
SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS

Number 208

February, 2011

Reviews XIII

edited by
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SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS

FOUNDED 1986

Editor-in-Chief
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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public the results of research that, because of its unconventional or controversial nature, might otherwise go unpublished.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.

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Preface

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The first issue of *Sino-Platonic Papers* (*SPP*), entitled “The Need for an Alphabetically Arranged General Usage Dictionary of Mandarin Chinese: A Review Article of Some Recent Dictionaries and Current Lexicographical Projects,” appeared in February of 1986. Three things are noteworthy about that first issue of *SPP*:

1. It served as a manifesto that culminated in the ABC series of user-friendly, single sort, alphabetically ordered dictionaries for the study of Chinese that is published by the University of Hawaii Press.
2. It was in essence and in fact a review issue.
3. It came out a quarter of a century ago this month.

In the years that followed, twelve more issues of *SPP* appeared that were devoted entirely to reviews. This shows the great importance that we at *SPP* have placed upon reviews for the advancement of scholarship and the spread of knowledge. It should, incidentally, be noted that all twelve review issues of *SPP* are available for free download at the *SPP* website (www.sino-platonic.org/).

From the beginning up to the twelfth review collection in 2005, the overwhelming majority of the reviews were written by the editor himself, although others have also contributed from time to time.

Given the close association between *SPP* and the mission of writing responsibly critical reviews on matters of language, script, and culture, plus the desire to celebrate the 25th anniversary of our series, we have decided to make this, the 208th issue of *SPP* (February 2011), the 13th review issue. We earnestly hope that the reviews gathered herein will serve the useful

purpose of introducing readers to the best new or under-recognized works in our various fields and cautioning them against publications that may be less worthy of their attention.

Finally, we will undoubtedly be assembling additional review issues in the future, and hereby warmly welcome all readers of *SPP* to submit reviews of publications which they wish to call to the attention of our colleagues and students who constitute the broad readership of this journal.

Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History

by Nicola Di Cosmo

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. ix, 369 pages

Professor Nicola Di Cosmo's fine book traces the interactions during the second and first millennia BC of the developing Chinese polities and society with northern border and steppe peoples. His final purpose is to elucidate a change in attitude toward the northern border, or "foreign," peoples that he has sensed occurred among the Chinese between the Eastern Zhou and Qin–Han periods. To this end he compares certain writings of the Eastern Zhou period with Sima Qian's monograph on the Xiongnu, the northern confederation of steppe peoples that coalesced in the late third century BC, as contained in Sima's *Shiji* (Historical Records) of c. 100 BC. He perceives from his careful study that Sima reflects a new interest in understanding China's northern steppe neighbors as seen in Sima's detailed account of steppe geography and Xiongnu culture and society. He further notes that, for the first time, as reflected in Sima's astronomical / astrological monograph, "Treatise on Heavenly Offices" (*Tianguan shu*), the Chinese included the steppe inhabitants as fully participating actors in their now more universalistic perceptions of and projections onto people and events on earth.

The book is organized into four self-contained sections, each further divided into two chapters, that individually elucidate to a degree not previously achieved the development of Chinese interactions with their northern steppe neighbors. Part I begins with a detailed and very helpful review of the geography of Inner and Central Asia, including Siberia, Xinjiang, Mongolia, and Manchuria, that sets well for the reader the stage on which the author then traces the archaeological evidence that identifies the significant cultures of these northern territories and their archaeologically established prehistoric interactions with both broader Eurasian peoples and the developing Chinese civilization to the south. In this latter portion of Section I Professor Di Cosmo's contribution in elucidating these interactions by employing Soviet and Russian archaeological and anthropological literature on the Northern Zone cultures of the second and first millennia BC is highly significant. It is a certainty that Di Cosmo's carefully detailed

account of the development of the Northern Zone cultures and their interactions with the Chinese and Inner / Central Asian cultures has both helped to educate many scholars in this field and stimulate others to take up the study of eastern Eurasian civilizations of the late-prehistoric and early-historic periods (second and first millennia BC).

The first chapter of Part II reviews descriptions found in Zhou- and Han-period historical sources of some of the interactions represented to have occurred between Chinese Zhou Central States and various states, tribes, and peoples of the foreign or borderland North during mostly the seventh and sixth centuries BC. In the second chapter of Part II Professor Di Cosmo continues his account of Chinese-foreign interactions to cover the introduction to the Chinese sphere of the riding of the horse and the use of cavalry. This chapter also introduces Professor Di Cosmo's new approach to understanding the purpose and function of Chinese frontier wall-building and walls. He understands them to have been intended and employed primarily as tools of Chinese northern expansion into foreign / border territories. That is, he determines that the walls represent Chinese aggression and offense, and not, as traditional interpretation has taught us, merely a defensive posture. This conclusion is consistent with his finding that during the Eastern Zhou the Chinese Central States typically moved aggressively against their northern foreign neighbors and viewed them as the potential and / or real loci of resources to be conquered and employed to enhance the power and wealth of the Central States. Professor Di Cosmo's new understanding of the purpose and role of the Chinese northern frontier walls in and of itself represents an outstanding contribution to our comprehension of ancient Chinese civilization and the principles on which it was organized.

Part III describes and analyzes the development of the Xiongnu confederation of the steppe in the late third century BC and the subsequent policies and procedures that the Chinese Han state employed in dealing with this new and powerful northern threat. Professor Di Cosmo describes how the Han state's turn, in the 130s BC and thereafter, from a policy of appeasement and pacification to one of aggression and conquest resulted eventually in the dissolution and defeat of the Xiongnu steppe empire.

In Part IV Professor Di Cosmo reviews Sima Qian's detailed description of Xiongnu culture, politics, and society of c. 100 BC and finally concludes his book with an analysis of a

now-transformed Chinese world view that was an expanded perspective on human earthly existence and interactions that apparently for the first time included on both the astronomical / astrological and earthly levels the stations and roles of the peoples and polities of the steppe.

The contributions to the study of ancient China and, indeed, Eurasia that this book offers are many. The book also provides ample stimulus to continued scholarly research, thought, and discussion regarding the development of the Chinese society and polity in the first millennium BC, the emergence of a Chinese self-identity during the same period, and this identity's definition vis-à-vis the northern border region and beyond.

One such discussion that Professor Di Cosmo's work stimulates stems from his careful review of interactions between the Zhou Central States and the various northern foreign / border tribes, peoples, and polities that period texts represent to have occurred during the Spring and Autumn period (721–481 BC) of the Eastern Zhou. (Part II, Chapter 1, or pp. 96–126) In Professor Di Cosmo's view, the aggressions of the Central States against the foreign peoples did not truly result from Chinese people's having perceived cultural differences between the Chinese and the northern foreign peoples. That is, according to Professor Di Cosmo, the "foreignness" of the cultures of the northern non-Chinese that often was invoked to justify aggression against the non-Chinese was simply a contemporary (and later apologetic) pretext offered by the Chinese. In reality, Professor Di Cosmo argues, pragmatic considerations of the accrual or preservation of scarce resources virtually exclusively drove the Chinese to opt for either war against or peace or alliance with their northern foreign neighbors.

Professor Di Cosmo is correct in refocusing our understanding of the motives lying behind the policies that the Chinese states adopted or the actions that they took vis-à-vis the "Yi-Di" (denoting usually "foreigners" or "barbarians" generally) or "Rong-Di" (indicating northern "foreigners" or "barbarians," or, depending on context, specific groups of northern Di or Rong peoples). It certainly must be so that practical concerns over the wealth and power that judicious accumulation or preservation of resources could bring were among the considerations that personnel of the Eastern Zhou states generally weighed when determining state policy toward the Yi-Di / Rong-Di or others of the Central States. And, yet, the role of the perceived non-Chinese nature or foreignness of the northern Yi-Di / Rong-Di cultures surely cannot be dismissed, either,

particularly since, according to the only historical sources that we possess for this period and which are those that Professor Di Cosmo so profitably cites (the most extensive and important among these sources being the *Zuo zhuan*), this factor was so very often and consistently invoked by Zhou state personnel to justify or explain state policy toward and actions taken against the northern peoples. In short, it seems only reasonable to allow that the Zhou state personnel weighed and balanced seriously all of the factors of culture, economics, politics, and power when they determined state policy toward either or both the northern foreign peoples *and* internal Zhou Chinese states. In countless cases the Zhou states allied with either one another or a foreign tribe / people / state against either an internal Chinese foe or an external foreign group. In most cases, the sources suggest, real concerns for self-survival influenced the decisions that individuals and state courts made to form certain alliances, go to war, or negotiate for peace. But neither can culturally founded Chinese ethical arguments that were commonly invoked, usually involving a Chinese state official's or elite's declaration of some sort of imperative demanded by Chinese-style "virtue," be dismissed as having served as nothing more than a pretext for making self-serving decisions over war, alliances, and/or peace. A concern for the preservation of one's culture and its definition of virtue in the face of a perceived threat to it, whether the threat is in fact real or only perceived from a position of ethnic or racial bigotry, is, after all, in many cases a perceived issue of self-preservation and survival.

Indeed it is certain that from the perspective of the truly central Zhou states, i.e., those located close to the old Shang–Zhou cultural center surrounding the Yellow River, not all Zhou states and not all foreign peoples were considered equally either Chinese or foreign. Gradations of Chineseness and foreignness appear to have been recognized, both explicitly and implicitly. At the same time that border Zhou states such as the northwestern Qin or the southern and southeastern Chu, Wu, and Yue were regarded to count among the Zhou states, they were also, as Professor Di Cosmo demonstrates, accused of acting like or being "Yi-Di" or "Rong-Di," that is, something like "foreign" or "barbarian." (pp. 100–102) How they were viewed at any given time by another Zhou state seems indeed to have been predicated largely on the basis of actual political-economic-military circumstances prevailing at the moment, such that while as often as they were allies of a given state they were just as often enemies, but one cannot deny the reality

conveyed clearly by the sources that at times their behavior — and their geographical positions in proximity to foreign peoples and polities, and also, consequently, their cultures — brought about censure voiced by a Chinese commentator whose consciousness of and dedication to a believed sense of ethically exclusive Chinese culture and its norms of behavior stimulated him to accuse the unethically behaving Chinese state or individual of exhibiting symptoms of an Yi-Di or Rong-Di, foreign or barbarian, nature or bent. In fact, it appears, from both the examples of such behavior and censure that Professor Di Cosmo cites and many other cases as found in the period sources, that such censure may have been intended to or did indeed effect an alteration of behavior in or by the offending Chinese state or individual. That is, such censure may have served the Zhou culture and its constituent states as a self-policing mechanism that helped to hold in check the less “virtuous” impulses and tendencies of the member Zhou Chinese courts and individuals. It also may have been simply a means of reinforcing for the Chinese their sense of cohesion and uniqueness, their feeling of difference and cultural purity, even if such purity may have been but a wish. Such censure may, then, have helped to create and sustain the very sense of cultural exclusiveness, identity, or cohesiveness that Professor Di Cosmo argues (pp. 125) did not truly or fully exist during the Spring and Autumn period among the Chinese states. In these cases, then, we may be witnessing the very development, but at the very least the sustenance, of the culture that Professor Di Cosmo proffers did not yet exist.

An example of the existence of this Chinese culture as early as the seventh century BC appears to be reflected in a tale drawn from the *Zuo zhuan* that Professor Di Cosmo describes (pp. 98–99), in which the Zhou court minister Fu Chen remonstrates with the Zhou king, urging him not to ally with the Di in attacking the Zhou state of Zheng. Fu Chen warned the king that the Di were possessed of four evils, which included being unable to (1) hear the harmony of the five sounds, which made them deaf, (2) distinguish the five colors, which made them blind, (3) conform to virtue and righteousness, which made them perverse, and (4) speak words of loyalty and faith, which made them foolish. Fu Chen further ascribed to the Di a greedy and insatiable nature. However, his persuasion was unsuccessful, as the king proceeded to ally with the Di against the state of Zheng. Shortly thereafter, the Di played an instrumental role in dethroning the Zhou king.

Professor Di Cosmo understands this episode to reveal nothing of either a cultural rift between the Chinese and the Di or a prejudice sustained among Chinese of the Zhou Central States against the Di, but, rather, a factional struggle in the Zhou center between the inner and outer Zhou courts. However, while it may be true that factionalism between the Zhou courts played a role in determining whether or not the king would ally with the Di, neither can one deny the fact that this story represents that a Zhou minister expressed the view that a significant cultural separation was perceived to exist between the Zhou Chinese Central States and the Di peoples and that such a cultural gulf was sufficient to argue strenuously against the Zhou king's forming an alliance with the Di against a Zhou state. If nothing else, the story reflects that, doubtlessly, individuals present at the Zhou court (and evidently also at the courts of the Zhou Central States) harbored a cultural prejudice against the Di for their perceived cultural difference from the Chinese. Fu Chen's remonstrance with the Zhou king demonstrates that indeed some felt that such differences between the Chinese and Di argued against any consideration of allying with the Di against a Zhou state. This story reveals nothing of any putative Zhou pretexts employed to justify a war against the Di, and it reveals of the Chinese attitude toward the Di in the seventh century BC only that some high-ranking Chinese perceived that real and troubling differences existed between the Chinese and foreigners.

Another case in which various interpretations of motives behind events are possible is that of the Chinese Jin state's attack on and pursuant annihilation of the non-Chinese Di tribe or state of Lu in 594 BC. The event that precipitated Jin's decision to make war against Lu was the killing by Lu minister and de facto ruler Feng Shu of a daughter of the lord of Jin who had been married to Ying Er, the proper Lu chief. At the Jin court the Jin minister Bozong argued in favor of responding to Feng Shu's ignominy by going to war against Lu because, as Bozong maintained, Feng Shu had committed several crimes, including neglecting appropriate ritual propitiation of the ancestors, misappropriating lands of the Jin's allied state of Li, and drinking. Of Feng Shu's further having murdered recently his lord Ying Er's wife, who was also the daughter of the Jin lord, Bozong opined that, "His (Feng Shu's) successor perhaps will respectfully conform to virtue and justice, and that ... will strengthen his rule. Why then wait? If we do not punish the culprit, but wait for the successor, and then punish him though he has his

merits, would it not be unreasonable?” (p. 113) Professor Di Cosmo remarks that here as in other cases the moral issue alleged to have stimulated the state’s proposed violent response to Feng Shu / Lu was a mere pretext and that the military campaign that ensued really was politically and economically motivated. Contrarily, one might take Bozong at his word and understand his intent to have been as he stated, i.e., to punish the miscreant Lu / Feng Shu as the stimulus had arisen when, in addition to his having committed over time a number of ethical and political offenses, Feng Shu’s recent murder of the daughter of the Jin lord and wife of the Lu chief had triggered in the Jin court a need to deal decisively with this troublesome person / state. We note as well that in the text quoted above Bozong did not seek a pretext for an unreasonable war but rather a clear and reasonable solution now to the existence of an insulting crime having been perpetrated against the Jin court and its ruling house. Indeed, he says, it would be unreasonable to attack a state perhaps ruled in the future by a meritorious and virtuous leader. In his wish to avoid unreasonableness, he demonstrates that his decision-making actually seems to have been founded on precisely what Professor Di Cosmo suggests did not exist for him, a coherent Chinese culture that guided individuals and states in a code of what was accepted to be appropriate, reasonable, just, and virtuous behavior. While in many cases that the *Zuo zhuan* describes the foundations on which people made decisions were not so reasonable or “virtuous,” for Bozong and his Jin lord, the immediate cause for war, that is, the crime of the murder of the daughter of the Jin lord in addition to Feng Shu’s prior offenses, existed reasonably in the moment soon after the crime had been perpetrated, but it would not exist reasonably in the future if (1) the insult were allowed to stand or pass without Jin’s having repaid the insult with immediate violence and, in the interim, (2) a new and reasonable, just, and virtuous chief had come to rule the Lu.

In another instance Professor Di Cosmo argues that discussions at the Jin court in 569 BC of a peace proposal recently offered them, with gifts, by the Wuzhong Rong peoples demonstrate that the Jin’s ratiocinations aired at court for and against accepting the peace offering had nothing to do with moral or cultural, but rather only pragmatic, considerations. One might suggest immediately that in fact heeding cultural or moral arguments can and often does contribute to pragmatic good governance. But let us review the discussion at the Jin court to better understand the context for interpretation of words spoken.

Initially some Jin personnel rejected the Rong peace proposal on the grounds that the Rong (and Di) were without affection or an understanding of friendship and were greedy and therefore should be attacked. In response, a minister named Wei Jiang, who had served the Jin previously in a diplomatic capacity in negotiating with the Rong, argued against war and for peace, citing various practical political and economic benefits to Jin strength and rulership of accepting the peace offering and then purchasing land from the Rong instead of taking it by force. In two of his points of argument Wei invoked the “virtue” (*de*) of peace in preventing military losses and in encouraging those distant to come nearer and those near to submit to Jin authority and rule.

Professor Di Cosmo considers that Wei’s arguments demonstrate that the Jin court was concerned with only political, not moral, motives. (pp. 119–120) He understands Wei’s “virtue” to relate only to “clear-sighted governance” and not at all to moral or cultural values. Beyond noting again that “virtue” or its lack may surely have influenced directly “good governance” in Spring and Autumn Zhou China, we may remark further that a different interpretation of this discussion is possible and perhaps more appropriate. We may justifiably contend that Wei’s argument touting the advantages of accepting the Rong offer of peace and his specific applications here of the term “virtue” represent his attempt to appeal to an audience already set on an “unvirtuous” war against a peace-seeking adversary by contending that war in this context was neither pragmatic nor virtuous. To Wei it was unwise, first because the pragmatic benefits of acting virtuously and accordingly accepting the gifts of peace and negotiating peaceably with the Rong far outweighed any advantages that might be gained from warring with them, and second because this Zhou culture’s sense of virtue demanded that to wage war in the face of a peace proposal was in fact unvirtuous. The rationale that he offered to his bellicose audience at the Jin court for acting virtuously was indeed pragmatic, but this pragmatically spun entreaty to adopt the virtuous path does not erase the underlying appeal to culturally accepted virtuous behavior in response to a peace offering. Wei was appealing to what he believed were his and his audience’s shared deep understanding of what their Zhou culture taught them was virtuous conduct, even if in order to trigger a virtuous response in his audience members he needed to identify for them and remind them of the pragmatic benefits of acting virtuously.

Discussion of these examples leads to another point that can be teased out of Professor Di Cosmo's discussion of the state of development during the Spring and Autumn period of a coherent or cohering Zhou culture that demarcated lines of inclusion and exclusion, domestic and foreign. This point is that, while it is true that the period sources, and mostly the *Zuo zhuan*, do not delineate clearly any empirical account of Rong, Di, or other "foreign" cultures or ethnicities, this likely did not result from a lack of interest in or understanding of the foreign peoples on the part of the Zhou states but rather their familiarity borne of constant contact, interaction, intermarriage, interbreeding, and coalescence with the "foreigners" that rendered unnecessary the development of any written accounts of foreign cultures. The Zhou states had been interacting, allying, and warring with the northern "foreign" neighbors for centuries, including a moment in 771 BC when the Zhou Prince Yijiu, with the Western Shen, allied with the Western Rong group / tribe / state to topple the Western Zhou regime and send it across the pass to establish the Eastern Zhou in Luoyi. In addition, by the time of the Spring and Autumn period, the courts of the northern states themselves were accustomed to the presence of northern foreigners, including racially mixed members of the reigning families. An example is Chonger (Double Ears), known posthumously as Duke Wen of Jin (r. 636–628), whose mother was Lady Hu of the Western Rong. No one could claim that the Jin court did not recognize and understand the differences between the culture of the Zhou Central States and those of the various foreign tribes with which they dealt diurnally.

The personnel of the courts of the Zhou states, and particularly those located in the northern border region, including the Qin, Jin, and Qi, knew the foreigners and their cultures well and understood the context of the interactions of disparate cultures, the Zhou and non-Zhou. Again, this was a context of interactions that included alliances, wars, treaties, and broken treaties, just as occurred among Central States of the Zhou. We might reason, then, that there was no cause to write down something that the personnel of the Zhou states already understood well and with which they dealt daily in continuous interactions and negotiations, and, in a period in which writing was yet cumbersome and costly, there would have been very little impetus to record in writing something so well rehearsed and understood.

What appears to have mattered enough to record in writing was rather anecdotal evidence that could, as a body, provide for inheritors and inhabitants of an ever-insecure culture a code of conduct amid a continuously fluxing and often confusing, violent, human environment. For as many have observed over the millennia of the most significant and usable source for the Spring and Autumn period, the *Zuo zhuan*, this work offers not so much a simple factual record of historical events as it does a moralistic interpretation of such events such that we really do not know if most of the conversations recorded in this text occurred as they have been presented. The purpose of the stories found in the *Zuo zhuan* and later commentarial sources attached to the base *Chunqiu* text, that is, the *Guliang zhuan* and *Gongyang zhuan*, as well as individual works such as the *Guoyu* and *Zhanguo ce*, individually and collectively appear to present implicitly a code of conduct representative of the ideal developed and continuing to develop in the Zhou culture of a virtuous way of responding to certain types of behavior and events, with the final goal of creating and/or maintaining an order in which human-made disaster and destruction need not prevail over civil governance and interstate / international cooperation. Events throughout the Zhou and beyond, into the Qin and Han periods, demonstrate clearly enough that this implicit code, composed of the totality of the moralistic tales found in the *Zuo zhuan* and other sources that reflect the world of the Eastern Zhou, was an ideal toward which the states and individuals could and ought to strive but that was never achieved, in that the Zhou Central States of course did not cease to engage in self-destructive and mutually devastating warfare but rather often pursued the kind of trickery and dishonesty that the moral tales attempted to curtail and prevent.

Of course, it would not have been so that the Zhou Central States were equally familiar with all foreign northern cultures. They would have understood best those cultures with which they dealt most often, that is, those physically or geographically, or even, as a result, culturally, proximate to them and their border activities. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that vituperations voiced against the character of foreign peoples, or disparaging remarks offered by certain individuals against their nature or behavior, might have been directed against those foreigners, more distant and less interactive with the Zhou states, who were, as the traditional Chinese metaphor seems accurately to have described them, “unfamiliar” (*sheng*, often translated most literally as “raw” or “uncooked”), as opposed to those foreigners nearby with whom the

Zhou states interacted more frequently and who, through such interactions, had become culturally more familiar to the Chinese and thus were identified, logically, to be “familiar” (*shou*, or “cooked”). While some have considered these metaphorical descriptors to have been insulting to the foreigners, since they seem to compare the foreigners to food in various stages of preparation for consumption, really they appear rather to have identified appropriately for the Chinese only the familiar from the unfamiliar. Thus, the traditional understanding of the Zhou interactions with the border / foreign peoples seems, really, to represent the reality with which the Zhou Central States grappled and in which they struggled for survival.

Professor Di Cosmo’s milestone accomplishment is a must-read for all those interested in the development of ancient Chinese society, culture, philosophy, and historiography amid the fluid interactions that the Chinese enjoyed with peoples of eastern Eurasia who inhabited the lands outside of the old Chinese cultural and political center. Indeed, *Ancient China and Its Enemies* ought to be read carefully by anyone interested seriously in the study of any civilization of ancient Eurasia. Each renewed reading of this book offers the serious student not only a sound and thorough review of many salient aspects of the development of ancient Chinese and steppe societies but also a plethora of fresh ideas and interpretations to stimulate the reader’s interest and imagination, all leading to the fruitful pursuit of continued investigation into seminal developments in the ancient eastern Eurasian world.

John C. Didier

Colorado State University

The Prehistory of the Silk Road

by E. E. Kuzmina; Victor H. Mair, Editor

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, Encounters with Asia Series, 2007

The Silk Road has become a subject of study comprising multiple topical themes. The juxtaposition between the foreign and the familiar, stories of interaction and transformation, the idea of asymmetrical conflict, the convergence of contrasts — each of these fascinating historical phenomena contribute to the tremendous current popularity of everything relating to the ancient Silk Road. Therefore, the idea of such a volume as Elena Kuzmina's *The Prehistory of the Silk Road* is delightful and enticing to many, and especially to those of us who love the study of human history in the larger sense.

In 2004 I offered a new course through Harvard University's Division of Continuing Education entitled "The Archaeology of the Silk Road." This course was specifically designed to instill the idea that, for millennia, there had been long distance contact and interaction between groups on the Eurasian continent — along the piedmont, across the desert, and in the steppe — well before the historic silk route. Several students immediately dropped after they realized it would not be a course offering a distilled history of art, but instead a study of *archaeology*, and that we were going to explore cultural histories in a holistic way, not outside of the context of the physical geographies and palaeoenvironmental facets of Eurasia. The remaining students explored the natural and cultural histories of Eurasia in detail, from Kamchatka in the Russian Far East to Kalmykia and the Caucasus, the Upper Volga to Xi'an. These students learned about soils, climate changes, and itinerant interaction spheres, from early farmers to early metallurgists; of archaeological cultures whose far-reaching technological, cosmological, and aesthetic influences have been tantalizingly under-explained, and whose disparate segments of communication later coalesced into an attenuated, elongated, treacherous, and magnificent network later to be known as the "Silk Road." If only we had had the chance then to offer Kuzmina's book as a textbook for the course!

This compact volume (114 pages of text, not including appendices, maps, notes, and bibliography) boasts a general introduction, an overview of the ecology of the Steppe, and a synthetic chapter on the economic developments from the Neolithic through the early Iron Age for the first three chapters' 70 pages. The remainder of the book is devoted to a regional focus on archaeological culture histories from southern central Asia (Chapter 4), the dynamics between eastern and western central Asia (Chapter 5), and the conclusion (Chapter 6).

Following the main text is an appendix on relative and absolute chronologies, with a discussion of the variance between traditional Russian typological phasing and radiocarbon dates, and a collection of published radiocarbon dates arranged regionally.

