, p. 72.

(Northern Xinjiang) and captured Ili. This was to preempt any further expansion by Yaqub Beg.⁵³ Later the Russians recognized Yaqub Beg as sovereign of Kashgharia and settled on an economic agreement. The British, looking to offset the new Russian influence in the area also recognized Yaqub Beg's rule in 1874.⁵⁴

Although ruling for only a decade, Yaqub Beg made legitimate steps towards consolidating his rule. Not only did he establish international relations, but he also minted coinage, initiated a new taxation system and attempted to fortify his position through the construction of forts.⁵⁵ He also followed the efforts of the various rebelling Muslim groups in reinstating Islamic law. Qing legal codes were now to be replaced with *shari'ah* law. Despite these developments, Yaqub Beg's rule was still fairly tenuous, and he maintained his authority only through harsh repression.⁵⁶ Not only did he murder many of the Muslim leaders who had fought against the Qing, but the populace that he controlled continued to be riven with ethnic, class, and religious sectarian divisions. Moreover, as Ma Hua-Lung and his New Teaching Muslims in Gansu remained a tangible alternative to Yaqub Beg's rule, even a pan-Muslim identity became difficult to maintain. Zuo Zongtang would exploit these divisions to the fullest to ensure his victory.

Zuo's first move was to defeat Ma Hua-Long and his associates in Gansu. Only then would he have an open pathway up the Gansu corridor into Xinjiang. The new governor-general moved slowly, reorganizing the local militia, establishing stable supply lines, and amassing supplies for the long march ahead. Before beginning his campaign into Gansu, Zuo also applied a policy of general amnesty to demoralize and fragment the rebelling Hui community.⁵⁷ In exchange for amnesty, Zuo demanded that the surrendering forces and their leaders would agree

⁵³ Kim, p. 141.

⁵⁴ Kim, pp. 143–144

⁵⁵ Kim, p. 129.

⁵⁶ Kim, p. 129.

⁵⁷ Fields, p. 81.

to be resettled in a new area.⁵⁸ This strategy quickly proved its worth when a force of 40,000 Northern Shensi Muslims defected to the Qing government. Zuo was not benevolent to all of his enemies. Excluded from this program of amnesty were Ma Hua-long and his New Teaching followers. Not only had Ma betrayed the Qing government once before, but his esoteric New Teachings sect diverged greatly from the more orthodox Muslim groups of the region. This provided a way to divide the Muslim community, while advertising the Qing's respect for Islam. According Zuo, Islam was not the problem; it was the radical fundamentalists of Ma Hualong.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, the march into Gansu was an extremely bloody campaign. Even before confronting Ma's forces, the Qing military had killed twenty to thirty thousand Muslims in Gansu.⁶⁰ Backed by their fervent beliefs and with no recourse available to surrender, many of the Hui of the New Teachings sect decided upon fighting to the last man. Consequently, it took nearly two years for Zuo's armies to subdue Ma, and this was only after Ma surrendered and a more fervent faction fled to reorganize their forces.⁶¹ In 1871 Ma and nearly two thousand of his followers were executed. Following this victory, Zuo made another proclamation of amnesty for those who recanted their faith in the New Teachings sect. This would have a great influence on his final campaigns in Gansu. Kim observes "It would not be far-fetched to say that his success in quelling the rebellion in Shanxi and Gansu owed more to the dissension among the Muslims than to the superior military power of Zuo Zongtang's army."⁶² After nearly another five years of pacification and preparation, Zuo was finally able to make his move into Xinjiang in 1876.⁶³ As with everything else in these conflicts, the campaign in Xinjiang would be significantly different from that in Gansu and Shensi.

Zuo Zongtong had about 60,000 men when he entered Xinjiang. Zuo strategy was to first

⁵⁸ Liu and Smith, p. 229.

⁵⁹ Liu and Smith, p. 228.

⁶⁰ Kim, p. 160.

⁶¹ Kim, p. 160.

⁶² Kim, p. 161.

