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IN DEFENSE OF THE VISUAL

Reflections on an Illustrious Career

Introduction

On November 18, 2010, the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery awarded the Charles Lang Freer Medal to James Cahill, former curator of Chinese art at the Freer and eminent scholar in many topics of Chinese and Japanese art history, in recognition of a lifetime of seminal contributions to his field. Over the years, Cahill’s scholarly writings and collaborative projects with other prominent Chinese art specialists have played an important role in the development of Chinese art history studies internationally. A specialist in Chinese painting, he has researched major artists and their masterworks as well as lesser-known painters, thereby broadly expanding subjects of study.

Born in 1926 at Fort Bragg, Calif., James Cahill received his bachelor’s degree in Oriental Languages from the University of California, Berkeley (1950) and his master’s (1952) and doctorate degrees (1958) in art history from the University of Michigan. While pursuing his doctoral studies, he worked principally with the distinguished historian of Chinese art Max Loehr, a recipient of the Freer Medal in 1983; the eminent Japanese art historian Shujiro Shimada at Kyoto University; and with Swedish scholar Osvald Sirén, the first recipient of the Freer Medal, on his monumental seven-volume Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles.

In 1958, Cahill joined the Freer as curator of Chinese art and painstakingly surveyed the extensive collection, leaving detailed observations that are still regularly quoted today. With Rutherford J. Gettens and John A. Pope, he also produced the landmark publication, The Freer Chinese Bronzes (1967), a work centered on the museum’s ancient Chinese ritual vessels.

In 1965, he joined the history of art department at UC Berkeley, where he taught until his retirement in 1994. In 1973, he was one of the first American art historians to visit China, and in 1977 he returned to China as chairman of the “Chinese Old Painting Delegation,” where he was given unprecedented access to painting collections. He has received two Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Awards from the College Art Association and is currently professor emeritus in the history of art department at Berkeley.

The Charles Lang Freer Medal was established by the Smithsonian Institution in 1956 to honor distinguished career contributions by scholars in the history of Asian and Near Eastern Art. Cahill is the twelfth honoree in an eminent group of earlier recipients, the most recent being Oleg Grabar in 2001. The following essay has been adapted from Cahill’s acceptance remarks at the November award ceremony.
I MUST BEGIN BY EXPRESSING MY FEELINGS of extreme pleasure and honor at receiving this prestigious and unexpected award (fig. 1). That "unexpected" is real: looking over the list of previous recipients, I could scarcely imagine myself joining it, including as it does—among the Chinese art specialists, that is—so many of my teachers and heroes. I knew all of them, learned from them, interacted with them, and feel now that I am here as a very old person, like Dustin Hoffman at the beginning of Little Big Man, who has somehow survived to tell the tale and had best do it while he still can.

That feeling of pleasure and honor was my first reaction on receiving the letter from Julian Raby, director of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, and I suppose it was normal enough. My second and third reactions are odder, and one, at least, needs to be explained. First, it struck me that almost exactly one Chinese cycle of sixty years—which is, as many of you know, the way the Chinese measure long stretches of history—has passed since I first arrived at the Freer Gallery of Art in the autumn of 1950 with a new bachelor's degree in Oriental Languages from the University of California in Berkeley and a Hackney Scholarship. And second, an odder thought: that someone with a very sharp ear for prose style, reading the 1965 address of the third recipient of the Freer Medal, Yukio Yashiro (fig. 2), and that of the twelfth, i.e., me, might detect a curious similarity between them. And that is because the English text of Yashiro's talk and my address were written by the same person—me. A prominent Japanese art scholar in Tokyo like Yashiro, faced with the need for giving a talk in English, would be likely to bring his Japanese text for translation to the dealer Mayuyama Ryūsendō, who performed many such services for art scholars. While Junkichi Mayuyama and his young assistants, in suits and neckties, entertained customers and showed them works of art on the lower floors of Ryūsendō, my close friend and Tokyo sake-bar drinking companion Haruo Igaki worked away in shirtsleeves on the top floor, handling much of the firm's correspondence, keeping accounts, and doing translations when needed. And I, whenever I was in Tokyo—where I spent a lot of time, since it was my favorite city in all the world—often helped him by rewriting English texts, as I did with Yashiro's, working from the Japanese original and Igaki's rough English rendering. So I knew it before it was delivered and was deeply impressed by the story it tells. I will return to that later.

Louise Wallace Hackney wanted the scholarship she funded to train young specialists in the kind of work she herself had done in cataloguing the Chinese painting collection of Ada Small Moore, which is now at Yale University.1 She had catalogued it, that is, together with a Chinese collaborator who could read the inscriptions, identify the seals, use textual sources for the artists' biographies, and otherwise construct full entries for the paintings. (It was acceptable in those days for a non-Chinese-reading author to cowrite a book with a Chinese collaborator. Agnes
Meyer, one of the original Friends of the Freer, had done it with her book on Li Gonglin; Sir Percival David, the poet Witter Bynner, and many others had done it as well.) Hackney’s collaborator was C. F. Yau, the dealer who had sold Moore most of her paintings. (Fortunately for him, he did not need to deal with questions of authenticity; serious concern with that was still a project for the future.) Hackney specified that the recipient of her scholarship spend a year at a museum with a strong Chinese painting collection learning to “catalogue” Chinese paintings, using Chinese-language sources. The recipient needed, of course, to have studied literary Chinese, as I had; the age of depending on Chinese collaborators was ending. I was the first holder of the Hackney Scholarship; although it had been offered for five years, no qualified applicant had appeared before. I worked mainly with Archibald Wenley, the director of the Freer at that time, and received a good grounding in producing what at the Freer were called “folder sheets,” putting together just that kind of information for the paintings. It is a project I still believe to be an important part of Chinese painting studies.

After my Hackney year at the Freer, I was fortunate enough to enjoy a succession of opportunities for learning other approaches, all by sheer good luck. I never, as I realized later, made a conscious decision about the direction I would pursue or the scholarships I would apply for. I had neared the end of my undergraduate studies at Berkeley with no clear idea of where I would go from there, only a vague notion that I would become a translator of Japanese literature, and do for *Heike monogatari* what Waley had done for *Genji*. Then my teacher Ed Schafer pointed out a notice about the Hackney Scholarship in the back pages of an issue of the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* and, knowing that Chinese painting was one of my interests, urged me to apply for it. After my year at the Freer, I moved on for further study, more or less automatically, to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, which has close academic ties with the Freer. And by supreme good fortune, I arrived just as Max Loehr went there to teach and was sitting in the front row at his first lecture.

Through Loehr, I was exposed to the great German tradition of art history, which he represented at the highest level for Chinese art scholarship in his generation. After taking a master’s degree at Michigan in 1953, I was awarded, after applying on the urging of one of the faculty there, a fellowship to study museum practice for a year at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. And during that year, besides working with Alan Priest, Aschwin Lippe, and others, I found myself spending a lot of time with Wang Liqian, or C. C. Wang, who represented, for his generation, traditional Chinese connoisseurship at its highest level. I was later to spend many days with Wang at the Freer, at the Palace Museum storage area in Taichung, and elsewhere, looking at paintings together—that is how one learned from him. And
then, again on someone’s advice, I applied for and received a Fulbright scholarship to Japan and spent a year in Kyoto working with Shimada Shūjirō, learning from him something of the great Japanese tradition of dealing with Chinese paintings. Shimada took me to visit such notable collectors as Sumitomo, Takashima, and Kawabata Yasunari to see the paintings they owned. And again, I learned mainly by looking and listening through all these viewing sessions.

While I was in Kyoto, Osvald Sirén came there and persuaded me to come to Stockholm at the end of my Fulbright year to work for him, and I agreed. Sirén is not one of my heroes, and I can’t say I learned much of real value from him. As a pupil of Bernard Berenson, Sirén was assigned the role of doing Chinese painting what Berenson had done for Italian painting. Thus, he should have developed a connoisseur’s penetrating eye for Chinese painting. But, as Alexander Soper pointed out in a review published while Sirén was still alive, he never did, and he ended as a tireless gatherer, assembling photographs, appropriating information and translations from others without compunction to produce weighty but not deeply perceptive books on Chinese art.

Traveling in Europe after my three months in Stockholm, however, brought me into contact with many collectors, scholars, and dealers, such as Jean-Pierre Dubosc, who with Laurence Sickman introduced Ming–Qing painting to the United States. I later compared myself to the Buddhist pilgrim Sudhana who went about the universe seeking out the great bodhisattvas to receive their teaching.

I returned to the Freer to finish my doctoral dissertation, devoting half of it to a first attempt in any Western language to lay out the theoretical foundations of wenren hua or literati painting, introducing numerous quotations I had found by browsing through old Chinese books in the Freer library. This was very much a text-reader’s project. I became, in my excitement over opening up this new subject area, virtually a partisan of literati painting, working to introduce it to readers and viewers unfamiliar with it. I was struck, for one thing, by its divorcement of expression from the work’s representational content, in which it seemed strikingly to parallel or predict the abstract expressionist painting that was just then flourishing in the United States. More recently, in my later life, my engagement with this doctrine has made me more a critic than a proponent of it, as I have come to realize how badly it has blocked our appreciation of other kinds of Chinese paintings and worked against their survival.

In the 1950s, however, my role as a spokesman for literati painting enabled me to become a member of the remarkable team put together by John Fairbank and others to produce a series of symposia and volumes on Confucianism; my contribution, presented at the 1958 conference in this series, was an essay titled “Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting.” And it was largely in this context that I
came to know the great historian Joseph Levenson, who would briefly become a good friend and colleague when we both taught at UC Berkeley, before his tragic early death, and who had a profound impact on my way of thinking and working.\(^8\)

Before continuing, I want to speak of the extraordinary sense of camaraderie enjoyed by all of us at the Freer at that time. Wenley, although one cannot claim he was a major innovative scholar, was a very effective administrator, besides being a man of deep moral principles\(^9\); relations within the staff who served under him were on the whole harmonious. The really indispensable person at the Freer in that early period was the remarkable Burns A. Stubbs, who arrived as a guard but mastered so many skills and took on so many functions over the years—managing the storage and installation of objects, doing the photography, writing the text for the Peacock Room pamphlet—that it was unclear how the Freer could continue without him when he retired in 1956. I made an album of twenty clumsily drawn pictures for presentation to him on that occasion; they showed him teaching a new arrival at the Freer (Wenley) about Chinese paintings, photographing the Freer bronzes, writing the Peacock Room essay,\(^{10}\) and leading the annual procession through the heating-duct tunnel to the main Smithsonian building, bearing objects considered for purchase, which had to be shown to the Smithsonian Regents at their annual meeting but could not, by the terms of Freer’s will, be taken out of the building—this was the curious expedient for circumventing these conflicting requirements (figs. 3, 4).

Laurence Sickman, director of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, came sometimes to the Freer, and I got to know him in various contexts as a good friend. I would stop overnight in Kansas City on my way across the country—this was before nonstop flights were common—and Larry would put me up in his modest but comfortable house. We spent a lot of time looking at paintings together. Among his strengths was the breadth of his tastes and expertise in areas of Chinese art ignored by most others, including furniture and what he called dongxi, things or objects; these tastes he had absorbed during his years in China. And I was one of the
team Larry brought together in 1960–61 to catalogue the newly formed Crawford Collection.11

Other visitors to the Freer included Zhang Daqian, who had been in Japan during my Fulbright year there and whom I'd come to know well. We conversed in our one common language, Japanese, in which both of us were fairly fluent. He had advised and encouraged me in my first major purchase of a Chinese painting for my own collection, the Fisherman handscroll by Wu Wei; I needed support before putting out the purchase price, which was around $150, a big amount for a Fulbright student.12 There is a photograph of us together, taken on the Freer steps in 1958 after one of Zhang's visits; with us are his wife and son and his artist-disciple, Mrs. Fang Zhaoling.13

I had become aware of Zhang's forgeries of early Chinese paintings while in Japan and even more so in Hong Kong and Paris on the way home, and identified one among recent Freer purchases after my return.14 Detecting them became an important project for me. Zhang and I remained friends; I thought of him as a respected adversary with whom I was playing a high-level game. But in time I began to worry that too much of the limited funds available to major museums for purchasing early Chinese paintings was being spent on Zhang's fakes, and I set about trying to expose him—a project too long and complex even to outline here. His daughter Sing was for a time my student.

It was also in the late 1950s and early '60s that I was engaged in a series of large projects involving the National Palace Museum collection in Taiwan, which at that time was stored in an old sugar-cane factory some miles outside Taichung. It was only in 1965 that the present Palace Museum buildings outside Taipei were opened,
and the collection moved there.\textsuperscript{15} I visited it briefly in 1955 to see Yuan paintings for my dissertation; in 1958 and \textsuperscript{'59}, I was back, together with C. C. Wang, to choose paintings to reproduce—most of them for the first time in color—in the book \textit{Chinese Painting} that I was writing for the Swiss publisher Albert Skira.\textsuperscript{16}

In 1961 the great exhibition \textit{Chinese Art Treasures} came to the National Gallery, with a catalogue written mostly by John Pope and me at the Freer and Aschwin Lippe at the Met. I organized a "post-mortem symposium" in 1962 as a follow-up to that, to discuss controversial paintings that had been in it; this went on for two days in the basement auditorium of Asia House Gallery.\textsuperscript{17} I sat at the head table along with Larry Sickman and Lippe, choosing slides to show and inviting opinions about the paintings from members of the audience, which included just about everybody in Chinese painting studies at that time; it was our first grand gathering. Helping us by running slides and recording the proceedings were young graduate students from Princeton with names like John Hay and Roderick Whitfield. The two days of highly stimulating discussion began with the well-known painting, \textit{The Emperor Minghuang's Journey to Shu}, National Palace Museum, Taipei, which Max Loehr and Alec Soper dated exactly a millennium apart—Max in the eighth century, Alec in the eighteenth. This demonstrated how far from agreement we scholars still were, to the dismay of some dealers and collectors in the audience. The event was funded with a $750 grant I had applied for and received from the American Council of Learned Societies committee I'd served on, and I returned some of the money unspent. I did not know any better; the great age of big-spending symposia still lay ahead.

For the winter of 1962–63 I organized, with much help from Dick Edwards at the University of Michigan, a large-scale project to photograph paintings in that greatest of collections, which was still stored outside Taichung; Ray Schwartz of the Freer was the photographer this time. A side project, assigned to me by the female employees at the Freer before we left, was to find a wife for Ray, who was fortyish, still unmarried, and very shy.\textsuperscript{18}

Both projects were highly successful. I have a photograph that shows Ray and his future wife, Janny, a few minutes before he proposed to her; we—my then-wife Dorothy and our children, Nicholas and Sarah—had taken them on an outing to an obscure and scenic river gorge north of Taichung, since she could not be seen with him in public. The photographs from the project were deposited at the University of Michigan, becoming the original basis for the Asian Art Photographic Distribution Service.

During my last years at the Freer, up to my departure in 1965, I was an active participant in another major project, producing the Freer bronzes catalogue—which was not published until 1967, but was in preparation during those years.\textsuperscript{19} My role
Charles Lang Freer, Hara Tomitaro, and others at Hara’s villa near Yokohama, 1907.

was to write the sections on style and dating. John Pope, the all-over editor, generously assigned me this job in spite of his own skepticism about the value of the kind of style studies I had learned from Max Loehr. Noel Barnard, who worked on the inscriptions, always scoffed at style studies as purely subjective matters of feeling with no sound basis. Loehr had by this time published, in 1953, his modest but epochal study of “The Bronze Styles of the Anyang Period.” But it was only later that Alexander Soper and others would come to recognize the triumph it represented, using as it did the concept of “an internal logic of development” to define the earliest, pre-Anyang styles of bronze décor before archaeology proved Loehr right, where the three great text-and-inscription readers of his time, Umehara, Karlgren, and Li Chi, had all got it wrong. Pope had recognized an age of division in his famous “Sinology or Art History” article published in 1947, which was in large part a highly negative assessment of the work of Loehr’s teacher Ludwig Bachhofer, who indeed had written on Chinese art without being able to read Chinese. But the issue became moot in the generation of Loehr and Soper, scholars who were trained and accomplished in both “sinology and art history,” and who set models for all of us who followed, for whom the same dual competence would be routinely expected.

I have arrived at last at what is really the underlying theme of this talk: The “sinology or art history” controversy, although relegated to the past in the train-
ing of specialist scholars, continues in a new form as a deep division between basic approaches, defined now as verbal versus visual: using your eyes mainly to read texts or mainly to look at works of art. Unhappily, it has assumed a dimension of false cultural pride: some scholars, especially in China, argue that visual kinds of art history represent a foreign intrusion that should be resisted in favor of what they see as a traditional Chinese emphasis on research in texts. I have tried to show the wrongness of that belief in an argument of my own that cannot be repeated here at length; you can read it on my website. In short, I argue that the great theorists and critics, such as Dong Qichang who wrote the texts on which the “verbal approach” largely depends, in fact spent as much of their time as they could looking at paintings; but in that pre-photography age there was no way they could transmit the benefits of their deep visual engagement with those paintings in their writings. So we get a false and much-reduced sense of what these writers really knew and believed about painting.

I want to return now to the story told in Yukio Yashiro’s Freer Medal paper, which concerns Charles Lang Freer’s second visit to Japan in the summer of 1907. (In what follows I depend also on information from Tom Lawton’s writings and his greatly valued help, as well as on an essay by Ingrid Larsen that she generously made available to me.)

Yashiro explained how his relative Nomura Yûzô met Freer when his boat docked in Yokohama, rescuing him from a customs official who was giving him trouble, and took him to the villa of the great collector Hara Tomitaro (fig. 5), who later introduced him to another major collector, Masuda Takashi. Alas, Freer’s diary for that year (to which I have had access through the kindness of David Hogge, archivist at the Freer and Sackler) contradicts most of Yashiro’s entertaining story; either he or Nomura must have misremembered (fig. 6). Freer arrived in Kobe, not Yokohama, had no special customs problem, and did not meet Nomura until
later. But it is true that the introduction to Hara came from Nomura, and that Freer spent two weeks living in Hara's villa outside Yokohama seeing works of art, and later spent a lot of time doing the same with Masuda and other prominent collectors in Tokyo. Neither Hara nor Masuda was an academic scholar; both were rich businessmen who had refined their connoisseurial eyes through collecting. Yashiro's point, which I believe still has much validity, was that these two were instrumental in introducing Freer to what they took to be, and what we still recognize as, the loftier levels of taste in Japanese and Chinese art: early Japanese enaki and Yamato-e, the paintings of Sôtatsu and the Rimpa school in Japan, Japanese tea wares, early Chinese paintings.

The tea wares were not new to Freer, who had already acquired notable examples of Japanese ceramics, such as a Kôetsu teabowl from 1899 and a fine piece of Shino ware from 1902. And he had already disposed of all his Japanese prints and generally moved away from the kind of fin-de-siècle taste for japoniserie that he had learned from Whistler and others. I don't need (and haven't time) to remind you of his triumphs of acquisition in enaki and Rimpa; for tea wares, I will only recall those exciting days when I accompanied and helped Koyama Fujio as he went through the cabinets in the Freer's Japanese ceramics storage room. Others for whom I had opened those cabinets had glanced quickly over their contents before signaling that I should close them again; the Freer's first director, John Lodge, had taken all the pots out of their inscribed boxes and put the boxes in the basement, where they were lost. For box-readers, close relatives for ceramics of text-readers for paintings, this effectively robbed the pots of interest and value. Koyama, himself an accomplished potter, used his eyes and his fingers to judge the pots themselves and found unrecognized treasures. [Editor's note: Recently the Freer's art handlers have begun to reunite objects with their original boxes, many of which are made from strong but light, warp-resistant pawlonia wood (an aid in keeping out bugs and maintaining a stable temperature).]

I do want, however, to join Lawton and Larsen in recognizing Freer's extraordinary achievement in acquiring early Chinese paintings. Larsen and others emphasize, for this, the influence of Ernest Fenollosa, and I don't dispute that Fenollosa's high regard for Song painting, his disdain for the "literary formalism" that afflicted much painting from Yuan and later, must have set Freer initially in this direction. Fenollosa had given Freer introductions to people in Japan and assured him that "You may safely trust to your own judgment of paintings, better than anybody's." But that was a Yankee boast, recognizable from our vantage point as, for both men in 1906, still far from true. For Freer's development as a connoisseur of early Chinese painting, I would still incline to see his experience of that summer in Japan as crucial. He himself suggested as much in a letter he wrote in 1909 from Peking,
quoted by Lawton and Larsen, in which he writes: “Thanks to Fenollosa’s superior teachings and the splendid opportunities given me in Japan during the summer of 1907, when I saw practically all of the early Chinese paintings owned publicly and privately in Japan, I knew what to search for when I began my quest here—I mean Peking—.”