This very useful overview of chronologies and discussion of dating issues is followed by a compilation of maps (many of which are recognizable from previously published papers, both of Kuzmina and of others), and figures illustrating the earlier text. Her notes comprise a mere four pages. The bibliography is comprehensive, as would be expected from one of the most prominent, internationally renowned scholars of Eurasia, whose career was forged under the intellectual yoke of the former Soviet Union, yet who has been able to bridge the wide abyss between Eastern and Western approaches to human history.

In fact, this theme of contrasts between Eastern and Western approaches is pervasive throughout Kuzmina's book. It is fascinating to a Western reader to read in English, from an American publisher, the outline of her training reflected in her understanding of Western intellectual history in the social sciences. Impressive in scope, Kuzmina's familiarity with such varied twentieth century intellectual enclaves as the Club of Rome, Fernand Braudel and the *Annales* School, and even the work of Arnold Toynbee, are above and beyond expectation. While most earlier twentieth century Russian archaeologists and historians were given little access to Western archaeological literature outside of V. Gordon Childe, Kuzmina has shown admirable command of Western archaeological theory, albeit through a *Russified* perspective.

This compact little volume will prove very useful for any student of Old World archaeology. The density of information is combined with a refreshingly journalistic readability, which is a testament to both the editor and the author. The tables and maps are very useful as reference, especially the chronological charts of the appendix (pp. 115–128); and the combined

Russian and non-Russian sourced bibliography is exhaustive. Kuzmina has also taken great care to include the perspectives of others in her discussion on themes as diverse as the *Urheimat* of the Indo-Iranians (pp. 40–59) and the early metallurgy of China (pp. 88–89).

It is understood that with any attempt to address such a large subject in such a small volume there is bound to be a significant amount of simplification, conflation, and omission; for the archaeology of Eurasia is highly complex, and the history of its development is also complex. This history has had a profound bearing on the direction of research and on the secondary interpretations of field studies. (e.g. Lamberg-Karlovsky 2005; see also Kohl 2009 and Good 2010). Kuzmina and her editor have clearly and unapologetically steered away from any substantive discussion of this important back-story, giving away the full weight of authority this volume could have held. Aside from this major shortcoming, Kuzmina's *Prehistory of the Silk Road* is a worthy addition to the shelves of all serious students of the archaeology of Eurasia.

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Mozi: A Complete Translation

by Ian Johnston

Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. lxxxv, 944 pages

Mozi is a text as important as the Confucian writings for understanding any aspect of pre-imperial China. Yet two main reasons have prevented the study of this extremely significant text. The first is the dominance of Confucianism, the school's rival, throughout almost all of Chinese history, leading to the perception that *Mozi* is heterodox and dangerous. The second is that the wide range of topics it covers, from logic to optics, together with its very plain writing style, no longer interested the literati in late imperial China, who were mainly trained in Confucian classics and literature. When interest in the *Mozi* text revived, caused by a surge of excitement about evidential research in the later Qing period and the importation of Western philosophy at the beginning of the twentieth century, the available texts were in poor condition. Researchers and readers were faced with a poorly preserved text and a lost tradition.¹ In countering these difficulties, Ian Johnston's *The Mozi: A Complete Translation*, the first complete translation of *Mozi* in Western language (and, beyond this, a bilingual version), has made a tremendous contribution to the field.

Before Johnston's, there were several translations of selected passages from *Mozi* that were used by most Western, especially American, scholars. The earliest is Alfred Forke's *Mê Ti des Sozialethinkers und seiner Schüler philosophische Werke*,² published in 1922. He translated most parts of the *Mozi* except some of the defense chapters. As splendid as this work is, it is a

¹ For details on basic information and the transmission of the text, see Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*. Early China Special Monograph Series 2 (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 336–41; Ian Johnston, *Mozi: A Complete Translation* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2010), pp. xxi–xxxiv.

² Alfred Forke, tr., *Mê Ti des Sozialethikers und seiner Schüler philosophischen Werke*. Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen, Beiband zum Jahrgang 23/25 (Berlin, 1922).

German translation not readily accessible to English speakers. In 1929, Mei Yipao published a supplementary translation in English. He based his work on Forke's, but he was dissatisfied with Forke's translation of the dialectical and defense chapters, so he included only the epitomes, core doctrine chapters, and dialogues in his final publication.³

A further shortcoming of both of these works lies in the version of the *Mozi* text they used. Before Wu Yujiang 吴毓江 published his editorial work on the *Mozi* with two Ming dynasty (1368–1644) versions in 1944, Sun Yirang's 孙诒让 work based on the Dao zang 道藏 edition (1445) was the only edition accessible to these scholars.⁴ Burton Watson published his partial translation in 1963, so that he was able to compare different editions of *Mozi*. But he translated only part of the core doctrine chapters, and his work is oriented to literary translation rather than to scholarship. More recently, Philip Ivanhoe translated eight chapters of the core doctrine chapters, seven of which overlapped with Watson's selection.⁵

That scholars concentrate so extensively on the translation of the core doctrine chapters evidences their strong interest in them. These chapters are used to explain the internal connections of Mozi's philosophy.⁶ From the argument of the utilitarianism of early Moism formulated by Dennis Ahern⁷ in the seventies, to the despotic and democratic dichotomy cast by

³ Mei Yipao, tr., *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse*, Probsthain's Oriental Series 19 (London, 1929), pp.59.

⁴ See Wu Yujiang 吴毓江, *Mozi jiao zhu* 墨子校注 (Collation and commentary on *Mozi*) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2006); Sun Yirang 孙诒让, *Mozi jian gu* 墨子间诂 (Evidential rectification and investigation on *Mozi*) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986).

⁵ Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Mozi*, in Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden, eds., *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis and Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett, 2005).

⁶ For example, see Hui-chieh Loy, "Justification and Debate: Thoughts on Moist Moral Epistemology," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 35.3 (2008): 455–71, and Benjamin Wong and Hui-chieh Loy, "War and Ghosts in Mozi's Political Philosophy," *Philosophy East & West* 54.3 (2004): 343–63.

⁷ Dennis M. Ahern, "Is Mo Tzu a Utilitarian?" *Chinese Studies in Philosophy* 3.2 (1976): 185–93. The debate occurred at the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties. See Chad Hansen. "Mo Tzu: Language Utilitarianism (The Structure of Ethics in Classical China)," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 16 (1989): 355–80; Dirck Vorenkamp, "Another Look at Utilitarianism in Mo-Tzu's Thought," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 19.4

Hsiao Kung-chuan⁸ and further discussed by Chong Chaehyun,⁹ the discussion is focused on the core doctrine chapters. Even the traditional Moist–Confucian conflict is based almost solely on these chapters, despite the full discussion of this topic in the dialogue chapters.¹⁰

Compared to the frequent translation of the core doctrine chapters, the dialectical chapters and defense chapters are thus left behind. As Johnston points out, on the one hand, the “dialectical” chapters of *Mozi* are remarkable, due to the inclusion of a wide range of topics, covering not only logic and disputation, but also language in general, ethics, epistemology, and science (xvii). On the other hand, this section suffers (xi) extensive textual corruption and degradation. Since Hu Shi 胡適 identified these chapters as the work of later Moists, or the “separate Moists (Bie Mo 別墨),” a term he borrowed from *Han Feizi*,¹¹ these chapters are considered to be later works, as opposed to the early “core doctrines.” Therefore, the “dialectical chapters” have been discussed separately from the core philosophy of Mozi represented by the “core” chapters. Hu Shi, the pioneer of Chinese ancient philosophy for his time, tended to connect these chapters with the school of names (Ming jia 名家).¹² Based on this framework of

(1992): 423–43; and Whalen Lai, “The Public Good that Does the Public Good: A New Reading of Mohism,” *Asian Philosophy* 3(1993): 147–60.

⁸ See Hsiao Kung-chuan, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, vol. I: *From the Beginnings to the Sixth Century A.D.*, tr. F. W. Mote (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 240.

⁹ Chong Chaehyun, “Moism: Despotic or Democratic?” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 35.3 (2008): 511–21.

¹⁰ See Weixiang Ding, “Mengzi’s Inheritance, Criticism, and Overcoming of Moist Thought,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 35.3 (2008): 403–19, and Franklin Perkins, “The Moist Criticism of the Confucian Use of Fate,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 35.3 (2008): 421–36, and Bryan W. Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics and Consequentialism in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.139–98. Dan Robins even limits the core doctrine chapters exclusively in order to argue that Moists were not so much going against Confucian but the gentlemen in general. See Dan Robins, “The Moists and the Gentlemen of the World,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 35.3 (2008), pp. 385.

¹¹ Hu Shi 胡適. *Zhongguo gudai zhexue shi* 中國古代哲學史 (The history of ancient Chinese philosophy) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu, 1968), vol. 2, pp. 9.

¹² Hu Shi 胡適, *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China* (New York, 1963 reprint).

chronology, Angus C. Graham published his studies on these chapters, *Later Mohist Logic Ethics and Science*, in 1978. Although he keeps the “later” and “early” dichotomy through his research, he evidences a broader interest than Hu Shi, who focused on mainly the “philosophy” part of *Mozi*.¹³ A philologist, Graham did a great service by editing these highly fragmented chapters and collecting similar entries together in order to reconstruct systematically later Moist philosophy.¹⁴ Furthermore, his work on optics covers the part Hu Shi skipped and thus became the standard reading of this section in the Western languages.¹⁵ Similarly, the defense chapters are ignored by modern scholars due to their philosophical plainness and special terminology. Robin Yates has made tremendous contributions to the study of these chapters. He not only translated the defense chapters, but also undertook comprehensive research on the military technology in early China in general. His work is among the best on this topic.¹⁶

Faced with such a problematic text and the many years’ accumulation of scholarship, Ian Johnston’s translation shows his mastery in Classical Chinese and both Chinese and Western scholarship on *Mozi*. For the evidential and textual research, in which the Western scholars are not particularly interested, Johnston uses a huge quantity of Chinese scholarship derived from the

¹³ A. C. Graham keeps the division of the early Moism and later Moism, which are represented respectively by the “dialectical chapters” and “core chapters.” He uses these two terms very carefully. The two scenarios of chapters are never mixed with each other. See Angus C. Graham, “Later Mohist Treatises on Ethics and Logic Reconstructed from the *Ta ch’ü* Chapter of *Mo-tzu*,” *Asia Major* NS 17 (1972): 137–189; *Later Moist Logic, Ethics and Science* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978); *Divisions in Early Mohism Reflected in the Core Chapters of Mo-tzu* (Singapore, 1985); *Disputers of the Tao* (La Salle, Ill.): Open Court, 1989).

¹⁴ A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science*, pp. 73–100.

¹⁵ A. C. Graham and Nathan Sivin, “A Systematic Approach to the Mohist Optics (ca. 300 B.C.)” in *Chinese Science: Explorations of an Ancient Tradition*, edited by Shigeru Nakayama and Nathan Sivin (Cambridge, Mass: MIT, 1973), pp. 105–52.

¹⁶ See Robin D. S. Yates, “The City under Siege: Technology and Organization as Seen in the Reconstructed Text of the Military Chapters of the *Mo Tzu*,” Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1980, and his “Early Poliorcetics: The Mohists to the Sung,” in *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. V: 6, *Military Technology: Missiles and Sieges*, edited by Joseph Needham and Robin D. S. Yates (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 241–485.

first published version by Bi Yuan 畢沅 to the most recent thorough work by Wang Huanbiao 王煥鑣 (923–6). For the part on which Chinese scholarship is scanty, such as the dialectical and defense chapters, Johnston refers to Western scholarship. As a result, the Classical Chinese version of the text is full of notes and annotations, ranging from word variation among different editions to complex evidential research. On the dialectical and defense chapters, Johnston gives each of the entries a gloss that reconstructs the Moist logical system or explains the mechanism of the techniques.

Ian Johnston's high quality of translation not only lies in his deep understanding of pre-Qin intellectual history, but also in his insistence on remaining faithful to the Classical Chinese. For example, on the translation of the chapter name *shang tong* 尙同, Burton Watson uses a very specific translation "identifying with one's superior"¹⁷ to help the general reader catch the sense. However, neither does *shang* mean "to identify with" nor does *tong* mean "one's superior." The main point is also not merely "to identify with the superior." Therefore, this translation is not only semantically incorrect but also misleading. Johnston, on the other hand, translates it as "exalting unity," which not only preserves the meaning of the two words, but also keeps the consistency with the other similar titles (90).

The following translation shows Johnston's excellence in understanding *Mozi* based on intellectual history in early China in general. In the sentence "No-one who thinks of seeking profit and carelessly disregards his reputation can ever be deemed an officer in the world." (*Si li xun yan, wang ming hu yan, ke yi wei shi yu tianxia zhe, weichang you ye* 思利尋焉，忘名忽焉，可以爲士於天下者，未嘗有也。), he translates *li* 利 as "seeking profit" instead of the commonly used "profit" or "benefit." (13) This is because the same classical Chinese word *li* "利" has opposite connotations in Moism and Confucianism. While Moists praised *li* as "benefit," Confucians used the term pejoratively, indicating the benefit-seeking petty men. Therefore, in this sentence, which is supposed to be spoken by a Confucian, the word *li* should

¹⁷ Burton Watson, *Mo Tzu*, in *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsün Tzu, and Han Fei Tzu*. Translations from the Asian Classics. Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies, 74 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 34.

be translated in the sense of Confucianism instead of Moism, and Johnston catches this nuance very nicely.¹⁸

Johnston's comments on each entry of the dialectical chapters and defense chapters are extremely helpful for modern readers who are no longer familiar with the techniques and way of thinking in the pre-imperial China. For some entries that are difficult to unpack, the comments serve to summarize and compare various scholars' theories (508; 604–6). Sometimes they are used to indicate the internal logic and system of several entries or the whole chapter, so that the reader can gain a larger picture (622). If the language of the entry is too concise to convey any meaning, but probably is based on a specific metaphor, Johnston keeps the concise style in the translation, but elaborates it in the comment. For example, the explanation on the number on different levels goes as “Five has one in it; one has five in it; ten is (means) two.” (*Wu you yi yan; yi you wu yan, shi er yan* 五有一焉；一有五焉，十二焉) (543). In order to unpack the confusing literal meaning of this entry, Johnston says in the comment: “Then, in the E, 5 fingers are on 1 hand, 1 hand has 5 fingers on it and there are 10 fingers on 2 hands.” Then he refers back to a previous entry to justify his assumption (542). This supports the main translation in terms of intelligibility without changing the basic meaning of the classical Chinese sentence. Furthermore, in order to understand the entry in accordance with its social-intellectual background, Johnston also uses different texts to compare with the *Mozi* text. For instance, in order to illustrate different layers in the word *yong* 勇 (courage), he quotes from *Laozi* and *Lunyu* to discuss this term in a comparative perspective.

Besides the above two kinds of annotations, Johnston also gives notes on the name of each person, place, and official title, marked with a Roman numeral in the English translation. This seemingly trivial notation is very useful to general readers. These explanations of people and places can help readers to understand the actors in certain allusions, so that they can apprehend the aim of the allusion, and thus better understand the *Mozi* text.

¹⁸ On this issue of “benefit” in *Mozi*, see Chris Fraser, “Moism and Self-Interest,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 35.3 (2008): 437–54.

In addition to his impressive bilingual translation, Johnson's study of the text, based on extensive scholarship and a comprehensive understanding of pre-Qin intellectual history, and his drawing together the best scholarship in the world on *Mozi*, convinces us that, even though there is a long time lag between different categories of chapters, and even though the different categories of chapters may seem irrelevant to each other, they all belong to the same school. The content from different categories might agree with each other or argue between themselves, but they are never unrelated. For example: if questions are raised about "selfishness" in Moism, is a chapter (for example, 660) from the dialogue chapters helpful to answer them? When scholars argue about the relationship between Moism and Confucianism, especially Mencius, does the entry from Explanations B (566) have anything to do with it? I believe that, following the publication of this book, these questions can now be answered.

There are some points with which I do not agree. First, Johnston argues that *jian ai* 兼愛 should be translated as "universal love" for the reason that *jian* is the term that serves as the opposite of *bie* 別, meaning "partial." Thus, the meaning "impartial" fits the parallelism perfectly. But it is more important that the term actually focuses on the comparison between one's self and one's parents, between one's relatives and strangers. This comparison is emphasized by the constant use of the word with a comparative connotation, *ruo* 若, meaning "same as" (132). The word "universal," however, implies a ubiquitous existence of love.

Second, Johnston occasionally adopts, though very rarely, a twisted explanation of certain readings of characters. For example, the term "kitchen master" (*yong ren* 饗人) is written as "雍人" (*yong ren*) (656). Johnston follows Bi Yuan and Sun Yirang to change the first character to *wei* 維. However, the *yong* 雍, which is clearly the phonetical radical of 饗, here serves as a phonetic borrowing to indicate the word *yong* 饗. The word makes perfect sense without changing any of the characters.

Third, more trivially, there are several typos. On page xlvi, the Chinese character for "Fei Gong" should be 非攻, instead of 非功. On page lxxxiii and page 927, Alfred Forke's book title is given as "*Me Ti*" instead of "*Mê Ti*." On the top of page 928, the book that includes A. C. Graham and Nathan Sivin's article is entitled "*Exploration*," and it should be "*Explorations*."

However, none of these mistakes would even slightly affect the statement that this work is a tremendous achievement. With his thorough study of the *Mozi* text and effective ways of presenting both the original text and its translation, I believe Ian Johnston's *Mozi: A Complete Translation* will become the standard translation for scholars from different disciplines and a handy textbook for students of Chinese history.

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Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era

by Yuri Pines

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009. 311 pages

Envisioning Eternal Empire provides a compelling examination of the conflicting evidence both for and against the ideal of supreme monarchy in Zhanguo China. Yuri Pines cleverly encapsulates these divergent perceptions of power in the title of his fourth chapter "An Omnipotent Rubber Stamp." This question of autocratic governance remains the central focus of a wide-ranging survey of the major primary sources on the subject. Combining a comprehensive assessment and argumentative style, this book is valuable for upper-level undergraduate seminars and graduate courses in religious and intellectual history. Having assigned it in two classes, I can attest to its ability to facilitate animated classroom discussions.

Pines divides his latest book into three sections, The Ruler, The Intellectual, and The People. Within these sections, he marshals an ample assortment of transmitted pre-Qin texts, along with a few recently excavated from Guodian. The consistent theme he uses to connect these diverse sources is the question of how they relate to the timeless question of empire. Each section is inaugurated with a quotation that underscores the enduring imperial legacy of China's classical period. Sections one and two begin with quotations from Sima Guang and Fan Zhongyan, which connect this Zhanguo legacy to the start of the second millennium CE. The third section, on The People, begins with a quotation from George W. Bush, which is jarring on many levels. One reason is the consideration that Bush advocated a unitary executive branch, impoverishing the organ most closely connected to the will of the people, the House of Representatives. In short, the quote raises too many distracting questions to be useful, but this is not a significant issue for the book as a whole.

The Ruler is the section in which the reader is treated to the full messiness of the conflict over empire. One strong example of this is on page 16: "Even during the Chunqiu period, when such oligarchic modes of rule were practiced de facto in several states, nobody dared proposing their institutionalization...." The following page contains Pines's counterpoint:

By the seventh century BCE, hapless kings often became puppets of their self-proclaimed “protectors,” particularly the rulers of Qi 齊 and Jin 晉. Royal representatives were sidelined from interstate meetings, and haughty regional lords routinely transgressed ritual norms by adopting royal sumptuary and sacrificial prerogatives.

These two quotations offer an excellent example of the argumentative style of the book. Pines first presents the perspective of absolute support for dictatorship by enlightened monarchs. This is followed with a discussion of the exact opposite, in which he details the institutionalization of ritual mechanisms for maintaining weak sovereigns. Another example of this technique is on page 28: “The *Lunyu* differs markedly in this respect from the *Zuo zhuan*. Confucius appears there as an unequivocal supporter of the sovereign’s ritual superiority as essential for preservation of the sociopolitical order.” Two paragraphs later, he has “The *Lunyu*, with its ethical and *shi*-oriented focus, does not abound in pronouncements that favor the properly functioning ruler-centered ritual pyramid....”

The second section of the book discusses the intellectuals, and here the conflict over the importance of the monarch is less pronounced. Pines discusses the trend in the Zhanguo of power increasingly being transferred to people of middle to lower elite status. He explores the arguments made by the *shi* to support their transition to power. One concept he engages as a sign of this is the Way, which in chapter 5 he sees as a term available for the *shi* to monopolize as a source of moral authority. This power is then used for economic gain in chapter 7, where his section on “The Market of Talent and *Shi* Haughtiness” sees rulers as struggling to maintain even a modicum of power, in quotations from the *Han Feizi* and *Mencius*. This diminished role of the ruler is countered in the next section, “The Anti-*Shi* Reaction,” in which once again a quotation from *Han Feizi* shows that the rulers are interested in eliminating the power of the ministers. When these first two sections are considered in tandem, it is not clear that the *Han Feizi* is really envisioning an independent market for talent as much as seeing this potential as a threat for rulers to eradicate. There is not so great a divide between the arrogant *shi* and a corrective

reaction to it as the sections seem to indicate. Instead, it is more a disagreement between Han Feizi and Mencius as to the importance of ministers operating as independent critics of monarchs.

There is a problematic shift in the final section of the book away from embracing these opposing perspectives on the importance of the monarch. Instead, Pines begins to claim that the Zhanguo is a period when there was universal agreement that totalitarian rule was the only solution. One example is on page 204:

This ubiquity of the notions of “the people as foundation” and “government for the people” in Zhanguo texts has encouraged certain modern scholars to analyze these concepts through a prism of modern Western ideology, especially in the context of the idea of popular sovereignty. I believe this equation is far-fetched; in Part I of this book, enough evidence was marshaled to show that the Chinese political system was intrinsically ruler-centered and that all institutional power was supposed to be in the monarch’s hands.

Earlier sections of the book seemed to do an excellent job of arguing quite the opposite of what this quote claims. The Zhanguo is a period where rulers are mercilessly criticized by a variety of intellectuals and ministers, who do not hesitate to impose their will on the empire. This conclusion conflicts with the evidence that Pines generously provides to show how kings were marginalized.

My own work on Guodian has found that the embodiment of virtue is a mechanism whereby individuals can rise in status to become as powerful as heaven. There are no indicators in the texts that this social mobility, powered by moral cultivation, is limited to an elite group. Quite to the contrary, the role of nonverbal methods as a core part of this process means that broad inclusivity is intended. Perhaps that makes me one of those “certain modern scholars,” but Pines himself comes across much less stridently in earlier, and to my mind, stronger sections of the book.

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The Politics of Mourning in Early China

by Miranda Brown

Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007.

205 pages

The correlation between the father/son and ruler/minister relationships is a cliché of early Chinese political discourse, and one that Miranda Brown's book successfully obliterates. Her main focus is on the mourning practices of the Eastern Han elite, but her study is also important for the wider study of both Chinese history and philosophy.

As a point of comparison, Brown's first chapter takes on the thorny issue of the three-year mourning period in the Western Han period. Sources from this period reveal a peculiar disconnect between the vast amount of literature sounding the call to be filial and the fact that so few elite men actually mourned for the complete twenty-five months. Brown demonstrates through several examples that sources from the Warring States and early Han periods are not consistent on whether such extensive mourning is essential to filial piety. Therefore, it is not that Western Han elite were rejecting classical prescriptions so much as adapting to their new political context. Brown contends that the reason so few men actually mourned for the ritually prescribed period is because filial obligations were believed to be fulfilled through official service. This emphasis on public service was more than simply extending filial piety to the ruler (as prescribed by texts, such as the *Xiaojing* 孝經), but rather a conscious decision to solve an apparent moral dilemma between two competing obligations (i.e., to one's parents and to one's ruler) by transforming one's personal feelings for one's parents into an "impersonal public-mindedness" (p. 40).

Things changed in the Eastern Han period. Brown shows in the next four chapters that the allegiance elite men had to the dynasty deteriorated, and often revealed itself in new attitudes toward mourning. Contrary to the Western Han period, members of the Eastern Han elite were more prone to mourn into the third year for their parents. However, what is more interesting is

how this greater effort to engage in prolonged mourning also included new attitudes toward personal relationships beyond the usual father/son and ruler/subject analogies.

In Chapter 3, for example, Brown describes the phenomenon of elite men making a very public display for the mourning of their mothers, and notes that in the relevant source material (predominantly stele inscriptions), the instances of men mourning their mothers outnumber the mourning of fathers by almost two and a half to one (p. 66). Such public displays of mourning one's mother clearly contradicted the pre-Han and Western Han texts that preferred fathers over mothers. To account for this discrepancy, Brown notes the different associations that relationships with fathers and mothers tended to carry. While fathers were associated with official duty, mothers were associated with intimacy (p. 83). Brown explores this preference for intimacy over official duty even further in Chapter 4, which focuses on the mourning for friends and colleagues. The mother/son relationship became a template for these relationships. For example, some mourned for their friends by following the protocol for mourning mothers: without frayed sleeves (p. 98). Again, the mourning practices reflected different levels of formality within the relationships. Since the mother/son relationship was generally conceived as being more intimate and less hierarchical than the father/son relationship, it provided a model for expressing grief for these more horizontal relationships.

In each of these cases, the political background of the Eastern Han dynasty is crucial to understanding why these mourning practices developed. In contrast to the Western Han, the Eastern Han was marked by the growing power of the local elite, but Brown also notes that these practices seem to reflect an ambivalence toward official service, which became more pronounced in the last century of the dynasty (pp. 83–84). As the prestige of the imperial government declined, horizontal relationships (or at least less hierarchical ones) became more significant. In addition, the notion of public service was transformed from an emphasis on service to the dynasty to service to the local population. Brown's last chapter describes this phenomenon by providing several examples of how virtue was measured in Eastern Han stelae. Only twenty-eight percent of stelae inscriptions mention recognition from the imperial house, and some even deny the significance of such recognition (p. 108). Many instead stress the immense outpouring of emotion among the local population, often in dramatic fashion. One inscription, for example,

states that people “wept tears of blood” upon hearing of a person’s death (p. 117). Such descriptions of extreme reactions by ordinary people deemphasize the relationship with superiors, and instead reinforce the importance of peers and subordinates.