⁶³ Liu and Smith, p. 237.

take Hami and Urumqi and then move southward against Yaqub Beg's forces in Kashgharia. The overwhelming strength of the Chinese met little resistance in its capture of these cities in 1877, and as planned the army then maneuvered southward.⁶⁴ The following sequence of events was somewhat anti-climatic, as Yaqub Beg suddenly died in the spring of 1877. The subsequent power vacuum caused a struggle for supremacy among Yaqub's top lieutenants, and the Qing seized the opportunity to press for victory. By January 1874 the re-conquest of Xinjiang was nearly complete.⁶⁵ The relative ease of the pacification campaign in Xinjiang was a testament to the poorly organized Muslim forces of the region. Although they were all unified by their Islamic faith, they remained predominantly loyal to their local town or ethnic tribe. This was unlike the situation in Gansu, where the strong leadership of Ma Hualong and his New Teachings sect held together the coalition of Muslims. Thus when the Qing finally entered the region, there was no mechanism for amassing a united army to face off against the Qing. This problem was exacerbated further with the death of Yaqub Beg, who seemed militarily inept against Qing strategy. After nearly fifteen years, China's northwest had finally been pacified.

The aftermath may have been even more significant for Chinese history. The imperial court spent a fortune, much of it borrowed, to fund Zuo's re-conquest of Shensi, Gansu, and Xinjiang. In 1874 when Zuo was amassing his forces at Lanzhou for the final campaign westward, there was even a debate within the court on whether it was feasible to hold on to the region. Meiji Japan had just launched a "punitive expedition" to the east coast of Taiwan against the island's aborigines, and the Manchu court was again conflicted on whether coastal or interior defense was the paramount concern. Obviously, naval weakness had been the root cause of most of the Qing's woes in the last thirty years, but now even the outer environs of the Qing realm — Taiwan, the Ryukus, Korea, and Manchuria — were being threatened by Western and Japanese forces. To ensure the protection of these domains, all of the empires had to be drawn closer to the center. The fact that the argument for the re-conquest of Xinjiang won out, despite the cost, demonstrates the great value that the Manchu court placed on northwest security in this new

⁶⁴ Kim, p. 167.

⁶⁵ Kim, p. 177.

framework. Additionally, even after Zuo's successful campaign in Xinjiang, the Russians still remained in the Ili Valley.⁶⁶ The re-conquest was only the beginning of China's role in the "Great Game."

Chinese forces had to stay to ensure the security of the area. To signal to the Russians their plans and to facilitate their new strategy, Xinjiang was upgraded to a province in 1884. This transformation was an imperative, as European expansion across the world had shown that any area of control not directly under the authority of the state was free game for acquisition. This expansion of administration in Xinjiang was paralleled by a similar move in Taiwan in 1885, as well as Chinese control of Korean foreign affairs through the 1880s.⁶⁷ As these changes were to influence the boundaries of the Chinese nation-state during the Nationalist and Communist regimes this was an extremely significant event in the history of modern China.

As for the state of Islam in China today, the influence of these rebellions is a little more uncertain. Up into the present day, the Hui have remained a large portion of the populace in this region, staying fairly loyal to the various regimes that would control the area in the following century. Again, the situation in Xinjiang developed quite differently, with part of the region more than once becoming the Republic of East Turkestan. These divergent trajectories are probably a reflection of the same differences that influenced the developments of the rebellions. Then and now, the overall question of conflict is the nature of the relationship between people and the Chinese state.

Bibliography

- Chien, Yu-wen. *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.
- Dillon, Michael. *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement, and Sects*. Surrey, U.K.: Curzon Press, 1999.
- Fields, Lanny B. *Tso Tsung-T'ang and the Muslims: Statecraft in Northwest China, 1868–1880*. Kingston, Ontario, Canada: The Limestone Press, 1978.

⁶⁶ Liu and Smith, p. 243.

⁶⁷ Liu and Smith, p. 258.

- Jones, Susan Mann, and Philip A. Kuhn. "Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion," *The Cambridge History of China* (15 vols.), Vol. 10., ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, p. 132. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- Kim, Ho-dong. *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864–1877*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- Kuhn, Philip A., "The Taiping Rebellion," *The Cambridge History of China* (15 vols.), Vol. 10, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- Liu, Kwang-Ching, and Richard J. Smith, "The Military Challenge: The North-west and the Coast," *The Cambridge History of China* (15 vols.), Vol. 11, ed. John K. Fairbank and Kwang-Ching Liu. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Naquin, Susan, and Evelyn S. Rawski. *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.
- Perdue, Peter. *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Spence, Jonathan. *The Search for Modern China*. New York: Norton, 1990.

Since June 2006, all new issues of *Sino-Platonic Papers* have been published electronically on the Web and are accessible to readers at no charge. Back issues are also being released periodically in e-editions, also free. For a complete catalog of *Sino-Platonic Papers*, with links to free issues, visit the *SPP* Web site.

www.sino-platonic.org