From old records we can determine the Song paintings that Hara and Masuda owned and probably showed to Freer. We can guess at what he may have seen elsewhere, again from old records and reproduction books but also from his diary—in which, like Fenollosa, he uses Japanese pronunciations for the artists’ names: Bayen, Kakei, Barin, and Río Kai for Ma Yuan, Xia Gui, Ma Lin, and Liang Kai. Well-known collectors appear there too among Freer’s hosts: Nezu, Marquis Kuroda, Kawasaki, Count Date. For my present purpose, it is enough to say that the Song works he might have seen make up a deeply impressive group. I can only add that my own experience over many years of being shown great early Chinese paintings by Japanese collectors, scholars, and dealers gives me some sense of the benefits that Freer must have derived, during that remarkable summer, from doing this over and over until he had seen “nearly all the ... early Chinese paintings in Japan” in the company of major collectors such as Hara, Masuda, and the others.

And that new level of connoisseurship is reflected, I think, in Freer’s later purchases. In 1908 he bought the Hills in Fog ascribed to Mi Fu, a work we still use to represent that artist while not quite accepting the attribution; in 1911, the fine and important Rapids in a Mountain Valley, formerly Misty Gorge (fig. 7), which reportedly had a Xia Gui signature, lost in remounting, and the earliest extant version of
the Double Screen picture by Zhou Wenju. (Another version in Beijing is a later copy, as Tom Lawton's book on figure painting correctly points out.) In 1914 he bought the Freer version of the Gu Kaizhi-attributed Nymph of the Luo River composition, and in 1916 the Clearing Autumn Skies handscroll attributed to Guo Xi, as well as the River in Shu handscroll ascribed to Li Gonglin, which had been one of the “Four Treasures” of the Qianlong Emperor. Quite a few others could be added, and this is leaving out an impressive group of Buddhist, Daoist, and Chan Buddhist paintings among these early acquisitions. And all along Freer was also buying fine and important if wrongly attributed Ming-Qing paintings, such as the well-known picture of the principals from the drama Xixiang-ji, which, if one ignores a preposterous old attribution to Zhou Wenju, is a fine work of the kind I call "vernacular painting" and in fact is the picture that opens the last chapter of my recent book, Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China. My point is that no other collector outside Asia had done as well; academic scholars such as Fenollosa and Berthold Laufer, or a would-be Chinese-style scholar-collector like John Ferguson, were left far behind. Freer's summer of 1907 and its aftermath make up, I believe, a turning point in the history of the appreciation of Chinese painting in the West.

After my move from the Freer Gallery back to UC Berkeley in 1965, now as a professor of Chinese art history, where I was to teach for the next thirty years, I was able to organize exhibitions with seminars of graduate students, notably the Restless Landscape exhibition of late Ming painting in 1971 and the Shadows of Mt. Huang exhibition of Anhui-school painting in 1981. Some of those students and others have become leading figures in today's world of Chinese painting studies.

Students in my courses were given regular viewing sessions at the nearby University Art Museum where we looked at actual paintings in storage, close-up. They were also made aware of what I took to be landmarks in the history of the field; those in my course on early painting, for instance, always read Soper's two Art Bulletin articles on "Early Chinese Landscape Painting" and "Life Motion and the Sense of Space," along with writings by Sickman, Loehr, Michael Sullivan, and others. The need for putting together lecture courses on post-Song painting led me to undertake a series of volumes on later Chinese painting, of which three were finished and published before I turned to other projects that were not defined by periods.

Those later projects were mostly initiated by invitations to give lecture series, including the Norton Lectures at Harvard in 1978–79 and others later. I never wrote a book on early Chinese painting through Song, but my failure to do so has been the main impetus behind my current late-life project, a series of video-recorded lectures titled “A Pure and Remote View: Visualizing Early Chinese Landscape Painting.” Since my retirement in 1995 I have tried to keep writing; my long-delayed book on vernacular painting appeared only recently.
I also learned a lot, while teaching at Berkeley, from my Western-art colleagues; I was in the fortunate position, again by sheer good luck, of having such colleagues as Svetlana Alpers, Michael Baxandall, and T. J. Clark. And all of them taught, in their different ways, the necessity of looking long and hard at the works of art. Svetlana, in her seminal 1977 article “Is Art History?”, makes this crucial observation about all the major art historians she has considered—Clark, Michael Fried, Leo Steinberg, and by implication Baxandall and herself: “More important than the distinctiveness of their approaches ... is the common claim made by these scholars, against the evidence of most art historical writing today, that not only research about, but looking at a work, takes time. They all show that it took time to look in the past and they offer us ways in which it can today.” And if there is anything I would impress with the utmost urgency upon young specialists in Chinese art, it is that no approach that does not involve prolonged and analytical looking at the work of art, and attention to its visual properties, can produce an adequate account of it.

I have been fond of controversies, and sometimes even suspected of being argumentative, a trait one colleague associated with my Irish heritage. Questions on which I took a contentious stand include whether a certain pair of paintings (the Kōtōin landscapes) could be by Li Tang—I argued that they could not and must be somewhat later—and whether Chinese artists were completely free to paint what they pleased—I have tried to demonstrate the contrary, that is, ways in which they were subject to social and economic constraints that went some way toward determining how and what they painted. Presenting the paper on that topic at a Wen Zhengming symposium in Ann Arbor in 1976 introduced me to the guilty pleasure, a kind of scholarly schadenfreude, of confronting one's colleagues with unshakeable evidence for something that most of them don't want to believe. I was to enjoy that pleasure again in 1978 when I showed in my Norton lectures at Harvard how much seventeenth-century Chinese painters adopted from European pictorial art.

My latest largely unwelcome contention, which I hope eventually will be as accepted as those are, represents a kind of reversal of my early dedication to literati painting theory. In Pictures for Use and Pleasure and elsewhere, I point out how, about a century ago, the field of Chinese literature studies abandoned its exclusive dedication to classical literature—essays, studies of the classics, poetry, and the like—to pay attention also to the novel, the drama, courtesan songs, and other forms of popular literature. The outcome has been a huge expansion and deepening of Chinese studies as a whole, to embrace, among other things, the culture and contributions of Chinese women.

Why, I am now asking, have we in Chinese painting studies failed to do the same? Why do we still talk and write, that is, as though the doctrine or dogma of literati painting were somehow a central truth within our subject, instead of seeing
it, as I recently have, as merely the self-serving rhetoric of a male elite minority? What about the rest of China, including women; what kinds of paintings did they support and enjoy? Hopefully I will live to witness that long-overdue opening up of our field of study.

I have left unmentioned until now one of the previous Freer Medal recipients, my immediate predecessor in Chinese art, Sherman Lee. Sherman and I interacted more as contemporaries than as teacher and pupil; he was only eight years older than I. But I learned a great deal from him nonetheless. Among his strengths was an extraordinary breadth of knowledge, embracing the whole of Asian art and much of Western art; he was the only museum person in our field who could compete in Chinese-art connoisseurship with Larry Sickman without being shown up badly in the comparison.

Sherman chaired the first delegation of Chinese art scholars from the United States to go to China after it was opened to us, the Chinese Archaeology Delegation of 1973 (art history was not yet recognized as a legitimate field in China). Other members included Larry Sickman, seen in glasses beside him in the front row of the photograph (fig. 8); me, behind and above; Tom Lawton, whom Sherman wisely chose as his vice-chair, in the upper right; and in the upper left another Freer luminary, Tom Chase, who came as our art-science person. Sherman exhibited throughout this month-long, grueling trip his remarkable organizing ability, in addition to making witty speeches at our banquets and displaying his athletic skills, including playing Ping-Pong against our Chinese guide, losing only because, as we decided, any Chinese can beat any American at Ping-Pong, even one who was a former champion, as Sherman was.

In later years Sherman's remarkable energy and eloquence were reduced by several strokes and Parkinson's disease. His talk at the 1998 presentation of the Freer Medal to him was one of his last major public appearances. He was to make one more, however, about a year later; it was on my behalf, and represented powerfully the strength of his commitment to things he believed in. He had been working with Thomas Krens of the Guggenheim on a huge exhibition of Chinese art, but had to give that up when one of his strokes made it impossible for him to continue. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Museum had acquired, and announced with a splash on the New York Times front page, a painting titled Riverbank, which purported to be a thirteenth-century work, even bearing a signature of the great landscape master Dong Yuan. A few weeks later a journalist friend of mine published a brief note in The New Yorker revealing that I believed it to be another forgery by Zhang Daqian—I had in fact included it in a lecture on those given seven years earlier, with two of the painting's biggest believers in the audience, and shown why I took it to be Zhang's work. But other Chinese art specialists, even those who agreed with me, were
reluctant to enter the public fray, for reasons too complex to go into here, and I found myself quite isolated and under attack by partisans of the painting. The only person taking my side openly was my friend Hironobu Kohara in Japan, who had been the first to publish the opinion that Riverbank could not be early and must be a Zhang Daqian forgery, but Kohara was far away and carried less weight than he should have.

Sherman Lee, when he learned about this situation, reportedly said, “Jim is not alone” and came out of retirement, difficult as that was for him, to support me. If he had been a text reader he would have followed up the textual clues that Zhang had planted, including spurious seals and a concocted provenance, which supplied a false history for the work. Instead, Sherman made his way to the Metropolitan Museum and spent some hours on each of two days sitting in front of the painting and gazing at it. And, at the “Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting” symposium held at the Met in December 1999, Sherman emerged again to speak briefly and haltingly but incisively, showing with slides some features of style in the work that disqualified it altogether, in his view, as an early Chinese landscape. He concentrated on the rendering of water in the painting, comparing it with that in a genuine tenth-century work, the well-known handscroll by Zhao Gan. There, he pointed out, “The pattern of the water is not uniform; when disturbed by a rock, the water breaks and flows differently, then runs swiftly along. It is a living thing.” In Riverbank, by contrast, “Nowhere does it dance and flatten in response to variations in the surface tension. It is not the shui observed in early works; only a modern could fail to see the varying tension when observing water in nature.” And after
further observations about how, the closer one looks at details, "the vaguer and more insubstantial [they] become," he concluded by calling the work "a morass of starts, false starts, and half starts that point inexorably to a modern pastiche all too familiar to many of us ..." By that, I knew, Sherman was alluding to Zhang Daqian’s forgeries without naming him.

That so many Chinese art experts profess to believe in this painting, at least as "some kind of old work," testifies in large part, I firmly believe, to the failure of many of them to take the trouble that Sherman Lee took to gaze long and deeply into it with critical eyes.

Sitting in the front row at the Met symposium, making faces and saying aloud things like "ridiculous!" as I spoke, were a group of prominent Chinese authorities, including Qi Gong, Yang Xin, and C. C. Wang, the previous owner of the painting, which he had bought directly from Zhang Daqian. How can all these have been (as I believe) so wrong? The answer to that—my final observation, another reached late in my life, and another that many people will be disturbed by—is that the Chinese tradition of connoisseurship, based as it is in recognizing personal style and the hand of the artist, works best for the later periods of Chinese painting, Yuan and after, when these are prominent. For those periods, which comprise most of the history of Chinese painting as it can be known from extant works, Chinese connoisseurs are on the whole better than we are. But for Song and earlier painting, when "the artist's hand" typically isn’t there to see and identify, they can go badly wrong. Zhang Daqian understood this weakness and played against it in his forgeries, planting just those clues by which his Chinese contemporaries made their judgments and which could be falsified in his fakes. I say this as one who has the deepest admiration for traditional Chinese connoisseurship, and who has tried to absorb some of its wisdom, by learning from C. C. Wang and others, throughout his long career.
It is time, or past time, to conclude, and I will do so by noting again that I began at the Freer, a full Chinese cycle of years ago, as a student of that approach to Chinese paintings that uses textual sources to construct the histories and contexts of the individual works and their artists, an approach that I have continued always to teach and support, while acknowledging that others can do it far better than I can. But I have also devoted a lot of time and argument to advocating a visual approach and trying to exemplify it (fig. 9). And in doing that I have placed myself, I believe, within the great tradition of my Freer Medal predecessors in Chinese art, all of whom, in their different ways, were more object-lookers than text-readers.

Note: This address will also be made accessible, in the near future, as one of the series of video-lectures posted on http://jamescahill.info and the website of the Institute of East Asian Studies at U. C. Berkeley, http://ieas.berkeley.edu/publications/aparv.html. These will include an additional section expanding on the real character of the "Authenticity" symposium mentioned in this essay.
NOTES


2 Agnes Elizabeth Meyer with C. F. Yau, Chinese painting as reflected in the thought and art of Li Lung-mien, 1070–1106 (New York, Dufﬁeld & Co., 1923).

3 Sir Percival David, Chinese connoisseurship, the Ko ku yao lan, the essential criteria of antiquities, with a facsimile of the Chinese text of 1388 (London: Faber & Faber, 1971).


6 Jean-Pierre Dubosc and Laurence Sickman, Great Chinese Painters of the Ming and Ch’ing Dynasties (New York: Wildenstein Gallery and Asia Institute, 1949).


8 See, on my website (http://jamescahill.info), under Responses and Reminiscences no. 75, “Joseph Levenson’s Role in My Development as a Scholar and Writer.”


12 For a section of this handsroll, see James Cahill, Chinese Painting, Treasures of Asia series (Geneva: Skira, 1960), p. 119. Published also in French and German editions and by Crown Publishers, New York.

13 This photograph is published on the front cover of Orientations 37, no. 1 (January–February 2006).

14 The scroll is titled Three Worthies of Wu, F157,15a-b.


16 Cahill, Chinese Painting.


25 Jerome Silbergeld, for one, writes this: "If there was anything revolutionary about Yuan painting, it was lost on this generation, including America's foremost private collector of East Asian art, Charles Lang Freer, whose taste was formed by his association with Fenollosa and by contemporary Western painters' interest in Japanese decorative arts." See Silbergeld, "The Yuan Revolutionary Picnic," Ars Orientalis 37 (2008), p. 14.
26 Lawton and Merrill, Freer: A Legacy in Art, p. 70.
27 I hope this statement will be accepted as self-evident; if evidence were demanded, it could be produced easily by juxtaposing the writings of Fenollosa with early twentieth-century Japanese writings on Chinese painting. The first histories of Chinese painting were in fact written by Japanese: for these, see Kuiji Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field: A Case Study of Teng Gu and Fu Baoshi," (awaiting publication); also Aida Yuen Wong, "Writing New Histories," in Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2006).
28 Lawton and Merrill, Freer: A Legacy in Art, pp. 83–84; Larsen, "Don't Send Ming or Later Pictures," p. 18.
30 Thomas Lawton, Chinese Figure Painting (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1973), pp. 34–37.
31 James Cahill, Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2010), p. 150, fig. 5.1.
32 I include Ferguson here on the basis of my memory of going through, many years ago, the paintings he bought in China for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and my reading of his writings; also the relevant sections of the dissertation on him by Lara Netting, of which she generously sent me a copy; see Lara Jaishree Netting, "Acquiring Chinese Art and Culture: The Collections and Scholarship of John C. Ferguson (1866–1945)" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2009).
33 The Restless Landscape: Chinese Painting of the Late Ming Period (Berkeley: University Art Museum, 1971). Catalogue of an exhibition, later shown also at the Fogg Museum, Cambridge, MA. Edited, with a preface, and in some part rewritten, from manuscripts produced by seminar students working under my direction. Shadows of Mt. Huang: Chinese Painting and Printing of the Anhui School (Berkeley: University Art Museum, 1981). Catalogue of an exhibition at University Art Museum (opened January 21, 1981); later shown at three other museums. Principal essays by students; edited, with some rewriting and supplementary writing by J. Cahill, with an introductory essay.
36 Twelve lectures, comprising some thirty-five hours of talking-with-pictures. Eight lectures have already been posted on YouTube, and can be accessed through my website or that of the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley (http://ieas.berkeley.edu/), for viewing and downloading at cost; the remaining four will be posted within the coming few months. IEAS will also make them available on disks, at cost. Notes on them and "handouts," along with links sending viewers to the IEAS website, will also be posted on http://jamescahill.info.
38 On http://jamescahill.info as CLP 64: 1976, "Life Patterns and Stylistic Directions: T'ang Yin and Wen Cheng-ming as Types," paper for Wen Cheng-

39 An attempt at a preliminary and only partial answer to that large problem is in my article "Paintings for Women in Ming-Qing China?" in Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in China, vol. 8 (2006), pp. 1–54. (Note: The original Nan Nü publication, due to an error, lacked the color illustrations, which were later sent separately in a packet to subscribers.)


THE SIXTH CENTURY IN
EAST ASIAN ARCHITECTURE

Abstract

Only two pagodas and one Buddhist pillar stand in China to represent architecture of the sixth century. Other information about buildings in the century before the Tang dynasty (618–907) has heretofore been filled in through written records, contemporary and earlier relief sculpture and painting, and inferences from wooden architecture of the sixth through eighth century in Japan. Korean architecture has rarely been considered in assessments of sixth-century Chinese architecture.

This paper proposes a new and deeper understanding of Chinese architecture of the sixth century. To achieve it, literary sources, excavation sites, rock-carved caves, tombs, relief sculpture, murals, pagodas, and a pillar are examined together with approximately ten building sites from the sixth and seventh centuries in Korea and aboveground and excavated remains of the seventh and eighth centuries in Japan. The paper shows that shared structural details and building plans existed in religious and funerary architecture across East Asia in the sixth century; South Asian architecture was an important source of pagodas in sixth-century China; monastery configurations unknown in China were constructed in Korea and Japan; and, perhaps most surprisingly, architecture of the Eastern Han period (23–220), particularly rock-carved architecture in cliff tombs in Sichuan province, provides prototypes of sixth-century architectural forms. Links between the Eastern Han and the sixth through eighth century are further emphasized through an examination of domes and eight-sided structures.

FOR DECADES, TWO OR THREE PAGODAS have defined our vague notions of an architectural presence on the Chinese landscape in the century before the Tang dynasty (618–907). The twelve-sided, fifteen-story pagoda at Songyue 嵩岳 Monastery on the sacred Buddhist peak Mount Song 龍山 is dated by inscription to 523 (fig. 1). It is a sharp contrast to the squarish, single-story, simply named Simen塔 四門塔 (Four-entry Pagoda) from Shentong 神通 Monastery in Licheng 武城, Shandong province, begun by 544 and completed in 611 (fig. 2). A third pagoda, also in Henan and still today unprotected in a residential yard amid farmland, preserves its sixth-century form, in spite of later repairs, and thus may be considered in discussions of pre-Tang architecture. Similar in profile to Simen, the Xiudingsi 修定寺 pagoda in Anyang 安陽 county is covered with relief sculpture (fig. 3).

The fact that two are in Henan is not surprising. Henan was the location of Luoyang, the capital of the Northern Wei (386–534) and a hub of Buddhist construction during the sixth century; 1,367 temples and monasteries are recorded in Yang Xuanzi's 楊衒之 (died 555?) 魏書 (Record of Buddhist monasteries of Luoyang). The two Henan buildings, however, were part of
different political spheres. Songyuesi is near Dengfeng 登封, seventy-five kilometers southeast of Luoyang. Its patroness was a Northern Wei empress. Xiudingsi is two hundred kilometers northeast of Luoyang in the sphere of Ye 頋, capital of the Northern Qi 北齊 (550–77). Simenta, as mentioned above, is in Shandong. A fourth monument, Yichi 妙德柱 Pillar, also part of the Northern Qi sphere in Dingxing 定興 county of Hebei, is dated by inscription to 570. Its importance has never been adequately recognized.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars have sought to fill gaps in Chinese architectural history of the sixth century by turning to Japan. The main reason is because the earliest building in China is the main hall of Nanchan 南禪 Monastery, dated by inscription to 782, whereas twenty-two wooden buildings in Japan have earlier dates. Fifty or sixty years ago, one might have expected that additional old Chinese buildings would be found. Based on systematic, government-supported excavation and recording of remains province by province, it seems fairly certain that the oldest wooden building in China is from the late eighth century.