Though friendship does not take on the significance that it does in the nineteenth century (as in, for example, the thought of Tan Sitong), it is remarkable that in the early imperial period, there would be such a strong attempt to elevate the relationship between peers and other relationships that do not reflect the same stark hierarchy of the father/son or ruler/subject relationships in Chinese politics. It is also remarkable that these relationships would be modeled on the mother/son relationship, as opposed to the outright rejection of filial piety (as found in the reform movements of the early twentieth century). Brown’s study shows how creatively the Eastern Han elite embraced these other political associations while still working within the moral and political frameworks of classical thought, by applying them in innovative ways within their own particular historical context.

Brown concludes her book with an exploration of the long-term significance of Han mourning practices with an excursion into the Song dynasty, specifically Ouyang Xiu’s fascination with Han stelae, as recorded in his *Record of Collecting Antiquities* (*Jigulu* 集古錄). She contends that he might be partly responsible for the fact that the shrines of the Southern Song are remarkably similar to these stelae, since the shrines and stelae both stress service to the population (p. 134). Brown admits that Ouyang’s *Record* probably was not the only factor that led the producers of these shrines to celebrate the same types of local heroism found in Eastern Han stelae (p. 135), and insists that more work needs to be done in order to allow her to make her hypothesis more definitive (p. 137). Part of that further research requires a deeper comparison of Han and Song politics and society. Ouyang Xiu may have been instrumental in promoting his admiration for the Han, but there might also have been some political factors that made his interest in the Han more attractive to others as well.

Because the political context surrounding Brown’s analysis of stele inscriptions is so important, her main argument in the book might have been strengthened by a more sustained discussion of Eastern Han political history. She need not have gone into any intricate details, for that would surely distract her from her main goal here. However, since surely the mourning

rituals of the Eastern Han did not lead to the disaffection of the elite from imperial service (and she certainly does not imply that they did), she could have provided a better picture of how she interprets the general political situation, so readers could understand how these stelae and mourning rituals fit into the wider context. Her introduction provides an outline of the Han political structure (pp. 7–10), but not a narrative outlining the broad changes in Han politics and society over the centuries.

This criticism, however, is minor in light of Brown's larger contribution to the discussion of filial piety and political service in early China. Her book illustrates, through a seemingly narrow set of ritual practices for the dead, the richness of early Chinese moral and political life. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in how theory is put into practice, and how that practice changes over time.

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The Revelation of the Magi: The Lost Tale of the Wise Men's Journey to Bethlehem

by Brent Landau

New York: HarperOne, 2010. 160 pages

Few figures have excited the Western imagination about ancient intercultural contacts more than the mysterious Magi [μάγοι] mentioned in the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. These figures are there said to have seen a star and to have traveled “from the East” [ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν] to bring gifts to the newborn Jesus. Since antiquity, Matthew’s terse account has been approached as an invitation to expansion. Early speculations about the Magi’s identity evoked Zoroastrian priests, Arabian travelers, Babylonian astrologers, and East Asian kings. Ideas about their number, names, and ages flourished as well. Beginning in Late Antiquity, and especially since the Renaissance, artists delighted in depicting one or more of them in terms of a rich and romanticized “Orient.” Their iconography has been further shaped through dramatic retellings and performances of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, from medieval Nativity plays to contemporary Christmas pageants. Even today, ideas about the Magi continue to evolve, especially through their integration into public and household crèches during the Christmas season. Scholars, too, have found the Magi to be an intriguing focus for investigating a wide array of issues, within and beyond the Gospel of Matthew; studies about them have explored themes ranging from the ambivalence towards astrology in ancient Christianity, to the attitudes towards Zoroastrianism in Syriac literature, to the place of the Nativity in the performance of social and political hierarchies in medieval and modern European cultures.¹

¹ E.g., Richard C. Trexler, *The Journey of the Magi: Meanings in History of a Christian Story* (Princeton, N.J., 1997); Anders Hultgård, “The Magi and the Star: The Persian Background in Texts and Iconography,” in *Being Religious and Living through the Eyes*, ed. Peter Schalk and Michael Stausberg (Uppsala, 1998), 215–25; Timothy Hegedus, “The Magi and the Star in the Gospel of Matthew and Early Christian Tradition,” *Laval théologique et philosophique* 59 (2003) 81–95; Witold Witakowski, “The Magi in Syriac Tradition,” in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. George A. Kiraz (Piscataway, N.J., 2008), 809–44. Note also my brief discussion in “Beyond the Land of Nod: Syriac Images of Asia and the Historiography of the West,”

In *The Revelation of the Magi*, Brent Landau seeks to bring popular attention to an excerpt about the Magi preserved within the eighth-century Syriac *Chronicle of Zuqnin*.² Landau here builds upon his 2008 Harvard dissertation, written under the supervision of François Bovon.³ The result, however, is far from the usual dissertation-turned-book. Rather than surveying the findings of past research, or delving into detailed textual or historical argumentation,⁴ the book summarizes the results of Landau's dissertation research in a concise and engaging manner, oriented towards the non-specialist reader (see, e.g., pp. 30–1). Its main aim is to present the first full English translation of these Magi materials, which are preserved in the single manuscript of the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* (Vatican syr. 162), albeit partially paralleled in a brief Latin summary of an “apocryphal book under the name of Seth” [*Liber apocryphum nomine Seth*] in the fifth-century *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum*.⁵

In the translation that makes up the heart of the book (pp. 33–91), Landau offers the reader a lucid and idiomatic rendering of the Syriac, supplemented with thoughtful explanatory Notes (pp. 101–37). Although oriented towards the non-specialist, the Notes often encompass

History of Religions 49.1 (2009) 48–87 at 75–82.

² For the Syriac of the passage in question, see J.-B. Chabot, *Chronicon anonymum Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum I* (Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientaliū 91; Paris, 1927), 57–91, and for references to other relevant editions and translations, see Witakowski, “Magi in Syriac Tradition,” 801 n. 1, as well as Landau's dissertation as cited in n. 3 below. An earlier annotated English translation of one small portion can be found in Sebastian Brock, “An Archaic Syriac Prayer over Baptismal Oil,” *Studia Patristica* 41 (2006) 3–12 at 6–11 (cf. Landau, *Revelation*, 78–9).

³ Brent Landau, “The Sages and the Star-Child: An Introduction to the *Revelation of the Magi*, An Ancient Christian Apocryphon” (Th.D. dissertation, Harvard Divinity School, 2008).

⁴ See Landau, “Sages and the Star-Child,” 10–16, for a survey of the history of scholarship, and for his arguments concerning the work's textual history, pp. 137–220.

⁵ It is through this brief summary that many of the Magi traditions in question came to circulate in the West, due to the rich *Nachleben* of the *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum*; see further M. A. Screech, “The Magi and the Star,” in *Histoire de l'exégèse au XVIe siècle*, ed. O. Fatio and P. Fraenkel (Geneva, 1978) 378–409, as well as Landau, “Sages and the Star-Child,” 137–42; idem, *Revelation*, 85–8.

points of interest to specialists as well. Especially useful are the cross-references to the more detailed discussions in his dissertation — the full text of which he has made freely available online.⁶ An English translation of the Latin parallel from *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaëum* is included in an Appendix (pp. 97–8). Framing these fascinating texts is an engaging Introduction (pp. 1–31), which is structured around the story of how Landau himself came to learn about them. Here, he also takes the reader through the steps of his source-critical hypothesis concerning the origins of these materials as an “early Christian apocryphon.” In the Conclusion (pp. 83–92), he shares further thoughts about his sense of the significance of this “lost” work, both as an example of an apocryphal tradition with wide-ranging influence and as an early expression of a universalistic message of enduring relevance. The Annotated Bibliography (pp. 137–44) serves as a guide for the reader interested in learning more. The relevant textual editions are here listed, together with selections from the specialist debates and discussions that Landau engages in more depth in his dissertation and related articles.

The *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, sometimes called the *Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre*, is a four-part Syriac world-chronicle, and it is best known for its preservation of rich historical data about the Near East. It was first brought to the notice of Western scholars by J. S. Assemani in the eighteenth century, and especially through the editions published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Jean-Baptiste Chabot.⁷ In recent decades, it has continued to attract the interest of historians of Late Antiquity and specialists in Syriac literature — particularly in the wake of Witold Witakowski’s 1987 monograph on its historiography,⁸ as well as the publications of translations of major sections of the work by Witakowski, Robert

⁶ <http://ou.academia.edu/BrentLandau/Papers/>

⁷ Chabot, *Chronicon anonymum*; idem, *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré, quatrième partie* (Paris, 1895); idem, *Incerti auctoris Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum* (Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientalium 104; Paris, 1933).

⁸ Witold Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahrē: A Study in the History of Historiography* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis; Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 9; Uppsala, 1987). See also Sebastian Brock’s helpful review in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 52.2 (1989) 338–9.

Hespel, and Amir Harrak in the 1980s and 1990s.⁹ With the recent rise of interest in Syriac Christianity, the traditions about the Magi therein have also been treated to renewed discussion in articles from the 1990s and 2000s.¹⁰

In the course of recounting the history of the world from Creation to 775 CE, the anonymous monk responsible for the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* preserves excerpts from a broad range of materials, including histories, chronicles, and parabiblical writings.¹¹ Among these are excerpts from works elsewhere attested in fuller forms, such as the sixth-century Syriac *Cave of Treasures*, but also materials known in their fullest form from the selections here presented. The excerpt that Landau calls the *Revelation of the Magi* falls into the latter category. The *Chronicle*'s anonymous compiler introduces the excerpt with a brief notice, tantalizingly vague about the title, scope, structure, and character of the work from which it was taken:

About the revelation of the Magi, and about their coming to Jerusalem, and about the gifts that they brought to Christ. An account of the revelations and the visions, which the kings, [sons of kings,] of the great East spoke, who were called Magi in the language of the land because in silence, without a sound, they prayed. (1:1–2, trans. Landau, p. 33)¹²

⁹ Robert Hespel, *Chronicon anonymum Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum II* (Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientaliū 507; Scriptorēs Syri 213; Louvain, 1989); Witold Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, part III* (Translated texts for historians 22; Liverpool, 1996); Amir Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnīn, parts III and IV: A.D. 488–775* (Mediaeval sources in translation 36; Toronto, 1999). Note also the translated excerpts from the work in Andrew Palmer, Sebastian P. Brock, and Robert Hoyland, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool, 1993).

¹⁰ Hultgård, “Magi and the Star,” 221–5; Brock, “Archaic Syriac Prayer”; Witakowski, “Magi in Syriac Tradition.”

¹¹ See further Witakowski, *Syriac Chronicle*, esp. 124–35.

¹² Cf. Chabot, *Chronicon anonymum*, 57. As Landau notes (*Revelation*, 107–8 n. 33), it is unclear what language is here meant, and the etymology remains obscure.

In the account that follows, the names of the Magi are listed, and they are located in a Far Eastern land called Shir (2:3–4), a name elsewhere associated with China.¹³ The Magi are then placed within a line of the transmission of secret knowledge from Adam via Seth, as written in “books of hidden mysteries” placed within “the Cave of Treasures of the Mystery of the Life of Silence” in “the Mountain of Victories in the east of Shir” (2:5–4:1). The text describes how the Magi entrusted with the cave and books were commanded to await a vision of a star upon a pillar of light (4:2–8):

“Wait for the light that shines forth to you from the exalted East of the majesty of the Father, the light that shines forth from on high in the form of a star over the Mountain of Victories and comes to rest on a pillar of light within the Cave of Treasures ... giving light to the entire creation, and obscuring the light of the sun, moon, and star ... the great mystery of the Son of the exalted majesty, who is the voice of the Father ... the light of the ray of his glory ... an image that has no form or likeness among any things that exist...” (4:2–5, trans. Landau, pp. 36–7).

The text then recounts how the Magi — entrusted with the care of the cave, books, and mysteries — awaited this star from generation to generation, performing rituals of purification and silent prayer (4:10–5:11). The theme of hidden books also occasions a lengthy account of Adam’s testamentary teachings as received and recorded by his son Seth (6:1–10:10); these teachings include the revelation that this star had descended to rest on the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden but ascended when Adam transgressed (6:2–3).¹⁴ Here, as elsewhere in the excerpt, primeval history is treated in a manner reminiscent of the *Cave of Treasures* (a late

¹³ Compare Greek references to “silk people” [Σῆρες], and see further Gerrit J. Reinink, “Das Land ‘Seiris’ (Šir) und das Volk der Serer in jüdischen und christlichen Traditionen,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 6 (1975) 72–85; J. Tubach, “Der Apostel Thomas in China: Die Herkunft einer Tradition,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 108 (1997) 58–74.

¹⁴ Compare late antique Jewish descriptions of the light of the Shekhinah, e.g., *3 Enoch* 5:1–5; cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:2, 19:7.

antique Syriac work that, perhaps not coincidentally, serves as one of the main sources for earlier sections of the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*).¹⁵

Returning to the Magi, the text then describes how Christ finally came with great majesty in an elaborate vision of light to the pseudonymous narrators: the very Magi of the Gospel of Matthew (11:1–15:10).

“... we saw that heaven had been opened, like a great gate, and men of glory carrying the star of light upon their hands. And they descended and stood upon the pillar of light, and the entire mountain was filled by its light ... and (something) like the hand of a small person drew near in our eyes from the pillar and the star.... And we saw the star enter the Cave of Treasures.... And when it had concentrated itself, it appeared to us in the form of a small and humble human...” (12:3–13:1, trans. Landau, pp. 48–50).

The star is thus revealed to have been Christ himself, and his appearance of light is linked to his cosmic all-pervasiveness:

“And I am everywhere, because I am a ray of light whose light has shone in this world through the majesty of my Father, who has sent me to fulfill everything that was spoken about me in the entire world and in every land by unspeakable mysteries...” (13:10, trans. Landau, p. 51).

He commands the Magi to travel to Judaea, and in the form of the star, he guides them there, miraculously enabling them to make the long journey with ease (16:1–17). After an expansive first-person retelling of their time in Jerusalem, as also recounted in the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew (17:1–9), it tells of their time in Bethlehem, where they see a cave that is identical in appearance to the Cave of Treasures in Shir; there, the pillar of light descends again — “and it stood in front of the cave, and that star of light descended and stood

¹⁵ Notably, the portions quoted from the *Cave of Treasures* in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* include the tradition that Adam was buried in the Cave of Treasures in the Land of Shir; see further Witakowski, *Syriac Chronicle*, 125.

above the pillar, angels on its right side and on its left side” (18:3). The Magi follow the star, pillar, and angels into the cave to find the newborn Jesus, to whom they give gifts and from whom they receive teachings, and he is again described in terms of light, as the “ancient light” and “ray of [the Father’s] light” (18:5–21:12). The teachings culminate in their commission by him “to be witnesses for me in the East with my disciples,” and the promise that “when I have completed the will of my Father regarding everything about which he commanded me and have ascended to him in glory, I shall send to you some of my chosen ones, who have been chosen for your land” (21:5).

After lengthy material celebrating Jesus’ mother Mary (22:1–25:4), the text then describes the journey of the Magi back home to Shir and the positive reception of their message there (26:1–28:6). Later, as promised by Jesus, they are visited by the apostle Judas Thomas, who baptizes and commissions them (29:1–31:10). Upon their baptism, they receive yet another vision of light: “a certain child of heavenly light, who descended from heaven” (31:1). After a summary replete with praise, the end of the excerpt is signaled — presumably by the compiler of the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* — with the statement that “the story [*taš’itā*] of the Magi and their gifts has finished” (32:4).¹⁶

Although Landau perhaps overstates this text’s obscurity, it has certainly not garnered much popular attention. Rather, like the rest of the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, this excerpt has been discussed primarily in specialist scholarship on Syriac Christianity. Recent studies, for instance, have focused on its relationship to other Syriac traditions about the Magi and about the apostle Thomas, as well as engaging long-standing debates about possible Persian influences.¹⁷ Landau, by contrast, makes clear that he approaches the topic as a scholar trained in early Christianity and its theologies, and he stresses that the Magi materials in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* had been virtually unknown among scholars in his field when he began to work on them (pp. 14–15).

¹⁶ See further Witakowski, *Syriac Chronicle*, 153–5.

¹⁷ E.g., Hultgård, “Magi and the Star,” 221–5; Witakowski, “Magi in Syriac Tradition,” 837–8. The touchstone for the discussion of Persian influence remains G. Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit* (Cologne, 1960) 72–89.

For Landau, these materials prove significant primarily insofar as they might tell us something about early Christianity. His focus thus falls on the attempt to mine and stratify them, in the hopes of reconstructing a “lost” source from an earlier era — closer in time to the Gospel of Matthew than to the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*. Not only does he analyze and present the excerpt in isolation from its present literary setting, but he largely sets aside the results of past research; he summarily dismisses the possibility of Persian influence,¹⁸ for instance, and he also downplays connections with traditions distinct to Syriac Christianity, not least by isolating and privileging a hypothetical source that predates the development of such traditions (cf. pp. 21, 25).

Landau approaches the excerpt about the Magi in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* as a late form of an early and independent apocryphon, and he dedicates much of his Introduction and Notes to speculations about the non-extant textual sources and redactional stages that might connect the medieval world-chronicle with this “lost” early Christian work. His hypothesis, more specifically, is that the ultimate origins of the Magi material in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* lie in a Greek or Syriac work from the second or third century CE, pseudonymously attributed to the Magi. To this hypothetical *Urtext*, he suggests that a new ending, featuring the apostle Thomas, was appended in the late third or early fourth century — roughly around the same time as the composition of the *Acts of Thomas*, and perhaps even in the process of the translation of the *Urtext* from Greek into Syriac (p. 20). It is this expanded form of the hypothetical “original” that is posited to have served as the shared source of [1] the compiler of the Syriac *Chronicle of Zuqnin* and [2] the redactor of a non-extant fourth-century Greek version — the latter of which was then summarized in Latin by the fifth-century author of *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaëum*.

Landau’s hypothesis differs from past suggestions mainly in the addition of more and earlier hypothetical stages and sources, and in the assumption that the earliest of these sources is

¹⁸ Such theories are somewhat passingly dismissed in Landau, *Revelation*, 102–3 n. 9, with the logic that the narrative situates the Magi in Shir rather than in Persia; this critique, however, seems largely to miss the point of the arguments by Widengren, et al. (see n. 17 above and n. 27 below). Note the more detailed survey in Landau, “Sages and the Star-Child,” 12–16, as reproduced now in idem, “The *Revelation of the Magi* in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*,” *Apocrypha* 19 (2009) 182–201 at 189–94.

preserved in relatively pristine form within the excerpt in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* (i.e., as basically the Magi materials there, minus the concluding section about the visit of Thomas). Interesting is the contrast with the hypothesis posited by Witakowski. Witakowski has speculated, albeit cautiously, that since “the *Story* [of the Magi preserved in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*] differs from the *Liber* [*apocryphum nomine Seth* cited in the *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum*] in its verbosity rather than the actual narrative material, one might conclude that whereas the *Liber* is a summary of the otherwise unknown original apocryphon, the *Story* ... could be an expanded version.”¹⁹ On the basis of the use of an archaic feminine for “Holy Spirit” [*ruḥā qaddištā*] (e.g., 21:10, 30:5–6; 31:1),²⁰ Witakowski further suggests that the “common source of both the *Liber apocryphum nomine Seth* and the *Story of the Magi* [in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*] came into being some time in the fourth century,” and he cites its “remarkable Iranian elements” to correlate this rough dating with the cultivation of Magi traditions among East-Syrian Christians, who transmitted them to West-Syrians like the compiler of the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*.²¹

¹⁹ Witakowski, “Magi in Syriac Tradition,” 813. For this, Witakowski cites the pattern in the transmission of the *Teaching of Addai* in Greek and Syriac as a model. For Landau, interestingly, the model is the shorter and longer endings of the Gospel of Mark (*Revelation*, 29–30).

²⁰ This point is noted also by Sebastian Brock (“Archaic Prayer,” 11), as well as by Landau (see below). Brock does not seek to reconstruct source documents, however, but describes the relationship between the relevant extant writings in terms of stories and traditions; more specifically, he suggests that they “draw on what must once have been an extensive literature associated with the name of Seth, and in both the *Revelation of the Magi* and the *Opus Imperfectum* this material has been brought together with legends concerning the Gospel Magi that presumably grew up in Sasanian Iran in order to provide a foundation legend for the Iranian Christian community... In the *Revelation of the Magi*, this local tradition has been neatly combined with the widespread early tradition that Thomas evangelized Parthia (so Eusebius, *HE* III.1.1) or Persia (so Rufinus, *HE* IX.2), and for this purpose, the compiler has drawn upon materials that must derive from the kind of milieu that produced the literature associated with the name Judas, or Judas Thomas” (p. 5). Contrast Hultgård, “Magi and the Star,” where the concern is to use the traditions in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* to posit some Persian background even to the reference to the Magi and star in Matthew.

²¹ Witakowski, “Magi in Syriac Tradition,” 814.

By contrast, Landau's criteria for reconstructing sources are largely theological.²² He too notes the use of the feminine for "Holy Spirit" (pp. 18–20), but for him, this linguistic marker signals the fourth century as the latest plausible date only for those passages related to Thomas.²³ He observes that this part of the Magi materials in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* is third-person narrative, in contrast with the primarily first-person address of the rest (p. 19); furthermore, the account of Thomas' visit is marked by frequent references to "Jesus" and "Christ" (pp. 19–20), names generally absent from the excerpt (p. 25). For him, such differences are clues that the Thomas material may be a redactional addition, appended to the tale of the Magi with the aim of countering its "theologically dangerous" message: whereas the original apocryphon promoted a universalizing vision of salvation that could encompass even non-Christians, this message was blunted — according to Landau's hypothesis — by the addition of a new ending featuring Thomas, which limited the path to salvation specifically to Jesus Christ and to missionary activity pursued in his name (pp. 25–31). At issue — in Landau's view — was a problem of pluralism:

As the *Revelation of the Magi* originally ended, the Magi and the people of Shir have all come to experience the presence of Christ, though they have done so completely without any of the trappings that we might associate with institutional Christianity. They are, in the words of the great twentieth-century Catholic theologian Karl Rahner, "anonymous Christians." The Apostle Thomas episode solves this "problem" by having the Magi baptized and commissioned by an apostolic emissary... (pp. 28–9).

²² In this, Landau applies the types of source-critical reasoning common in traditional research on parabiblical literature (e.g., "Old Testament Pseudepigrapha," "New Testament Apocrypha"). Hultgård similarly pushes this material very early — albeit due to what he sees as "Gnostic coloration" that he deems incompatible with the late antique contexts of its present preservation, but consistent with the early Syriac Christianity in which the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Acts of Thomas* took form ("Magi and the Star," 223–4).

²³ Chabot, *Chronicon anonymum*, 86–91.

In seeking source-critically to reconstruct the “early Christian writing” that he sees as embedded within the medieval *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, Landau thus seeks to recover an ancient witness to a universalizing perspective on Christian truth:

The case of the Magi, then, raises the possibility that Christ has appeared to many people and yet not revealed himself as Jesus Christ.... According to the author of the *Revelation of the Magi*, the fundamental Christian message is not simply that Christ has been sent in order to save all humanity.... The *Revelation of the Magi* goes much further than this, claiming that the revelation of Christ is actually the foundation of all humanity’s religious beliefs and practices (p. 26).

What Landau claims to find embedded within the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* is thus a text with “a far more positive view of non-Christian religious traditions than any other early Christian writing” (p. 27), which “stands alone among early Christian writings in its positive appraisal of religious pluralism” (p. 90).

Although the prospect of such a document is certainly intriguing, the source-critical hypothesis remains highly speculative. To date it prior to the fourth century, one must accept Landau’s contention that the passages featuring Thomas were not originally part of the account of the Magi, despite the text’s reference to the promise made by the newborn Jesus to send them “some of my chosen ones, who have been chosen for your land” after his death and ascension (i.e., 21:5, cited above), and also that these passages did not circulate separately, nor as part of another work, but were composed only for the express purpose of expanding an earlier document so as to blunt its otherwise “theologically dangerous” message.²⁴ In addition, one must accept his working assumption that the excerpt in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* otherwise approximates the most ancient text of this putative document, with no other major changes or additions — or, in other words, that despite multiple states of redaction (and perhaps even translation), one can basically

²⁴ Indeed, otherwise, the dating of the Judas Thomas passage (as placed in the fourth century or prior, on the basis of the use of the archaic feminine form of “Holy Spirit”) would tell us nothing concrete about the dating of the rest of the material.

recover the second-/third-century apocryphon simply by excising the passages about Thomas from the relevant excerpt in the eighth-century world-chronicle;²⁵ apart from this assumption, after all, it is difficult to argue that one can recover the original message of the “lost” work with enough confidence to judge which parts of its present form can be dismissed as late, extraneous, dissonant, or conflicting. And yet, from what we know about the practice of compiling world-chronicles, any such assumptions are tenuous.²⁶

Much to Landau’s credit, his translation renders the relevant excerpt from the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* without any emendations related to his source-critical hypothesis about the scope and character of its original form, such that readers are invited to judge for themselves, consulting the Appendix for the parallel in the *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum*. Time shall tell whether the hypothesis is confirmed by further studies and stands the test of scholarly debate. Even if this particular hypothesis is questioned, refined, or overturned; however, Landau’s book will long remain a milestone in the history of research on these materials. It stands, moreover, as a rare example of how specialist textual discussions about seemingly arcane texts can be conveyed to a broader audience in a clear, engaging, and exciting manner. It is ideal for use in undergraduate teaching, and it will also hopefully help to encourage the publication of more affordable and accessible English translations of apocryphal materials in the future (e.g., perhaps akin to the French series “Collection de poche apocryphes de l’AELAC”).

In the process, moreover, Landau opens the way, not just for popular engagement with these little-known materials, but also for further scholarly exploration across the lines of different specialist subfields and disciplines. By virtue of his own training in early Christianity, Landau has

²⁵ I.e., rather than representing an expansion of the Sethian text or tradition known to the author of the *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum* — as Witakowski and others have suggested (see nn. 19–21 above).