Nevertheless, a view of China's earliest architecture that relies on evidence from places east of China is not without problems. The least problematic justification for a study of material from more than one East Asian country together is that most of the architecture is Buddhist, and there is solid documentation for the transmission of Buddhist doctrine from China directly to Japan, China to Korea, or Korea to Japan as well as for specific monks who preached in more than one East Asian
Buddhist architecture in Japan should be informative about buildings in China and Korea that no longer survive, particularly if a specific priest or the same sect of the religion was in more than one place.

Another justification for the juxtaposition is more troubling. It is known that some Japanese archeologists and architectural historians who conducted research in China and Korea in the decades following the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, and continuing beyond the occupation of Manchuria, sought to show Japan to be the true, valid, or superior repository of the Buddhist building tradition, the caretaker for what China had not been able to preserve. It could then be argued that Japan was the final destination and, further, the superior culmination of a long process of transmission and refinement of the Buddhist tradition that had begun in India. In the first half of the twentieth century, the concept of the Far East or East Asia (Tōyō 東洋) dominated the titles of journals and textbooks of scholars who sought to present China, Korea, and Japan as a region with numerous unified cultural and artistic models. In the 1940s, these notions could support the idea of a Japanese Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In Europe and North America, they fit into diffusionist writings discussed at the end of this study.

In China, the most famous architectural historian of that period, Liang Sicheng (1901–1972), also fit into this mold but with a different agenda. Western trained at a time when Banister Fletcher’s and James Fergusson’s textbooks offered students models of how a classic tradition disseminated, Liang’s canon selected buildings from China and Japan that could be incorporated into a framework of eminent structures designed for China’s imperial or elite patrons. Thereby, Liang could present China as the point of origin of a classic tradition that diffused to Japan, just as Greek classicism had been the source of ancient Roman art. Aware of the political issues and apparent agendas among both Chinese and Japanese scholars, it is perhaps understandable why in more recent decades researchers have avoided studies of East Asian architecture as one entity. We shall see here that, for the sixth century, the juxtaposition of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean architecture is valid.
Two dramatic changes in the study of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and East Asian art since the mid-twentieth century are the reasons why. First, new information, primarily from excavations, has emerged in China since the days of Liang and the political promoters of the concept of Tōyō. Sixth-century Chinese palace sites have been excavated in the Luoyang, Ye, and Jiankang 建康 capitals; new evidence has emerged from Buddhist cave-temples in China that were not studied in the first half of the twentieth century; and several thousand tombs have been opened. In addition, several Chinese monastery sites have been excavated, and the remains can be compared with textual descriptions, Japanese buildings, subterranean tombs, and rock-carved cave architecture. Second, there is excavated evidence from Buddhist monasteries of the Korean kingdoms, Koguryō, Paekche, and Silla, dated before 668 when the three were united by Silla. The hunches of scholars who worked without the benefit of the last sixty years of excavation, including Liu Dunzhen 劉敦楨 (1896–1968), Naitō Tōichirō 内藤虎次郎 (1897–1939), Alexander Soper (1904–1993), and Liang Sicheng, are borne out by evidence available today. Buddhist architecture of the sixth century resonates between China, Korea, and Japan. Unexplored by the early researchers was Korea, which turns out to be pivotal in Buddhist construction during this period.

Chinese Buddhist Architecture without Buildings
To understand how dramatically excavation has altered our understanding of the sixth century, we begin where researchers did with less knowledge of cave-temples and little information about architecture underground. Tall pagodas are emphasized. One reads in Wei shu 魏書 (Standard history of Wei), compiled between 551 and 554, for example: “The architectural system was expanded from old Indian models. There were structures called pagodas (futu 浮屠 or Fotu 佛屠 [stupas]) of one, three, five, seven, or nine tiers. Luoyang had forty-two pagodas in the generations of Jin (late third–early fourth century).” The same text tells us that Luoyang’s famous White Horse Monastery (Baimasi 白馬寺) had a four-sided pagoda whose sides were exquisitely painted. Both the shape and mention of Indian sources are significant. The majority of China’s early pagodas have squarish plans; Songyuesi’s pagoda is an exception. As we shall see below, it is likely that patrons knew Indian stupas were circular.

A passage in Sanguo zhi 三國志 (Record of the Three Kingdoms), written in the fourth century, tells us that in Jianye 建業 there was a multilevel (chonglou 重樓), large stupa-shrine (futuici 浮屠祠) that had a nine-layer bronze chattra (umbrella-like spire) and contained bronze and gilded statues dressed in brocade. More than three thousand people could gather in the arcades (gedao 閣道) that enclosed it. The texts use the word 竇寺, here meaning monastery.
A five-story pagoda with a golden chattra so high that it could be ascended for a view of the city Pingjin 平晋 is recoded for the year 342 in Shui jing zhu 水經注. Also in the fourth century, Dao'an 道安 (circa 312–385) oversaw the erection of a monastery that had a five-story pagoda. His disciples, Huiyong 慧勇 and Huiyuan 慧遠, built meditational halls at late fourth-century monasteries. In the year 433, the monk Jiabamo 伽跋摩 saw a three-story pagoda at Pinglu 平路 Monastery in the capital that had been constructed a decade earlier. Yongning 永寧 Monastery in the Northern Wei capital at Pingcheng 平成 (Datong) had a seven-story pagoda built by the emperor in 452 that is said to have risen more than three hundred chi 尺.

Beginning in the fourth century, records also inform us of adjacent complexes, each with its own pagoda. In the last part of the fourth century, the monk Huida 惠達 added a pagoda to the west of one that had been built by Emperor Wendi 文帝 in Jiankang. In 391, Emperor Xiaowu 孝武 increased its size to three stories. At Xianggong 湘宮 Monastery in the south, there had been a seven-story pagoda that the emperor wanted to see rise to ten stories. When this turned out to be structurally impossible, he had it divided into two monasteries, each with a five-story pagoda. Thus pagodas rose as high as nine stories, were either prominent in their monasteries or in pairs, and often were wooden. None of the descriptions is inconsistent with the famous pagodas at Songyue and Shentong monasteries.

Through descriptions of pagodas, the texts afford a glimpse at other Buddhist architecture. According to Wei shu, in 398, a five-story pagoda, Xumishan 須爞山 [Mount Sumeru] di’an 殿 (perhaps a hall with a Buddhist altar inside), both heavily decorated structures, and lecture hall, meditational hall, and monk’s seat (shamen zuo 沙門座) were built at a monastery by the Northern Wei emperor Daowudi 道武帝, presumably in Pingcheng. A stele now in Beilin 碑林 Museum in Xi’an records that in 488, Huifu 晉福 Monastery had two three-story pagodas, a hall for preaching Buddhist law (Fatang 法堂), monks’ residences, and connective arcades (getong 閣通). Toutousi 頭陀寺 in Ezhou 鄂州 had multistoried kiosks (cengxie 層榭) and pavilions that soared (feige 飛閣). One would like to assume that each different architectural term for a tall building refers to a different building type, but it is impossible to be certain that the biographer of a monk or author of a historical or descriptive text was as careful about his language as are we who interpret it. If a ge 閣 soared in the monastery in Ezhou before the year 500, it is significant, for the earliest extant ge in China is the Guanyin 觀音 Pavilion of Dule 獨樂 Monastery, dated 984.

In 520, Liang Wudi 梁武帝 repaired monasteries for his parents, one with thirty-six yuan 院 (precincts, or subtemples) and one with a seven-story pagoda, a main hall with eight golden images, and lecture halls for the more than five hundred
nuns. Tongtaisi 同泰寺, also in Jiankang, in the period 520–27, had a nine-story pagoda, as well as six large halls (dian 殿), more than ten smaller halls (xiao dian or tang 堂), meditational rooms, three-story east and west platforms, trees, other plantings, and a pond. It took more than ten years to complete, only to be destroyed by an earthquake. The monastery Hedongsi 河東寺 had several tens of thousands of monks associated with it around the year 600 and could hold as many as one thousand among its ten subtemples, each of which contained numerous platforms for expounding the doctrine, about ten thousand bays of buildings in all. (Da)baozhuangyan (大)寶莊嚴 Monastery Reliquary Pagoda was built by the monk Tanyu 曼裕 in Guangzhou in 537. It stood in front of a (Buddha) hall. The imperial monastery Daoyinsi in Jiangling 江陵 had the same arrangement. Its Buddha hall was five bays across the front with additional side projections, and the pagoda in front had five stories.

With nothing remaining of any of these monasteries, one has no way to judge if the details are exaggerated. Yet pagodas, Buddha halls, lecture halls, and monks’ quarters are mentioned consistently, and the locations of hall and pagodas are specified. A pagoda in front of the hall and two pagodas are the dominant arrangements. The four building types are seen in Japan’s earliest monasteries with wooden architectural remains. As we shall see below, excavation and study of sixth-century Chinese building sites emphasizes the importance of the pagoda and seem to confirm both configurations. Evidence of alternate arrangements long known in Japan and now known in Korea still cannot be found in China. Such plans are not described in texts, either.

A final passage from a Chinese source is noteworthy. When Liang Wudi visited Ayuwang 阿育王 (Asoka) Monastery in 523, he built two pagodas, each with precious relics. Su Bai refers to them as twin pagodas (shuangta 雙塔), but there is no evidence in the text that they were an identical or even a similar pair. The beginnings of twin pagodas in China could have been the result of construction of one pagoda that was too tall to support itself, as mentioned above, or it could have been a concept derived from pairing in Buddhist cave architecture. Both configurations recorded in Chinese texts, a single pagoda or a pair, may mimic the arrangement of space in cave-temples constructed about the same time the texts were written. The rock-carved spaces also may inform us about the locations of Buddha halls with respect to pagodas.

Planned Space in China in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries
The eleven caves shown in figure 4 were excavated at Yungang 雲岡, near the Pingcheng capital, between 465 and 494, the year the Northern Wei capital was moved from Pingcheng to Luoyang. Among them were four arrangements: single
The sixth century in East Asian architecture

The site of Mogao pairs, fourth century.

Before the end of the fifth century, the Mogao caves at Dunhuang began to be excavated. The first two caves, 4 and 5, were excavated in 366, and later, caves 6, 7, and 8 were excavated in 409. The Mogao caves are located in the Dunhuang region of Gansu province, in the northwestern part of China. The site is known for its rich collection of Buddhist art, including paintings, sculptures, and murals.

The Mogao caves are situated in a desert area, and the earliest caves were dug into the cliff face to protect them from the elements. The caves were used as places of worship and meditation, and they served as a meeting place for the monks and nuns who lived in the area.

The Mogao caves are divided into three parts: the早期, 中期, and 晚期. The early caves, caves 1-5, were excavated in the fourth century and were used primarily for religious purposes. The middle caves, caves 6-25, were excavated in the fifth century and were used for both religious and secular purposes. The late caves, caves 26-109, were excavated in the sixth to the eighth centuries and were used for secular purposes.

The Mogao caves are an important source of information about the history and development of Buddhist art in China. The caves contain a wide variety of art, including paintings, sculptures, and murals. The art is characterized by its rich color and intricate detail, and it reflects the religious and cultural beliefs of the people who created it.

The Mogao caves are a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and they are visited by tourists from all over the world. The site is located in the Dunhuang region of Gansu province, and it is easily accessible from the city of Dunhuang, which is located in the northwestern part of China.
The three cave-temple plans with pagoda-pillars, and thus tombs as well, also appear to share the spaces of Buddhist monasteries described above. The pillar-pagoda would correspond to the freestanding pagoda in a monastery. A worship hall on line with a pagoda can be seen as the antechamber of the cave-temple with the pagoda space behind it. The third type, paired pagodas, although mentioned in texts, is not known in monastery remains in China before the Sui dynasty. We shall see its importance in the sixth and seventh centuries in Korea and Japan.

The pagoda of Yongningsi 永寧寺, according to Luoyang qielan ji, was the most spectacular landmark in Luoyang.45 Built by order of Empress Dowager Hu 吳 in 516 and burned to the ground in 534, the site was excavated over a fifteen-year period in the late twentieth century. One reads that there were more than a thousand monks' courtyards, with single- and multi-story halls, courtyards, and stairs, painted in blue and with carved windows, located amid greenery so that in entirety even the Great Hall on Mount Sumeru and the Palace of Purity in the Tusita Heaven were no match for it. One has no reason to doubt that the empress's monastery would have been vast and beautiful, but we know nothing specific about its layout beyond the central core where the pagoda was preeminent.

According to Yang Xuanzhi’s text, the wooden tower was four-sided and rose nine stories to a height of ninety zhang 丈.44 The chattrā added another ten zhang to its height. Chains from which hung golden bells joined the chattrā to the pagoda. Each story of the pagoda had its own roof with a total of 120 bells suspended from the nine of them. The pagoda was visible fifty kilometers from the capital and on windy nights the bells could be heard more than five kilometers away.45 Today, only a quadrilateral earthen mound about 38.2-meters-square remains at the site. Based on the text and the size of the mound, there is little doubt Yongningsi’s pagoda towered at the center of the monastery.46

In 2002, remains of a pounded earth platform, about forty-five meters square and 4.5 meters in height, were excavated 1,300 meters south of wall remains of the Eastern Wei 魏 (534–50)–Northern Qi city of Ye, beyond Zhuming 朱明 Gate.47 It supported a pagoda of about thirty meters square. So far, this pagoda has not been associated with a monastery described in Yezhong ji 鄰中記 or other texts.48 Smaller than Yongningsi, but nevertheless large in base dimensions and probably height, it should have had the status and monumentality in Eastern Wei and Northern Qi Ye that Yongningsi held in Northern Wei Luoyang. Assuming it was built by the ruling family, it might survive from Daxingshengsi 大興聖寺, a monastery in Ye recorded in Gu Yanwu’s 郭炎武 study of imperial cities through history, Lidai
diwang zhaijing ji 歷代帝王宅京記, constructed by imperial order in the second year of Wuchengdi's 武成帝 reign, or 562. Today the pagoda is called Zhao-pengcheng 趙彭城 Pagoda after the town where it stands.

As mentioned at the beginning, the only towering pagoda that survives is at Songyue Monastery, dated 523 (see fig. 1). It is also the only dodecagonal structure in China. Its smooth plaster exterior is evidence of extensive repairs conducted in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Three Pagodas

The Songyuesi pagoda is the earliest freestanding example of miyan 密檐 (closely piled eaves)-style pagoda architecture. Its fifteen layers span more than twenty meters of the 39.8-meter structure. Beginning at ground level, there is a twelve-sided platform, then a shaft of about ten meters, and then another twelve-sided section marked by four large horseshoe-shaped entrances at the four cardinal directions and eight smaller, similarly shaped entries. The faces are divided by replicas of octagonal columns with lotus-shaped bases and capitals. The fifteen miyan layers have window frames flanking each prominent entrance, but not actual windows. The chattra mounted on a lotus pedestal resembles a miniature pagoda. Replicas of bracket sets and other architectural features originally decorated each level of each face.

It is believed that the pagoda originally opened on all four sides, but by the 1930s access was possible only from the south and east, with the eastern access blocked. Inside, only the first-story interior was dodecagonal; each subsequent story inside was an octagon.

From a stele at the site and Wei shu, we know that in 484 there was a Buddhist monastery on the grounds. Xuanwudi 宣武帝 of Northern Wei built a detached palace at this location during the Yongning 永平 reign period (508–11). In 520, the monastery was expanded and Emperor Xiaomingdi 孝明帝 inscribed its name on a placard. The emperor would have been only nine years old at the time, suggesting that his mother, Empress Dowager Hu, the same woman who had sponsored construction of Yongningsi, was a major force behind the repairs. Internal political strife, including murders at court, caused the work to stop, but in 523, when the dowager returned to her position of power, work began again. Thus 523 is usually considered the construction date. When Tang emperor Gaozong 高宗 (reigned 650–84) visited, a seven-Buddha hall, two other halls, and a tower stood there. Tang Zhongzong 中宗 (reigned 684 and 705–10) built a western meditational precinct, and at that time a thirteen-story pagoda for a monk, presumably a small funerary pagoda, was also there. All those buildings are gone.

During repair work of the 1980s, a digong 地宮, literally “underground palace,” was found. It is not known when the practice of digong beneath pagodas began.
One was discovered under the mid-sixth century pagoda at Ye.⁵⁸ The Songyuesi pagoda *digong* is a two-chamber space entered from the south side of the base. Its plan is similar to those of cave-temples from Dunhuang to Yungang and tombs from Jiuquan to the Koguryo kingdom (fig. 8 and see figs. 4, 5, and 6). The two-chamber plan that dominated fifth- and sixth-century cave-temple and funerary spaces thus was used in a *digong* at the same time. On the walls of the *digong* one finds inverted V-shaped braces alternating with single-tier bracket sets. We shall see that these braces, used here to recreate a temple or residential environment, are also employed in other sixth-century architecture discussed below (see fig. 15). The space beneath the pagoda, then, appears to be more than reliquary storage; the architectural decoration likens it to a temple. Carbon-14 testing yielded a date of 1,560 years ± 160 for a corner piece of brick, indicating that, like the pagoda reliquary in the Ye capital, the Songyuesi reliquary could have been dug when the pagoda was constructed.⁵⁹ Xiao Mo suggests that treasures could have entered during anti-Buddhist persecutions under Northern Zhou Wudi 武帝 (reigned 561–77) and/or during the Tang reign of the Wuzong 武宗 emperor (reigned 841–46).⁶⁰

The unique form of the Songyuesi pagoda may be evidence that Chinese builders attempted to construct an Indian stupa, but the closest they could come to a circular exterior was by using twelve segments.⁶¹ If this is true, then it suggests the veracity of the passage from Wei *shu* quoted above, that builders of pagodas followed Indian models. Perhaps the dowager empress commissioned a four-sided, nine-story, timber-frame pagoda that reflected Chinese construction in the Northern Wei capital, whereas for a towering monument on a sacred peak a circular structure was sought. In the sixth century, the twelve-sided building is unique, and even eight-sided architecture, as we shall see below, was rare at that time. Possible Chinese precursors would be Biyong 輊雍 or Mingtang 明堂.⁶² Or perhaps the pagoda on Mount Song was fashioned after miniature stone pagodas of the Northern Liang kingdom (397–439) that would have been carried eastward (fig. 9).⁶³

For the other sixth-century pagodas have square groundplans. Simenta is a central pillar, granite structure accessible, as its name tells us, from all sides (see fig. 2). The monastery of which it is a part was established in 351 by the monk Langgong 朗公.⁶⁴ An inscription inside dated 544 and signed by image carver Yang Xianshu 楊顯叔 at one time was believed to be the date of the pagoda, but during repairs of 1972 the year 611 was found carved into a brick.
The plan and structure of Simenta also invoke architectural sources of India, buildings only slightly earlier than it. The sources are Brahmanical. The Dasavatara Temple dedicated to Viṣṇu at Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh, dated to the first half of the sixth century, and the contemporary Pārvati Temple in Nachna-Kuthara, Madhya Pradesh, both in central India, are four-sided buildings with central pillars containing imagery, with one entry, and windows on the other three sides (fig. 10). No earlier buildings in China suggest comparisons. Pagodas in relief on sixth-century rock-carved cliffs in Baoshan 寶山, Anyang county, Henan, are similarly four-sided, with chattras whose pinnacles have complicated decorative forms (fig. 11). The formal similarities with Simenta and pagodas carved on the Baoshan cliffs are important reasons why the third pagoda, at Xiuding Monastery, is believed to retain its sixth-century structure (see fig. 3). The first monastery at that site was founded in 494. Xiudingsi was destroyed in 576 during the above-mentioned persecutions of Buddhism by the Northern Zhou emperor Wu. Rebuilding of the four-sided, brick-faced pagoda probably occurred during the reign of Tang Taizong 太宗, between 627 and 650. Thus, all three of China’s early pagodas can be traced to South Asian forms, the Songyuesi pagoda to circular stupas and the Simenta-type pagoda to Brahmanical architecture. The first century of extant Buddhist monumental architecture in China thus also suggests that no single pagoda form had been selected.

The monasteries of which the three pagodas were part remain largely unknown. All three had additional buildings, but their dates are post-sixth century, and records only allude to pre-Tang arrangements. Excavated evidence confirms only one monastery plan, the one at China’s best excavated monastery, Yongningsi, and shared by plans of cave-temples, tombs, and digong (fig. 12). The pagoda is in front of the image hall at Yongningsi, and the pagoda equivalent is behind in the other configurations, but with so little evidence, the two structures on a line should not be ruled out as an implementation of the fundamental plan of pagoda and Buddha hall on a line behind a main entry.
The only other Northern Wei monastery excavated to date, Siyuan Fosi 思遠佛寺 in Datong, dates to the fifth century, before the transfer of the capital to Luoyang in 494. Built due south of Yongguling 永固陵, the tomb of Empress Dowager Wenming 文明, who was laid to rest in 484, the monastery may have been constructed as part of her funerary complex above ground. The site plan indicates that the pagoda was along the central axis of the monastery and the only structure of significant size (fig. 13). Its prominent centrality was further emphasized by two enclosures. Lacking descriptive records, so far its height has not been estimated. It is believed that a Buddha hall stood behind the pagoda to the west and behind it were monks' quarters. The early sixth-century monastery, represented by Yongningsi, would then be a transitional scheme in which a hall for images was coming to share space with the dominant pagoda.

Remains of pagodas dated second-to-fourth century south of the Taklamakan desert in Loulan 楼蘭, Miran 米蘭, Endere (Andaér 安迪爾), Niya 尼雅, and Rewak (Rawak, Rewake 热瓦克) suggest that they too were the major monuments in their monasteries. Archaeological evidence in China now confirms the centrality of the pagoda in its monastery by the fifth century, and by the sixth century, that a Buddha hall might be on line with it. The two schemes reflect those of pagoda or corpse in a one-room cave-temple or tomb, and pagoda or corpse in one chamber and a second chamber, in a line with each other, in the same concealed spaces. As we shall see, replications of architectural features further support, if not confirm, a shared building tradition widespread in sixth-century China.

**Shared Structural Details**

Architectural detail can be found on almost any surface in China. The grottoes at Majiashan are extremely informative for the study of details of timber-frame architecture. The exterior façade of cave 43, for example, exhibits octagonal pillars with emphatic edges and owls' tail decoration (chiwei 鸚尾) (fig. 14). Parallel roof rafters are found on the façade of cave 4, a seven-bay, hipped-roof structure with a one-bay-deep porch in front, and inside that cave, decorative "balls" are placed at the joining points of imitation beams that frame the ceiling (figs. 15 and 16). This last feature is distinctive at Majiashan. Cave 15 has a triangular roof truss at each end but no kingpost. This is important because there is a kingpost in the roof truss...
of the above-mentioned Nanchan Monastery main hall of 782 and in the main hall of Tiantai天台Hermitage, a Tang building dated to the early ninth century. Cave 3 has a curved beam (yueliang 月梁 or hongliang 虹梁), another feature otherwise not documented in extant wooden architecture until the eighth and ninth centuries, with the Kondō 金堂 of the Japanese monastery Tōshōdaiji 唐招提寺, dated 756, and the East Hall of Foguang Monastery the earliest extant wooden evidence (fig. 17). The East Hall also has no kingpost in its truss. Another feature in cave 3 is the timu 替木, or cushion-brace. Finally, in cave 127 one sees the xuanyu 懸魚 ("suspended fish," also found in Japanese architecture and known in Japanese as geyoj) (fig. 18). We shall observe the timu in other examples of sixth-century architecture. Except for the timu, imitation timber framing inside and on the facades of Maijishan caves provides evidence of structural features not known in wooden architecture for two to three centuries.

The cave-temples are equally informative about ceiling structure. Two types dominate. One is the truncated pyramid, found in Western Wei cave 127 at Maijishan, and in sixth-century cave-temples to the east built under Northern Qi patronage at Xiangtangshan 響堂山 in southern Hebei. This type is also in Anyang county, Henan, at Xiaonanhai 小南海 and Dazhusheng 大住聖, and in many Mogao caves, including 285 and 249 (fig. 19). The second is the dome (fig. 20).

Except for ceilings, many building components observed in sixth-century caves are found in sarcophaguses fashioned in the shapes of buildings or on funerary
There are six excellent examples. The earliest belonged to Ning Mao 寧懋, said to come from Luoyang, who died in 527.\(^7\) The structure consists of the three distinct sections of a standard Chinese building: elevation platform, weight-bearing pillars and non-weight-bearing walls, and ceramic-tile roof; and the three sections of any standard Chinese wooden frame building: pillar layer, bracket-set layer, and roof frame. The roof is noteworthy: an eave emerges from a main ridgepole and hangs over the front and back walls. Rafters also emanate from roof ridges on the sides, so that decorative end tiles appear on all four sides. The above-mentioned inverted V-shaped struts are present above an imitation beam at the top (fig. 21).

A pottery structure found in a Sui tomb in Henan with similar short rafters projecting perpendicular to front and back roof ridges and more curving ridges along the front and back roof supports the idea that architectural features are decorative when used in small-scale. Still, they are specific and therefore can offer relevant information about the wooden building parts after which they are fashioned. Here we observe eight-sided pillars lodged into lotus-patterned pilasters and decorated with bands from which lotus petals emerge from each side as well as eave end tiles decorated with lotus patterns. We also observe exceptionally long bracket arms that project above tiny, decorative, single-step bracket sets to support the roof under-eaves. Those cap-and-block bracket sets, the kind seen in cave-temple details of the fifth and sixth centuries, atop the pillars and under the long arms, are accurately rendered but illogically placed (fig. 22).

Better evidence of sixth-century wood joinery comes from the sarcophagus of a Xianbei official of the Northern Qi, Shedi Huiluo 犀狄回洛, who died in Ye during the second moon of 562 and was buried with his wife twelve months later. Among its pieces found in the tomb are plinths, cap blocks, bracket arms, and cushion braces (queti 青替) with floriated decorative molding at the ends (fig. 23). As in the pottery structure, there is no evidence that tiebeams extended through the bracket sets to interlock with the columns. Bracketing is single step with three separate blocks, inverted V-shaped braces were positioned on a lintel above the façade, and there was a hip-gable roof.\(^7\)

The stone sarcophagus of Master Shi 史 (Shijun) who died in Xi’an in 579 also is important.\(^8\) On it, the bracket sets above columns on all four sides are two-tier, but as in other sarcophaguses, they interlock. Bracket arms have decorative molding around their outer sides, cap blocks that do not interlock columns, and additional
plates, pieces known as mindou 石斗 (fig. 24). A search for these details takes us to the western wall of Mogao cave 314, dated Sui. There, one finds two sets of roof rafters and the additional decorative roof ridges observed in the Ning Mao sarcophagus and pottery building. In Mogao cave painting, neither the two-step bracket set nor the mindou below the bracket-set block appears until the Tang period.61 It is unlikely that craftsmen came up with the original idea of adding a step to the bracket sets on the Shi sarcophagus. By the year 857, we find bracket arms with four steps in the eminent East Hall of Foguang Monastery. The other three Tang buildings have single-tier bracket sets. Knowing that rank is associated with structural complexity, we should view the Shi sarcophagus as an example of an eminent building, a contrast emphasized by comparison with the Ning Mao and Shedi Huiluo coffins. The mindou is seen in Japanese architecture of the seventh century, discussed below.

The other stone sarcophagus, belonging to Yu Hong 虞弘, is not as pertinent to the study of architectural features, but one funerary bed is.62 It belonged to An Qie 安伽, who died in 572 and was buried in Xi’an.63 The structures on this final resting place for his corpse range from timber framed to cloth tent. Chinese-style architecture includes the alternating single-step bracket sets and inverted V-shaped braces observed in the façade of Maijishan cave 15, the façade of Tianlongshan 天龍山 cave 16 near Taiyuan, Shanxi, dated to the sixth century,64 and the Ning Mao and Master Shi sarcophagus as well two sets of roof rafters, the lower, circular in section and the upper, four-sided in section (fig. 25).

The final major monument of China’s sixth century is Yicihui zhu 柱, literally, “pillar of righteousness, kindness, and beneficence.” Rising approximately 6.6 meters in Dingxing 定興 county in Hebei, in a village today named for it (Shizhucun 石柱村 [Stone Pillar Village]), Yicihui Pillar was erected in the autumn of 570 to commend pious relief efforts in an age of chaos forty-five years earlier (fig. 26).65 The structure at its top is considered here in relation to other architecture in miniature.

The years 525 to 528 witnessed the relocation of populations of north China and slaying, execution, destruction, and other tragedy. Dingxing suffered horrendously. When calm was restored, seven men gathered the human remains and gave them proper burial. This was the initial act of kindness. Thereafter, acts of human beneficence increased almost daily, giving way to a society of aid for Buddhist believers. In 552, a pagoda and Buddhist halls were constructed. Courtyards were rebuilt, and monks’ quarters were expanded. Even as life became more threatened, efforts to help the population increased. In 559, a local official presented a memorial to
the emperor requesting that this group be praised and commended. In 562, the secretariat carved a placard and erected a pillar of commendation. The next year, a temporary wooden pillar was raised, and then in 567, it was replaced with the stone column that stands today.

The pillar rises on a squarish podium about thirty centimeters high. Like pillars of Maijishan façades, it is eight-sided but not octagonal. At the top of the nearly five-meter stretch is another base, 1.26 by 1.05 meters and twenty-eight centimeters high, that supports a three-by-two-bay structure about seventy-nine by sixty-nine centimeters at the base with a four-slope roof (fig. 27). Its floorboard is positioned right on the base. The pillars have clear evidence of entasis. They rise about thirty-five centimeters. Each pillar has a cap-block supporting a plate above it, but there are no bracket sets. Across the top are a tiebeam that penetrates the columns, an architrave, a column-top tiebeam, and a brace that cushions the roof frame (timu). At its ends, the decorative molding has the same pattern that is on the cushion braces of Shedi Huiluo's sarcophagus. The roof structure is remarkably detailed. Two sets of rafters, upper and lower, four-sided and circular-sectioned, have been carved in the stone. The lower set is decorated. And there are decorated imitation ceramic roof tiles whose curves help protect a building from rain. All eave rafters are parallel. The Buddha sits in the open niche beneath a chaitya (pointed, horseshoe-shaped)-style arch, a feature one finds in sixth-century painting and in relief at Maijishan, Tianlongshan, and Dunhuang (see figs. 27 and 15).

Thus freestanding pagodas, murals, facsimiles of timber-frame architecture in relief, small-scale structures including sarcophaguses, and the Yicihui Pillar provide our image of sixth-century Chinese architecture. For the monastery plan, we rely on excavations from Siyuan Fosi, Yongningsi, and Zhaopengcheng, on written records, and a Sui site discussed below. From Korea, there is less evidence in painting, relief, or miniature,86 but monastery plans from all three kingdoms provide important information about what might have existed in China.
Korean Monasteries of the Fifth to Seventh Century

Excavation is one of the most reliable sources of information about early Korean monastery plans. Specific plans appear to be associated with each kingdom. For reference, Buddhism came to Koguryó in 372, Paekche in 384, and Silla in 527.

The earliest Koguryó monasteries survive in the vicinity of P'yöngyang where the capital was moved from the Ji'an region (today in Jilin, China) in 427. The two most extensively excavated monasteries are similar. Each is focused on an octagonal structure.

Chöngnungsas/Jeongneungsa 定陵寺 occupies a 223-by-132.5-meter site consisting of thirty-three building foundations that can be divided into five sections. More has been excavated here than at any contemporary Chinese monastery to date (fig. 28). The central focal octagon is believed to be a pagoda foundation, and the halls next to and behind it, Buddha image halls; a lecture hall may have stood behind them. Based on Japanese evidence of monasteries (some of which is discussed below), it is has been suggested that bell and drum towers were behind the pair of image halls on either side of the back area and that the hall farthest north may have been the abbot's quarters. West of the main sector is an I-shaped unit, the gong-plan, a Chinese configuration used for building complexes of high status. The proposed dates for Chöngnungsas range from the late fourth to early seventh century. A fifth-century date is given based on its name, Monastery Determined by the Tomb. It has been suggested that the reference is to the nearby tomb of the first ruler of Koguryó from P'yöngyang, King Dongmyöng 東明.
The second Koguryo monastery has been identified as Kūmgangsa/Geumgangsa 金刚寺. If this is true, the site dates to 498.89 This monastery consisted of a core of four main buildings enclosed by a covered arcade, gates positioned in the arcade south and north of the main building line, and probably a few buildings outside the cloister (fig. 29). The central formation is believed to be a pagoda with Buddha halls at the north, east, and west sides, a more focused version of the Chōngnūnsga plan.

Scant remains of two other Koguryo monasteries also point to a central octagonal structure and four-sided buildings behind and at its sides. Sangori 上五里, about two kilometers southeast of Kūmgangsa, shows an octagonal hall flanked by a building on either side. An octagonal foundation with large buildings symmetrically positioned to the east and west, and a larger one due north, also have been uncovered at Tōsōngri/Toseongri 土城里, in Hwanghae 黄海.90

Seven monastery sites are associated with the Paekche kingdom, the earliest dated to the late 520s and the last to shortly before Paekche’s fall to Silla. All the architecture postdates the transfer of the capital to Unchjin/Unjin 熊津 (modern Kongju/Gongju 公州) in 475. The move southward was due to encroachment by Koguryo, which could mean that the architecture of the enemy was known to Paekche. All seven have a south gate, pagoda, image hall, and lecture hall in a line, the gate and lecture hall attached to an enclosing arcade. Twin structures may stand at the back corners.

Daet'ongsan 大通寺 and five more extensively excavated monasteries—Gun-suri 軍守里, Kūmgangsa/Geumgangsa 金刚寺, Dongnamri 東南里, Chōngrimsa/Jeongrimsa 定林寺, and Nüngsa/Neungsa 隆寺—are all near Puyö/Buyeo 扶餘 and dated 538–99.91 Their plans affirm Paekche’s reliance on the Yongningsi (fig. 30).92 As we have seen at Chōngnūnsga, the character nüng/neung 隆 means tomb; and Nüngsa, positioned two hundred meters west of eight royal graves known as Nüngsanri (Tomb Mountain Site), is named to reflect this location. There is better evidence here that the pagoda was timber than for most other pagodas of Koguryo or Paekche because the foundation stones for the central pillar and wooden pieces remain. A granite sutramnean reliquary has an inscription informing us that it was laid in 567 by King Widök/Wideok 威德.93

Chōngrimsa has four distinctive features: a lotus pond uncovered south of the south entry; clay images that suggest remarkable similarities with statues found
at Yongningsi; a five-story, 8.85-meter granite pagoda, Paekche’s oldest; and an inscription stating that the pagoda was erected to commemorate that Tang China helped Silla to defeat Paekche, meaning that the monastery survived the transition from Paekche to United Silla rule in 668. Some argue the base story of the pagoda survives from the sixth century and the rest is later.

Paekche’s most famous monastery is Mirüksa/Mireuksa 彼勒寺, dated to the period when the capital was at Iksan 益山, circa 600–660. The vow to construct it was made in 602 by King Mu 武 (reigned 600–641) following a vision he and his wife had on Mount Yonghwa 龍華 in which three images of Maitreya appeared rising out of a pond. Initial excavation by a Japanese team in the late 1930s revealed three courtyards, perhaps one for each of the Buddhas in the imperial dream. Since the mid-1970s, it has been known that Mirüksa had three parallel courtyards, the largest in the center. About forty building foundations and two symmetrically located ponds have been uncovered.

The focal courtyard had a squarish pagoda, elevated on a two-layer granite platform, 18.56 meters on each side. It is one of the most copiously studied Korean pagodas. When first investigated, it was believed to have been a nine-story, five-bay timber structure that rose about forty-five meters. We now know it was three bays square. The name of the builder, Abiji 阿非知, is identified. The pagodas in the side cloisters were stone (fig. 31).

How one assesses the plan of Mirüksa is important. One interpretation is that it consists of three parallel subtemples, each with the Yongningsi/Paekche plan. Another is that it is an example of a twin-pagoda monastery, with an additional primary pagoda along the central axis. We already have seen the possible links to arrangements of Buddhist cave-temples and tombs and, based on those associations, to people as well. The pagoda–Buddha hall pair, the Yongningsi/Paekche plan, is associated with two-chamber cave-temples, tombs, and digong. As for a triple pagoda-hall scheme, the Binyang 寶陽 caves at Longmen 龍門 also are a triad. They are associated with a son and parents. Mirüksa’s pagodas may be similarly associated, with the ruler Mu, his wife, and their son Üija/Uija 義慈王 (reigned 641–60), who succeeded him as, it turned out, last ruler of Paekche. One can never be certain if the imminence of dynastic collapse was apparent to rulers, but the appearance of Maitreya, the Buddha who would take on the role of Shakymuni after the termination of the current era, in triplicate, would be significant if
concerns of his family's end were a consideration. If the side pagodas were twins and the two sixth-century pagodas on Ayuwangshan 阿育王山, mentioned above, were not a pair, Mirüksa would be a very early example of twin pagodas.

Then there is Silla. Three monasteries represent Buddhist architecture from the founding of the kingdom in 527 to the end of the seventh century. The first is Hünnyunsa/Heungnyunsa 興輪寺, founded in 528 and completed in 544. The plan today suggests a roughly symmetrical monastery with a large image hall and a pair of buildings with octagonal ground plans. There is no definite evidence of a pagoda, but two eight-sided buildings may be twin pagodas. Excavation suggests they were made of wood on stone bases. If so, Hünnyunsa is stronger evidence than Mirüksa that monasteries with twin pagodas were constructed in Korea in the sixth century.

Pairs of octagonal buildings constructed by Koguryó rulers lead us back more than a century to the mountain castle Wandu 丸都. Located about 2.5 kilometers outside the city limits of Ji'an, the stone wall-enclosed sector of Wandu mountain-castle is one of the most intriguing excavation sites of post-Han, pre-Tang East Asia (fig. 32). Abandoned in the mid-fourth century, the fortified palace is likely to predate the official acceptance of Buddhism in the Koguryó kingdom. Excavation through the 2003 season produced a plan suggestive of a palatial core of four rows of buildings. Most intriguing are two octagonal structures in their own precinct (fig. 33). The fourth-century date raises the possibility that the buildings are not Bud-

Hwangnyongsa 皇龍寺 in Kyŏngju is the most famous Silla monastery and arguably the most important. Initial construction was on a site intended for a palace. The appearance of a yellow dragon gave way to the change in function and the name Hwangnyong (Yellow Dragon) Monastery. Hwangnyongs’a’s plan at that time followed Yongningsi’s, but already there was space for construction to the right and left that could have formed a plan similar to Mirūksa’s.

The first major change was the addition of a lecture hall behind the main building. A nine-story pagoda stood in the 640s (fig. 34). The date 643 inscribed in foundation stones is consistent with the visit of the monk Chajang/Jajang 慈藏 following study on the sacred Buddhist peak Wutai in 636, where he is said to have met the dragon whose oldest son was the guardian of Hwangnyongs. According to Samguk sagi 三國史記 (Historical record of the Three Kingdoms), the dragon told Chajang that if Silla built a nine-story pagoda, nine districts would come to pay tribute. Queen Sŏndŏk/Seondeok 善德 sent to Paekche for advice, and Abiji, the man to whom Mirūksa’s nine-story wooden pagoda is attributed, was dispatched with two hundred artisans. This human link between two pagodas is unique in East Asian architectural history. Before this, all Silla pagodas are believed to have been stone. The desire to construct a towering wooden monument suggests that it was modeled on the Pakeche structure or a different one and, as in China, it was a building type identified with rulers. The nine-story pagoda of Yongningsi is the best example of a prototype in China.

Comparing the heights of the pagodas of Yongningsi and Hwangnyongs, both known only from descriptions and theoretical reconstructions, the first was nine bays square and rose more than one hundred meters, and the second was seven bays square and just under seventy-five meters in height. The base of Hwangnyongs’s pagoda was wooden whereas the foundation of the Yongningsi pagoda was stone, as it was at Mirūksa. The plan of Hwangnyongs also should be considered in relation to Mirūksa’s. By the first rebuilding of the Silla monastery, 574–645, Buddha halls stood east and west of an enlarged, central Buddha hall. A precise date for the construction of the second and third Buddha halls is relevant to the date of
Asukadera 飛鳥寺, discussed below. Around 754, a date on a bell found there, a bell tower was constructed on the eastern side in the front section of the monastery. One assumes that the symmetrical tower on the west was a sutra library.103

Hwangnyongsa also may be evidence that nearby monasteries were built in response to each other and perhaps even shared architecture. The relevant structure is the pagoda of Bunhwangsa 芬皇寺, founded in 634.104 That monastery is several hundred meters behind Hwangnyongsa, with a 390-meter distance between pagodas. Except for the fact that its pagoda is four-sided, the Bunhwangsa plan recalls those of Koguryo: the pagoda is behind an entry gate, and three Buddha halls enclose it to the northeast, northwest, and due north (see figs. 28 and 29). Three stories of a pagoda believed originally to have had nine remain today (fig. 35). The Bunhwangsi pagoda returns us to Chinese monasteries.