²⁶ For instance, as William Adler has shown, the compilers of world-chronicles often drew upon source collections; *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus* (Washington, D.C., 1989). Accordingly, one cannot assume that the compiler of the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* — however cautious in his quotations — had every text from which he pulls excerpts directly in front of him in a full form, nor that every excerpt comes only from a single text.

been able to highlight important yet neglected elements. Perhaps additional elements will be illumined when other new questions and concerns are brought to bear on these complex and fascinating materials — a prospect now made newly possible by the publication of an English translation in a widely available and affordable form, so rare for texts of this sort. It is hoped, for instance, that further interdisciplinary attention might help to solve some of its remaining puzzles, such as the repeated emphasis on the Magi’s silent prayer (e.g., 1:2; 2:1; 3:8; 4:1; 5:7; 12:2).

One wonders, however, whether it is wise to follow Landau in setting aside so much of the past scholarship about these materials.²⁷ Landau has succeeded in opening up the possibility that the Magi materials in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* might illumine the theological diversity of early Christianity in the Roman Empire,²⁸ but it strikes me as critical not to foreclose their significance for our understanding of Syriac Christianity, late antique Mesopotamia, and the interactions of religions in the Sasanian Empire and beyond. Even if one accepts that part of the excerpt concerning Magi in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* might preserve the scope and contours of a “lost” second- or third-century document, it seems unnecessary — and unwise — to dismiss the likelihood that its present form has been shaped by the eastern contexts of its formation and

²⁷ See esp. Landau, “The *Revelation of the Magi* in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*,” 189–94, where he explains that he finds the interest in Persian parallels “rather curious, as there are no *blatantly obvious* Iranian features in the text other than the list of the Magi’s names in 2:3, and even this appears to be an interpolation. The text does not claim the Magi to be Zoroastrian priests, to reside in Persia, or anything else that would distinctly mark its provenance as Iranian” (p. 194, italics mine); he there stresses, moreover, that “I have not found any of the alleged links to Iranian traditional religion to be persuasive, and have instead argued that the *RevMagi* is entirely explicable as a Christian composition without any *concrete* references to other religious traditions” (p. 198; italics mine). Widengren’s and Hultgård’s arguments that an ancient Persian mythological complex lies behind the Magi traditions in the Gospel of Matthew and *Chronicle of Zuqnin* (see n. 17), however, are not based on claims about explicit statements — nor are nor Brock’s and Witakowski’s suggestions that Sasanian cultural contexts shaped the late antique Syriac traditions about Magi now preserved in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* (see n. 36). The blanket critique, moreover, may misleadingly conflate their rather distinct positions.

²⁸ Landau admits that there is no concrete evidence for situating the work in the Roman Empire, but he speculates on the basis of its “sophisticated theology” about “an urban location, perhaps Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, or another major urban center of the Roman world” (*Revelation*, 24–5).

transmission among scribes and tradents in the Syriac Christian literary tradition.²⁹ Even source-critical analysis, moreover, might benefit from further attention to the present literary settings of the materials under analysis.³⁰

The universalistic horizon that Landau highlights, for instance, fits well with the genre of the world-chronicle in which this excerpt is preserved, and it also reminds us of the rich variety of religions with which Syriac Christianity crossed paths, by virtue of trade and travel within and beyond Roman and Sasanian Empires — into South, Central, and East Asia.³¹ Reading the text from this perspective, one might note the use of similar imagery in light-theophanies across Eurasian cultures, often as a self-consciously cross-cultural religious idiom and/or in concert with expressions of a universalizing impulse.³² After all, by the time that the material about the Magi in Shir was being integrated into the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, East-Syrian Christians had already traveled into Central and East Asia, promoting their teachings with celestial and light imagery; missionaries and other travelers had traced the mythical paths of the apostle Thomas and the Magi, and Christians in China even invoked the latter, and another guiding star, when explaining their faith as the “Brilliant Teaching [*jingjiao*] of *Da Qin*.”³³

²⁹ Indeed, when seeking to dismiss Persian influences, Landau himself explains the inclusion of Persian names in the work’s list of Magi as the result of later editorial activity (“*Revelation of the Magi in the Chronicle of Zuqnin*,” 194).

³⁰ It is interesting, for instance, that the excerpt dedicated to the Magi in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* includes traditions about primeval history that echo elements of the *Cave of Treasures*, one of the compiler’s main sources for earlier sections, and it is also intriguing that this excerpt, with its culminating concern for the apostle Judas Thomas, comes after Edessene historical materials.

³¹ See, e.g., my references and discussion in Reed, “Beyond the Land of Nod,” 60–87 — and also now Dietmar W. Winkler and Li Tang, eds., *Hidden Treasures and Intercultural Encounters: Studies on East Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia* (Münster, 2009).

³² See, e.g., Matthew T. Kapstein, ed., *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience* (Chicago, 2004) and references there, as well as Benjamin J. Fleming, “Mapping Sacred Geography in Medieval India: The Case of the Twelve Jyotirlingas,” *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 13.1 (2009) 51–81, esp. pp. 57, 63.

³³ See further Reed, “Beyond the Land of Nod,” 75–82.

While highlighting unique elements in the Magi materials from the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, Landau notes how the “identification of the Star of Bethlehem with Christ himself [is] an interpretation found nowhere else in the diverse array of early Christian speculation about this mysterious portent” (p. 13). Interestingly, this and other imagery of light in the text (e.g., 4:2–8; 11:1–15:10; 18:3–20:4; 31:1) find rich parallels in other traditions, including in some of the eastern cultures in which Syriac Christianity circulated in Late Antiquity — as well as in the astronomical discourse that sometimes bridged traditions such as Syriac Christianity and Tantric Buddhism, as their adherents traveled together along the Silk Road.³⁴ Perhaps most intriguing, in this regard, is the repeated motif of Christ appearing to the Magi as a star upon a pillar of light. This image recalls, not only the local Syrian traditions of pillar worship that endured into Late Antiquity, but similar motifs across Eurasia — the pillar of light in Plato’s myth of Er, the eschatological pillar of the *Zohar*, the *jyotiḥstambha* of the Śaivite *liṅgodbhavamūrti* myth.³⁵

By setting aside the question of non-Christian parallels and interreligious influence, Landau has been able to focus on the text of the excerpt and illumine its internal theological dynamics. With the resultant insights, however, we may be able to return, more effectively, to questions about other connections. The universalizing impulse that Landau so insightfully draws out, for instance, may actually fit well with Witakowski’s and Brock’s insights into the cultivation of Syriac Christian traditions about the Magi among converts from Zoroastrianism.³⁶ If he is correct that religious pluralism is among the concerns that shaped the text, moreover, it might point us to another important nexus of interreligious contact and competition. Landau

³⁴ See now Huaiyu Chen, “The Encounter of Nestorian Christianity with Tantric Buddhism in Medieval China,” in *Hidden Treasures and Intercultural Encounters*, 195–213, esp. pp. 204–5 on astronomical exchanges. Chen emphasizes, for instance, that “Nestorians and Tantric Buddhists all contributed to introducing Persian astronomical knowledge to the Tang court” (p. 210).

³⁵ See, e.g., David T. M. Frankfurter, “Stylites and Phallobates: Pillar Religions in Late Antique Syria,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 44.2 (1990) 168–98; Moshe Idel, *Ascensions on High in Jewish Mysticism: Pillars, Lines, Ladders* (Budapest, 2005), esp. 205–6; Benjamin J. Fleming, “The Form and Formlessness of Śiva,” *Religion Compass* 3.3 (2009) 440–58.

³⁶ E.g., Brock, “Archaic Syriac Prayer,” 5; Witakowski, “Magi in Syriac Tradition,” 837–8.

characterizes the text's concern as akin to contemporary ecumenical values (pp. 28–9). Within the linguistic spheres and cultural contexts that shaped this account of the Magi, however, such claims resonate most strongly with the teachings of Mani and his followers — who did, in fact, claim that all other religions were expressions of the same message as their own.³⁷ Similarly, one might wonder whether it is coincidental that its descriptions of Christ's appearances in light find such poignant parallels in the Manichaean “Column of Glory” who is also the “Perfect Man.”³⁸ Of course, such connections must remain speculative until further investigation, but they raise the possibility that the Magi may have functioned as a focus for answering and/or appropriating Manichaean claims, whether in the early stages of the formation of these traditions or at later stages in their transmission.

As noted above, the very name and notion of “Magi” embodies a rich history of intercultural interactions across Eurasia. The term, after all, traveled from its Persian roots [*maguš*] westwards into Greek [μάγος] and Latin [*magus*], but perhaps eastward as well,³⁹ even prior to its use by Matthew in his Gospel to describe Jesus' visitors “from the East.”⁴⁰ Likewise, just as Persian μάγοι formed one focus for ancient Greek reflection on “Others” in the wake of the rise of the Achaemenid Empire, so perhaps too with later Christian reflection on Matthew's mysterious Magi. By presenting the excerpt about these figures in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* in such a clear and accessible manner — and with such insightful interpretations and provocative

³⁷ Interestingly, one might point to some terminological overlap as well: when listing some “characteristic terms in the *Revelation of the Magi* which are completely absent from the *Acts of Thomas*,” Brock notes its use of “Father of Majesty” [*Abbā d-rabbūtā*], a term also common in Manichaean texts; “Archaic Syriac Prayer,” 12.

³⁸ This concept was well known to Syriac Christian authors (e.g., Ephrem and others who wrote against Mani); on its translation and transmission eastward, see also Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China* (Leiden, 1998), esp. pp. 71–2.

³⁹ Victor Mair, “Old Sinitic *Myag, Old Persian Magus, and English ‘Magician,’” *Early China* 15 (1990) 27–47; Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997)

⁴⁰ I.e., as μάγοι in Matthew 2:1, 7, 16 — magicians? Persian priests? See references and discussion in Hultgård, “Magi and the Star,” 215–21.

hypotheses — Landau makes widely available its first full translation into English, as well as boldly opening the way for fresh questions and perspectives to be brought to these fascinating traditions.

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A Story Waiting To Pierce You: Mongolia, Tibet and the Destiny of the Western World

by Peter Kingsley

The Golden Sufi Center Publishing, Point Reyes, California, 192 pages

Peter Kingsley has long had an interest in such Presocratic philosophers as Parmenides, Empedocles, and Pythagoras. He considers them to be mystical, prophetic thinkers, rather than the secular rationalists they are often portrayed as by intellectual historians. For Kingsley, the writings of these thinkers are sacred texts with hidden meanings that only initiates can grasp. For others, whose view of the Presocratics is limited to superficial exegesis, the spiritual significance of these works is lost or hidden.

Now, with *A Story Waiting To Pierce You: Mongolia, Tibet and the Destiny of the Western World*, Kingsley makes his debut as a historical novelist. *Story* is a unique work in that the narrative is a relatively simple, compelling story, whereas the notes constitute a dense, extremely well documented scholarly argument. The book seems short and simple. As a story it is — but as a work of scholarship, it is rigorous and demanding. Kingsley's style is unpretentious, but he deals with matters of the utmost importance, such as the rise of Western civilization. One of Kingsley's great contributions to our understanding of human history is that he demonstrates clearly how the whole of Eurasia has been a tightly interwoven ecumene for thousands of years, one that is linked together by Central Asian peoples of great mobility, resourcefulness, and spirituality.

The key figure in this book is Abaris the Hyperborean, of whom few will previously have heard. (Hyperborea, incidentally, was supposedly the area of Asia that is now Tibet and Mongolia.) Abaris is a wandering healer who comes to Greece, where he has a tremendous impact upon Pythagoras. The references to Abaris in Western literature are scattered, but Kingsley weaves them together into a colorful tale. Even more enigmatic is the alleged Hyperborean derivation of Apollo.

Kingsley's thesis in this book (it is both a treatise and a novel) is that, through his presumed impact on Pythagoras, Abaris has a fundamental influence upon the whole of Western

science and culture. What is more, Kingsley suggests that the Western tradition, starting with Greece, is intimately bound up with Tibetan and Mongolian culture and, beyond that, the Native American tradition. This is where I part company with the author.

The Greco-Roman heritage of the West has its roots in the late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age manifestations of the Indo-European tradition. At that stage, we know virtually nothing of Tibet and Mongolia, and I dare say it is likely that neither had at that early time yet experienced its distinctive ethnogenesis, especially not the Mongolian one, for we have no evidence whatsoever of a Mongolian people and language until long after the establishment of Greek civilization. Consequently, one can only state unequivocally that Kingsley is not bound by the niceties of chronology and history. Rather, he simply gives free rein to his enthusiasm for ideas and images. This may be fine for a mystical novel, but it will not do for the history of philosophy, much less for the history of nations and peoples. Even the pre-Buddhist Bon tradition of Tibet, by which Kingsley sets such store (he has an amazingly long and erudite note [pp. 128–143] on this subject) cannot be shown to have a time-depth that would put it back at the age of the Greeks.

What this all boils down to is not merely a matter of misconstrued chronology, but also an issue of misapplied directionality. As I have demonstrated in numerous books and articles (e.g., *The Tarim Mummies* with J. P. Mallory), the overwhelming trend and trajectory was for cultural influences to flow from west to east during the third and second millennium BC, and it was only during the latter part of the first millennium BC that a significant amount of culture and technology began to travel from east to west. It is possible that the east — as personified by Abaris — began to have an impact of some sort on Greek civilization around the middle of the first millennium BC, but it certainly was not foundationally formative.

While on the one hand Kingsley is concerned with myth and mystery, on the other hand he bases his findings on the minutiae and realia of daily life. His evidence is gleaned through philology, archeology, history of religions, and other disciplines. Relying on data from these sources, he brings such peoples as the little-known Avars, the mighty Mongols, and the entrancing Tibetans vividly to life.

The whole is tightly tied together by the force of his intellect, often in surprising ways. For instance, Kingsley focuses on such seemingly unprepossessing objects as arrows and the

phurba (ritual dagger). Never before has anyone analyzed the symbolic significance of these mundane and mystical items with such clarity and explanatory power. For all of these reasons, *A Story Waiting To Pierce You* is a captivating and enlightening book, one I heartily recommend to anyone with an interest in Eurasian history — so long as one does not take all of it entirely literally.

Despite my reservations about Kingsley's assertions concerning Tibetan and Mongolian shamanism, I do think he is on the right track in wanting to afford due recognition to the nomadic (and pre-nomadic [agropastoralist]) peoples of Central Eurasia. They were surely essential in the formation of the great civilizations all around the periphery of eastern, southern, and western Eurasia. I would even concede that these mystical, esoteric, "shamanic" traditions may have had an impact upon the development of Sufism. The problem is that we cannot, and should not, equate them with any particular people living today. Rather, they are known to us now only by the traces they have left in archeological cultures and as the names of long-lost peoples who are mentioned in ancient tomes. These peoples were not Tibetans nor were they Mongolians, though they undoubtedly fed into background of the peoples who later became the Tibetans and the Mongolians.

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Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires

Walter Scheidel, editor

Oxford Studies in Early Empires, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo, Mark Edward Lewis, and Walter Scheidel

New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. xvi, 240 pages

This book presents the first fruits of the Stanford Ancient Chinese and Mediterranean Empires Comparative History Project, the most ambitious effort ever undertaken to study systematically the similarities and differences between the Roman and Han empires. It contains an introduction to the entire project by its leader, Walter Scheidel, who is also the editor of this volume, together with seven essays, two of them by Scheidel himself, on individual aspects that are pertinent to both empires, such as their respective military establishments, legal systems, monetary policies, and so on. The contributors are all specialists either in Roman or in Han history, but each manages to address important characteristics of both empires at a professional level. Thus every individual essay is truly comparative and does not confine itself to the particular contributor's primary area of material expertise, but instead assesses both Rome and Han in terms of the specific subject area in question.

There is no real tradition of seriously and systematically comparing these empires, and there are many reasons why this is so. Primarily, few scholars possess the requisite expertise in both fields to undertake such a project. Consequently, the editor of this volume, in particular, and most of the contributors as well, are at pains to convince the reader that the undertaking is worth the effort. It is therefore more or less inevitable that a book of this kind will emphasize the similarities between the two empires more than the differences, and that is generally the case here. Scheidel's introduction and first chapter shoulder most of this burden and do so with zest, stressing in particular the chronological, geographic, demographic, and other similarities between Rome and Han. In some respects, this emphasis on analogies risks ignoring or obscuring equally important differences. For instance, if the territories occupied by Rome and Han — located as they are in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere and occupying land masses

of comparable extent — are in some sense responsible for providing the conditions in which these empires arose, then why did another area that could be so described — namely, North America — not produce a similar empire at the same time? Conversely, to focus once again on the western hemisphere, why did the Inca and Aztec empires, which are roughly comparable to Rome and Han in some respects, arise under quite different geographical conditions and at a quite different time? That is to say, when it is put that Rome and Han shared certain physical qualities, it seems to be implied that these ecological conditions are likely to give rise to empires of similar scope and character. But do not the counter indications deserve as much consideration as the evidence in favor of that hypothesis? And, that said, are all of the “similar” conditions that gave rise to both Rome and Han really so similar? The spatial extent of the two empires, as was noted previously, was roughly similar. Rome, however, governed a landmass that surrounded the Mediterranean Sea, and there probably is no serious history of the Roman Empire or indeed of the Classical world that does not take this fact into account: Baudrel and Horden and Purcell are only the most outstanding examples.¹ Han, in sharp contrast, governed an enormous landmass partly surrounded by an ocean in a way that is almost precisely opposed to the Mediterranean configuration. In the West, then, water connects and land divides. In the East, ocean is a major limiting factor, though water in the form of great navigable rivers rendered an enormous landmass less difficult to traverse than was the case in Europe. But it seems clear that the Han faced different geographical challenges and opportunities than did their Roman counterparts. In a way, these issues are obvious, but I would have liked them to be evaluated more frankly than they are here, even if I sympathize with the need of the project leaders to make their case for an ambitious and (no doubt) valuable interdisciplinary undertaking.

When it comes to the other individual contributions, this emphasis on general similarity is less evident, but not altogether absent, while other issues occasionally come into view. For instance: Nathan Rosenstein, a Romanist and an expert on military history, contributes a chapter on this aspect. As a Romanist myself, I am in no position to judge his assessment of Han realities,

¹ Fernand Baudrel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (3 vols., Paris 1949). Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford 2000).

though when it comes to Rome, I am certain that he is generally on very solid ground. But in reading his chapter I could not avoid thinking that Rosenstein's own earlier work on the military culture of the Roman Republic influenced his understanding of the later Imperial system. Thus there is no question, as Rosenstein has previously shown, but that the essentially oligarchic system of government that obtained under the Republic was highly tolerant of failure on the part of aristocratic amateurs who not infrequently found themselves commanding Roman legions. But the Imperial system designed by Augustus and refined by his successors produced a much more professional army from top to bottom. It therefore seems anachronistic — assuming that Rosenstein is right about amateurism in the Han system — to find Roman *Imperial* armies comparable in this respect.

The following chapter by Sinologist Karen Turner concerns law and punishment and presents a quite balanced picture of similarities (less direct involvement on the emperor's part over time, an increasing tendency to codify the law, a certain ambiguity regarding laws against treason) and differences (the greater disruption brought about in the West by the introduction of a monarchical system; a greater emphasis in the West on human and property rights) in these areas between the two empires. In this way, particularly where questions of rights come into play, the chapter points clearly to a need for further comparative analysis that goes beyond institutional realities to a consideration of ethical, philosophical, and ideological matters — areas, to be sure, that lie outside the scope of this volume, no doubt by design, but towards which certain of these essays, and this one in particular, point with some urgency as areas for future consideration.

In contrast with the other contributors, Maria Dettenhofer, an expert in Roman Imperial court history, offers a perspective that focuses not on a major institutional structure but rather on a relatively restricted aspect of the two imperial cultures, namely, the role of eunuchs at the Roman and Han courts and in imperial administration. Again, like the previous chapter, this one raises questions, particularly regarding gender issues, that would seem to benefit from further qualitative as well as quantitative analysis. Dettenhofer does not appear to add a great deal that is new to the general understanding of the specific institution under consideration, either by way of information or of analysis, nor is it clear that the phenomenon that she considers is of comparable importance to most of the areas considered in the other essays; but she does survey

the relevant material in a sure-handed way and so, like the authors of the other papers in this volume, offers a solid foundation on which others may be able to build.

Peter Fibiger Bang, a comparative economic historian and the author of a challenging, revisionist study of the Roman Imperial system of trade,² contributes a chapter that is in keeping with his earlier work, stressing the comparability of Rome and Han as tributary empires characterized by relatively low administrative costs and relatively low economic integration. His ideas in this area were worked out through comparative study of the Roman and Mughal empires, which suggests that in this area at least we may already have arrived at the point of reaching solid general results from the systematic comparison of premodern states, rather than by working more or less unconsciously with an implicit comparison between ancient and modern states always in mind.

Mark Edward Lewis, a Sinologist, in his chapter on gift circulation and charity in the two empires, establishes a major area of difference between Rome and Han culture by contrasting the elaborate system of gift-giving that lay firmly in the control of the Han emperor with the much more decentralized institution of elite euergetism that prevailed throughout the Mediterranean under various governmental regimes. As in the case of Turner's paper, Lewis's analysis points to a clear need for a qualitative study of the phenomenon that would focus on its philosophical and aesthetic as well as its social dimensions. It is of course precisely in such areas that comparative study becomes most challenging, since there are so few scholars who are sufficiently conversant with the literary and artistic traditions involved to make solid contributions of the kinds that are required. But perhaps this paper will serve as a stimulus to that end.

Scheidel's second essay (in addition to his editor's introduction to the volume) considers the use of money in the Roman and Han empires. Pointing out that the study of Roman monetization is considerably more advanced than that of Han, Scheidel adjusts his emphasis accordingly to provide a brief overview of the situation in Rome and a more extensive description of Han. This chapter, which runs to some seventy pages, is really a monograph in itself and virtually demands a separate review by a specialist in economic history. Suffice it to

² *The Roman Bazaar: A Comparative Study of Trade and Markets in a Tributary Empire* (Cambridge 2008).

say here that it reaches a provisional conclusion, namely that the Roman Imperial economy was much more monetized than that of the Han state. The real point, however, lies not in any specific conclusion that Scheidel is able to draw, but in the vast amount of information that he organizes and presents and the comparative possibilities that he thereby creates. Even in related areas that he specifically excludes from consideration, in this long paper Scheidel indicates potentially fruitful avenues of research, such as “comparative consideration of monetary thought and the invocation of money in literary discourse, a fascinating topic that would readily support a book-length study” (138). Indeed, it will be surprising if this paper fails to attract lively attention from classicists, Sinologists, and scholars from other fields and to provoke further investigation and analysis.

In this sense, Scheidel’s paper well represents the main contribution that this volume has to make. Although I have mentioned a degree of exaggeration in adducing and stressing parallels between Rome and Han, there can be no doubt that this volume not only establishes that the two ancient superstates do indeed invite comparative study but, what is more, that the essays contained herein both lay the groundwork and set part of the agenda for future researchers. The book is offered as the first in a series of works that aim to assess the two empires from a comparative perspective; as such, it is one of the first major products of a well-organized series of collaborative, interdisciplinary conferences. It thus offers every reason to expect major advances over the coming years in our understanding of these two great powers of the East and the West.

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The Camel's Load in Life and Death: Iconography and Ideology of Chinese Pottery Figurines from Han to Tang and Their Relevance to Trade along the Silk Routes. 2nd ed.

by Elfriede Regina Knauer

Zurich: Akanthus, 1998. 159 pages, illus., maps

This is a work of genius, a veritable classic. About fifteen years ago, I watched it grow from scattered notes that Kezia had taken during her far-flung travels, from observations made in countless museums, and from meticulous records of reading done in libraries too numerous to list. This is a unique book, and only Kezia Knauer could have written it. Why? First, it draws on a variety of bodies of knowledge and expertise that are normally only commanded one at a time. Most notably, it is seldom that a premier scholar of Western Classical art, archaeology, history, and literature displays any interest in or ability to deal with Oriental antiquities. Mysteriously, Kezia possessed an affinity with the East (perhaps it was her childhood name, the one by which I am referring to her in the first part of this essay and near the end, that linked her to the Orient). Whatever it was, Kezia found herself drawn to the East and reveled in studying its diverse cultures.

Second, *The Camel's Load* could only have been written by someone whose mind is like a computer in storing vast amounts of data, but superior to a computer in being able to judge the relatedness of disparate facts and images. Kezia constantly astonished others by being able to draw upon an enormous quantity of knowledge about artifacts and texts, not merely to recite raw facts, but to draw them together and put them in meaningful, illuminating contexts. Above all else, however, the uniqueness of *The Camel's Load* depends upon Kezia's sharp eye and penetrating intelligence. Kezia was distinguished by her ability to see things that escaped ordinary mortals. She could effortlessly catch the smallest, telling details and proceed to make sense of them in ways that left onlookers breathless.

Although I could cite endless examples of Kezia's preternatural perceptivity, I shall mention only two instances from the latter part of her life. The first is her masterful solution to the iconography of the "Queen Mother of the West," which depended upon her ability to look at

numerous images in a completely novel fashion and in the light of her profound understanding of Kybele (Cybele). Kezia initially delivered this paper at a conference organized by me that was held at the University of Pennsylvania Museum on May 5 and 6, 2001. When she finished her presentation, the entire audience leaped to their feet and erupted in loud cheers and applause, a reaction that seldom occurs in academic settings. Almost effortlessly, but with enormous erudition and powerful analysis, Kezia solved a problem that had perplexed scholars for a century before she turned her attention to it. I later published that paper in *Contact and Exchange in the Ancient World* (University of Hawaii Press, 2006; it was republished with addenda in her own *Coats, Queens, and Cormorants*, 2009, 435–473). When my editor at the University of Hawaii Press first looked at the manuscript, she told me that there was one paper in the volume that would have to be omitted — Kezia’s. She said we’d never be able to get all the permissions for the illustrations. I told the editor that Kezia’s monumental paper would be omitted only “over my dead body,” and then spent five years tracking down all the permissions for the sixty-plus images in it (some were on postcards and brochures from obscure museums, others had changed hands several times, and so forth). I don’t regret one minute of the time I spent in tracking down all those permissions.

The second instance of Kezia’s stunning perceptivity that I will mention here is what I believe to be the last paper she wrote, “Leonardo da Vinci’s Gioconda and the Yellow Shawl: Observations on Female Portraits in the Renaissance” (*Raccolta Vinciana* 33 [Milan, 2009], 1–79; a short German version was published posthumously in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, “Ein Bildnis von himmlischer Schönheit,” September 4, 2010.) This is her long (79 pages) work analyzing the subject of Leonardo’s famous portrait. Probably no painting on earth has been more intensely viewed and studied than the Mona Lisa, yet it was not until Kezia focused her gaze upon it that Leonardo’s masterwork yielded up so many of its secrets. In this stupendously important but low-keyed paper, Kezia comes to a startling conclusion, namely, that La Gioconda’s sartorial style, especially her yellow shawl, is that of a “courtesan.” In other words, she was a woman of pleasure (which is what ‘Gioconda’ implies). Incidentally, it is curious that yellow in Chinese culture is also the color of erotica (*huangse* [lit., “yellow color,” i.e., “pornographic”]).

Many of Kezia's outstanding articles have been collected in her big *Coats, Queens, and Cormorants: Selected Studies in Cultural Contact between East and West*, published in 2009 by Akanthus, which also brought out the first and second editions of *The Camel's Load*.

I wish now to concentrate on the work at hand, namely, *The Camel's Load in Life and Death*. What makes this little book so special? I say "little," and Kezia — with her usual humility — used to characterize it that way too. Like all of her writings, however, it is so densely full of information and insight that, although it is only around 160 pages in length, it packs the weight of many books twice its length. There is a vast amount of valuable information in Kezia's book, including information that she herself discovered in Chinese museums and at other locations in and around China, that cannot be found in any Chinese or Japanese publication. Her book is a classic, and consequently it will have lasting value, regardless of what is written in the future in any language. Anyone who wants to do a good job of writing about camels on the Silk Road between the Han and the Tang dynasties, no matter what language they do it in, will be compelled to read her book.

In writing *The Camel's Load*, Kezia plumbed the relevant Western-language literature. She also dealt extensively with materials derived from East Asian literature and, above all, firmly based her findings on a nearly exhaustive coverage of the material evidence concerning her subject that was recovered from Chinese sites.

The Camel's Load is one of the most extraordinary books about the Silk Road that has ever been written. One might expect that an entire book concerning the burdens carried by camels would be a dull and dreary affair. Quite the contrary, far from being a mundane, plodding, pedestrian account, this small gem of outstanding scholarship affords an exciting and informative experience for anyone fortunate enough to get their hands on it. Not since Edward Schafer's *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1963) and related works has anyone written about the Central Asian nexus between China and the West as entertainingly and with such precision. Indeed, *The Camel's Load* is unique in its combination of meticulous attention to detail, sustained focus on revelatory minutiae, and sheer erudition. I do not know of any other study in any language with which *The Camel's Load* can be compared. In fact, it would probably have been virtually

impossible for any other scholar than E. R. Knauer (hereafter ERK) to write such a book. A remarkable combination of training, talent, and temperament enabled ERK to produce this extraordinary volume.

First of all, ERK was trained as a classical (Greek and Roman) art historian with a strong philological and archaeological background. Second, she was a tireless investigator of library resources, no matter how obscure and difficult to obtain. Third, she had an incredibly sharp and perceptive eye that can spot telling visual evidence that others failed to notice entirely. Fourth, she was a born ethnographer who was able to bring together data obtained from observation of the cultures of recent and contemporary groups with historical materials. Fifth, ERK had an uncanny instinct for utilizing archaeological findings in illuminating ways. Sixth, she was an absolutely intrepid traveler and indefatigable museum-goer who had literally journeyed to the ends of the earth in search of visual and textual documentation for her various research projects.

The Camel's Load is set in an unusually clear typeface and is beautifully printed on glossy paper. Included are 94 photographs, many of them in color, that accurately reproduce the subtlest shades of the objects portrayed. Even the black and white photographs are extremely sharp and clearly convey the tones of the artifacts depicted. The photographs come from an astonishing variety of sources and are carefully labeled. A large number of those showing rare pieces and places were taken by the author herself.

Although *The Camel's Load* is a work of enormous learning, it brings the ancient and medieval Silk Road alive in a nearly breathtaking manner. Reading through it, one almost feels as though one is present while the medieval Central Asian grooms tie on the saddles, packboards, bags, masks, ewers, and what-not that are heaped upon the backs and sides of the camels, while the yellowish brown beasts shuffle their feet in the sand, bray, and spit. The deft analytical lens of the author enables us to penetrate the symbolic world of the rugs, rabbits, tiger skins, demons and monsters, and other trappings on the camels. To browse through ERK's book is to be transported through time from the Han to the Tang (206 BC–AD 907 (with side trips back to the Bronze Age and up to the recent past) and through space from Chang'an to Rome.

In *The Camel's Load*, one becomes familiar with the economics of international trade, the transportation of silk and glass, weaving technology, the peculiarities of camels, the modus operandi of robbers, funerary practices, and countless other fascinating topics.

I simply cannot praise this marvelous book highly enough. While it is suffused with an ineffable charm seldom seen in academic works, at the same time it is a solid scholarly contribution, as is evident from the fact that on many pages the footnotes take up more space than the main text. This virtuoso volume is definitely worth whatever effort is necessary to obtain it. The reprinting of *The Camel's Load* in a new edition is most welcome, since this means that it will be available to many more readers than before.

Finally, Kezia's splendid book, most deservedly, was awarded a prize for "grande originalité" from the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres in Paris. This prize is, in fact, named after the great French Sinologist, Stanislas Julien, and it is one of the most coveted and prestigious in the entire world of Chinese Studies. How extraordinary, yet altogether fitting, that this celebrated prize for Sinologists should have been awarded to a Classical scholar of Kezia's remarkable stature and wide-ranging purview!

What is perhaps most remarkable is that Kezia achieved this without knowing Chinese. This is all the more testimony to her unerring sense of how to pursue scholarly questions, her critical acumen, and her amazing ability to ask the right people and the right questions. If Kezia did not know something that she needed to know in order to bring one of her investigations to a good conclusion, she would make inquiries with colleagues in various specialties. That is how it was with Chinese, and I was honored from time to time by having Kezia ask me very precise, technical questions about Chinese language, culture, and history. Most of all, though, what enabled Kezia to make her fantastic breakthroughs was her ability to accumulate a mass of visual data acquired from a wide variety of sources, and then to process that data in the light of a broad command of the development of Eurasian civilization from the Bronze Age to the Renaissance. Only a soaring genius like Kezia could achieve such inspiring flights of imagination and discovery. I was fortunate to have been her friend and Sinological accomplice for more than two decades.

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Ethnic Identity in Tang China

by Marc Abramson

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. 288 pages

The subject of ethnic identities during the Tang dynasty is decidedly a broad and complicated one. Its complexity is further compounded by the dynasty's large spatial and temporal span. During its first half, the cosmopolitan Tang polity held sway in vast areas of the Asian continent from Samarqand to the Sea of Japan. Near its end, in the words of the famous Tang poet Bai Juyi, Tang border defense was barely a hundred miles away from its capital, Chang'an. Earlier, in 763, Chang'an was in fact sacked by Tibetan troops. These great changes and upheavals over almost three centuries had enormous impact on the political, social, and cultural life of the Tang society or societies, acutely affecting the recognition and views of ethnic identities. The author should thus be commended for his valiant effort to dissect this complex subject in a well-organized and systematic manner.

After a short introduction, the book is structured as follows. The first chapter provides a general review of ethnicity in ancient China. I find the chapter title "Ethnicity in the Chinese context" especially fitting. Though the author in all likelihood uses the word "context" in the broad sense, it in fact turns out to be practically always in the original *written* sense, i.e., in the context of Sinitic written sources.

The elaboration of this "ethnicity in the Chinese context" is then divided into four main chapters, each representing a major component or dimension of the subject by the author's determination, namely stereotypes, the role of religion (as typified by Buddhism), physical features, and geography. One may argue about their completeness, but these are certainly very important aspects of the subject. Each component is examined in great detail based on abundant primary sources and even more numerous secondary studies. This is apparently the fruit of many years of painstaking research and accumulation, judging just by the sheer number of references cited. An important chapter on ethnic change during the course of the dynasty follows, itself followed by a concluding chapter.

Occasional errors and omissions (see below) notwithstanding, the book is an excellent synthesis of a large amount of related data, both primary and secondary, and is thus a must-read not only for specialists but also for all scholars interested in medieval China. In addition to setting up a tentative framework for studying this fascinating subject, the author raises many fresh points that can lead to further explorations of ethnicity in ancient China.

My overall assessment is that the book mostly represents a Hàn, or more precisely, a Sinitic narrative. With precious few exceptions, nearly all data on the subject are from medieval Chinese or Sinitic sources. As such it is meticulously written and extensively referenced, and it covers many aspects of ethnicity in Tang China. The book is heavily influenced by secondary studies by modern Chinese scholars. This assessment can be summarized from the book's Introduction, which defines the subject as largely that of an ethnic Self versus an ethnic Other (p. iii). Though the author is careful to repeatedly use the plural "Tang elites," the ethnic Self of the book seems to be mostly the Tang civilian elite, which the author views as principally Hàn. Or in the author's words (p.8) "[an implicitly created] Han identity of the Self ... could help unify Tang elites as a whole...."

This view of a largely unified, if not monolithic, Han elite or ethnic Self of the Tang in contrast to the ethnic Other is perhaps my principal disagreement with the book. Here I may cite my favorite observation by the Yuan historian Hu Sanxing (*ZZTJ* 108.3429) that from the Sui (581–618) until the end of the Song (1279), "sixty to seventy percent of those who were prominent in their times have been descendants of [various Xianbei and Xiongnu groups]." This estimate would posit the majority of the Tang elite(s) as having recent if not immediate non-Hàn pedigrees.

Following Han Sanxing's incisive assessment, the biggest ethnic story of the Tang in my view is the gradual and slow formation of a new dominant elite in which "authentic" or pure-blood Hàn were but a minority. An imperfect analogy would be the appearance of a new English elite after the Norman Conquest, which decimated the power and status of the old Anglo-Saxon nobility.

As summarized by Hu Sanxing, both the Chinese and English processes took several centuries to complete, certainly longer than the entire time span of the Tang. For one thing, the

Tang's continued military and political involvement on the Steppe and in the Western Regions (traditionally a "core interest" of a Steppe power since the Xiongnu) can be compared with the Norman-English aristocracy's similar attachment to the European continent, and the ultimate failure of the Tang (and the Northern Song) to hold on to these territories is not unlike the French-speaking English kings' losing the Hundred Years War in the end.

Other major criticisms

I begin with the phrase "The ambiguity of the non-Han" in the title of Chapter 2. In my view, a more important chapter on ethnicity in Tang China would have been "The ambiguity of *the Han*." It is very difficult to define precisely this loose ethnic group, now conveniently named Han. As the author has also noted (p. 2), the term itself was just emerging from a pejorative slur in the Northern dynasties, to an at best neutral one in the first half of the Tang, such that, as recorded in *Da Tang xinyu*, a primary source cited by Abramson, Empress Wu Zetian had to stress that she needed "a *good Han*" to help administer her government. There is also evidence that the term did not quite extend to include the southerners, a precursor to the Mongol Yuan's official separation of "Southerners" from the Han.

A related issue is what can be termed "northern-centricism," or the near-complete domination of Tang politics by northerners, both Han and non-Han. This was only lightly touched upon in the book (pp. 99 and 168). With the continuing southward migration of China's key economic regions, the issue would come to the political forefront in the Northern Song.

Another major criticism, or rather disappointment, is that the heavily stereotypic non-Han (Fan) element in the Tang military elite is analyzed in great detail in the book, proportional to the volume of corresponding source material and secondary studies. In contrast, non-Hans in the Tang civilian elite, an equally important subject vis-à-vis ethnic identity, receive scant coverage. The latter is certainly a more difficult subject to analyze, given the scarcity of written data. But this also makes it more revealing for reconstructing the ethnic picture of the Tang elites.

And there do exist good data on this subject. For instance, the early Song source *Beimeng suoyan*, cited by the book, includes a story on how a sequence of four chief ministers during the late Tang period, including Bai Minzhong, a cousin of the poet Bai Juyi, were all of Central

Asian origin. Two other sources (*Tang zhiyan* and *Taiping guangji*) attribute a poem to Bai, after he was relieved of his portfolio and transferred to a provincial position, that openly declared:

Of the Ten Hu clans, I belong to the sixth,
Having once in the golden palace held sway over the realm.

A vital subject completely ignored by the book is the civil service examination first introduced in the Sui dynasty and further perfected during the Tang. The examination system played an unsurpassed role in forging a new ruling elite based on meritocracy, as against the old, largely northern Han, aristocracy, with Li Deyu (787–849) as the last representative *par excellence* of the latter. After witnessing the examination process, Emperor Taizong was notably quoted (*Tang zhiyan*) as saying that “all the world’s talented men have now fallen into my embrace 天下英雄入吾彀中.” Many a non-Han (non-northern Chinese) rose to top positions in Tang bureaucracy via the examination route, including the aforementioned Bai Minzhong, and Jiang Gongfu (730–805) who was born in Vietnam.

Even more directly related to the subject of the book, the Tang implemented what can be termed the world’s earliest “affirmative action” measures in its civil service examinations, setting aside special quotas for non-Han candidates. Even the famous Mongol Yuan dynasty term Semu 色目, translated, not entirely tongue-in-cheek, as “gens aux yeux de couleur” by a French sinologist, for Central and Western Asians in China, originated in Tang examination quotas for non-Hans (*Nanbu xinshu*).

The above cases also demonstrate that the Tang imperial house may well have intentionally used and promoted ethnic minorities for checks and balances, an issue largely neglected by the book. Instead, on p. 49, the author blames the heavy use of non-Han generals on chief minister Li Linfu’s Machiavellian scheme to monopolize civilian power. I may cite *Nanbu xinshu*’s story about the final advice the famous Monk Yixing imparted to Emperor Xuánzong against entrusting imperial guards to Han officers. This is reminiscent of the Mongol *kheshig* imperial guards whose leaders were never Han.

Another problem with the book’s nearly exclusively Sinitic sources is that, besides stereotypes and exoticisms, their medieval authors tended not to bother with other non-Sinitic

traits and phenomena in Chinese society. Though the book stresses repeatedly the inherent biases and one-sidedness of the sources, it regrettably does not investigate the underreported non-Han ethnicity and its longevity in ancient China, which often requires deeper exploration and non-written sources.

For instance, Chen Yinke, an author cited several times by Abramson, once uncovered a successful Tang “Confucian scholar-official” family that maintained its apparently foreign religious tradition “forbidding ancestor-worship.”

Another striking example is the recent archaeological discovery, in the county of Yingshan, Hubei province, of several Song-dynasty tombs belonging to the Bi clan of Central Asian ancestry. Regardless of the possibility that one member might happen to be the namesake inventor of movable type for printing, the solid finding is that the Bi clansmen held Manichaean beliefs, and violated the Sinitic father-name taboo that was deeply entrenched by the Song period. By that time, the Bis had lived in China for many centuries.

Miscellaneous comments

pp. viii–ix. “... available sources were written in Sinitic and composed by ethnically Han authors.” Though qualified in endnote 4, the statement is simply not correct, as many Tang period authors were not ethnically Han. For instance, the book *Gewon bilkyung rok* 桂苑筆耕錄 that provided an importance case of the *bin’gong* 賓貢 (guest tribute–student) quota in Tang civil service examinations was authored by Choi Chiwon, a Korean. *Tanglü shuyi*, the single most important treatise on Tang legal codes, cited prominently by the book, is attributed to the authorship of Zhangsun Wuji, who was of undisputable royal Tuoba blood. The famous poet Bai Juyi, together with his best friend Yuan Zhen, were both non-Hans by descent. So was Bai’s another poet–friend Liu Yuxi, a descendant of the Xiongnu, whose words are quoted in the book, albeit unbeknown to the author (see below). More indicatively, Liu’s more recent forefathers served the Tuoba emperors/qaghans.

- p. 61. The author's interpretation of the "Western Regions" (*Xiyu*) is incorrect and much too narrow, as can be readily seen from the title of Xuanzang's famous *Da Tang xiyu ji*, cited in the book.
- pp. 83–107. Chapter 4. Deep Eyes and High Noses — The Barbarian Body. Chen Yinke's interesting study on the origin of the Chinese term for bromhidrosis is regrettably not cited.
- p. 146. This is an insightful point on "membership in the Tang empire," yet the author fails to compare it with the similar traits of the "conquest dynasty" Qing.
- p.147. Abramson makes a good point about the Tang being "a sinicized version of the non-Han Northern Dynasties." In terms of "Han-ness", the Tang was between the Han and the Northern dynasties.
- p.151. "... many Tang elites who carried [abbreviated non-Han surnames] steadfastly omitted references to non-Han ancestry without actually inventing fictive ancestors." The author's strong wording "steadfastly omitted" is a stretch, given that we do not possess all writings of these Tang elites. In addition, the statement is an anachronous moot point, because these surnames' "Barbarian" origin was common knowledge of the contemporaries. See the discussion by the Tang genealogy expert Liu Fang of "*lu* (Barbarian) surnames" borne by many prominent members of the Tang elite (*Xin Tang shu* 199.5678).
Incidentally, by the Sui dynasty, the term *lu*, often translated as "caitiff," had become almost neutral. It was for instance used by southern Chinese as a generic designation of all northerners, both "Barbarians" and Han.
- p.155. "Highly competitive and socially sensitive clans that commissioned genealogies increase their efforts to elide the historical record of changes by retroactively altering their ancestors' non-Han surnames." Not quite so. A large number of these multi-character surnames continued to be used long afterwards. Even the apparently non-Han three-character surname Houmochen 侯莫陳 continued to flourish well into the Northern Song. One of the Song court conspirators who fabricated the trumped-up treason case against the anti-Jurchen hero Yue Fei

(1103–1142) had such a “Barbarian” double surname Moqi. His iron effigy is still kneeling in front of Yue’s tomb in Hangzhou. The large-scale disappearance of “Barbarian” surnames had to wait until Zhu Yuanzhang, the xenophobic founder of the Ming dynasty (Gu Yanwu, *Rizhi lu*, *juan* 23).

p. 166. “Tang national elites often socially despised the non-Han soldiers and generals, despite their value to the state.” Li Bai and Du Fu, the two greatest Tang poets, would have to beg the author’s pardon here, as both have left works dedicated to an ethnic general cited in the book. The statement would have been more accurate in describing the elite of the Song dynasty.

p. 224. The translation “Fine words recorded while a guest at Liu’s” of *Liu binke jiahua lu* is wrong. Here Binke “guest” was an epithet of the famous author-poet Liu Yuxi, who had once assumed the post of *Taizi binke*, “Adviser to the Heir Apparent,” and was descended from the Xiongnu to boot.

To recap, the book is the very first English-language treatise on an important but extremely difficult subject. While numerous modern scholars in China and elsewhere have delved into related issues and subtopics, as referenced in the book, the reviewer has yet to read another work with similar concentration, breadth, and level of synthesis. As such the book is a welcome addition to the study of medieval China and Asia. But given the complexity and enormity of the task, and to borrow technological terminology, this book is an excellent “first order” study — many a “second order” analysis is needed to fully expose this truly fascinating subject.

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Mélange tantriques à la mémoire de Hélène Brunner / Tantric Studies in Memory of Hélène Brunner

Dominic Goodall and André Padoux, editors

Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry/École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2007¹

The texts, rituals, liturgies, theologies, and systems of soteriology that fall under the heuristic category of “Tantra”² form an important, often integral, feature of Asian religions from South Asia, Tibet, Nepal, China, to Japan, contributing to the development and growth of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and even Taoism.³ With respect to Hinduism, the first unequivocal textual evidence that can be labeled “tantric” emerges around the sixth century CE,⁴ with inscriptional

¹ I would like to thank Shaman Hatley, Sucharita Adluri, and Annette Yoshiko Reed for their comments and suggestions on this review.

² The definition and delineation of “Tantra” can be problematic, and scholarly over-application of the term has come under scrutiny in the last decade, especially with respect to East Asian religious traditions. See further, e.g., Robert H. Sharf, “Appendix 1: Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” in *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treaties* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 263–78; André Padoux, “What Do We Mean by Tantrism?,” in *Roots of Tantra*, eds. K. A. Harper and R. L. Brown (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 17–24.

³ For discussion of the Taoist employment of “tantric” rites via the Vajryāna tradition in China, see Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), and the review by James Benn in *Journal of Asian Studies* 63:4 (2004), 1113–14. Also Charles D. Orzech, “Seeing Chen-Yen Buddhism: Traditional Scholarship and the Vajrayāna in China,” *History of Religions* 29.2 (1989): 87–114.

⁴ See further Shaman Hatley, “Tantric Śaivism in Early Medieval India: Recent Research and Future Directions,” *Religion Compass* 4.10 (2010): 615; Alexis Sanderson, “History through Textual Criticism in the Study of Śaivism, the Pāñcarātra and the Buddhist Yogintantras,” in *Les Sources et le Temps. Sources and Time*, ed. F. Grimal (Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2001): 2–19. Cf. David Lorenzen, “Early Evidence for Tantric Religion,” in *Roots of Tantra*, 27.

evidence even earlier.⁵ With respect to Buddhism, the relevant textual sources have been dated as early as the third century CE.⁶ Both traditions may well have more ancient precedents.⁷

Despite the wide influence and spread of tantric traditions across Asia, their modern study is still in its relative infancy. Research on the relevant Tibetan and especially Chinese sources has benefited from the discoveries at Dunhuang, where great storehouses of ancient manuscripts were stored and guarded.⁸ For the relevant Sanskrit and related sources, by contrast, much of the record still remains fragmentary and incomplete. The primary textual sources are largely in the form of manuscripts and inscriptions that have yet to be adequately documented and brought under scholarly scrutiny.⁹

Hélène Brunner (1920–2005) contributed much to such efforts, as a pioneer researcher, editor, and translator of Āgamic traditions for nearly half a century. The 2007 volume edited by Dominic Goodall and André Padoux in her honor — *Mélange tantriques à la mémoire de Hélène Brunner/Tantric Studies in Memory of Hélène Brunner* — richly extends and celebrates her life

⁵ See note 10, below.

⁶ Paul Williams and Anthony Tribe, *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2000), 194, 271 n. 5; Williams, for example, notes that “the third century date for the appearance of tantric Buddhist texts is based on the existence of a third century translation of the *Anantamukhasadhakadharani* by Chih-ch’ien.” Cf. Steven Hodge, “Considerations on the dating and geographical origins of the *Mahavairocanabhisambodhi-sutra*,” in *The Buddhist Forum III*, ed. T. Skorupski and U. Pagel (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1994), 57–83. As to whether or not *dhāraṇī* literature is accurately described as “tantric,” however, is open to debate.

⁷ Speculations about the connection between the Pāñcarātra tradition, a Vaiṣṇava branch of Tantra, and the Nārāyaṇīya section of the *Mahābhārata*, for instance, point to early roots of Vaiṣṇava Tantra within the Epic period. See, e.g., Anne-Marie Esnoul, “Introduction,” in *Narayaniya Parvan du Mahabharata, Un texte Pañcaratra* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres/UNESCO, 1979).

⁸ See, e.g., Sam Van Schaik, “The Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts in China,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65.1 (2002): 129–39; James Robson, “Signs of Power: Talismanic Writing in Chinese Buddhism,” *History of Religions* 48.2 (2008): 140–41.

⁹ Hatley, “Tantric Śaivism in Early Medieval India,” 615–16.

and work. The volume begins with a preface by the editors (pp. 7–14), as well as a brief introductory essay by Padoux (“Une vie, une oeuvre,” pp. 15–21). Together with a list of her published works (pp. 23–26), these introductory materials convey her wide-ranging and important contributions to Āgamic, Tantric, and Śaiva studies.

The editors present the thirteen articles in the volume as evidence for the continuing influence of Brunner’s work. Consistent with the focus of most of Brunner’s scholarly energies on Śaiva “Tantra,” the emphasis in the volume falls on Śaivism: the contributions are divided between eleven on Śaiva traditions and two on Vaiṣṇava traditions. The international scope of the volume is impressive, including scholars working in France, Italy, Austria, Holland, India, Japan, the United States, and Canada, as well as other countries. Although the preface and introduction are in French, the majority of the contributions are in English, with one in French and one in German.

The volume has a clear focus on textual studies, and it includes a number of editions and translations. It includes three architectural plates in color (pp. 112–13) and two diagrams (pp. 525, 536), along with a number of analytical charts; unfortunately, editions are not accompanied by any sample images of the manuscripts utilized. Indices would have also been helpful. The “General Bibliography” (pp. 552–82) is cumulative and is a resource in its own right; divided between “Editions” and “Translations and Studies,” it will be helpful for students and scholars of Āgamic, especially Śaiva, literature, as well as for anyone interested in pre-modern South Asian ritual practices, and the history of Hinduism and South Asia more broadly. As is common in *Festschriften*, the contributions are arranged in alphabetical order.

The first contribution, “The Saṃskāravidhi: A Manual on the Transformatory Rite of the Lakulīśa-Pāśupatas” by Diwakar Acharya (pp. 27–48), is a Sanskrit edition and annotated translation of the *Saṃskāravidhi*. Acharya defines it as a “*paddhati*” text, rather than “*dīkṣāvidhi*,” as it is registered at the archives. The edition and translation are based on a palm-leaf manuscript from the National Archives in Kathmandu, Nepal (MS no. I-736; microfilm Reel No B 32/12), which he deems similar to a fourteenth-century manuscript in style and script.