Today a pagoda faces south and a pavilion faces west at Kaiyuansi 開元寺 in Zhengding 正定, Hebei province. Founded in 540 and repaired in 898, the monastery had several names before it became Kaiyuansi during the widespread establishment of monasteries in the Kaiyuan 開元 reign period (713–42) of the Tang dynasty.105 In 1990, a digong was uncovered at the bell tower with burial objects dated to the Sui and early Tang periods. Excavators have argued convincingly that the bell tower is a replacement for a pagoda.106 The proposed reconstruction is one of the best pieces of evidence of a pre-Tang twin pagoda arrangement in China (fig. 36). Without assumptions that in the sixth century Kaiyuanshi had twin brick pagodas in its front courtyard, evidence of twin pagodas survives beginning in the Tang period, with the pagoda pair at Lingquansi at Baoshan, Henan prefecture.107 The Tang pagoda at Kaiyuansi has figures inset on either side of the corner of the base of its lowest story, similar to the ones found at the Bunhwangsa pagoda (fig. 37, and see fig. 35). The similar pagodas are reason to believe that pagodas and monastery plans traveled eastward on the East Asian continent.

From Korea, then, at least three sixth-century monastery arrangements have been confirmed by excavation: central pagoda with Buddha halls on three sides; pagoda and hall in a line behind a main gate; and twin pagodas. Furthermore,
each kingdom appears to have had a preferred monastery plan: Koguryō, the first; Paekche, the second, and its most complex monastery, Miruksa, three parallel sections of this type or perhaps twin pagodas; and Silla, twin pagodas. In each kingdom, religious space was dominated by pagodas and halls for Buddhist images. Pagodas were wooden, brick, and stone, but none of the first type survives. Octagonal construction was important in Koguryō. Although logic tells us that China should have had all three plans, we can be certain only about one of them before the seventh century: hall and pagoda on the main axial line of the monastery.

**Japan's Earliest Buddhist Architecture**

There is no question either that Buddhism was introduced to Japan from continental East Asia or that it came to the Japanese islands as an organized, coherent system or systems as many as five hundred years later than it flourished, at least in pockets, in China. Officially Buddhism came to Japan through the presentation of an image from the king of Paekche in 538.

All three Korean monastery plans existed in Japan, along with two others, before the year 700. Four of them are represented in the group known as the Four Great Monasteries of the Fujiwara 藤原 capital.

The earliest of the four, Asukadera, also known as Gangōji 元興寺, was founded in 588. Associated with the Soga 曽我 clan, particularly Umako 馬子 (551–626), its plan is that of sixth-century Koguryō monasteries and the second Hwangnyōngsa, dated circa 643 (see figs. 28, 29, and 34). The simplest explanation for the plan is that Asukadera followed a Koguryō model, a plan based on examples like Chōgnunsa and Kûmgangsa that pre-date 588 and do not survive. This proposal does not explain why the central pagoda in Koguryō is octagonal while at Asukadera and Hwangnyōngsa, it is four-sided.

In contrast to Asukadera, which was excavated more than half a century ago, the second monastery, Kudara Ōdera 百濟大寺 was unknown except through textual references until the late 1990s. Founded in 639, it has opened for scholars of early Japanese Buddhist art the kind of possibilities one anticipated when excavation in China began in earnest in the 1950s: a new monastery plan. A pagoda and Kondō 金堂 (Buddha hall) were positioned side by side at this early seventh-century monastery. The base areas of the two buildings are similar: the pagoda platform is thirty-two meters square and the base of the image hall is thirty-seven by twenty-five meters, with perimeters of 128 and 124 meters, respectively. In addition, each structure is marked on the south of the enclosing covered arcade by its own gate. We have noted pairing of buildings in China, but usually with an additional, central, focal structure. The only precedent for this kind of parallel approach that does not involve twin buildings and without a central focus that comes to mind is the

49 THE SIXTH CENTURY IN EAST ASIAN ARCHITECTURE
Plans of selected Chinese, Korean, and Japanese monasteries of the 6th through 8th centuries. Drawn by Sijie Ren.

(a) Miruksa, 600–660; (b) Yongningsi, 516; (c) Hwangnyongsa, ca. mid-6th century; (d) Hwangnyongsa, after ca. 643; (e) Nungsja, 566; (f) Asukadera, 588; (g) Shibemnoji, 593; (h) Kawaradera, 660s; (i) Kudara Odera, mid-7th century; (j) Horinji, 670 or later; (k) Yamadera, 641; (l) Horyuji, ca. 711; (m) Moto Yakushiji, 680; (n) Chongrimsa of Paekche, mid-6th century; (o) Kanzeonji, 723–31; (p) Hokkiji, 706; (q) Kungangsa, mid-6th century; (r) Minami Shigadera, 8th century; (s) Itamidera.

1) pagoda; 2) Buddha hall.

The plan of the third great monastery of the Fujiwara capital, Kawaradera 川原寺, founded in circa 668, may be a modified version of Kudara Odera. Kawaradera may have been transformed from a palace shortly after funerary ceremonies for Empress Saimi 明明 were held there following her death in 661. An additional building behind the pagoda and Kondô may have been a second Kondô or it may have been a lecture hall, as the back structure at Kudara Odera is believed to be. If building type, size, and approach are related to religious beliefs, several conclusions can be drawn from the three plans. Asukadera seems to emphasize the single importance of the pagoda. Kudara Odera shows a shared importance of pagoda and image hall. Kawaradera signals a shift toward a coherent worship space, and the smaller size of the pagoda compared to the Kondô seems to indicate that the pagoda is no longer the supreme monument of Buddhist space. Why the pagoda is on the east at Kawaradera and on the west at Kudara Odera is unknown at this time. The last of the four, Yakushiji 四天王寺, is the earliest Japanese evidence of twin pagodas (fig. 38).

Less than half-a-kilometer southeast of Kawaradera are the remains of Tachibanadera 橘寺, a nunnery dated to the seventh century. Its plan is that of Yongningsi of Luoyang and the Paekche monasteries, that is, gate, pagoda, and Buddha hall in a line, but oriented east–west. Shitennôji 四天王寺 of the Naniwa 難波
capital (today Osaka), founded in 593, has the same plan but oriented north–south like the Chinese and Korean monasteries. Knowing that the Yongningsi-Paekche scheme was implemented in Japan before the year 600, it should be significant that it was not selected for any of the great monasteries of the Fujiwara capital. The nunnery Chūgūji 中宮寺, established in Ikaruga 穂積 by the year 606, also had this plan. Tachibanadera was rebuilt in 680, following destruction by fire. If it retains the plan of 601, then the four Japanese Buddhist monasteries, Chūgūji, Tachibanadera, Shitennōji, and Ikarugadera 穂積寺 all had the Paekche plan when only Asukadera of the Great Four was standing. All extant Japanese monasteries constructed before 621, except Asukadera, are associated with Prince Shōtoku 聖徳 (573–621) who served as regent when his aunt Suikō 推古 (554–628) was empress. If it was not his favored plan, then it was favored in his time.

Both the plan associated with Shōtoku and the Asukadera plan, we now know, have Korean sources. The twin pagodas plan of Yakushiji may trace to the Silla kingdom, unless it can be determined that such a plan was built in China earlier than Kaiyuansi and Lingquansi. The origins of a monastery with pagoda and Buddha hall side by side, the arrangements of Kudara Odera and Kawaradera, appear to be in Japan.

Hōryūji and Seventh-century Architecture in Japan

If we continue investigation of Japanese monastery plans for another century, through the Nara period (710–84), no new plans are found. The arrangement with one pagoda and three Buddha halls disappears, as did the Koguryō kingdom by this time, and twin pagodas become popular. The Paekche arrangement persists into the eighth century, with evidence of it at Yamadadera 山田寺 in Nara (see fig. 38). The plan of pagoda and Kondō 金堂 side by side had already appeared in Ikaruga where three monasteries of this type were constructed. One of them is Hōryūji 法隆寺, also the location of ten of Japan’s twenty-two oldest wooden buildings.

Hōryūji receives more attention than any other early Buddhist monastery in Japan, probably more than any early monastery in East Asia except Foguangsi. Its Kondō 金堂 is unique among extant buildings in East Asia (fig. 39). From the exterior, it appears to be a two-story structure with an additional set of perimeter eaves on the first story. The upper story roof is a hip gable with a porch defining it. There are two sets of roof rafters, the upper circular in section and the lower four-sided; all are parallel. Pillars are thick, with entasis, and penetrated by beams near
the tops. On top of each pillar is a sarato (Chinese: mindou) The bracket sets are distinguished by cloud-shaped patterning, including a lower portion known as zetsu (tongue). Another distinctive feature is the alternating inverted V-shaped braces and single-step bracket arms across the balustrade of the upper story. Yet another is the very long, plain bracket arms. Similar building components are found in the central gate; pillars with entasis, penetrated by beams near the tops; sarato on top of each cap block; cloud-shaped patterning decorating the bracket arms; zetsu; and inverted V-shaped braces alternating with single-step bracket arms across a balustrade.

The five-story pagoda in the central cloister of Hōryūji is a three-bay square structure with a central pillar. With base dimensions only twenty meters square, it is much smaller than the pagoda that would have stood at Yongningsi or Kudara Ōdera. Remarkably, the central pillar and structural members around it do not interlock. Instead, space between them gives the wood a flexibility that allows it to respond to temperature and geographic conditions as violent as an earthquake.119

The above-mentioned Ikarugadera was located fewer than two hundred meters southeast of the four core buildings of Hōryūji today and, as also mentioned, in the late sixth century it had the plan of China’s Yongningsi, Paekche monasteries, Shitennōji, and other monasteries associated with Prince Shōtoku. In the mid-seventh century, Shōtoku’s descendants were purged by the Soga clan, and then in 670, the monastery known as Hōryūji was consumed by fire.120

Because of the fire, the year 670 is the earliest possible date for Hōryūji’s four core buildings: Kondō, middle gate (Chūmon), pagoda, and enclosing arcade. The buildings certainly have stood since 747, the year mentioned in a monastery inventory. Early eighth century is most often used by Japanese architectural historians, and the discussion here also is based on that date.121

Harder to assess is whether the individual components of the buildings—such as bracket sets, balustrades, and roof styles and distinctive exterior features like the number of roof eaves of the Kondō or stories of the pagoda—reflect the early eighth century or if they were intended to retain the forms of the early seventh-century buildings, even if newer wooden pieces were employed. It is possible building pieces from Ikarugadera were used in the postconflagration reconstruction. The range of possibilities directly relates to whether builders or architectural forms came from the independent Korean kingdoms or from United Silla and whether Tang or pre-Tang architecture should be considered in assessing Hōryūji’s earliest architecture.

One begins to answer these questions through two other pagodas in Ikaruga, each fewer than two kilometers from Hōryūji. The three-story structure at Hokkiji may be the oldest wooden pagoda in Japan. One almost as ancient stood at Hōrinji until it was destroyed by lightning in 1944.
The Hokkiji site traces to the year 638. Associated with Okamoto 岡本 palace, the pagoda is dated by some to circa 685 and by others to 706. Ikarugadera certainly predated it, but the Hokkiji pagoda was standing when Hōryūji was rebuilt after 670 (fig. 40). It is about three-fourths the height of the Hōryūji pagoda. As far as we know, in circa 700, Hokkiji consisted of a pagoda and Kondō enclosed by an arcade, with a middle gate at the front and a lecture hall behind, and perhaps dormitories and a refectory. The plan is Hōryūji’s in reverse. The pagoda has a key structural feature of central pillar and base, only partially implanted into the ground. Eventually central bases and the columns they contain would be moved above ground. The position is consistent with a date of 685–706.

The Hōrinji pagoda that one sees today has been reconstructed based on the pagodas at Hōryūji and Hokkiji. The monastery plan was that of Hōryūji. Records place the construction date after 670 and before the reconstruction of Hōryūji in circa 710.

Structurally, Hōrinji’s pagoda was most similar to Hokkiji’s. Both are three stories and about the same height. All three of the Ikaruga pagodas are supported by twelve exterior pillars and four interior ones. Tiebeams join the exterior columns at the tops and bottoms. At Hōryūji and Hokkiji, they penetrate the columns. Every exterior pillar has entasis. At its top, above the upper tiebeam, is a daiwa 台輪 that interfaces the column and cap block (Chinese: ludou 樑斗; Japanese: dairo 大斗) of each bracket set. Bracket arms that penetrate the building have one small bearing-block (makito 巻斗), but those at the interior corners have three. Bracket arms at all three pagodas are decorated with cloud-shaped patterning. Long tiebeams (torii-hijiki 通り肘木) rest on bearing blocks and the tops of bracket arms in both directions. Struts (tsuka 杖) join the tiebeams and rafters (taruki 垂木). Concerning rafters, there are two sets, the lower, circular in section and the upper, square-shaped in section. Beams and struts support a lattice ceiling (kumiire tenjō 組入天).

These shared structural features of wooden framed buildings of circa 700 in Japan are those one seeks in China to determine if sixth-century timber construction anticipated Japanese architecture of the subsequent century. The upper tiebeam and entasis have been observed at the shrine atop the Yičihi pillar (see fig. 27). The cap block and additional block (santo) have been seen in the Shijun sarcophagus (see fig. 24). Patterning on the ends of bracketing is found in Shedi Huiluo sarcophagus (see fig. 23). The heights of the three Ikaruga pagodas are harder to assess in comparison with China and Korea. The Hōryūji pagoda is more complicated than Hokkiji’s or Hōrinji’s, but it did not soar nine stories like the one at Yongningsi or even as high as the three-bay square central pagoda of Mirūksa. One must wonder if nine-story pagodas were associated with royalty and, if so, whether any were erected at the Great Monasteries of the Fujiwara capital.
Equally intriguing, because of a possible relation to the height of wooden pagodas, is construction in stone. As in Korea, stone pagodas existed in the Asuka and Nara periods (fig. 41). The fact that extant timber pagodas in Japan are three and five stories, that no wooden pagodas survive from this period in Korea, and that in China the first towering timber pagoda survives from the eleventh century all may be the result of natural disasters. But it also may indicate that the technology did not exist for ensuring tall wooden construction, and perhaps for that reason brick and stone pagodas were built in the first place.

One more Japanese structure is helpful in understanding sixth-century architecture: Tamamushi Shrine. Made to house a devotional image, the shrine consists of four parts: base, bodies of the main lower and upper sections, and roof (fig. 42). As a whole, it can be compared to the Yichuei pillar, perhaps evidence that personal shrines were elevated at eye-level, and those for an entire village soared multiples of that height in the sixth and seventh centuries. In terms of specific elements, the bracket arms of Tamamushi Shrine are decorated with the cloud-like patterning found in the Ikaruga buildings.

Five timber-supported structures are painted on the back of the lower shaft of Tamamushi Shrine. Each is comprised of only five elements: foundation platform, red pillars, red bracket sets, parallel roof rafters, and chiwei at the ends of the main roof ridge. A similar form is used to portray buildings on the Tenjukoku 天寿国 “Mandala,” commissioned in about 623 following the death of Prince Shōtoku and today in the nunnery Chūgyūji. An open pavilion-like structure similarly is employed for the Chinese building under which the Sogdian An Qie (died 572) and his wife sit on his above-mentioned funerary couch (see fig. 25). The pavilion has the typical sixth-century feature, the inverted V-shaped brace, found at the Hōryūji Kondō and Middle Gate and elsewhere (see figs. 15, 23, 24, and 39). The timber frame and tile roof with parallel rafters and corner decoration are all that are necessary to identify a late sixth- or early seventh-century Chinese building. The aspects of Chinese ideology associated with a wooden building may have been different for a Sogdian lord and a Japanese royal patron, but in the early seventh century, those motifs were shared at both ends of East Asia.
Stone Architecture of Eastern Han

Compared to evidence of architecture of the sixth and even the fifth and fourth centuries, three-dimensional evidence from the Eastern Han (23–220) period is often larger in size and occasionally boldly compelling. Best known are que, the gate-pillars that marked entries to cities and approaches to tombs. Approximately thirty still stand. Long bracket arms, undulating bracket arms, and bracket arms with cloud-like patterning, all observed in wooden architecture of Ikaruga, are found on them (fig. 43). Recently identified evidence of architecture from chambers of Eastern Han cliff tombs in Qijiang and Anju townships of Santai county, Sichuan, near Leshan, presents the same kinds of bracket arms (fig. 44). The inverted V-shaped brace found on the Kondô and middle gate of Hōryûji, the Shijun sarcophagus, and in relief sculpture and painting of caves and tombs across China and Koguryô is painted on architraves in second-century stone tombs in Liaoyang, Liaoning (fig. 45). The red wooden frame comprises the same features as the structure on An Qie’s funerary couch and those on Tamamushi Shrine and the Tenjukoku Mandala (see figs. 25 and 42).

Central pillar construction, the feature associated with Buddhist cave-temple architecture and individual wooden pagodas, also is found in Eastern Han cliff tombs (fig. 46). Sometimes in the middle of a chamber and other times close to the back wall, but always on the interior central axis, central columns also are used in brick tombs in the Luoyang region of the late Western Han period and slightly later (220 BCE–9 CE). The presence of details of Indian Buddhist art in Chinese imagery of the Han period is well documented. The wooden pillar that spans the length from central “heart” stone to roof spire in a timber-frame pagoda, like the bracket arms that decorate it, thus may have a second-century CE Chinese source independent of a South Asian one. The last feature of Han cliff tombs that finds its way into Buddhist construction is the lantern, or cupola, ceiling (fig. 47).
Octagonal Construction

The final defining structural element of sixth-century East Asia is the octagon. It appears not only in ceiling construction but in ground plans. In Korea, one recalls octagonal pagodas at Koguryo monasteries and the twin octagonal structures at Wandu mountain castle (see figs. 28, 29, and 33). The form may trace to Han China. In the 1930s Bishop Charles William White saw and published an octagonal tomb, believed to be Han because of the objects in it.134

The earliest confirmed archaeological evidence of an aboveground octagonal hall in China is from the Tang dynasty. Three such foundations have been uncovered at the Luoyang capital. The first measures 65.8 meters in “diameter” and has a central pillar placed into the ground in a stone foundation. An inscription says the structure was erected by imperial decree in 705. Initially believed to be the Mingtang of the usurper empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (625–705), it is now known that her Mingtang stood just over one hundred meters to the north.135 The best suggestion for the first foundation is that it is from the Tang Tiantan 天壇 (Altar to Heaven). Empress Wu’s Mingtang is the second foundation and is also believed to have been octagonal.136 The third octagonal wooden hall was excavated on the western side of the palace-city of Luoyang (fig. 48).137

Two eighth-century octagonal buildings in Japan may help explain the function of the third Luoyang building and perhaps other eight-sided architecture. One is Yumedono 夢殿 (Hall of Dreams) in the east precinct of Hōryūji; it was begun in the 730s under the direction of the priest Gyoshin 行信 as part of what would be a century-by-century enhancement of the life and legendary lore of Prince Shōtoku, who is said to have come to this site to contemplate, or dream about, the Buddha.138 In the above-mentioned inventory of Hōryūji, the east octagonal hall is named hakkaku Butsuden 八角佛殿 (eight-cornered Buddha hall).139 Another octagonal hall stands in Hōryūji’s west precinct. Built under the direction of the priest Gyoki 行基 in 718 at the request of Lady Tachibana, it was known as Saiendō 西円堂, “west circular hall.”140 Saiendō was rebuilt in 1249. Its original images are not certain, but the current Heian-Kamakura-period main image, Yakushi 菩薩, may represent the original primary statue. A healing deity, of course, is associated with severe, life-threatening illness.

Hōryūji’s eighth-century octagonal hall consists of eight 8-sided exterior pillars and eight interior ones. A different plan is used for the octagonal hall at Eizanji 東山寺, about twenty-five kilometers from Hōryūji in Nara prefecture. It has only four interior pillars, the same configuration as the Luoyang building whose purpose has not been determined.

The date of Eizanji’s founding is uncertain. Roof tiles found there are similar enough to some uncovered at the site of Yakushiji in the Fujiwara capital that a very
early eighth-century date has been proposed. Others believe it was constructed in 763–64. There is little doubt that the Eikanji octagonal hall was constructed within twenty-five years of the erection of Yumedono, so that it is unlikely it was built without knowledge of the octagonal hall on the other side of the Nara capital.