Acharya provides a brief introduction to the work, as well as copious textual parallels and extensive notes. He refrains from offering any speculation about the work’s date, but presumably

this information will be included in a future publication; he has promised, for example, the publication of three related *viddhis* along with a subsequent analysis of their contents. Inasmuch as the Lakulīśas are important for the history of early Śaiva doctrine and ritual,¹⁰ Acharya's presentation of this potentially early initiatory rite will be of much value for historians and Sanskritists alike.

Peter Bisschop's contribution, "The description of Śivapura in the early *Vāyu-* and *Skandapurāṇa*" (pp. 49–71), is an annotated synoptic edition of two parallel texts: *Vāyu Purāṇa* 2.39 and early *Skanda Purāṇa* 183. His edition of the first is based on the printed editions and one manuscript, while the second renders the text from two Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts. The passages in question are concerned with description of a heavenly paradise called the "City of Śiva" (Śivapura).

The relevant portion of the early *Skanda Purāṇa* is found at the end of two of the approximately ten manuscripts employed for the critical edition.¹¹ As such, analysis of it may give a glimpse into the textual history of this early and important work, as well as to some of the textual complexities of its Nepalese reception and transmission.¹²

Bisschop persuasively shows how the Pāśupata writers responsible for the early *Skanda Purāṇa* reshaped materials from the *Vāyu Purāṇa* in light of their distinctive sectarian concerns (esp. Pāśupata Yoga), such as the promotion of Vighraheśvara (pp. 51–52, 59–60). The transmission of the text thus speaks to the possible extension and development of related ideas present already in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*. Here, Bisschop only goes so far as to signal the "Śaiva

¹⁰ The sect of the Lakulīśas (also called Kālamukhas) seems to have grown out of the Pāśupatas, which have roots that date perhaps to the fourth century CE or earlier; see further A. Sanderson, "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions," in *The World's Religions*, ed. Stewart Sutherland, et al. (London: Routledge, 1988), 664–67; idem, "The Lākulas: New evidence of a system intermediate between Pāñcārthika Pāśupatism and Āgamic Śaivism," *Indian Philosophical Annual* 24 (2006): 148–9, 210.

¹¹ See R. Adriaensen, H. T. Bakker, H. Isaacson, *The Skandapurāṇa*, vol. 1, *Adhyāyas 1–25* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998): 31–36.

¹² Bisschop posits this ending as the tentative conclusion to the other manuscripts, pointing to missing sections in them.

character” of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* (p. 60), having dealt with the issue more extensively in another article.¹³ In any case, the parallel that he adduces provides a concrete case for understanding the fluid composition of Purāṇic literature, and his synoptic edition is a model of the analysis of how small portions of older texts became interwoven into newer ones, along with new ideas, within the dynamic literary practices of early Śaiva communities.

In a co-authored article on “People of the Festival” (pp. 74–97), Richard Davis and Leslie Orr attempt to shed light on what Brunner has called “the living religions of India.” To do so, they focus on a nine-day temple festival (*mahotsava*), described in a Sanskrit ritual text, the *Mahotsavidhi*, attributed to Aghoraśiva in 1157 CE (p. 73). By juxtaposing inscriptional evidence from the late Chola period (ca. tenth to thirteenth centuries) with the descriptions of ritual participants in the *Mahotsavidhi*, Davis and Orr are able to reconstruct a rough sketch of this Āgamic ritual; not only do they note where the manuals and inscriptions differ, but they thus attempt to bring the ritual to life from the confines of textual abstraction. In particular, Davis and Orr are here concerned with defining the range of ritual participants — from the chief priests, to dancers, musicians, and entertainers. Theirs is one of the few essays in the volume that uses different types of material and literary evidence in order to try to render a picture of the social realities of Śaivism within its specific ritual and temple contexts. In doing so, they point to the methodological problems of relying solely on one type of evidence, such as Āgamic ritual manuals, for reconstructing the history of “Tantra” and Śaivism.

A concern for the relationship between prescription and practice is also evident in the fourth article (pp. 99–112): “Note sur les modes de representation de Sadāśiva dans l’ordonnance iconographique et architecturale du temple” by Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat. Filliozat here attempts to link theological concepts connected to Śaivasiddhānta — particularly those associated with the figure of Sadāśiva — to the practices of image-makers and architects. He is primarily concerned with the manner in which *bindu*, *brahma-mantra*, the 36 *tattvas*, and other concepts drawn from theological literature, are linked to the monuments and artifacts that they were assigned to create.

¹³ P. Bisschop, “Two parallel passages in the Vāyupurāṇa and the Skandapurāṇa 167,” forthcoming in the proceedings of the 13th World Sanskrit Conference, Edinburgh, 10–14 July 2006.

To investigate these connections, he explores traditions from Āgamic and Purāṇic sources such as the *Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama*, its commentary by Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, and *Somaśambhupaddhati*, alongside the iconographical and architectural evidence of two thirteenth-century temples in Karnāṭaka and one eleventh-century temple in Khajuraho (pp. 107–11; see figs. 1–3). This multifaceted examination of text, image, and architecture seeks to further our understanding of the processes of concretizing abstract doctrines in Śaiva temples and worship. Some of Filliozat’s interpretations are perhaps overstated; one might question his assertion, for instance, that “comprendre Sadāśiva et comprendre le temple, c’est comprendre le fonds de la doctrine śivaïte” (p. 100), or that “toute la religion est présente dans le temple” (p. 111). Nevertheless, his approach and insights remain helpful, not least for pointing us to the pressing task of navigating between doctrinal abstraction and material culture.

T. Ganesan’s “Analyses of the Vijayāgama and Svāyambhuvāgama” (pp. 113–23) is a continuation of an earlier article on five Śaivasiddhānta texts of the *śivabheda* division.¹⁴ Ganesan here examines the contents of two Śaivasiddhānta texts of the *rudrabheda* division, the Vijayāgama and Svāyambhuvāgama,¹⁵ based on transcriptions in the French Institute of Pondichery. The Vijayāgama deals extensively with the festival of Durgā (Durgotsava) and outlines eight forms of Śiva (called *mūrtipas*), along with the corresponding female forms, as part of the opening *utsava* rites (pp. 113–16); other sections of the Vijayāgama concern a festival of Gaṇeśa (*vighneśotsava*) and a festival on the day of the star *ārdrā* (pp. 116–17). Topics tackled in the Svāyambhuvāgama include festival rituals, the ritual extraction of mantras, ritual baths (*snapanā*), and rituals of temple construction; the text also provides a discussion of

¹⁴ T. Ganesan, “Approaching the Āgama: A brief survey of their contents,” in *Glimpses of the National Seminar on Āgamas: Āgamasuśamā*, *Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati Series 115*, ed. Lakshminarasimha Bhatta, K. Hayavadana Puranik, and Haripriya Rangarajan (Tirupati: Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, 2005), 140–62.

¹⁵ The “traditional divisions” of the Śaivasiddhānta system are broadly split between two groups of Āgamas, ten *śivabheda* and eighteen *rudrabheda* texts. Sanderson suggests in this same volume (p. 239 n. 26), however, that titles occurring in the South do not necessarily refer to Northern texts under the same title. Thus, we may consider that Ganesan here is limiting his discussion to the newer South Indian material, although he does not clearly state this.

doctrine (*vidyāpāda*) in the midst of the ritual material. Ganesan suggests that the text is “very corrupt,” albeit without further elaboration or details; this is unfortunate, since sometimes apparent “corruptions” can reveal something about the textual history, development, or reception of a work. Nonetheless, his article is helpful as an important initial discussion of these sources and, in particular, gives insight into the diversity of the Āgamic literary corpus, by highlighting rituals primarily dedicated to Durgā and Gaṇeśa rather than to Śiva.

Dominic Goodall contributes “A first edition of the [Śatika-]Kālajñāna, the shortest of the non-eclectic recensions of the Kālottara” (pp. 125–66). Preliminary comments on the work are followed by a critical edition based on three manuscripts: two from the National Archives in Kathmandu and one from the Oriental Research Institute at the University of Mysore. The *Kālottara* is typically placed near the bottom of canonical lists of 28 Śaivasiddhānta scriptures common to South Indian Āgamic traditions. Goodall suggests that there are a number of variant texts that share the title of “Kālottara” but that there is a “common core of material” among one group of recensions. This “core” may contain the “earliest Kālottara material” and, indeed, may be considered the “heart of the Kālottara teaching” (pp. 125–26). Although preliminary and speculative, this article thus contributes much to our understanding of the growth and development of the Śaivasiddhānta canon.

In the only German article in the volume, “Bharadvājas Nyāśopadeśaḥ: Bemerkungen zu Bhāradvājasamhitā 1,1–70” (pp. 167–85), Gerhard Oberhammer explores the connection between the Rāmānuja school of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Pāñcarātra. Along with the article by Marion Rastelli, which directly follows, Oberhammer’s contribution also forms the extent of the volume’s exploration of Vaiṣṇava “Tantra.” Oberhammer’s article is, in part, a follow-up of an initial assessment by H. Daniel Smith of this little discussed passage. Oberhammer argues that the *Nyāśopadeśaḥ* is either [1] a treatise on taking refuge in God (*prapattiḥ*) without regard to Pāñcarātra tantric practices or [2] a work by adherents of the Rāmānuja’s Viśiṣṭādvaita school who were familiar with and influenced by the Pāñcarātra tantric school.

What Oberhammer thus suggests is that the passage is not, as it might seem at first sight, a Pāñcarātra text that was excised from some larger, coherent work. Rather, Pāñcarātra was appropriated into Śrīvaiṣṇavism over centuries. Although, in some sense, Pāñcarātra and

Śrīvaiṣṇavism have become synonymous, it was and is not always the case. Rāmānuja for instance, though a Śrīvaiṣṇava, kept Pāñcarātra at a distance, even as he argued for the validity and authority of “Tantra.” The article will be of special interest to scholars concerned with the intertextual influence of different late medieval schools of Vaiṣṇava ritual, theology and philosophy.

The second contribution on Vaiṣṇava “Tantra” — Rastelli’s “The “Pāñcarātra Passages” in *Agnipurāṇa* 21–70” (pp. 187–229) — builds on previous scholarship by H. Brunner, A. Sanderson, and R. C. Hazra, all of whom noted parallels between the *Agni Purāṇa*, Śaivasiddhānta, and Pāñcarātra literature. Rastelli investigates whether or not sections of the *Agni Purāṇa* can be linked to original Pāñcarātra sources. In the process, she unravels much of the textual complexity of chapters 21–70 by working through an electronic edition of the text.¹⁶

Rastelli compares parallels through a number of verse-to-verse correspondence charts with a subsequent analysis. One chart, for instance, maps out correlations between the *Agni Purāṇa* and the *Hayasīrṣa Pāñcarātra*, while a second is dedicated to parallels with the *Nāradya Saṃhitā*, *Viṣṇudharma*, *Prakīrṇādhikāra*, *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, and *Gautamadharmā Sūtra*. After thus comparing and contrasting selections from a wide range of literature, including both Pāñcarātra and Purāṇic sources, Rastelli concludes that *Agni Purāṇa* 21–70 may well be the first redaction to bring together this diverse set of textual materials. If so, this example may tell us much about the transmission of tantric ideas and sources, especially Vaiṣṇava ones, into a Purāṇic context. By giving us a glimpse into the detailed workings, structure, and complexities of a Purāṇic text and its sources, Rastelli’s analysis also opens the way for further discussion about what is meant by the concept of “authorship” within this tradition.

The longest contribution in the volume is that by Alexis Sanderson, “The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir” (pp. 231–442). It is so extensive, in fact, that it might have been published as a separate book; it spans over 200 pages and comprises more than a third of the entire volume. Sanderson here examines a broad range of exegetical material from printed, manuscript, and inscriptional sources in Sanskrit and Tibetan. Although there is little engagement with recent,

¹⁶ For the electronic edition, see http://www.aa.tufs.ac.jp/~tjun/data/gicas/ind_scripture-e.html.

secondary scholarship, this essay extends and continues his previous work on the same general topic.¹⁷

Sanderson here considers Kashmiri exegetes writing scriptures of the “Śaiva Mantramārga” — a category that he has elsewhere defined as one of two major streams of literature dedicated to Śiva.¹⁸ This article is intended to nuance his previous findings, and it thus suggests some of the fragility of modern categorization of medieval traditions. Among the group of Kashmiri exegetes of the tenth and early eleventh centuries here explored, Sanderson has detected two major sub-branches. His focus falls on their literature, in their Kashmiri manifestations. Reformulating his previous work, he argues that one sub-group write “purely Śaiva scriptures” (Śaivasiddhānta) and focus on Śiva as the cultic figure, while the other sub-group have a decidedly “Śākta character,” inasmuch as they propitiate either the god Bhairava or “the Goddess.” These sub-groups are also referred to as Saiddhāntika and non-Saiddhāntika.

While these categories are relatively well-known, at least among specialists of Śaivism, Sanderson’s intimate engagement with this multifaceted commentarial world highlights the textual complexities of these traditions and exposes the interdependence and interrelatedness of the sub-groups, as previously unexamined. Thus, for example, writing on the commentary of the *Piṅgalāmata*, a text dealing with the rituals of installation of temple images, he states:

As such it is not only a source relevant to Saiddhāntikas — and indeed it is much cited by them — but also a valuable indication that the separation and opposition between the Saiddhāntika and non-Saiddhāntika forms of Śaivism is less clear-cut than appears from reading the commentaries on the general Tantras. (pp. 249–50)

The vivid and dynamic picture painted by Sanderson, thus, does much to suggest the limitations of the canonical categories that he and others have defined in previous scholarship. It is clear that we must not treat such traditional distinctions as simply fixed, but rather as

¹⁷ E.g., Sanderson, “Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions”; idem, “The Lākulas.”

¹⁸ The other major stream is called “Atimārga” or “The Outer Path”; see Sanderson, “Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions,” 664.

potentially shifting and evolving. Rituals, perhaps especially, are transportable across sectarian boundaries, and it is precisely such permeability that makes even the category of “Tantra” more of a heuristic tool than a direct reflection of pre-modern communities or experiences, as we noted at the outset.

Sanderson’s substantial contribution concludes with a helpful “Chronology” and “Brief History” (pp. 411–34). Here, he synthetically outlines the development of the various sub-groups and gives a general context to their multiple, interwoven exegetical writings. In addition, an extensive list of sources is included at the end of the article (pp. 435–42); this list will be useful for anyone wanting to pursue further studies of this material.

The tenth article (pp. 443–74) is “Materials for the Study of the Levels of Sound in the Sanskrit Sources of the Śaivasiddhānta: Ratnatrayaparīkṣā 22, 70c–86b, 171c–173b and its Ullekhinī with Excerpts from an Unpublished Commentary” by Francesco Sferra. Sferra examines the concepts of sound (*nāda*) and word (*vāc* and *śabda*) in “early Śaivasiddhānta scriptures.” Much of the material that Sferra treats dates from around the ninth and tenth centuries, with some later materials (p. 446).

Sferra is especially concerned with a text called the *Ratnatrayaparīkṣā*, which is said to discuss “levels of words.” At the end of the article, part of the text is published and translated. His treatment of it is intriguing and suggestive, such that it is unfortunate that it lacks further contextualization. The author presumes previous knowledge of the philosophical discourse among Śaiva exegetes and the broader Hindu discourse on word and language; this discourse seems to be connected to widespread systems of liberation within the Śaivasiddhānta and other Indic traditions. There is some interesting discussion of the intertextuality of sources dealing with these concepts, which will be of interest to scholars of sound and the philosophy of language in Indian tradition in particular.

Raffaele Torella’s contribution is the third part in a series of “Studies on Utpaladeva’s *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti*” published in the same year.¹⁹ This part bears the subtitle “Can a

¹⁹ Raffaele Torella, “Studies on the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti*, Part I,” *Halbfass Commemoration Volume*, ed. K. Preisendanz (Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 473–90; idem, “Studies on the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti*,

cognition become the object of another cognition?” (pp. 475–84). Torella here focuses on a section (i.e., I.4.3–5) of a unique, fragmentary codex of *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti*, which contains a commentary (*vivṛti* or *īṭkā*) by the tenth-century Kashmiri Śaivasiddhānta author Utpaladeva. The section under discussion is part of a longer interpolation of a passage from the *Bhagavadgītā* (15.15b) concerning “three powers (*śakti*) in the Lord: Cognition, Memory and Exclusion” (p. 475).

This preliminary essay outlines some of the philosophical arguments that Utpaladeva engages, such as the relationship “between the cognitive act of the original perception and the cognitive act of the subsequent memory” (p. 476), as well as some of the general discourse on memory and cognition of other sources (e.g., the *Yogasūtra*, Abhinavagupta). The contribution includes an edited edition of the *vivṛti* with notes;²⁰ a translation of the selection will follow in a subsequent publication.

In “The Search in Śaiva Scriptures for Meaning in Tantric Ritual” (pp. 485–516), Judit Törzsök returns to the well-known question of whether or not ritual is meaningful or has meaning. The reader, of course, is reminded of the influential works on this topic by Frits Staal. Törzsök, however, avoids citing or engaging with these or other studies, for reasons of space.²¹ The purpose of her article is to glean a general understanding of “meaning” from a range of Śaiva tantric sources, especially those related to initiatory rites. Sources here considered include materials drawn from Śaivasiddhānta, Kaula, and Trika traditions (e.g., *Tantrasadbhāva*, *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, *Kubjikāmata*, and the *Mālinīvijayottara*). Törzsök suggests three approaches to ritual among Śaiva exegetes: [1] the “argumentative approach,” [2] the

Part II. What is memory?” in *Indica et Tibetica: Festschrift für Michael Hahn zum 65*, ed. J. U. Hartmann and K. Klaus (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2007), 539–63.

²⁰ Unfortunately, parts of the first eight lines are effaced in my copy of the volume.

²¹ Esp. Frits Staal, *Ritual and Mantras: Rules Without Meaning* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996). Although Staal focuses on Vedic ritual, the implications and influence of his work go well beyond that focus. Even in other fields, the “Staal School of ritual and ritual studies” is well known; see, e.g., Ithamar Gruenwald, *Rituals and ritual theory in ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 198.

“interpretive approach,” and [3] the “rejectionist approach.” The second of these is most central to her argument, inasmuch as the process of interpreting ritual by various commentators and writers is how “meaning” is instilled upon a given ritual or tradition. The third is also important since it points to internal concerns and debates about the necessity for ritual.

Törzsök makes the astute observation that the discourse on the nature of ritual action has an internal, theoretical record among Śaiva exegetes that should hold primacy in modern scholarly considerations of the nature and purpose of a given ritual or rituals in their historical context. That said, her use of the term “meaning” is not entirely clear. Exegetical references to knowledge and systems of liberation linked to ritual appear to be the intended and assumed repository for “meaning” as she here understands it, but there is, for instance, no definition outlined, nor any corresponding Sanskrit term(s) discussed. Even a brief engagement with or rebuttal of Staal’s well-known arguments might have helped to clarify her position in this regard.²²

The final article of the volume (pp. 517–50) — Somadeva Vasudeva’s “Synaesthetic Iconography: 1. The Nādhāntakrama” — focuses on textual representations of the goddess Mālinī via phonemes and graphemes. This goddess is among the prominent “alphabet deities” in the Trika system, one of the sub-branches of the Bhairava-tantras, especially connected to the Śakti-tantras and known primarily through the work of the tenth-/eleventh-century exegete Abhinavagupta.²³ By examining scriptural consistencies in passages of the *Trikatantras* (*Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, *Mālinīvijayottara*, *Triśirobhairava*, and *Tantrasadbhāva*), Vasudeva makes an argument as to how these sources consistently map a specially ordered Sanskrit syllabary called the *nādhāntakrama* onto the divine body of Mālinī. He maintains that these core passages are a persistent feature of the Trika tradition and span across several centuries. The

²² That Śaiva exegetes applied second-tier “meaning” to a set of repetitive activities (such as initiation rites), the origins of which are not clear, for instance, does not necessarily imbue those activities with the content of their analysis; it only gives us insight into their interpretation thereof from their own vantage point in history.

²³ See Sanderson’s chart, “The Structure of the Mantramārga,” for a breakdown of the various tantric sub-groups; “Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions,” 669, 695–96.

nādiphāntakrama can be seen to follow the ritual mapping (*nyāsa-*) of the phonemes onto the body.

Vasudeva then goes on to extend this correlation to graphemes from the Brāhmī script based on “physical resemblance” and offers a hypothetical chart of the graphemes using Brāhmī characters (pp. 532–33). This speculative correlation seems to serve as part of an attempt to date the Trika tradition to the Gupta period. While the argument is certainly possible, it would have been more persuasive if more clearly articulated. At times, for instance, it is difficult to discern where the author’s own speculations begin and where the assertions of the exegetes end. Indeed, all the evidence employed on the Trika is derived from Abhinavagupta, along with his commentators, although he himself was not interested in this kind of correlation (p. 531, cf. Sanderson on p. 371). The analysis is, nonetheless, intriguing and thoughtful, and it opens up interesting insights into the textual complexities of the Trika tradition. This contribution is especially illuminating when read as a complement to the related section of Sanderson’s article (pp. 370–81).

Taken together, the contributions in this volume provide a “snapshot” of cutting-edge, recent scholarship on “Hindu Tantra.” Particularly useful is the introduction, assessment, and evaluation of a number of unpublished or neglected Sanskrit sources, either through direct consultation of early manuscripts or through philological gleanings based on late transmissions. Although the volume includes some new perspectives and insightful assessments concerning other kinds of evidence, such as inscriptions, architecture, and iconographical sources, the emphasis on textual evidence is understandable. Indeed, as noted above, much of the basic groundwork on the early texts available to us has yet to be done.

In the conclusion of his contribution (p. 130), Goodall beautifully describes his experiences of encountering and editing the Śaiva manuscripts there considered:

Editing without producing a translation — and particularly editing this sort of text, in which one is conscious that not all the riddles can be solved and that the language is full of anomalies — there is a heightened risk that one will leave impossible things in the text, without taking the trouble to think through and

beyond them to plausible solutions. When recollating, I often found myself rushing ahead with the feeling that the wording settled upon was as satisfactory (and as satisfactorily interpreted) as could reasonably be hoped, and then returning shortly afterwards to find that just a little more thought yielded a much more believable result. But for all the times that I did this, there were doubtless many others when I did not and should have.

Although describing only his own experiences with a particular set of texts, his comments perhaps capture something of the broader challenges involved in laying the necessary textual groundwork for further research on “Hindu Tantra.” In light of such challenges, the reader is especially grateful to the volume’s editors and contributors for the inclusion of a number of first editions, the copious references to unpublished manuscripts consulted by its contributors, and the engagement with the various methodological challenges faced when dealing with the raw data from which religious histories are reconstructed.

As noted above, most of Brunner’s works focused on Śaiva “Tantra,” such that the volume’s emphasis on the Śaiva material is apt. The editors, however, go on to assert that the volume can serve as a general study of “Tantra” inasmuch as it is fundamentally and essentially Śaiva:

Des treize contributions ici rassemblées, onze sont des études śivaïtes. C’est évidemment chose normale pour un volume d’hommage à Hélène Brunner. Mais ce l’est également d’une manière plus générale pour un recueil d’études tantriques. Cela d’abord parce que, pour ce qui est de la quantité et la qualité des oeuvres, le phénomène tantrique est avant tout śivaïte (nous ne parlons pas ici du bouddhisme). Mais ce l’est aussi, croyons-nous, fondamentalement et essentiellement, parce que le tantrisme (si on peut utiliser ce substantif) est avant tout śivaïte. (p. 7)

Such an assertion is provocative and perhaps somewhat overstated, given the rich breadth of Buddhist material typically classified under the rubric of “Tantra.” One might speculate that

the editors' intention was to evoke recent debates about tantric "origins" and, in this way, playfully assert agency to Śaivism over Buddhism; if so, this is not clearly stated.²⁴ "Tantra," of course, cannot be essentialized into a single static moment at a point of origination, which is then transmitted, unchanged throughout its history, as is amply demonstrated by Sanderson's extensive contribution to the volume. A narrow definition of Tantra is counter-productive, in my view, for understanding the way in which it has evolved and transformed across traditions and throughout its long history. Clearly the very problem of its definition, signaled by the editors themselves (e.g., "si on peut utiliser ce substantif"), points to the limitations of any attempts at essentializing this complex phenomenon. Like the god Śiva himself, "Tantra" is eclectic and amorphous in nature.

It is this fluidity, moreover, that points us to the influence of tantric traditions within, between, and even beyond Hinduism and Buddhism.²⁵ Both Hindu and Buddhist "Tantra" seem to emerge in eras of dynamic trans-regional contact, when long-distance Eurasian trade-routes like the Silk Road has been established, and in the wake of periods of "foreign" (e.g., Kushan) rule in South Asia that saw the introduction, export, and transformation of local technologies and sciences, as well as medical, ritual, and iconographic traditions. In its various permutations, what we call "Tantra" seems to have served as a contact zone for the transmission and transformation of different kinds of knowledge across Asia.²⁶

²⁴ For a survey of debates about such historical agency see Hatley, 2010: 221–2; cf. David Gordon White, "Introduction," in *Tantra in Practice*, ed. David Gordon White (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 18–19.

²⁵ See, e.g., Huaiyu Chen, "The Encounter of Nestorian Christianity with Tantric Buddhism in Medieval China," in *Hidden Treasures and Intercultural Encounters*, ed. Dietmar W. Winkler and Li Tang (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2009), 195–213.

²⁶ In a recent talk given at the Oriental Club of Philadelphia ("The Cultural Translation of Buddhist Medicine into Medieval China," October 14, 2010), C. Pierce Salguero discussed the transference of medical knowledge and metaphors from India to China, in part, via tantric texts, especially *dhāraṇīs*. Due to the translation of such texts and the ideas and metaphors that they contain, into a comprehensible Chinese lexicon, they effectively became a site of social and political commentary and contestation — a contact zone of intercultural and religious discourse.

I suggested above that the earliest manifestations of “Tantra” and its affiliations with South Asian religions must remain obscure until further basic groundwork is done on the relevant textual sources. From the excellent contributions in this volume, however, it is clear that new inroads are being made, and that the results are already contributing much to our understanding of the complexity and diversity of South Asian ritual, theological, and scholastic traditions. The volume thus does a beautiful job of honoring the work of a formidable scholar whose main focus was the Śaiva Āgamas. One can only assume that Brunner would have been pleased to have such a capable group of scholars continuing her life’s work and passion.

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Imperial China, 900–1800

by F. W. Mote

Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003. xix + 1107 pages

The greatest strength of Professor F. W. Mote's impressive work *Imperial China, 900–1800* is its elucidation of the dynamic interplay between the Chinese heartland and the semi-nomadic pastoralists on its northern borders, which constituted a major force in shaping the region's history until the Western nations began to exert their power in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Through the efforts of historians such as Mote — freed by language, distance and time from any personal concerns and political considerations — the world view of Sinocentric exceptionalism, established in no small measure with the help of dynastic records compiled under the watchful eye of authoritarian rulers, is gradually being deconstructed, and China is being integrated into an organic, breathing, give-and-take narrative of human history. Mote's work provides a significant contribution towards closing one of the world's major cultural fault lines, and presages the day, now visible on the distant horizon, when it will be possible to speak of a genuinely global history — a history of the human endeavor as if written by an omniscient sage who, sitting on the moon, has carefully observed its entire course, in all its aspects, and is thus able to set this history down in the perspective that stretches the shadows of our nuclear warheads into eternity: that of mankind as the inadvertent captain of a Noah's Ark, our planet, this cooling drop of encrusted magma, traveling through an unfathomed cosmos towards an unknown destination.

Imperial China, 900–1800 was the magnum opus of Mote, who died in 2005, and the final summation of half a century of research on, foremost the Yuan and Ming dynasties, but also the preceding Song and succeeding Qing. While his writing style lacks the perfect fluidity and ease of Jonathan Spence, fluctuating as it does between the majestic, eloquent tone of a Grand Historian and the rare relapse into tortured academese, this is readily accounted for by the ground-breaking, epic scope of his endeavor, a millennium in the history of the world's largest nation. It would seem that, with one or two more revisions, Mote could even have achieved the

deep cadences of Edward Gibbons's "*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*," with the concomitant readership that it deserves. In any event, future historians working in a more popular vein will be able to build upon his achievement, and spread the vast amount of knowledge enclosed between the covers of his book to ever wider circles of the English-reading world. Of equal importance, this is a book that should be urgently and carefully translated into Chinese, for it would provide the Chinese people with a unique, true and exciting account of their own history.

Despite working with things Chinese for almost twenty-five years, this writer, for one, had virtually no concept of the Khitans, Tanguts, Jurchens, and Mongols, which, as Mote shows, played such a crucial role in shaping the region's history during the past millennium, and is apt to make the lack of readily available information his tepid excuse. In this respect, *Imperial China, 900–1800* populates and brings to life a vast swath of white on the world map of history for the English-speaking lands. By getting to know the names of their leaders, and receiving descriptions of their homelands and traditional modes of life, the imagination is given something tangible to set to work upon, and long-held pre- and misconceptions are corrected. And while Mote has chosen to build his historical narrative on the old-fashioned, politically incorrect backbone made up by the lives, times, conquests, defeats, strengths and weaknesses of the successive emperors and their dynastic families, along the way, he digresses thoroughly and vividly on all sundry manner of interesting topics, such as Buddhism and Daoism, cultural policies, biographies of major statesmen, thinkers and artists, demographics, economics, the civil service examination system, the organization of rural society, international trade, the Grand Canal, and the conquest of Taiwan, putting his encyclopedic knowledge on full display and weaving a tapestry as multifarious and colorful as life itself.

On the level of the philosophy of history, Mote repeatedly professes his opposition to the Spenglerian, and also deeply Chinese, organic conception of history, according to which a dynasty takes root, sprouts, buds, flowers, comes to fruition and then slowly decays with the same inevitability as a member of the vegetable kingdom, and sets out to demonstrate his view that human history is of an entirely different cloth, dictated by the good and bad decisions made by very human beings, that decline can be reversed by bold, thoughtful leadership, and that while dynasties often come to an end amidst moral rot and economic bankruptcy, they can also be

terminated during periods of relative strength, prosperity and cultural effervescence, as was the case when the Ming gave way to the Manchu Qing.

This brings us to another very interesting question that Mote answers in great detail. Having conquered China militarily, how did these small semi-nomadic, initially illiterate nations with a few million people go about the business of governing the scores of millions of Chinese inhabiting the Chinese heartland? What strategies did they employ and how did they differ? The Khitans of the Liao Dynasty, which ruled the Sixteen Prefectures of northern China from 938 to 1124, established a dual system of governance that allowed them to, paraphrasing Mote, “draw on the resources of China without sacrificing their steppe integrity.” The succeeding Jurchens, whose descendants were known as the Manchus, defeated the Khitans in the 1110s, proclaimed the Jin Dynasty, and ended the Song Dynasty in 1127, thereby pushing the native Chinese rulers south of the Huai River, initially governed through the same system of dual institutions, before centralizing the political structure on the Chinese model and establishing a single capital at the site of present-day Beijing in 1153. Top positions in the civil and military hierarchies were reserved for Jurchens, and the meritocratic civil service examination system was skewed in favor of Jurchen candidates, who were given simpler tests and passed at much higher rates. In 1279, then, a third wave of nomadic conquistadores, the Mongols, achieved the complete subjugation of China. To rule their more than hundred million subjects, they instituted a four-tiered ranking of people by ethnic and geographic identity in the following order: Mongols, Western/Central Asians (Uighurs), Han (the population of the conquered Jin territories of North China), and finally, Chinese inhabitants of the southern Song territories conquered after 1273. The civil examination system was discontinued, and official posts largely filled on the basis of inherited privilege. Furthermore, government offices at all levels were dually staffed, most often by a Mongolian superior and a Chinese subordinate who did the actual work. But Mongol rule soon foundered on its inherently shaky foundation, and did not last a century before Zhu Yuanzhang restored native rule in 1368 with his establishment of the Ming dynasty. This was followed by the most long-lived and successful of the conquest dynasties, the Manchu Qing, who, having taken Beijing in 1644, set out to govern China according to the guiding principle of, in the words of Mote, being more Chinese than the Chinese themselves. This principle was brought to its

fullest incarnation in the Kangxi Emperor, who skillfully succeeded in making alien rule acceptable to the Chinese elite, and who has been heralded as one of the great rulers in Chinese history.

While the vacillating fortunes of conquest dynasties constitute a major thread in Mote's historical narrative, an enumeration of the number of themes he has managed to explore in this magnificent book would run as long the present review. Suffice it to say that this is a book that will reward its reader for the time invested with a ten-fold return in terms of new knowledge, perspectives and ideas, historical drama, and sheer reading pleasure. In a lecture entitled "Chinese History and World History," given at Cambridge University in 1955, Professor Edwin G. Pulleyblank reviewed the evolving conception of Chinese history in the West: the first infatuations of Voltaire and Leibnitz, Montesquieu's critique of Chinese despotism, Hegel's dismissal of Chinese history as "...duration, stability — Empires belonging to mere space, as it were — unhistorical history," and Oswald Spengler's "monstrous" proposition that the organic life cycle of Chinese history had come to an end 2000 years ago during the Han dynasty, and that to all intents and purposes Chinese culture had been dead ever since. As Pulleyblank pointed out at the time: "This sort of claptrap would be scarcely worthy of our attention were it not for the influence which it has had and continues to have to the present day." He then went on to point out the future direction of the study of Chinese history: "If we will have the patience and perseverance to study Chinese history in its sources with the thoroughness and care that we expect in other scholarly disciplines, if we do not do this in a narrow spirit of pedantry but with our minds alert to the perennial problems that have assailed mankind everywhere — the basic biological urges of hunger and sex, the struggle with a grudging earth for the means of livelihood, the inadequacies of established social patterns to deal with new conditions, the oppression of the weak by the strong and the reaction of men driven to desperation, the universal aesthetic and religious aspirations of mankind, the problems of power and corruption — if we do this with imagination that will not go beyond what can be verified by evidence, we shall, I am sure, find that Chinese history throws light on our own history in countless ways and that mankind is indeed one." Perhaps Mote attended that very lecture, and took these words to heart as the cue

for his life's work. Whether or not, with *Imperial China, 900–1800*, he has, in the most stupendous manner, answered the summons.

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Local Religion in North China in the Twentieth Century: The Structure and Organization of Community Rituals and Beliefs

by Daniel L. Overmyer

Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009. xiv, 219 pages

Recently many scholars have turned their attention to the modern condition and organization of popular religious activities in China, especially as fieldwork in many areas of mainland China has yielded a quantity of new materials for study. The new book by Professor Overmyer is outstanding in the list of such studies, as it gives an excellent overview of modern religious practices across an expansive region, covering several provinces of North China.

Overmyer deals with the tradition of Chinese religion, which still presents problems for interpretation. It has long been accepted by the majority of scholars that China has three main religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. But recently many scholars have interpreted the sectarian movements (at least in their developed form since the Ming dynasty [1368–1644]) as a fourth institutionalized tradition; Overmyer has contributed considerably to the growth of this justified approach.¹ However, most scholars agree that another, fifth, independent tradition exists, shared by the majority of populations in towns and villages. Even naming this tradition is problematic, because traditionally in China it did not have a name. Many scholars use the expression “Chinese religion” to refer to it, but Overmyer uses the term “local religion.” What constitutes this religion in North China, and how does it function? Overmyer provides preliminary answers to these questions.

In doing so, Overmyer offers a new theoretical approach to Chinese religion. Until recently, many Western scholars interpreted “local religion” as diffuse and amorphous, a mixture of elements of the institutionalized traditions. This misconception is partially due to the distinction between “institutionalized” and “diffused” types of Chinese religions made by C. K.

¹ See for example his ground-breaking study, *Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China* (Cambridge: Harvard U. P., 1976).

Yang in his monograph *Religion in Chinese Society*. There Yang stated that “diffused religion is conceived of as a religion having its theology, cultus, and personnel so intimately diffused into one or more secular social institutions that they become a part of the concept, rituals, and structure of the latter, thus having no significant independent existence.”² Overmyer argues against this view of Chinese religion. He aspires to demonstrate “that local traditions of ritual and belief are important both in their own right and as a foundation of traditional Chinese ideas, values and social relationships. These traditions are persistent and deeply institutionalized in their own ways ...” (p. 5). In his approach Overmyer agrees with the views of scholars who have studied the local traditions of South China. However, the unique quality of his book is its major focus on North China, never previously systematically studied in this context.

The communal religious traditions in different parts of South China were the targets of several long-term collaborative research projects: *Series on Customs and Performance Arts (Minsu quyì congshu)*, edited by Wang Ch’iu-kuei; *Hakka Traditional Society Series (Kejia chuantong shehui congshu)*, edited by John Lagerwey and his colleagues in China; *Zhejiang Traditional Society Series (Zhejiang chuantong shehui congshu)*, edited by John Lagerwey and Paul R. Katz. Overmyer clearly states that his research project was inspired by those done for South China (pp. xiii–xiv), and his book supplements our knowledge about Chinese religion in North China. Overmyer also draws a comparison with the traditions of the South and demonstrates how different they are.

The materials on which Overmyer bases his study mainly come from his own fieldwork experience as well as the fieldwork reports by local Chinese scholars from different areas of Hebei province, published in the series *Studies of the Popular Culture of North China Villages (Huabei nongcun minjian wenhua yanjiu congshu)*. Overmyer is one of the two chief editors of this four-volume series. Besides these, Overmyer also extensively quotes from other high-quality Western and Chinese case studies of religion and folk culture in several provinces of North China, mainly Shanxi, Shandong, Shaanxi, and less frequently Henan. The main region of this study, as

² C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: a Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961; rpt. Taipei: SMC publishing, 1994), pp. 294–295.

defined above, is the area that has been since time immemorial populated by Han-nationality Chinese and that is the center of their cultural development. Yet very little systematized knowledge of the beliefs and practices of village folk there existed before the extensive fieldwork primarily organized by Western (or Western-trained) and Japanese scholars started in the twentieth century. Overmyer's book convinces us of this.

Overmyer demonstrates that the local religion in North China had its own structure, system of beliefs (which can be the equivalent of cosmology), cults, and personnel. According to Overmyer, "Chinese local religion is based on family worship of deities and ancestors on home altars, but it also involves large-scale rituals participated in by members of the whole village or township community..." (p. 56). Overmyer's focus in this book is on the second manifestation of local religion, communal celebrations (usually in the form of the so-called temple festivals or temple fairs of various scales). Such a choice is well justified as such festivals have been the most conspicuous events of religious life up to the present.

Overmyer identifies a three-part structure in most festivals: inviting, welcoming, and seeing off the gods. Processions at the festivals involve music, dancing, storytelling, drama, and martial arts performances of all kinds, and the art objects that are displayed as part of the festival setting. Overmyer's book provides us with the important context in which folk artists in most parts of North China worked: they were mainly dependent on religious events.

As Overmyer demonstrates, lay organization constitutes the special feature of local religion. Family and community heads have long been responsible for the organization of community rituals. In the twentieth century, they both participated in the rituals themselves and hired Daoist priests or Buddhist monks, spirit-mediums, musicians, and opera troupes to assist them. Resident temple managers called *miaozhu* existed in some local temples, but were not common. Where they did exist, they usually were not responsible for organizing festivals (p. 56).

An important feature of local religion is the practical goal of religious activities. Overmyer shows that the cosmology underlying religious events is the shared "belief that the living and the dead, gods, humans and ghosts are all connected by bonds of mutual influence and response" (p. 2). All of the practices are permeated with moral values embedded in family and social life, which can be expressed directly or inferred from what people do in their rituals. He

argues that these values appear in legends about gods and their miraculous responses, as well as in operas performed at festivals (pp. 149, 170). Thus, one can feel a deep connection of religion and social relations. Overmyer proceeds from the assertion that “society and religion are transformations of each other.”

An excellent feature of Overmyer’s research is his combination of the analysis of historical sources (such as the local gazetteers of late imperial times) with that of modern evidence (including oral histories, observations, documents, and opera scripts). This approach helps the author to reconstruct the history of religious events in local communities and demonstrate the transformation of these traditions in combination with the preservation of certain basic elements. Certainly the study of the modern circumstances of local religion in China would be impossible without an overview of the past situation so far as we can reconstruct it. Overmyer also makes an important point in insisting (as elsewhere in his research) on a complex approach to the study of religion that includes geographical, economic, and social factors (p. 3).

In the first chapter, the author analyzes rain rituals as an example of community rituals. The second chapter discusses the historical origins and development of local community rituals. The third is devoted to the leadership and organization of the community rituals with emphasis on their context in self-managed villages.

In the fourth chapter, the author gives an outline of the actual practice of temple festivals in honor of the gods. The fifth chapter deals with the temple and deities that serve as the base of community observances. The sixth analyzes the beliefs and values associated with the community rituals. The conclusion provides some comparative comments with the community festivals in other areas of China.

Noteworthy also is the conclusion about the transformation of popular religious sects (most of which originated in late imperial times) into community-based traditions, with deified sect founders turned into local protective gods (p. 181). This well-substantiated argument constitutes an important addition to the research on Chinese sects previously carried out by Overmyer (see note 1 above), and completes our understanding of the survival of these traditions in the modern period.

In several chapters dealing with various aspects of local religion (notably chapters three and five), the author tries to follow a geographical system in the organization of his material, placing materials from each province into a sub-section. However, he is not always consistent in his approach. For example, chapter four, which also could be divided in this way following the same logic, does not have sub-sections. In chapter five geographical and historical principles seem to be used simultaneously for the organization of sub-sections (some use provinces, some time periods), which does not seem to be a perfect choice. One of the sub-headings in chapter three is “Shaanxi and Heilongjiang.” Heilongjiang may be a typographical error for Heilongjiang, however there is nothing about Heilongjiang, a northeast province far from the geographical area discussed in this book, in this sub-section. One can guess that the name appeared here by mistake.

Overmyer’s book is an outstanding introduction to local religion. However, one should note that many important questions lie beyond the scope of this book. Overmyer emphasizes that his research is limited to the Han nationality (p. 9). However, the specific features of religious life of other nations of North China in the twentieth century, such as Manchus and Mongols, as well as that of numerous communities of Muslims and Christians in this region, deserve special study and analysis. Other important questions regard the transformation of these religious traditions in the process of religious revival in mainland China, which started in the 1980s, and the division of gender roles in local religion (a phenomenon of female religiosity).

Regarding the first point, the reader finds the name of Bai Qiu (Norman Bethune [1890–1939], a Canadian physician who helped the Chinese Communist Revolution) among the lists of gods to whom temples in Hebei are dedicated (p. 135). Overmyer leaves this without comment. It is clear that Bai Qiu entered the folk pantheon because of Communist propaganda; however, the worshippers followed the usual logic of their religion, according to which they deify the humans who are remembered for their extraordinary contributions to the communal welfare (p. 157).³ This reminds me of a case that I witnessed in a small temple maintained

³ Note also the way in which the Chinese transcribed the family name of Bethune, Bai (a common family name), as “Asking-for-Mercy.” Thus he appears as a merciful deity.

mainly by women in a village near Fanzhuang in Zhao county of Hebei. There, a portrait of Mao Zedong, an ardent fighter against traditional forms of religion, appears along with feminized images of Bodhisattvas addressed as mothers (the tradition that Overmyer connects with the female cults of the sects in late imperial times [p. 15]). To my question, the women answered that Chairman Mao should be worshipped for his service to the people and for the good he provided them. They inverted the revolutionary image of Chairman Mao and deified him, according to their usual religious logic. This example shows how persistent, vibrant, and flexible local religion in China is.

Overmyer's book combines a scholarly approach with clarity of language and accessibility. It can be recommended to specialists in the field as well as to beginners in the study of Chinese society, religion, folk literature, theatre, and performing and visual arts.

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Academia Sinica

Tibetan Market Participation in China

Academic Dissertation by Wang Shiyong.

University of Helsinki: Institute of Development Studies, 2009. 200 pages

Electronic version: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-10-5801-1>

The Western discourse on Tibet is often obsessed with issues connected with “human rights,” “political representation,” “democracy,” and “freedom of speech.” Unfortunately, behind these labels there lie hidden objectives that have less to do with the welfare of Tibet and the Tibetans than with a false perception of cultural superiority, reflecting the direct heritage of colonialism and Christian missionaryism. The Western new fundamentalists refuse to realize that creating a “democratic” China would not solve the problems of Tibet; rather, it would worsen them. To understand this, one only needs to look at the Western “democracies” and how they treat their own ethnic minorities who have cultures and languages different from the mainstream of the “nation.” As a state based on the imperial principle, with a strong centralized government, China is, in fact, better equipped to handle internal ethnic differences than the inherently homogeneous nation states that dominate the Western political scene.

The problem is that China is not doing as much as it could, and there are several reasons for this. One reason is that the Chinese also have a tradition of looking down upon the “Barbarians” surrounding the Middle Kingdom. Both the Tibetan nomad and the Tibetan monk represent in Chinese eyes cultural “backwardness” that has to be fought by aggressive acculturation schemes and re-education campaigns. Instead of helping the Tibetan traditional ways of life adapt to modern conditions, China is trying to abolish them altogether in favor of more “civilized” solutions. In this, China is not alone, for all over the world “marginal” cultural patterns are being abandoned in the interests of “modernization” and “urbanization,” and much of this change is not voluntary, but forced by the political and economic authorities, who think they know better.

In the case of Tibet, the Chinese can easily feature themselves as cultural heroes bringing “modernity” to a “backward” region. This is because Tibet herself did not modernize in time,

when she had the chance during the period of independence between 1911 and 1950. However, what is happening today is that China is modernizing *Tibet*, but not the *Tibetans*. Although the Tibetans are forced to abandon their “marginal” ways of life, they are not absorbed into the stream of economic progress that otherwise affects the lives of most Chinese citizens. Instead, the “marginal” traditions are replaced by a new type of marginalization, which leaves the Tibetans helpless in their own country, while the economic benefits from the new policies are reaped by Chinese immigrants flooding into Tibet. Gradually, the Tibetans are being degraded to the level of the North American Indians and other culturally exterminated populations.

The Tibetans still have, of course, many favorable circumstances on their side that the North American Indians do not have. For instance, the Tibetans have a great history with a long tradition of political independence. They also represent an important religious tradition, that of Tibetan Buddhism, which has a worldwide visibility and impact. Most importantly, they have a government in exile with excellent leadership and good connections all over the world. Even so, this government is not recognized by the international community, and its possibilities to affect the lives of the Tibetans living under China are rather minimal. For *these* Tibetans, the issue of statehood or autonomy is not the most urgent; for them the acute task is to survive as individuals and communities in the rapidly changing conditions surrounding them.

This is the background of Wang Shiyong’s thesis, which is focused on finding solutions to prevent the further marginalization of the Tibetan population under China. As a starting point he assumes that the Chinese government is not intentionally trying to marginalize the Tibetans; rather, the marginalization is the result of ignorance and inertia on both sides. In this, he may be quite correct, though, of course, the Chinese government may use marginalization as a tool to promote its long-term interests. Under no conditions would China like the Tibetans to start modernizing themselves without the “help” of the Chinese government. However, modernization under control is not necessarily against the interests of China, for keeping ethnic minorities and regional populations happy is a goal that directly contributes to the strength of the empire.

Corroborated with up-to-date figures and ample statistics, Wang Shiyong’s analysis shows beyond doubt that the Tibetans have not been able to take up the challenge of the modern capitalist market economy offered to them by the communist state of China. In the “free”

competition with, in particular, ethnic Chinese and Chinese Moslems, the Tibetans have all odds against them: they lack the start capital, they lack the social connections, and they lack the know-how to make money. Perhaps most frustratingly, they may even lack the wish of making money, for prosperity for prosperity's sake is something not inherently present in the Tibetan system of values. Although traditional Tibet did have rich landlords and monasteries, there never was any comparably significant native merchant class, as most of the business activities were handled by foreigners from either China (in the north) or India (in the south).

It is, however, obvious that in the modern world the Tibetans cannot survive long without learning the skills of market participation. Wang Shiyong sees the principal solution in vocational and professional education. In spite of their old and sophisticated civilization, the Tibetans under China have a conspicuously poor average level of education, even when compared with other regional "minorities." The old educated elite was either destroyed or exiled by the communists, while the new elite serving the current system is typically involved in administrative and teaching positions and lacks the type of competence necessary for serious economic or industrial activities. For instance, the building boom today going on in Tibetan cities is in the hands of immigrant Chinese entrepreneurs, who employ Chinese workers from their home provinces, leaving only the meanest jobs for Tibetans. When a Chinese entrepreneur needs more labor force, it is both quicker and cheaper to bring in more fellow Chinese than to initiate a training program in construction skills for Tibetan workers who, moreover, are not fluent in Chinese.

Hence, a knowledge of Chinese has also become a prerequisite for success in Tibet. However, Wang Shiyong correctly notes that Chinese is best learnt as a second language, while the actual curriculum in Tibetan schools should be offered in Tibetan. In a majority of all Tibetan schools in China this is not the case; rather, Tibetan-speaking children are processed through a Chinese curriculum, which leaves them ultimately with almost no knowledge of either Chinese or the subject matter. The consistent use of the native language is particularly important in science and mathematics classes, a conclusion confirmed by actual experiments quoted and conducted by Wang Shiyong. Himself originally a bilingual Tibetan-Chinese teacher of science and mathematics, he certainly knows what he is talking about.

A problem mentioned by Wang Shiyong in this connection is the uneven language policy practices in the Tibetan areas under China. Somewhat surprisingly, though perhaps not accidentally, the position of the Tibetan language is particularly fragile in Central Tibet, where Chinese dominates as the language of education in all middle and high schools. The situation is better in some of the other Tibetan areas, today administered under the provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, Gansu and, most importantly, Qinghai. As a result, these areas have emerged as a source of Tibetan intellectuals who can recognize and propose solutions to the problems threatening their people. It is another matter whether the authorities implement these solutions.

One should not overemphasize the significance of education, however. The majority of the Chinese and Moslem immigrants in Tibet, including the business leaders, are, in fact, poorly educated. Not all of them are even fluent in Standard Mandarin, not to speak of full literacy in Written Chinese. Also, many of them do not possess any vocational or professional skills that would make them inherently more likely to succeed in business than the local Tibetans. Apart from a network of social and political connections, their most important asset is simply their numerical superiority: even if many of them may fail, there are always sufficiently many who succeed in order to keep the Tibetans from gaining a secure foothold in the “open” market.

Ideally, both Tibet and the Tibetans could be modernized by what Wang Shiyong identifies as the “people-oriented” approach, implying a model in which economic and development policies are implemented with proper consideration of the local conditions, including ethnic and cultural differences and environmental issues. However, at the present stage, this approach would require not only “positive” measures, like reforming the school system, but also “negative” ones, like, most importantly, stopping the Chinese immigration into the Tibetan areas. One of the most conspicuous aspects of the marginalization of the Tibetans involves the loss of urban environments, as cities like Lhasa have become dominated by Chinese-speaking immigrants with no knowledge of the local language and with little sympathy for the local culture. Under such conditions, there is not much hope that the market participation of the Tibetans can increase.

Although there is little that can be done at the moment, it remains a merit of Wang Shiyong to have taken up the issue of market participation as an important aspect of the Tibetan

question. Clearly, economic development is a major instrument by which the Tibetan culture can be either destroyed or rescued. The solutions are there, and it is the responsibility of the Chinese government to choose which way to go. History shows us that aggressive colonial policies are not the safest way to keep an empire together.