Both Nara-period octagonal halls are commemorative, posthumously created to evoke the memory of an ancestor or great man. Pagodas, the only other East Asian structure known to be octagonal, commemorate the death of the Buddha.

Two eight-sided buildings also were constructed at the monastery Kofukuji in Nara, the earlier known as the north octagonal hall, vowed in 721, and the south octagonal hall in 814. Today they stand as Kamakura- and Edo-period buildings, respectively. Their Japanese names are Hokundo hall and Nanendo hall, or north and south circular halls, respectively. The character en 亜 is the same one used for the Heian–Kamakura–period Saendo at Horyuji. The names return us to the issue raised by the dodecagonal Songyue Monastery pagoda.

If the name circular is used for an octagonal ground plan, does it follow that the intent was a circular building? An attempted circle has been proposed here to explain the unique twelve-sided Songyuesi pagoda (see fig. 1). The name “circular” suggests a similar intent in Nara Japan. Furthermore, although the Japanese octagonal halls were not pagodas, they were intended to evoke the memory of a departed Buddhist.

The question of a Chinese source for the one-story commemorative octagonal halls in Japan returns us to the ruins from Sui–Tang Luoyang. The octagonal hall in its own precinct in the northern part of the Luoyang palace–city also may have been commemorative.

None of the eight-sided buildings was mentioned in Alexander Soper’s study of eight-sided and domed ceilings that rise above these kinds of buildings. He did recognize the importance of Koguryo in his 1947 article on the Dome of Heaven in Asia. Soper wrote in response to Karl Lehmann’s study of the ceiling type outside Asia two years earlier in which ceilings, particularly with representations of heavenly bodies, from Byzantium through the Italian Baroque period were shown to have sources in ancient Rome, provincial Rome, and, he posited, ancient Egypt. Soper began in Mathura and continued in several directions, taking his reader to the Esoteric Mandala of the Two Worlds, cave-temples of Bamiyan and Kizil, Mogao caves, Koguryo tombs, and Ming (1368–1644) temple ceilings. Uncharacteristically, Soper did not consider periodization. Rather, he sought to demonstrate that a feature in Western architecture “penetrated eastward far beyond the limits of Roman authority or of orthodox Christianity.” He wrote, further, that the similarities with the Western material are hard to explain except by “direct borrowing.” Soper suggested that Buddhists built Domes of Heaven because they came into


51 Ceiling of Fohadi cave 4, Bamiyan. Photo by and published courtesy of Michael Meister.

Contact with the repertoire of Greco-Roman architecture during the Gandharan period. He did not cite Josef Strzygowski (1862–1941), but his thesis is very much in that mold: focusing on Indian Buddhist, early Christian, early Islamic, or Byzantine art, Strzygowski inevitably managed to bring his reader back to ancient Greece as the source of civilization’s greatest art.

Whether from the pen of Strzygowski or Franz Boas (1858–1942) or other diffusionists writing in the 1920s through 1940s who argued for heliocentrism, the ideas followed the Darwinian use of the word evolution in dangerous ways. The theories fed into notions of ethnic cleansing on the one hand, colonialism on another, and orientalism on yet another, all with the understanding of a superior source that spreads, sometimes intentionally and other times because of its inherent superiority, to “lesser” cultures. There is no evidence that Alexander Soper or Karl Lehmann were reading the cultural anthropology of their day. Yet as a professor at Columbia, Boas’s work was widely known in the United States and is likely to have been known to scholars in the third, fourth, and fifth decades of the 1900s. One cannot ignore that there were agendas in cross-cultural comparative research in the first half of the twentieth century. Those agendas, and equally distasteful political undertones of the Japanese research in the same decades with which we began this study, no doubt have been factors in the absence of scholarship on East Asian or broader Asian subjects in more recent decades. As it turns out, some of the most pertinent material for understanding the sixth century in East Asian architecture was first studied by Tōyō-ists and is included as evidence of the Dome of Heaven in Soper’s study. Among it are ceilings in caves of the Kucha region that some now believe to be as early as the fourth century, contemporary with Koguryō tombs, and in caves at Bamiyan (figs. 49–52, and see fig. 20).

The visual similarities of the domed ceilings and ceilings of embedded octagons in the Kucha region and elsewhere in Xinjiang, Bamiyan, and the Koguryō tombs are as striking today as they were when Soper wrote about them sixty-four years ago. At that time, and through the 1980s, Rome was believed to be their source because the ceilings were considered post-Han phenomena, dated to the fourth century at the earliest. Not only are the interiors of cliff tombs in Sichuan evidence that components in Japan’s oldest wooden buildings—long bracket arms, cloud-shaped decoration on bracket arms, and central pillars—trace to the Eastern Han period but that the domed and octagonal ceilings, like features of wooden halls that are sometimes under them, also trace to the Han. In fact, the ceiling is found in two-
dimensional form in the Xin period (8–23) in a tomb in Jinguyuan, Luoyang (fig. 53).\(^\text{153}\) If White's rendering of the tomb he saw in Luoyang in the early twentieth century is correct, then the octagonal space traces to the Han period as well.

The existence of Han prototypes does not mean that Han Chinese construction was the source of cave-temple architecture in Xinjiang or Afghanistan, only that it is a possible source. Yet archaeological evidence mounts to support connections between China and Rome, which were proposed when there was little material evidence to support the possibility.\(^\text{154}\) Most important is that if the search to demonstrate the transmission of forms across Asia was misguided in the first part of the twentieth century, some of the conclusions by the searchers may have been valid. Those writings, like standard histories and monks’ biographies of the centuries after Han and through the Tang, have now in some ways been tested and validated.

Buddhist monastery builders in sixth-century China, Korea, and Japan built temples, tombs, digong, and monasteries with shared plans and construction details. Entering the century, the pagoda was the primary monument in Buddhist space, and its forms were traceable to India. By the end of the century and into the seventh, the image hall had ascended in importance. For now, the roots of sixth-century construction lie in the Eastern Han. They may trace earlier, and we must leave open the possibility of innovation between China’s third century and the sixth in China, Korea, and Japan, but we currently have little to guide our assessment of these subjects. Han China constructed eight-sided spaces, particularly in ceilings, and domes sheltered Buddhist spaces across Xinjiang and in the Bamiyan region by the fourth century. One now writes as confidently about sixth-century architecture in East Asia as about that of the seventh or eighth century. The discourse tells us that it was an age of the reaffirmation of building pieces and a construction system that had existed on continental East Asia four or five centuries earlier.

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NOTES

1 Wang Xuanzhi’s (d. 5557) almost unique text on a city and its Buddhist architecture is divided into five juan, each focused on one urban sector: inner, north, south, east, and west. Information about religious architecture in the adjacent suburbs is also included. For a translation, see Wang Yi-t’ung, A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); for a study, see W. J. F. Jenner, Memories of Lo-yang: Yang Hsüan-chih and the Lost Capital (493–534) (Oxford and New York: Clarendon and Oxford University Press, 1981).

2 The main hall of Nanchan Monastery, on Mount Wutai, has been extensively studied. See, for example, Chen Mingda 陳明達, “Nanchansi 南禪寺” (Nanchan Monastery), Wenwu cankao ziliao 文物參考資料, no. 11 (1954), pp. 38–42; Qi Yingtao 齊英濤 and Chai Zejun 柴澤俊, “Nanchansi dadian xifu 南禪寺大殿修復” (Restoration of the main hall of Nanchan Monastery), Wenwu 文物, no. 11 (1980), pp. 61–75; Chai Zejun and Liu Xiangwu 劉憲武, “Nanchanshi 南禪寺”, Wenwu 文物, no. 11 (1980), pp. 75–77; Qi and Chai, “Wutai Nanchanshi dadian xifu gongcheng baogao” 五臺南禪寺大殿修復工程報告 (Report on restoration work on the main hall of Nanchanshi, Mount Wutai), Jianzhu lishi yunjiu 建筑歷史研究 (Research on Chinese architecture) vol. 2, internal publication of the Chinese Institute for Research on Chinese Architecture, preface dated 1982; and Chai Zejun, “Wutai Nanchanshi” (Nanchan Monastery on Wutai), in Chai Zejun gujiaanzhu wenji 柴澤俊古建築文集 (Collected essays on old architecture by Chai Zejun) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1999), pp. 78–82. The building also is discussed in almost any general study of architecture in Shanxi or in China.

3 Japanese timber buildings dated before the end of the eighth century are: the Kondô 金堂 (main Buddha hall), five-story pagoda, middle gate, covered arcade, Yumedono 夢殿, great east gate, Dempódó 伝法堂, sutra repository, Higashimuro 東室 (dormitory), and refectory, all at Horiyôji 法隆寺; three-story pagoda at Hokkôji 光法寺; the octagonal hall at Eizanji 付山寺; the east pagoda at Yakushiji 薬師寺; the five-story miniature pagoda and west Kondô at Kairyô-ji 流王寺; the five-story miniature pagoda of the Gokurakuji 極楽坊 at Gangôji 元興寺; the east pagoda at Taikadera 随麻寺; the Hokkedô 仏華堂 and Tegai Gate 設合門 at Tôdaiji 東大寺; the main hall of Shin Yakushiji 新薬師寺; and the Kondô and lecture hall at Tôshôdaiji 廣才寺. For illustrations of most of them and discussion, see Suzuki Kakichi, Early Buddhist Architecture in Japan, trans. M. N. Parent and N. S. Steinhardt (Tokyo, New York, and San Francisco: Kodansha International, 1980), pp. 54–131. Korea’s oldest wooden buildings date to the thirteenth century.

4 In the 1950s when Nanchansi was rediscovered, China’s other two earlier Tang buildings were first published, and site surveys and excavation became activities sponsored by the Chinese government, it seemed likely that additional early wooden buildings would be identified. Year by year, the likelihood lessens. An excellent example of the kind of survey that is considered comprehensive is Zhongguo wenwu ditu ji 中國文物地圖集 (Chinese cultural relics atlas), with eighteen provinces or other regions published to date. Since the 1990s, various publishers have participated in the project.

5 On this subject, see Iida Sugashi 井田須賀斯, Chugoku kenchiku no Nihon 日本的中國建築史.
6 The "giants" among archaeologist-scholars of the first decades of the twentieth century, men such as Tokiwa Daijo 常盤大定 (1870–1945), Sekino Tadashi 関野耕正 (1868–1935), and Umehara Sueji 梅原末治 (1893–1983) all have come under scrutiny. On this subject, see Vimalin Rujivacharakul, "The Rise of Chinese Architectural History: Cross-cultural Studies and the Making of Modern Knowledge" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2006).

7 Journals include: Tōyō gakuhō, begun in 1911; Tōyō bijutsu 東洋美術, 1929–37; Tōyō keizai shinbō 東洋経済新報, 1929–60; Tōyō bunka kenyū kiyō 東洋文化研究所紀要, begun in 1943; Tōyō bunka kenyū 東洋文化研究, 1944–49.


11 The building on which Liang relied most is the Kondō of Toshodaiji. See Liang Sichang, "Tangzhaozhi jingtang he Zhongguo Tangdai de jianzhu" 唐招提寺金堂和中國唐代的建築 (The Kondō of Toshodaiji and Chinese Tang architecture), in Liang Sichang qianshi 梁思成全集 (Complete works of Liang Sichang), 9 vols. (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2001), vol. 5, pp. 414–32.

12 The best single source of information and theoretical reconstructions of sixth-century palace buildings is Fu Xinian 富新炎, Zhongguo gudai jianzhu 趙中國古代建築史 (History of premodern Chinese Architecture), vol. 2: Liang Jin, Nanbeichao, Sui-Tang, Wudai jianzhu 南北朝隋唐五代建築 (Both Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui-Tang, and Five Dynasties architecture) (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2001), pp. 109–18. Because most of the information about palaces is speculative, they are not considered here.


14 The working number of tombs between the Han and Tang periods used at scholarly meetings is at least 20,000, of which at least twenty percent have been excavated.

15 Examples of each that address these points are: Liu Dunzhen, "Falonsi yu Han, Liuchao jianzhu shiyang zhi guanyu bing buzu" 法隆寺與漢六朝建築式樣之關係 (Supplementary notes on the relation between Horyuji and architectural styles of the Han-Six Dynasties period), Zhongguo yingzao xueshe lunan 中國營造學會論壇 5, no. 2 (1932), pp. 1–60; Naitô Toichirô, The Wall-Paintings of Horyuji, 2 vols., trans. and ed. W. R. B. Acker and Benjamin Rowland (Baltimore: Waverly Press, Inc., 1943); and Alexander Soper, The Evolution of Buddhist Architecture in Japan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942).

16 Wei Shou 魏收 (506–572), Wei shu 魏書 (hereafter Wei shu) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), juan 114, pp. 3025–29. Many of the passages quoted here are cited in Su Bai 顧愷, "Dong Han, Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao, Fosi buju chutan" 東漢，魏，晉，南北朝，佛寺佛塔初探 (Early stages of investigation of the layout of Buddhist monasteries of Eastern Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties), in Tian Yuqing 田郁清, ed., eds. Qingshu Deng guangming jianzhu jianshi huanian lunwen ji 喬慶舒銘誌教授羨廿年論文集 (Celebrating Professor Qingshu Deng's 20th Anniversary of Academic Writing), 61.
九洲與論文集 (Collected essays commemorating the ninetieth birthday of Professor Deng Guangming) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997). Some are also cited in Zhao Yonghong 趙永洪, "Jin bainian Han-Tang Fosi kaogu de huiju yu zhanwang" 近百年漢唐佛教考古的回顧與展望 (Retrospective look at the archaeology of Buddhist monasteries from Han to Tang in the last century), in Zhonghua wenhua bainian lunwen ji 中華文化百年論文集 (A hundred years of Chinese culture), 2 vols. (Taipei: Guoci Lishi Bowuguan, 1999), vol. 2, pp. 628–81. I thank Wai-Kit Tse for tracking down the sources in many of the references in Su Bai’s article.

17 Wei shu, juan 114, p. 3026.

18 Chen Shou 陳壽 (233–97), Sanguo zhi 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), juan 49, p. 1185; and see Fan Ye 范曄, Hou Han shu 後漢書 (History of the Later Han) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), p. 2368.

19 Si 寺 is a term borrowed from its secular meaning of official bureau to refer to a Buddhist building complex. It is usually translated as monastery. Its Buddhist context in a fourth-century text indicates the religious use had occurred by that time. See Taiwan Gaokongshi 臺灣高僧，Foguang da cidian 佛光大辭典 (Dictionary of Buddhism) (Gaoxiong: Foguang chubanshe, 1988–89), vol. 3, pp. 2414–417.


21 Known for his translations of scriptures, Dao’an had been moved to Chang’an by Xiaowendi 孝文帝 after the conquest of Xiayang 襄陽 in Hubei in 379.


23 Sengyou 僧祐, Chu Sontzang ji ji chuan 變三藏記集 (Collected notes on the three collections), juan 13, in Xuxiu Siku quanshu, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), vol. 1288, p. 320.

24 Wei shu, juan 114, p. 3037.


26 Xiao Zixian 晓子顯 (489–537), Nai Qi shu 南齊書 (Standard history of Southern Qi) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), juan 53, p. 916.

27 Wei shu, juan 114, p. 3030.

28 On “Da Dai Danchenggong Huifu su bei” 大代宛城公福寺碑 (Stele of Huifu Monastery of Duke Dai Dangang), see Guoja Tushuguan Shanben Jinshizhuan Jiuzhou 国家圖書館善本金石續 ed., Xin Qian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhidai wenxian quanben 先秦秦漢魏晉南北朝石刻文獻全編 (Compendium of Stele inscriptions of Pre-Qin, Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern Dynasties), 3 vols. (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2003), vol. 2, pp. 559–60.

29 Wang Jun 王軍, “Toutouzi buwen” 頭陀寺碑文 (Stele inscription of Toutouzi), in Xiao Tong lun yu ed., Wen xuan 文選 (Selected writings [“Rhapsodies”]) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), juan 59, p. 2537.


32 Xu Song 許嵩 (8th century), comp., Jiankang shihua 金陵實錄 (Veritable record of Jiankang) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), juan 17, pp. 15–16a.


36 Su Bai, “Dong Han, Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao,” p. 42. The passage is in Yao Silan 姚思廉, Liang shu 梁書 (Standard history of Liang) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), juan 54, p. 792. Sometimes twinning is assumed when in fact the evidence only confirms two pagodas. Even when pagodas are symmetrical, they need not be identical or have the same date. On the two pagodas at Kiyauji in Quanzhou, see Gustav Ecke and Paul Demiéville, The Twin Pagodas of Zayton (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935). They were not built as a pair, nor were the two pagodas at Pulguksa in Kyŏngju. It is all the more difficult to be certain about the intent at a sixth-century monastery where nothing survives.

38 The Mogao caves are well known and widely published. For a picture of fifty-seven caves, the majority of them dated sixth century or earlier, see Xia Nai 夏鼐 et al., eds., Zhongguo shiku 中國石窟: 洞溝模高窟 (Chinese rock-carved caves: Dunhuang Mogao caves), 5 vols. (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1982), vol. 1, p. 185. On the smaller site in Yixian, see Liao Jianhua 劉建華, Yixian Yanjiaogou li 中縣彌佛溝窟 (Yanjiaogou stone rock-cave in Yixian) (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2001). A site plan is found on p. 10.

39 Alexander Soper, "Imperial Cave-Chapels of the Northern Dynasties: Donors, Beneficiaries, Dates," Artibus Asiae 28, no. 4 (1966), pp. 241–70.


41 On the tomb in Dingjiazhai, Gansu, shown in fig. 5, see Gansu shen Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 甘肅省文物考古研究所, Jiuquan Shilin no. 16墓壁畫 (Paintings on the Sixteen Kingdoms Period in Jiuguan) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989). On the Koguryo tomb, illustrated in fig. 6, see Jilinsheng Wenwu Gongzuodui 吉林省文物工作隊, et al., "Jian Changchuan yihao mu shilun" 喊安長川一號壁畫墓 (Changchuan Tomb No. 1: Murals in Jian) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989). For the Koguryo tomb, see Changchuan yihao mu 聖安長川一號墓 (Changchuan tomb No. 1 with murals in Jian) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989).

42 For an Eastern Han example in Henan, see Liu Dunzhen 刘敦準, Liu Dunzhen wenji 刘敦准文集 (Collected essays of Liu Dunzhen), vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1984), pp. 439–52; for a fifth-century example in Jilin, see Wei Cuncheng 魏存成, Gaogouli kaogu 高句麗考古 (Koguryo archaeology) (Changchun: Jilin Daxue chubanshe, 1994), fig. 83.2.

43 Testament to its paramount importance, Yongning is the first monastery discussed in Luoyang qiehun ji. According to Qiu Guangming 丘光明, Zhongguo gudai dihui hengkao 中國古代度量衡考 (Research on weights and measures through the ages) (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1992 and later editions), foldout chart between pp. 190 and 191, during this period a chi 促 was approximately one half-meter, so that ninety zhang 丈 would have been 450 meters, surely an exaggeration.

44 Wang Yi-t’ung, Record of Buddhist Monasteries, p. 16.

45 Two erudite scholar-architectural historians have proposed reconstructions. For their studies, see Yang Hongjun 楊鴻勲, "Guanyu Bei Wei Luoyang Yongningsi ta fuyuan zuotu de shouying" 閒於北魏洛陽永寧寺塔複原圖的說明 (Explanation of reconstruction sketches of the pagoda of Yongningsi in Northern Wei Luoyang), Wenwu, no. 9 (1992), pp. 82–87 and 59; and Zhong Xiaozhong 中小雲, "Bei Wei Luoyang Yongningsi ta fuyuan tantao" 北魏洛陽永寧寺塔複原探討 (Inquiry into the reconstruction of the pagoda of Yongningsi in Northern Wei Luoyang), Wenwu, no. 5 (1998), pp. 51–64.