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Chinese as It Is: A 3D Sound Atlas with First 1000 Characters

by Conal Boyce

Indianapolis: Dog Ear Publishing, 2010. xviii, 190 pages

This is a very unusual book, one difficult to categorize precisely. It comprises 38 pages of introductory material, 12 appendices (85 pages in all), and a main section called “The Matrix.” These 62 pages, which make up the heart of the book, are somewhat difficult to describe — the work’s cover features an interpretive illustration of this section in place of an exact description. Conal Boyce has selected roughly 1,000 simplified characters, one for each viable Mandarin syllable, and arranged them in a grid. The four tones are listed along the y-axis; the x-axis is left essentially unlabeled, but it can be understood as if it were labeled *ai*, *an*, *ang*, *ao*, *ba*, *bai*, etc., on through all the possible syllables (when tone is disregarded) of Mandarin (the syllable group *a* is missing for some reason). Each cell, on the most basic level, is filled in with the pīnyīn for a particular Mandarin syllable and a character and brief gloss representing one of the most common words (or morphemes) with this pronunciation. Many cells are left blank, representing the phonetically possible Mandarin syllables which do not happen to exist (or which represent archaic or extremely rare words); there is nothing, for example, in the cell which would have been filled with *ǎng*. Some syllables, such as *shì*, are quite common — in these cases, a number of other frequently-occurring characters with the same pronunciation are listed in smaller type beneath the gloss. When the character Boyce has selected for a given syllable is not used as a single-syllable word in Modern Standard Mandarin (MSM), as is the case with *ān* 安, an example of a word that contains this morpheme is given (here, “peaceful = *ānjìng (de)*”). Boyce scrupulously maintains this distinction between characters that represent MSM words and characters that can only be used to write parts of MSM words. This is very unusual in this kind of book, that is, a learner’s “first 1000 characters”; a beginner using this book would have quite an advantage over the typical user who struggles to learn the importance of this distinction.

This layout, the “3D Sound Atlas” of the book’s subtitle, allows for a quick visual scan of the syllables of Mandarin. Certain kinds of syllables are additionally color-coded or

typographically marked, quickly giving more information to the reader. Among other conventions, syllables written with four or more high-frequency characters are written in green, syllables represented by only one viable character are written in red, the definitions of single characters that have many different definitions (or that write many different homophonous words) are italicized, and entries that represent what the author considers more advanced vocabulary are surrounded by a double border. These features of the book not only allow the reader to absorb general information about the possible syllables of Mandarin, but also give the reader views into the structure of the language. As Boyce points out, for example, the double-bordered cells (containing more advanced vocabulary) not infrequently contain red syllables (syllables represented by only one character); less common syllables naturally tend to write less common words.

The appendices contain a number of perceptive insights, some of which I have rarely if ever seen formulated as clearly. They contain a wide variety of material, some only tenuously related to the text proper. Their variety can be seen from their titles; they bear such names as “Defining the Morphemic Space,” “In Search of a ‘Taming Mechanism’ for English,” “Not Even Wrong,” and “Muchengxue and the Monosyllabic Mystique.” In a discussion of character simplification, the author asks, “who benefits from a ‘simplification’ campaign anyway?” The answer is left unstated, but, as Boyce writes, “the Big Chinese Character Count in the Sky can only ever increase over time ... real people know that they must learn both *jiǎntǐzì* and *fántǐzì*” (p. 112); this may be slightly overstating the case, but it is inarguable that each standardized simplification results in an additional standard character for somebody to learn.

Of the many other asides of this kind given in this book, space permits only a few brief examples. Boyce perceptively includes the graph *ruǐ* 蕊 ‘pistil’ as one of his roughly 1,000 common characters. A typical learner of Mandarin as a foreign language will likely never come across this word, so why has it been included? The graph, as the book points out, is very commonly used in transcription (not “transliteration,” as Boyce writes) of foreign names, making it an important character for the student to be able to recognize. I have never seen this very simple (and valuable) point spelled out before. Boyce also has interesting points to make about the “degraded” state of Mandarin’s tonal system compared to, e.g., Taiwanese or Cantonese (with

Middle Sinitic implicitly taken, I suppose, as “real” Chinese) and about the lexical classification of certain four-syllable compounds which do not quite qualify for *chéngyǔ* status.

Unfortunately, not every one of the appendices is as well thought out as the ones mentioned above (but this is an acceptable fault, I suppose, in an appendix). In an extended defense of the Zhùyīn fúhào 注音符號 (also known as *bopomofo* ㄅㄆㄇㄏ) system of phonetic symbols, Boyce acknowledges one of its faults, and explains at length how, in certain syllables beginning with retroflex or dental sibilant initials (Hànyǔ pīnyīn *shi, zhi, chi, ri, si, ci, zi*), as Zhùyīn fúhào does not explicitly mark vowels, “one can easily forget the implied vowel even exists” (p. 164). It is in fact commonly argued that no vowels do exist in these cases, and a small amount of research could have eliminated this unnecessary digression.¹ Another unfortunate comment concerns the impact of other languages on Chinese during the Tang dynasty — after waving aside changes caused by the introduction of Buddhist vocabulary into Sinitic, he writes that, as far as he is aware, the period “resulted in close to zero impact upon the language” (p. 121). This is certainly quite an understatement.

That the book is simultaneously aimed both at beginning/intermediate learners and at specialists is not the problem it initially seems to be. The so-called “Matrix,” aimed at beginners, makes clear many otherwise easily ignored facts about the relative frequency of the various syllables of Mandarin — it is remarkable, to take one page at random, to see that not only are *sen* and *seng* (spoken with any tone) quite rare as syllables, but that *se* is as well, with only *sè* as a possibility. None of these facts, taken individually, was new to me, but Boyce’s visual presentation forced me to put them together for the first time: for some reason, syllables starting in *se-* are extremely rare in Mandarin (and, relevant to the above-mentioned discussion of Buddhist vocabulary, the syllable group *seng* is represented in this book only by *sēng* 僧, originally an abbreviation for *sēngjiā* 僧伽 ‘monk,’ a syllable that came into the language from the Sanskrit *saṃgha*). And the portion of the book somewhat hesitantly aimed at scholars — the bulk of the front matter together with twelve appendices — comprises some quite original ideas

¹ See, for example, Jerry Norman, *Chinese* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 142. (“After the dental sibilants and retroflexes it [pīnyīn letter *i*] represents a voiced syllabic prolongation of the initial.”)

combined with a very readable introduction to a number of linguistic and orthographic topics of which most beginning students (not to mention a certain number of specialists) are completely unaware. Work in Sinitic linguistics is typically exceptionally opaque to the uninitiated reader; this book's discussions, on the other hand, are accessible to anyone willing to put in a little bit of work. This book would be an excellent addition to the bookshelf of the beginning student of Mandarin language and to that of anyone trying to engage with the sometimes-difficult world of Sinitic linguistics.

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Language Choice and Identity Politics in Taiwan

by Jennifer M. Wei

Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2008. 133 pages

The island of Taiwan is home to various languages. Due to its dominant role in the media and education in the past sixty years, Mandarin, the official language, is now spoken by almost the entire population. Some seventy percent of the people are also speakers of Southern Min dialects, which are collectively referred to as *Taiyu*, literally meaning “Taiwanese language.” Speakers of Hakka dialects make up some twelve percent of the population. The Austronesian languages of Taiwan’s ethnic minorities face extinction, as the number of speakers has dropped below two percent. Although some areas are dominated by particular varieties, Taiwan’s languages are not separated by clear geographical boundaries. As many people in Taiwan are bilingual or even trilingual, mixing of linguistic codes is a ubiquitous phenomenon. Codemixing never occurs randomly; instead, as shown in this detailed study by Jennifer M. Wei, it is determined by various cultural, psychological, and strategic factors.

Wei’s study starts off with the chapter “To -er is to err: Acts of identity in Chinese.” The analysis emanates from the author’s personal experience as a female speaker of Mandarin from Taiwan and her encounters with speakers of northern Mandarin varieties, notably Peking Mandarin, during a stay in the United States. The chapter provides an analysis of language choice represented by the presence or absence of syllable final *-r*. This feature is known from most northern Mandarin dialects, most importantly that of Beijing, but it is absent from Taiwan Mandarin. Wei argues that the presence or absence of *-r* in Mandarin is not a matter of linguistic correctness in a prescriptive sense. Instead, either option represents “contested social meanings” and should therefore be considered as an “act of identity” (p. 4).

Chapter 2 (“Language Choice in Mandarin in Tai-yu”) analyses the switching between different varieties as a strategy in political discourses. This particular field, according to Wei, represents an “often-neglected area” (p. 29) in research on codeswitching. Her analysis is based on one example of codeswitching by former president Chen Shui-bian during a campaign in

2001. The example shows that, depending on specific strategic needs, switching between Mandarin and Taiyu enables politicians like Chen to represent themselves as members of different social groups. By using Mandarin, Chen styles himself a representative of officialdom. The use of Taiyu, a code widely associated with rurality and local authenticity, enables Chen to establish bonds with the common people. The choice of a language is thus the performance of a deliberate political act. As codeswitching significantly affects strategic options, the languages involved in codeswitching “are taking up more of the public domain, including politics, education and the media. Mixing Tai-yu with other languages and alternating various language choices have become all the more prevalent in mundane conversations and popular among politicians in public discourse.” (p. 30)

The interface of language choice and political discourse is further pursued in Chapter 3 (“Chen Shui-bian’s Language Choices”). Adopting Rational Choice models (Myers-Scotton 1993 and Myers-Scotton and Bolonyai 2001), Wei claims that “Chen [Shui-bian], like most politicians, relies on ambiguities inferred from language choice to avoid taking responsibilities for problems, to redefine interpersonal boundaries, and to take refuge in more positive roles” (pp. 33–34). The analysis of various examples of language used by former president Chen in this chapter is preceded by a sketch of the history of twentieth-century language politics in Taiwan.

A more detailed account of Taiwan’s ethnolinguistic struggles in history can be found in Chapter 4. In this chapter, the historical overview is followed by an analysis of language choice in presidential television debates among four nominees of the Democratic Progressive Party in 1995. Comparing language choice as related to power struggles in Taiwan with a case study on Montreal (Heller 1998), Wei reaches the conclusion that “many Taiwanese speakers have experienced the contested meaning of speaking a language and have learned to adopt codeswitching as a way to get on with daily linguistic transactions” (pp. 75f.).

One focus of Chapter 5 (“From Nationalism to Multiculturalism: Making Choices in Language Policy”) is on language in education, notably on the “dilemma of a Mandarin-plus or Mandarin-only program as a case in point” (p. 81). Quoting examples from comments and editorials from the media as well as official documents, Wei shows “that since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Taiwan’s Ministry of Education (MOE) has implemented a revised

language policy in education with a concentric, more inclusive imprint for national identity” (p. 82). Her argument is partly based on the introduction of mother tongue education as a compulsory one-hour course for Taiwanese elementary school students in 2001 and the draft of a language equality law (*yuyan pingdeng fa*).

The final chapter (“A Hybrid Chinese for the Twenty-first Century”) is a summary of the previous chapters. The summary is linked to Wei’s concluding argument in favor of a “hybrid Chinese” — “a de-nationalized and hybridized Mandarin drawing upon features from both local and global interactions as well as a concentric and marginalized identity more compatible than its predecessor, Standard Chinese, in multilingual and multicultural contexts” (p. 103).

As each chapter offers thoughtful discussions of theoretical models as well as historical and legal details, the book is a truly successful example of theoretical reflection in combination with empirical inquiry. It can therefore be recommended to students and specialists of language choice, language politics, and political rhetoric as well as regional specialists focusing on Greater China and/or Taiwan. The meticulous and critical analyses of authentic language data are another merit of the book. Unfortunately, the layout of the quoted examples is anything but clear; readers who are not familiar with at least one of the analyzed varieties will therefore find it difficult to assess the validity of Wei’s conclusions. Some of her claims will certainly not remain unchallenged. It may for example be argued that she tends to overestimate the significance of the mother tongue education program initiated in 2001. As the reviewer has argued before, such measures “are largely of symbolic value and will arguably not lead to substantial changes in Taiwan’s linguistic hierarchy” (Klötter 2006: 219). In short, here and elsewhere, Wei’s claims and conclusions will certainly stimulate further discussion. *Language Choice and Identity Politics in Taiwan* is therefore thought provoking in the best sense of the word. It succeeds in offering new perspectives, challenging old ones, and pointing to directions for future research.

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ABC English–Chinese, Chinese–English Dictionary

by John DeFrancis and Zhang Yanyin, editors

ABC Chinese Dictionary Series

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010. 1,240 pages

Learners of American English spend little time rummaging through their dictionaries for the word *panky*. If by chance they are so moved, they will not find it, which will be meaningful. By contrast, beginning learners, longtime users, and even native speakers of Chinese languages continue to thumb through quaint and curious volumes on the trail of no other. At long last, nearly napping, they *will* find it, which will be the opposite of meaningful. All the more apposite will it be if, thereupon, they are introduced to history's doughty efforts to trap the same beast, *panky* asserted to refer to dubious dalliances 'debauched' in nature, its bedfellow *hanky* those of the merely 'clandestine' variety. If this were not enough, our reader's Sisyphean fate will be to look up one and the same *panky* again and again, at times wittingly, having forgotten some subtlety of its connotations, more often un-, as *panky* can naturally be written with any of a variety of Hànzì — in which bedazzling guises it will likely be unrecognizable.

There is a sense in which such would-be knowledge seekers should not complain: they will in this process wind up accumulating more than their share of would-be knowledge. Fortunately, for those with heartier tastes in *gnosis*, we have had for the past decade the *ABC Chinese–English Dictionary* and its offspring, from the University of Hawai'i Press. Descriptions of the series tend to focus, for good reason, on its innovative arrangement of the words of Modern Standard Mandarin in single-sort alphabetical order. The ordering, however, is really just a consequence of a more substantive innovation: the *ABC Dictionary* aimed to catalog words rather than something else entirely; it would not, decreed its contrarian editors some ten years ago, list *panky*.

This innovative series now also catalogs words of English: its latest incarnation, and first bidirectional effort, is the *ABC English–Chinese Chinese–English Dictionary (ABC-ECCE)*. The present brief "review" of this edition, it must be said, is entirely tongue-in-cheek, as the author

himself served as a some-time proofreader on the project and thus might as well take himself to task for any shortcomings uncovered. Among the many positives, the new English–Chinese section, at 29,670 entries and subentries (“Distinctive Features,” p. viii), is only modestly smaller than Chinese–English, which represents at 37,963 entries an abridgement from the *ABC Chinese–English Comprehensive Dictionary* of 2003. This is a very significant attempt, then, to capture the attention of that different — and considerably larger — section of the reading public that is Chinese-speaking learners of English. The fact does remain, though, that the editors’ decisive move to demystify the Mandarin word has its real potency in the realm of C–E headwords. The Mandarin employed in E–C definitions is, as a matter of course, practical-minded in its devotion to the task of explication — that is, there is no call for *panky*. As a result, the E–C section distinguishes itself largely through its use of Pīnyīn as primary orthography for Mandarin, with (practically) every instance of the language that occurs between the two covers — if not on the cover itself — given first in the Romanized script and only secondarily in characters. In extending this precept to E–C, the editors defy any who might have interpreted the use of Pīnyīn in earlier C–E exclusive editions as a pedagogical device: unambiguously, an approximately phonemic, word-separated script is part and parcel of the linguistic undertaking to which we bear witness. And in fact, reading full dictionary definitions in Romanized Mandarin is, to this critic, usefully revelatory of the medium’s legitimacy. What remains to be seen is the reaction of a general Chinese readership. One can only imagine the Pīnyīn will largely be ignored in such quarters — though if the editorial board’s thinking is in terms of a foot in the door, however heavy that door may be, perhaps time will show their decision here to have been a success.

Both sections contain relatively thorough coverage of matters grammatical, continued from the *Comprehensive Dictionary*, while newly adopted is a grade-level notation system (“Selection of Explication of Entries”, pp. 5 and 508) whereby a portion of headwords are marked, employing data drawn from other sources, with from one to four dots according to relative frequency and importance. The ordered relisting of all such Mandarin words, in particular, in one of the substantial appendices is to my mind a further tool for which learners should have much use. We find, in addition, both sections bolstered by a now very considerable

number of example sentences (again: Pīnyīn and then characters are provided in every case). If there is one issue to be addressed in future editions, it might be the numerous instances in which such sentences fall a bit short of the desired degree of idiomaticity: to focus on the first pages of C–E, for example, under *àishǒu' àijiǎo* (p. 521–l), Wǒ máng jíle, bié zài zhèr àishǒu' àijiǎo de > “I’m awfully busy, so stop hanging around here.” To be preferred might be a device that better emphasizes the inhibitory behavior of which the listener is accused (“in my hair,” “under foot,” “getting in the way”?); under ¹*ān* (p. 521–r), Tāmen ān de shì shénme xīn? > “What are they up to?” the English has many entirely innocent applications quite different from the Mandarin’s suggestion of “What are they scheming at?”; under ²*àn* (p. 521–r), Tā ànbuzhù xīntóu nùhuǒ > “He can’t control his temper.” the Mandarin is clearly narrative (“He couldn’t restrain the rage in his heart”?), not a description of a personality trait.

To be noted along with these are a few minor additional blemishes that go more to the heart of the dictionary’s noble intent: for instance, we might wish for a listing of commonly-heard *xìpāo* ‘cell’ in addition to *xìbāo* (p. 969–l), or at least a cross-reference; there are a number of similar cases, as unlisted *ènniǔ* ‘button’ as it relates to listed *ànniǔ* (p. 522–r). In the case of listed *huāgūduo(r)* ‘bud’ (p. 684–l), also and (more?) commonly unlisted *huāgūdu(r)*, the issue extends to orthographical variation, with 〈花咕嘟〉, 〈花咕噪〉, 〈花咕朵〉, and so forth all possible in addition to the 〈花骨朵〉 provided — though in general, *ABC–ECCE* is a model for coping with such discrepancies. A more discomfiting shortcoming from a purist’s perspective is that this new edition, like the *Comprehensive Dictionary* before it ... does in fact list *panky*. This might be seen as a nod to tradition, but is really more a nod to pragmatism, for the beginning reader of Chinese-character texts is given no orthographic indication of lexical (and thus look-up-able) units and thus arguably deserves some indication beyond silence that he or she is on the wrong track. To this end, at entries like *panky* — as *dié* (p. 607–r), the second syllable of *húdié* ‘butterfly,’ or more illustrative, *guǎn* (p. 656–r), a bound morpheme appearing in *fànguǎn(r)* ‘restaurant,’ *lǚguǎn* ‘inn’, etc., *ABC–ECCE* provides ahead of the “definitions” (these consisting of brief glosses of and cross-references to a selection of words in which the syllable and/or morpheme at issue features) the notation “B.F.” This shorthand is said at “Abbreviations” (p. ix)

to mean “bound form”; while appreciating the need for such a device, I might be tempted to provide to students an alternative reading: “best forgotten.”

If it is ultimately judged a necessary accommodation, this “B.F.” could hardly be printed too big or too bold for my tastes. The worst mistake, after all, would be to imagine that the *panky* phenomenon extends only to a marginal portion of the Mandarin lexicon. It is, emphatically, endemic to character-based representation. Traditional grouping by the “morpho-syllables” compelled by such representation introduces an order of a sort, but an order largely counterproductive to the proper apprehension of the really meaningful units of the language. Even given cases where a character representation accurately reflects morphemic constituency, such historical constituencies (as importantly opposed to internal structures — as “V.O.,” etc. — implied by the synchronic operations of the grammar) are generally not a matter to which language-learners need pay much attention, and may pay attention to their peril.

The series editors have certainly dared to dream, and slowly but surely, their vision has grown the more corporeal. Appreciative readers might in their turn dream of a (distant) future edition of *ABC* that includes available etymological information or *locus classici* for key words and phrases — even, perhaps, of a “real” dictionary of Classical Chinese that might complement Axel Schuessler’s *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*. For now, though, the rock-solid lexical grounding provided by *ABC–ECCE* and its antecedents should help one to keep one’s head when engaging reference works devoted to such more specialized information but organized according to traditional rubrics. It should be noted that *ABC–ECCE* measures only 4.5 by 7.5 inches, and so won’t require you to rearrange your bookshelf. If you are a longtime student of Mandarin and lack previous exploration into the series, however, it may be cause, as it was for me, to rearrange your brain. Let us find it an opportunity to sweep away some unwanted detritus, and thus to say, to all manner of lexicological hanky-panky, nevermore ... or at least much less frequently.

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Learning Chinese, Turning Chinese: Challenges to Becoming Sinophone in a Globalized World

by Edward McDonald

London: Routledge, 2011. 264 pages

I can't remember when I've been more excited by a book's title, and more disappointed by the book itself. From the publisher's description and the table of contents, the book would seem to be offering a broad diagnosis of the problems of current Chinese language textbooks, advice on how to better incorporate cultural aspects into language teaching texts, an indictment of the "fetishism" of Chinese characters, and above all, techniques for "developing a fluency and facility at operating in Chinese-language contexts comparable to their own mother tongue." Finally! This appeared to be a long overdue critique of the current brain-dead ways of teaching Chinese, and advice from an experienced, acculturated expat scholar on how to really get students inside the language and culture.

Unfortunately, this is yet another book that can't be judged by its cover. What the reader actually gets is a mixture of Derrida, Foucault, critical discourse analysis, "social semiotics," textual deconstruction, and identity theory, along with thumbnail overviews of various long-standing sinological controversies and feuds about the Chinese language and script — none of which are likely to jumpstart a weak Chinese language curriculum. Why this approach? As the author says, the treatment of these issues is meant to be "suggestive rather than comprehensive," and they are offered only to show how these domains are relevant to Chinese language studies. Nevertheless, to someone interested in practical language pedagogy, the book comes across as disappointingly meta-theoretical — a hodge-podge of *theories about how one might make a theory* for turning students into "sinophones."

In short, there is precious little in the book about even tweaking, much less revolutionizing, Chinese language textbook design; no shovel-ready projects on how to facilitate student immersion into Chinese culture; no practical advice on how to "turn Chinese" while learning Chinese, and little of immediate application toward the advertised goal of "becoming a sinophone in a globalized world."

The problem with this book is not just that it fails to live up to its promised thesis; it does

not really even have a thesis. It is essentially a cut-and-paste collection of various topics in Chinese studies (some very fascinating, it must be said) loosely or indirectly related to learning Chinese. In the few sections where McDonald directly confronts some aspect of practical language learning (such as the chapter in which he identifies conflicting paradigms in Chinese language textbooks), the discussion merely identifies a longstanding problem, without offering any solutions. The few explicit principles that he espouses (things like “learning in the language environment rather than the classroom,” “learning texts through contexts,” etc.) are by now uncontroversial truisms, and amount to empty slogans rather than new strategies.

To be fair, there is a lot of worthwhile and fun stuff here. There is an engaging account of ongoing historical discussion between scholars like Pound, Boodberg, Creel, and, more recently, Chad Hansen, about the nature of Chinese characters and how they represent meaning. There is a snapshot of Shen Xiaolong, a linguist with delusions of grandeur who thinks his “Chinese Cultural Linguistics” critique of Western linguistic theory constitutes a second Chomskyan revolution. (McDonald’s name figures prominently in some of Shen’s own writings, and the two of them have an ongoing research collaboration entitled “East–West dialogue on language and culture.”) Indeed, throughout the book there are many pointers to important domains that may very well be fruitfully applied to Chinese language studies. Any of these issues might deserve a complete volume, or at least a substantial chapter; but instead each is given a perfunctory few pages, and not effectively co-opted toward the ostensible purpose of the book. This is a pity, because McDonald is clearly a brilliant fellow with a unique resume, and has clearly made substantial inroads into many of these areas.

McDonald’s approach results in, to my mind, many missed opportunities in the book. The chapter on Chinese character “fetishisation” was not what I assumed it was about — and not what I think it *should* have been about, namely the overemphasis on character memorization in the process of Chinese learning. Instead the reader is given a somewhat abstruse account of the colossal historical misunderstandings and mystifications about the nature and function of Chinese characters. Even given this focus, the chapter would have been better served with more than just a token citation from a titan in the field, the late John DeFrancis (whose name is not even in the index of the book, for heaven’s sake!), or perhaps William Hannas (whose name is

also not in the index, even though he and his books are dismissed in a simplistic and offhand manner in a later chapter). The reader might have benefitted more from some academic clarity than this catalogue of historical befuddlement.

The most frustrating sections of the book are, ironically, the most concrete and fully fleshed-out case studies, which, though interesting on their own merits, seem somewhat gratuitous and unproductive for the purpose at hand. The first is a linguistic biography of former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, whose experience is too idiosyncratic to be of much instruction (indeed, the chapter concludes with the obvious statement that “Every learner is unique”). The second case study is a Foucault-drenched post-modernist analysis of the importation of the concept “metrosexuality” into Chinese. (I had to import the term into my own concept network as well, but then I’m a bit out of touch.) And finally, the book concludes with a rather self-indulgent sociolinguistic autobiography of the author himself, recounting his initial forays into Chinese studies, the choosing of his Chinese name, and musings about “the discursive creation of identity.”

I should have known something was amiss at the very beginning chapter. McDonald sets the stage with an extended discussion about Beijing taxi drivers, noting that Beijing cabbies constantly complain of the Chinese people having a very low “quality,” rendering the taxi driver’s word in *pinyin* from the quoted dialogue as *sùzhì*. Though standard dictionaries give this as the “correct” reading of the word, anybody who has spent any time talking to a Beijing cab driver would know that they pronounce the word as *sùzhi*, with a neutral tone on the second syllable. This aroused my suspicions about the usefulness of the book from the outset. To get such a detail wrong on the very first page of the book (or at least to fail to note the tonal difference) when the *whole point* of the example is the importance of learning from the actual speech of natives, does not bode well for the rest. And indeed, despite the book’s down-to-earth introduction, most of the chapters are situated in the rarified atmosphere of academia’s halls, and not the sweaty interior of a Beijing taxi.

In a way, this book is very Chinese in its structure and content. Chinese writers are fond of writing books on various topics in a free-wheeling discursive fashion that does not pretend to cover any aspect definitively, or to be useful in a mundane sense. McDonald’s book is somewhat

in this tradition. Perhaps he should have simply written the book in Chinese and given it the title *Duìwài Hànyǔ zátán* 《对外汉语杂谈》, and there would be no complaints from me. As it is, there's nothing wrong with the original title — he should just write a different book to go along with it.

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