46 On this pagoda, see Guoja Wenwuju 國家文物局, "Yecheng yizhi: Dong Wei-Bei Qi Fosi tai yijie" 駝城遺址: 東魏北齊佛塔基遺址 (Remains of Ye: remains of a pagoda foundation from a Buddhist monastery of Eastern Wei-Northern Qi), in 2002 Zhongguo zhongyao kaoguo faxian 中國重要考古發現 (Major archaeological discoveries in China in 2002) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2003), pp. 97–100. The pagoda received a lot of attention at a conference on tall timber pagodas of the sixth and seventh centuries. The conference papers are published in Tōhōku Gakushū Daigaku Ronsō 東北大学論叢, Rekishi to bunka 歷史と文化 40 (2006).
The best record of the city of Ye, *Ye zong ji* (Record inside the Ye capital), written by Lu Hui 陸繪 in the fourth century, describes the capital of the Wei 魏 kingdom. On this text, see Shing Müller, *Yezhongji: eine Quelle zur MATERIELLEN KULTUR in DER STADT YE im 4. JAHNHMBERT* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1993), and Edward Schafer, “The Yeh Chung Chi,” *T'oung Pao* 4–6, no. 76 (1990), pp. 147–55. Since five dynasties or kingdoms ruled from Ye, it is possible a monastery survived from the fourth to the sixth century, but there is no evidence of this. Because of the similarities between the plan and that of the Yongning Temple, it is more likely the ruins date to the sixth century.


Thus information from the survey in the 1930s is extremely important. See Liu Dunzhen 劉敦準, “Henan sheng beibu gu jianzhu diaocha ji” 河南省北古建築調查記 (Record of ancient architecture in the northern part of Henan). *Zhongguo yingzao xueshe luikan* 中國建築學會瞭望 (1937), pp. 96–99.

The three door or window likenesses on each face no doubt have influenced reconstruction drawings of Yongning Monastery pagoda.


This is according to a stele of 535 quoted in Fu, *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi*, vol. 2, p. 189.

This is according to a stele written by Li Yong 李頰 (678–747). It is found in Chen Hongchi 陳鴻墀, *Quan Tangwen 全唐文* (Complete writings of the Tang), *juan* 263 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), p. 1181.

Liu, “Henan sheng beibu,” p. 96.

56 This information is found in stele inscriptions but not in *Wei shu*. On stele at Songyuesi, see Zhang Jiatai 張嘉泰, “Songyuesi 蘇嶽寺塔 (Songyuesi pagoda).” *Wenwu*, no. 6 (1979), pp. 91–92.

57 See Guo Tiansuo 郭天鎖 and Wang Guoqi 王國寄, “Dengfeng Songyuesi ta digong qingli jianbao” 登封蘇嶽寺塔地宮清理簡報 (Brief report on the sorting out of the digong of Songyue Monastery Pagoda in Dengfeng), *Wenwu*, no. 1 (1992), pp. 14–25. *Taogong*, literally “heavenly palaces,” were found beneath the chattras. Objects in them date to the Song period and are considered evidence of a repair.


61 Most who have studied Songyuesi pagoda have observed South Asian sources for it. As early as 1956, Alexander Soper suggested the pagoda might be a “successfully faithful reproduction of some Indian model of the contemporary Gupta style.” See Laurence Sickman and Alexander Soper, *The Art and Architecture of China* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1971, 1st integrated ed.), p. 391. Michèle Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens, *Living Architecture: Chinese* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1971), p. 137, echoes this view, suggesting that the Indian Sthahara transformed in Central Asia from its brick or stone appearance to the shape of Songyuesi pagoda and that evidence of that transformation is preserved on walls of Mogao caves. Dietrich Seckel makes the same observation in *The Art of Buddhism*, trans. Ann E. Kepp (New York: Greystone Press, 1968), pp. 119–26, and in *Buddhist Art of East Asia*, pp. 64–68, and further observes that the Indian stupa is also the source of Gupta-period Hindu temples. I see the sharp differences between the contemporary Songyuesi and Shentongsi pagodas, the one twelve-sided and the other four-sided, as even more significant than do these authors. I believe the intent of the one is a circle, and the second is a square. The importance of construction of a “circle” with straight edges will be clear in the last section of this article.

62 For examples of Mingtang and Biyong reconstructed with eight or more straight edges, see Yang Hongxun 楊鴻雋, *Gongdelta kuaoyu tonglun* 宮殿考古論論 (Discourses on Palace Archaeology) (Beijing: Zhijin chubanshe, 2001), pp. 84, 86, and 321.

63 Another possibility, as suggested by Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens, is that the Songyuesi pagoda is the next stage in an evolution that traces eastward across Central Asia. Mud-brick pagodas, often on quadrilateral bases but with circular drums, survive in Niya, Loulan, Rewak, Miran, and Endere, among other sites in Xinjiang from the third or fourth century. Stanley Abe also discusses this kind of evolution in *Ordinary Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 150–56. For illustrations, see Christoph Baumer, *Southern Silk Road* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2000), pp. 62, 109, and 117.


On Baoshan, see Du Xianzhu, Baoshan Lingzangsi (Lingzuan Monastery of Baoshan) (Zhengzhou: Henan Remnin chubanshe, 1992).


Nor has it been calculated based on the site. The report on Siyuan Fosi is Hu Ping 胡平, “Datong Bei Wei Fangshan Siyuan Fosi yizhi faxiang baogao” 大同北魏方山思遠佛舍遺址報告 (Excavation Report on the Remains of Siyuan Buddhist Monastery of the Northern Wei in Fangshan), Wenwu, no. 4 (2007), pp. 4–26.

These pagodas are published in many places. In addition to Baumer, cited in n. 63, see Marylin Rhie, Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, vol. 1, pp. 392–425, and Zhu Yunxiao 朱雲霄, “Sichou zhi lishang de Fo ta” 絲織之路上的佛塔 (Buddhist pagodas on the Silk Roads), Xiyou yanyu, no. 2 (1992), pp. 63–68.


Cave 43 is the burial site of Empress Yifu 乙弗 and is thus dated to 540, the year of her death. For a line drawing that shows the chiwei, see Steinhardt, Chinese Architecture, p. 79.

The balls above and to the right of the pillar illustrated in fig. 14 may have a source in an ornamental feature of the Han period. The obverse sides of bronze plates used as coffin decorations in the Chengdu region of Sichuan exhibit similar features known as “pumpkins” in the same positions. For illustrations, see Chongqing Wushanxian Wenwu GuanliShuo 重慶巫山縣文物管理局 et al., “Chongqing Wushanxian Dong Han liujintong paishi de fajian yanjiu” 重慶巫山縣東漢墓金銅牌飾的發現研究 (Excavation and research on decorative bronze medals of the Eastern Han from Wushan county, Chongqing), Kaogu, no. 12 (1998), pp. 77–86.

For illustrations, see Wang Chunbo 王春波, “Shanxi Pingcheng fan Tang jianzhu Tiantaian” 山西平城樊唐建築天台庵 (A late Tang building at Tiantaian in Pingcheng, Shanxi), Wenwu, no. 6 (1993), pp. 34–42.

The crescent-shaped beam has heretofore been considered evidence that dates an East Asian building to the eighth or ninth century. Liang Sicheng was one of the first to discuss this. See his “Tangzhaozishi jingtang he Zhongguo Tongdai de jianzhu.”

For study and illustrations of all these cave interiors, see Chen Mingda 陳明達, ed., Zhongguo meishu quanji 中國美術全集 (Comprehensive history of Chinese art: Diaosu bian 雕塑編 (Sculpture series), vol. 13: Gongsuan, Tianlongshan, Xiangtangshan, Anyang shiku diaoke 禿獻, 天龍山, 香棠山, 安陽石窟雕刻 (Rock-carved cave sculpture from Gongsuan, Tianlongshan, Xiangtangshan, and Anyang) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989).

I chose an illustration from Simsim because it is not as well known as many other cave interiors. Its date is circa sixth century.

Some refer to these as “house-shaped.” See Wu Hung, “A Case of Cultural Interaction: House-Shaped Sarcophagi of the Northern Dynasties,” Orientations 33 (May 2002), pp. 34–41. There is no evidence of residential architecture from the sixth century with which to compare them or reason to believe that houses were only one room. Based on comparisons from the Sui period (589–617), such as Princess Li Jingxun’s sarcophagus of 608, eighth-century coffins in the Shaanxi Provincial Museum, and the main halls of Nanchanshi and Tiantaian, I believe the similarities are with temples.

chamber of Ning Mao of Northern Wei), *Gaoli Taiwan Daxue Meishushi yanjiu jikan* 国立臺灣大學 美術史研究所集刊 (Taiada Journal of Art History) 18, no. 3 (2005), pp. 1–74.

79 Wang Kelin王克林, "Bei Qi Shedi Huihuochu mu" 北齊陵狄回洛墓 (The tomb of Shedi Huihuo of Northern Qi). *Kaogu xuebao*, no. 3 (1979), pp. 377–402. I thank Albert Dien for informing me that the surname of this Northern Qi nobleman is pronounced Shedi, rather than Kudi. For the explanation of the pronunciation, see Yao Weiyan 姚薇元, *Beichao huxing kao* 北朝胡姓考 (Research on "barbarian" names of the Northern Dynasties) (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1958), p. 182. For a theoretical reconstruction of the sarcophagus, see Fu Xinian, *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi* 中国古代建筑史, vol. 2, p. 299.


81 For illustrations, see Sun Ruxian 孫儒賢 and Sun Haohua 孫浩華, eds., *Dunhuang shiku quanji* 敦煌石窟全集 (Comprehensive study of the rock-carved caves at Dunhuang), vol. 21: *Jianzhuzhaizhujuan* 建築画卷 (Paintings of architecture) (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2001), pp. 84–85.

82 On Yu Hong's sarcophagus, see Shanxi-sheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo 陝西省考古研究所 et al., *Taiyuan Sui Yu Hong nua 太原隋虞弘墓* (The tomb of Yu Hong of Sui in Taiyuan) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005).

83 He was also a Sogdian. On the couch, see Shaanxisheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo 陝西省考古研究所, *Xian Bei Zhou An Qi mu* 西安北周安伽墓 (The tomb of An Qi of Northern Zhou in Xi'an) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2003).

84 For information and illustrations of Tianlongshan, including this cave, see Li Qiqun 李碧群 and Li Gang 李鋼, *Tianlongshan shiku* 天龍山石窟 (Rock-carved cave-temples of Tianlongshan) (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2003); for an illustration of the cave 16 façade, see colorpl. 59.

85 Liu Dunzhen, "Dingxingxian Bei Qi shizhu" 定興縣北齊石柱 (The Northern Qi stone pillar in Dingxing county). *Zhongguo yangzao xueshi huikan* 中國考古學會 (1934), pp. 28–66; repr. in *Liu Dunzhen wenji*, vol. 2, pp. 38–73, and *Liu Dunzhen quanji*, vol. 2, pp. 170–90. All the stelae inscriptions and passages from local and regional records, such as Sun Xingyuan’s 孫星衍 (1753–1818) in *Jingji jinshi kao* 職官志考 (Records of stone inscriptions in the capital), are quoted in Liu’s article. The inscriptions are also studied in Liu Shufen 劉淑芬, "Bei Qi Biaoyixiang Yichilui shizhu—Zhong gu Fojiao shehui jiujì de gēnian yanjiu" 北齊佛敘像義慈惠石柱—中古佛教社會結緣的個案研究 (The Northern Qi stone pillar of righteousness, kindness, and beneficence in Biaoyixiang—Research on early Chinese Buddhist relief societies), *Xinshi xue* 新史 (1994), pp. 1–47. On the pillar, also see Luo Zhewen, "Yichilui shizhu Yichilui shizhu" (Stone pillar of righteousness, kindness, and beneficence), *Wenwu*, no. 9 (1958), pp. 67–68.

86 There is some. For fourteen examples of bracket sets found in Koguryo murals, see Chang Kyông-ho 楊慶浩, *Han'guk ui chonggong kongch'uk 韓國의傳統構築* (Korean traditional architecture) (Seoul: Muyne Ch'ulp'ansa, 1992); for bracketing and roof tiling and rafters from a Paekche miniature pagoda, see Yoon Chang-sŏp 尹昌燮, *Han'guk ui kongch'uk* 韓國의 건축 (Korean architecture) (Seoul: Seoul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'ansu, 1996), pp. 121–22.


88 The Three Great Halls and Three Back Halls of the Forbidden City in Beijing are prime examples of the gong arrangement.


90 On these two sites and for bibliography about them, see Hollemenger, "Buddhist Architecture," pp. 151–54.

92 The complete excavation report on Nunsaga is not yet published. For general information and an air view of the plan, see Kun-grap Chang Pangmulgwan (National Museum of Korea), Paekche t'okpyolchon (Seoul: Munhwasa, 2004). For publication of the frequently published golden incense burner excavated in his tomb.

93 This is the famous king associated with the story of a demoness who pilfered his closet.

94 The first excavation at Ch'onggrimsa was conducted under Fujisawa Kazuo 藤澤一夫, who did not publish his findings. Systematic excavation and publication was undertaken by a team from Ch'ongnam University Museum led by Yun Mu-byong. See Yun Mu-byong, Ch'onggrimsaji palgul chosa pogoso (Excavation report on the remains of Ch'onggrimsa) (Pusan Munhwa, 1986).

95 The story is recorded in the biography of King Mu in Iryön 一然 (1206–1289), Sun-guk yusa 三國遺事 (History of the Three [Korean] Kingdoms). The text records that the monastery had three separate "Halls of Maitreya’s Grand Assemblies," each with its own pagoda and courtyard. For the legend, see Jonathan Best, A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), pp. 176–77.


97 On these caves, see Amy McNair, Donors of Longmen: Faith, Politics, and Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Sculpture (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).


99 The major source of information on the mountain castle is Jin Xudong 錦東旭, ed., Wando shancheng 丸都山城 (Wando mountain castle) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004).

100 It is also the subject of the most research. See Youngbok Park, "The Monastery of Hwangnyonga," in Washizuka Hirokazu et al., Transmitting the Forms of Divinity (New York: Japan Society, 2003), pp. 140–53; and Munhwajae yonguso 文化財研究所, Hwangnyonga yujo palgul chosa pogoso (Excavation report on remains of Hwangnyonga) (Seoul: Munhwajae kwalliguk munhwaje yonguso, 1982–84).

101 For the tale, see Best, A History, pp. 189–90. For the comparison, see Kwon Chong-nam 권종남, Hwangnyonga kuchun-ja: 九龍寺 九層塔: (Nine story pagoda of Hwangnyonga) (Seoul: Misul munhwa, 2006). See also Yang Jeong-seok 梁正錫, "Shiragi Oryüji kyuchó mokuta no zöesenti kansuru hikaku shiteki kentó" 新羅皇龍寺 九層木塔の成績に関する比較的検討 (A comparative historical examination regarding the construction of the nine-story wooden pagoda of Hwangnyonga of Silla), Tóhó Gakkaï Daigaku kenkyū shi to 40 (2006), pp. 213–32. One hundred meters is the realistic assessment of the Yongnungsii pagoda's height.

102 The identification of the building types and date are consistent with construction in the eighth century at the monastery Horyüji, whose earliest buildings are discussed below. Park, "The Monastery of Hwangnyonga," p. 144, gives 854 as the final year of construction at Hwangnyonga.

103 For discussion and illustrations, see Hollenweger, "Early Buddhist Architecture," pp. 147–51.


106 For an illustration, see Wenwu, no. 3 (1986), pl. 7.

107 Kamunsu/Ganeunsu, Sacheonwanga/Sachonwangsa, and Pulguksa/Bulgeoksas, all dated to the United Silla period, are also monasteries with twin pagodas.

110 Each is discussed at length and extensively illustrated in Donald McCallum, *The Four Great Temples* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008). Here only summary information necessary to understand the sixth century is provided. I thank Don McCallum for numerous, helpful discussions and correspondence about the topic of this paper, and for an opportunity to present a version of it at UCLA in November 2008.

111 For an illustration of the city, see Fu, *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi*, vol. 2, p. 2. It is possible that through an indirect route this standard plan of Chinese imperial city planning came to Japan and was implemented in early monastery arrangements. I shall explore this possibility in a future study.


113 Tachibanadera is one of seven monasteries associated with Prince Shotoku, about whom more is said below. For a list and brief discussion of the seven, see J. Edward Kidder, Jr., *The Lucky Seventh: Early Horyüji and Its Time* (Tokyo: Hachiro Yuasa Memorial Museum, 1999), pp. 199–204.

114 The year 606 is the earliest date recorded in texts for Chügyüji. See Kidder, *The Lucky Seventh*, p. 177. On Chügyüji, see also Ohashi Kazuaki 大橋 一章, *Nihon no kodera bijutsu* 日本の古寺美術 (The art of Japan’s ancient monasteries), vol. 15: *Ikaruga no dera* 伊吹の寺 (Ikaruga monasteries) (Tokyo: Hoikusha, 1989), pp. 3–79.


116 For the list of buildings, see n. 3.

117 Fugoungsi, the fourth-oldest Tang hall, mentioned above, was the oldest-known Chinese wooden building from its discovery by Liang Sicheng in 1937 until the 1950s. There is no comprehensive study of Chinese architecture in which the Buddha hall of 857 is not discussed.


120 The events at the Horyüji site are crucial for understanding every other extant building of the seventh and eighth centuries in Japan. Yet as J. E. Kidder points out, following the purge by the Soga, records are spotty (Kidder, *The Lucky Seventh*, pp. 10 and 275–95). The important information about the fire comes from *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (Chronicles of Japan), which records two fires, one in the twelfth month of 669 in the treasury and the second on the thirteenth day of the fourth month, during the summer of 670, after which, “not a single building was left.” (William G. Ashton, trans., *Nihongi, Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, 2 vols. [Burlington: Tuttle Press, 1972], vol. 2, pp. 292, 293.) The text does not specify whether the Ikarugadera buildings were the ones lost in the fire or if a monastery already stood at the current site.


123 Sagawa, “Nihon kodai mokutô kidan no kôchiku gihō,” argues that the depth of implantation of the pillar decreases, and that one can date an early wooden pagoda based on that depth. According to him, the Hokkiji pagoda would be dated just after the beginning of the eighth century.


125 McCallum, *The Four Great Temples*, argues that Horyüji is a provincial
monastery, more humble in all regards than those of the capital in Asuka. If wooden pagodas at Fujiwara-yō to towered by comparison to the one constructed by Prince Shōtoku at Ikarugadera, the height would have been consistent with knowledge of imperial building in the Northern Wei and Northern Qi capitals at Luoyang and Ye, respectively, and the capitals of the Three Korean Kingdoms.

126 The most famous Nara-period stone pagoda is at Ishitōji, the monastery named for it in Shiga prefecture. There are many others, some reported to survive from the seventh or eighth century. One at Tō no Mori 塔の森 is located here. Another is at Eizan-ji, whose octagonal hall is discussed below. For discussion and more illustrations, see Ono Katatsushi 小野勝年, Sekizō bijutsu 石造美術 (Art in stone) (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1970).


129 For discussion and illustrations of que, see Chen Mingda, "Handai de shiqüe" 漢代的石渠 (stone que of the Han dynasty), Wenwu, no. 12 (1961), pp. 9–23; repr. and slightly edited in Chen Mingda gu jianzhu ya diaoou shi hun 陳明達建築與雕塑論 (Essays on ancient architecture and sculpture by Chen Mingda) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), pp. 142–55. Although the structures often are referred to as shi 石 (stone) que, they were built in both stone and brick. Also see Xu Wenpin 徐文彬 et al., Sichuan Handai shique 四川漢代石渠 (Han que in Sichuan) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1992), and Liu Dunzhen, "Shandong Pingyixian Hanque" 山東平邑漢闕 (Han que in Pingyi county, Shandong). Wenwu cankao zhihun 文物參考資料, no. 5 (1954), pp. 29–32.

130 The majority of Han tombs with full-size architectural decoration are cliff tombs (yamu 崖墓). For excavation reports on some of the most important, see Zhong Zhi 仲治, "Sichuan San'ai Qiijiang yantu qun 2000 niandu qingli jianbao" 四川三台郪江崖墓群 2000 年度清理簡報 (Brief report on the investigation in 2000 of a group of cliff tombs in Qijiang, Sichuan, Wenwu, no. 1 (2002), pp. 16–41; Liu Zhangze 劉章澤 and Li Shaohua 李昭華, "Sichuan Zhongjiang Taliangzi yamu jianbao" 四川中江塔梁子崖墓發掘簡報 (Brief report on a cliff tomb excavated at Taliangzi, Zhongjiang, Sichuan), Wenwu, no. 9 (2004), pp. 1–33; and Zhong Zhi et al., "Sichuan San'ai Qiijiang yamu qun Baimi yihaoju fuqian jiubao" 四川三台郪江崖墓群大邑縣一號墓發掘簡報 (Brief report on the excavation of Baimi tomb no. 1 from a cliff tomb group at Qijiang, Sichuan), Wenwu, no. 9 (2005), pp. 14–35. As of 2007, thirty-seven cliff tombs had been excavated in the Qijiang region. See Sichuan sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan 四川省文物考古研究院, Mianyangshi Buyuguan 绵陽市博物館, and Sannixianwen Wenwu Gudanyi 三台縣文物管理所, Sannixianwen Wenwu Gudanyi 三台縣文物管理所, Sichuan sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan 四川省文物考古研究所, "Liaoning Liaoqi Nianjiqiao Dong Han biaohua mu" 遼寧遼寧南部東漢墓壁畫 (Eastern Han tombs with murals on Nanjiao Street in Liaoyang, Liaoning), Wenwu, no. 10 (2008), pp. 34–59.

131 On this tomb, see Liaoningsheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan 遼寧省文物考古研究所, "ียง陽遼陽南郊東漢墓壁畫" (Eastern Han tombs with murals on Nanjiao Street in Liaoyang, Liaoning), Wenwu, no. 10 (2008), pp. 34–59.

132 A single central pillar is found in tomb 61 and a tomb in Xincun, both from Luoyang and now in the Luoyang Tomb Museum. For illustrations and discussion, see Huang Xinglan 黃興蘭 and Guo Yinqiang 郭引強, Luoyang Hanmu bianhua 洛陽漢墓壁畫 (Han tombs with murals in Luoyang) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996), pp. 89 and 123.

133 On this subject, see Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art," Artibus Asiae (1986), pp. 263–76.

134 William C. White, Tombs of Old Luoyang (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1934), plate
between pp. 18 and 19. Since then, no one has been able to find the tomb to confirm its shape.

135 On this structure, see Luoyangshi Wenwu Guanliju 洛陽市文物管理局, Gudu Luoyang 古都洛陽 (Beijing: Chaohua chubanshe, 1999), pp. 150–52.


137 Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Kaogu Yanjusuo Luoyang Gongzuo the 中國社會科學院考古研究所洛陽工作隊, “Sui-Tang Dongdu chengzhì de kancha he fajue xùji” 唐東都城址的勘探和發掘續編 (Continuation of investigation and excavation or remains of the Sui-Tang eastern capital), Kaogu, no. 6 (1978), esp. pp. 361–62.


139 Kidder, The Lucky Seventh, p. 353.

140 On Saenō, see Kidder, The Lucky Seventh, pp. 361–62.

141 A record of 989 states that in 765, Fujiwara no Toyonari 藤原大通 (704–765) donated land to support a monastery founded by his father, Fujiwara no Muchimaro 藤原多智麻呂 (680–737), and Lady Fujiwara no Funako 藤原房子 donated land in 780. A record of chief abbot Jikkyō ascribed to 1098 states that the monastery was built to 719, but this is not substantiated in other writings. Muchimaro’s ashes are believed to have been reburied under a hill north of Eizanji. The ashes of Fujiwara no Yoshitsugu 藤原義通 (710–764), son of Muchimaro, built the hall as a monument for the eternal rest of his parents. Fukuyama Toshio 福山敏男 and Akiyama Terukazu 秋山光和 763–64 and date the construction to 763–64. The major study of Eizanji is Fukuyama and Akiyama, Eizanji Hakkakudō no kenkyū 東山寺八角堂的研究 (Research on the octagonal hall of Eizanji) (Kyoto: Benrido, 1951). See also Fukuyama and Akiyama, Eizanji Hakkakudō 東山寺八角堂 (The octagonal hall of Eizanji) (Tokyo: Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 1950). The fact – date is argued in both. On this building, see also Tamura Yoshinaga 田村吉永, Eizanji (Kyoto: Kawahara shoten, 1948).

142 In Japan, octagonal architecture associated with the death of a great man was constructed as late as the seventeenth century, with examples at the Okunoin 奥院 of the first and third Tokugawa 徳川 shoguns, leyasu 家康 (1542–1616) and Iemitsu 家光 (1603–1651), in Nikko. For illustrations of the plans, see Okawa Naomi, Edo Architecture: Katsura and Nikko, trans. Alan Woodhull and Miyamoto Akito (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill and Heibonsha, 1975), foldout between pp. 60 and 61.


146 Ibid.


148 Orient oder Rom: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Spätantiken und Frühchristlichen Kunst (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1901) is typical of Strzygowski’s many books and many articles, most of them on or including this subject.

149 Heliocentrism is the origin of many cultures in one, or, slightly less controversial, the origin of many cultures in several. Strzygowski and Boas are two of the prolific diffusionists writing in the 1920s through 1940s who argued for heliocentrism. Boas presented his theories in, for example, General Anthropology (Boston: Heath and Company, 1938) and Race, Language, and Culture (New York: Macmillan Company, 1940). For their implications, see George W. Stocking, Jr., ed. A Franz Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883–1911 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

149 An expanded discussion of this topic would include the writings of Benjamin Rowland, many of which were focused on Bamiyan and South Asia, such as Art in East and West: An Introduction through Comparisons (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954); and scholars whose writings influenced him, Alexander Soper, and the other leading art historians of Asia through the 1970s; see, for example, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art (New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), based on a lecture given at Boston College in 1939; and Albert von

151 Well-known Koguryo tombs in which such ceilings are found include Anak Tomb 3, the Tomb of the Dancers, and Twin Pillars Tomb. For illustrations of these and others, see Kim Kiung. *Chosè han'to no hekiga kofun* (Tokyo: Rokkô shuppansha, 1980), pp. 31, 50, 52, 57, 62, 74, 80, 87, 98, 105, 108, 114, 122, 129, 145, 148, 152, 156, 162, and 171.


153 This is the date given to the tomb since excavation in 1978. See Huang and Guo, *Luoyang Hanmu bihua*, pp. 105–7. For the original report, see Luoyang Bowuguan, "Luoyang jingyuan Xin Man shiqi bihua" (A tomb with murals from the Xin Mang period at Jingyuan, Luoyang), pp. 163–73.

154 New finds that justify connections between imperial Rome and Han China are Luo Feng. *'Sichou zhi lü' yi xibei lishi kaogu* (Between Barbarians and Han: The "Silk Roads" and history of the Northwest) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004); Zhang Qingjie et al., *4–6 shiji de Bei Zhongguo yu Ou-Ya dala 4–6世纪的北中国與歐亞大陸 (North China and the Eurasian continent in the 4th–6th centuries) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006); and Zhongguo Guojia Wenwuju 中國國家文物局 and Ministero per i Beni e le Attivita Culturali, *Qin-Han—Luoma wenming zhan* 奎漢-羅馬文明展 (Qin-Han and Roman Civilizations Exhibition) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2007).
Abstract
Immortals (xian 天仙) are depicted as feathered sprite-like or dragon- or snake-tailed figures climbing stylized mountains or floating in swirling cloudscapes on tomb reliefs from the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 CE). Possessing iconographic uniformity in a time of growing regionalism, these images represent immortals as transient figures moving through an intermediate realm where they are often joined by deer, tigers, dragons, birds, heavenly horses (tianma 天馬), and other animals. Such imagery is based upon and expands Western Han (206 BCE–8 CE) prototypes and suggests an important association between these figures and the afterlife that is not discussed in textual sources. This paper analyzes the physical hybridity of immortals, their transitory existence, and their role as shaman-like intermediaries, demonstrating that Eastern Han representations of immortals repeatedly emphasize their liminal nature and close connection to the animal world. Their position betwixt and between physical forms and realms of existence was the basis of their spiritual power, enabling them to assist the deceased in their transcendent journey to paradise.

IMMORTALS (xian 天仙) FIRST APPEARED in various forms decorating Chinese mortuary goods during the second century BCE. By the middle of the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 CE), bird-human and reptile-human hybrid immortals were frequently found on or near ceilings and pillars as well as around doorways in the four main areas of tomb-relief production (Shandong/Jiangsu; Nanyang, Henan; Sichuan and Shaanxi/Shanxi). Although there are textual correlates to the representation of avian immortals, contemporary texts remain silent regarding the representation of immortals as reptilian hybrids and why such imagery would be placed in a tomb. The popularity of these figures as well as their iconographic uniformity in a time of growing regionalism suggests that they were believed to play an important role in the afterlife that is not explicitly discussed in texts. Concentrating on the representations of immortals during the Eastern Han dynasty, this paper argues that immortals were depicted as liminal but spiritually empowered figures who provided the important function of aiding the soul of the deceased in its transcendent journey to paradise. Many iconographic studies divide representations of immortals into a number of categories, but I think it is first necessary to step back and ask three basic questions regarding their depiction: 1) what do immortals look like, 2) where do they live, and 3) what do they do? As I will demonstrate, their physical bodies, the environment in which they were depicted, and their role as shaman-like mediators all repeatedly stress their connections to the animal world and their position betwixt and between various realms of existence.

Immortal with quills all over its body. Mizhi, Shaanxi, Eastern Han dynasty. After Zhongguo huaxiang shi quanjí, vol. 5 (Jinan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 2000), fig. 58.

Previous Scholarship

Scholars have discussed the depiction of immortals as anthropomorphic hybrids, their itinerant nature, placement in tombs, and their relationship to Han mortuary beliefs and shamanism. Although Michael Loewe has noted the depiction of immortals as avian and serpentine hybrids, most iconographic studies have categorized representations of immortals as yuren (feathered men) based on medium, region, or compositional elements. With the exception of Loewe and Sun Zuoyun, the authors of these studies—including those who focused on the desire of Qin and Han dynasty emperors and aristocrats to become immortal as well as the popularity of the cult figure Xiwangmu—have largely ignored the relationship between these figures and the afterlife.

Other scholars, however, have connected these figures to Han mortuary beliefs, their placement within tombs, and their depiction as ceaselessly mobile beings. Shih Hsio-yen has discussed the prominence of immortals in tomb reliefs from Shaanxi and, in the context of figural representation and scroll patterns between the Han Dynasty and the Six Dynasties Period (220–589 CE), their placement within the tomb and depiction as beings constantly in motion. Loewe has noted the wandering nature of immortals in visual representations and Han mirror inscriptions, and Jean M. James sees this as their defining characteristic. James rejects the identification of the figures depicted leading the deceased to paradise as “immortals,” stating that immortals did not serve as guides for the dead but were placed in the tomb to illustrate life on Mount Kunlun, where the hun (soul) of the deceased traveled on its journey skyward. Martin J. Powers has discussed techniques for representing immortals’ movement across space and their placement in tombs either alongside apotropaic figures or above Confucian sages. He argues that in tombs from Shandong and Northern Jiangsu, the world of immortals is often transformed into a Confucianized paradise. Many scholars have noted connections between immortals and shamanism in the context of Warring States (475–221 BCE) and Han ascension literature, tales of the fangshi (soiled) who tried to dupe the First Emperor (reigned 221–10 BCE) and Emperor Han Wudi (reigned 140–87 BCE), and the development of aspects of later religious Daoism. Building on the work of these scholars, this paper is the first in English to focus on the representation of immortals on Eastern Han tomb reliefs. It argues that representations of immortals repeatedly stress their liminality and close connection to the animal world, either through their physical bodies, the landscape that surrounds them, or the actions that they perform.
The Physical Characteristics of the Immortal

Previous iconographical studies have focused on the depiction of immortals as avian hybrids, hypothesizing their origins and distinguishing them from other part-bird and part-human creatures. These studies have clarified the iconographical genesis of and differences among the images, but they have ignored a number of other significant physical characteristics shared by immortals. Although winged figures dominate the Eastern Han iconography of immortality, some figures are illustrated as reptilian hybrids. Many also possess a number of characteristics whose importance has yet to be addressed, including androgyny, long hair, exaggerated nonhuman facial features, tattoo-like markings, and nudity. I call these “secondary characteristics” because they may be viewed as extensions of the concept of immortals as avian or reptilian hybrids. Like physical hybridity, these attributes connect immortals to the natural/animal rather than the civilized/human world. I will first investigate the depiction of immortals as avian and reptilian hybrids and then examine how this representation was strengthened by the addition of secondary physical characteristics. This examination will demonstrate that during the Eastern Han dynasty, immortals were believed to be spiritually empowered figures whose physical ambiguities mirrored their marginal existence betwixt and between the realms of heaven and earth.

Avian and Serpentine Hybrids

During the Eastern Han dynasty, immortals were most often depicted as avian hybrids. Variations exist upon this theme with representations ranging from figures with wings protruding from their backs to those with small quills covering the entire body (figs. 1, 2). Such feathering is also represented by wispy plume-like clothing that flares out at the elbows and around the knees (fig. 3) or a kind of feathered headdress. On some figures, the feathers seem to be almost “tattooed” on the immortal (fig. 4).

The representation of immortals as bird- or serpent-like beings suggests that during the Eastern Han dynasty, people believed some kind of bodily transformation
was necessary to transcend mortality. Bird imagery took pride of place and a number of immortals, such as Wang Ziqiao 王子喬, were said to have turned into birds and flown off to heaven. Although the exact origins of this belief are unclear, it was probably based on earlier totemistic or shamanistic traditions; one ancient variation of the graph for 仙 also means to "rise up" or "soar like a bird." Such linguistic associations may suggest some sort of folklore involving a birdlike dance or ecstatic identification with a divine bird. Similar cross-cultural associations between the soul and ascension have been noted by Poo Mu-Chou. In ancient Egypt, the Ba-soul was shown as a bird with a human head and had the ability to fly and leave the tomb. The ancient Greeks also believed that the souls of the dead were provided with wings. Avian associations with immortality may also have resonance with descriptions of several groups of people in the Shanhaijing 山海經 (Classics of Mountains and Seas), a geographical encyclopedia completed during the early Han dynasty. These include the Undying People (busi min 不死民), the Feathered People (yumin 羽民), and several other groups whose physical characteristics are similar to those of immortals depicted on Eastern Han tombs.

The visual correlates of this phenomenon first appear on burial goods from Mawangdui 马王堆 Tomb No. 1 (circa 168 BCE). The lacquer coffins and the funerary banner from this tomb are the earliest coherent precursors to the Eastern Han iconography of immortality and include the representation of a scantily clad immortal depicted with feather-like tufts of hair around his elbows, knees, and other parts of his body (fig. 5). Some of the other creatures on the black lacquer coffin are probably immortals as well. These figures are the first of several probable immortals who appear in tombs on coffins, murals, and banners during the second and first centuries BCE.

The appearance of such figures, although based on much older beliefs, rose to prominence during the reign of Han Wudi, who is famous for his obsession with living forever. During his reign, texts and stories drew associations between birds and immortality. According to Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BCE), a scholar at Wudi’s court, cranes in particular were thought to have the power of long life.
Luan Da 楠大, one of the many charlatans who promised Wudi immortality, wore feathered clothes and pretended to be an immortal when he received the rank of "General of the Heavenly Way" from an envoy who was similarly dressed.\textsuperscript{14}

The earliest textual source describing immortals as winged creatures is found in the "Yuan You" 原游 (The Far-off Journey), a poem from \textit{Chuci 楚辭} (Songs of the South) that was probably written around the beginning of the first century BCE:\textsuperscript{15}

Having heard this precious teaching, I departed,
And swiftly prepared to start on my journey.
I met the Winged Ones on the Hill of Cinnabar;
I tarried in the ancient land of Immortality.
In the morning I washed my hair in the Valley of Morning;
In the evening I dried myself on the coasts of heaven.\textsuperscript{16}

The text that clearly identifies the winged images on tomb reliefs as immortals was written slightly later by the social critic Wang Chong 王充 (27–97 CE):

In representing the bodies of genii one gives them a plumage, and their arms are changed into wings with which they poise in the clouds. This means an extension of their lifetime. They are believed not to die for a thousand years. These pictures are false, for they are not only false reports in the world, but also fancy pictures. However, man in reality does not belong to the class of crickets and moths. In the thirty-five kingdoms beyond the sea there live plumigerous and feathered tribes ... These people are the produce of their soil, it cannot be said that their bodies were covered with plumage and feathers through the influence of the \textit{Tao}. Yi and Yi visited His \textit{Wang Mu}, but she is not reported to have had a plumage and feathers. There are also immortals in foreign countries, but they are not described as having a plumage and feathers, and, conversely, the plumigerous and feathered tribes are not said to be immortals, these attributes can not imply immortality. How then can it be inferred that the genii must live forever, because they have wings?\textsuperscript{17}

This section from the \textit{Lunheng 論衡} (Critical Essays) is the longest passage from an Eastern Han text that both describes contemporary conceptions of immortals and refers to their visual representations. Although Wang Chong seeks to deny contemporary conceptions of winged immortals and their ascension to immortality, he demonstrates just how popular the idea of immortals as avian hybrids had become by the Eastern Han dynasty.
Immortal with dragon haunches for the lower half of its body. Nanyang, Henan, Eastern Han dynasty. After Zhongguo huaxiang shi quanji, vol. 6 (Jinan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 2000), fig. 129.

Although winged figures were popular on Eastern Han tomb reliefs, immortals were also depicted with serpentine features. In one relief from Shandong, the lower halves of the bodies have two snake-like legs or the single tale of a serpent, and another immortal from Henan has the haunches of a dragon (figs. 6 and 7). The connection between serpents and immortals goes beyond these fused figures, however, as immortals are also depicted accompanied by dragons or grasping snakes (figs. 3 and 8).

The prevalence of serpentine imagery in the iconography of immortality is related to the Han belief in the power of reptiles to alter their form and their associations with the dao 道, described as “now dragon, now snake” in ancient Chinese texts. Although during the Han dynasty snakes were believed to have special transformative and regenerative powers because they shed their skin, a particular mythology surrounded dragons, associating them with rain, clouds, and fertility. Dragons were also believed to be the progenitors of several ancient sages and emperors.

Although there are no textual correlates that described immortals as serpentine hybrids, an Eastern Han myth did explain that Huangdi 黄帝 had ascended to heaven on a dragon, mirroring the frequent depiction of immortals with dragons on tomb reliefs. In addition, from as early as the Warring States period, dragons were viewed as vehicles for the soul, and on several funerary banners and tomb murals dating to the Warring States period and the Western Han dynasty the deceased is depicted riding on a dragon.

In textual sources the best of examples of hybrid creatures that resemble Eastern Han serpentine immortals are the two sons of Huangdi who appear in the Shanhaijing. In this text they are said to stand on several snakes and have human faces with snake-draped ears and the bodies of birds. Although in no way an accurate description of later immortals, these and other figures found in the Shanhaijing and on Warring States and Han lacquer and bronze vessels bear witness to a tradition of divine hybrid figures from which Eastern Han artists and patrons could have drawn. Such figures can also be seen on one of the black lacquer coffins from Mawangdui Tomb No. 1, which is decorated with creatures that are pursuing or catching snakes, reminiscent of the later snake-grasping immortal from Shanxi (fig. 8).

Another visual antecedent for Eastern Han serpentine hybrids is found on the silk banners recovered from Mawangdui Tomb Nos. 1 and 3 that have been interpreted as depicting the journey of the soul to paradise (fig. 9). Loewe describes the figure at the top of the banner from Mawangdui Tomb No. 1 as Lady Dai, “sloughing off her mortal coil as easily as a snake sheds the skins that he discards.” John
S. Major has explained this figure and a similar figure at the top of the banner from Mawangdui Tomb No. 3 as "the apotheoses of the occupants of the tombs, and their serpentine tails are indicative of their transformation into godlike (or divine ancestor) figures in the celestial realm." These figures as well as earlier banners and the snake-grasping figures on the black lacquer coffin from Tomb No. 1 suggest that at least by the Warring States and Western Han periods, snakes and dragons were associated with transformation and the ascension of the soul to heaven.

The depiction of immortals as avian and serpentine hybrids was part of a larger tradition in ancient China in which sages, deities, and foreigners were described as anthropomorphic hybrids. In a number of early texts, Huangdi is said to have four faces, four eyes, and the body of a dragon or bear. Fu Xi 伏羲 and Nü Wa 女娲 are also depicted in Eastern Han tombs as human-serpent hybrids. The Xunzi 荀子 and a number of other ancient texts argue that physical abnormality was a condition of sagehood, and in the Shanhaijing there is no end to references of people who are half-man and half-beast. As Mark Edward Lewis has noted, these beliefs were closely tied to the ancient Chinese practice of physiognomy, the idea that the sages responsible for the founding of the Chinese world order were nonhuman progeny, had superhuman status, and were closely linked to nature. This argument suggests that immortals were part of a larger group of supernatural beings in ancient China that were viewed as marginal but spiritually empowered figures closely connected to the animal world.

**Secondary Characteristics**

Beyond their avian and serpentine features, immortals possessed a number of secondary characteristics that further demarcated and enhanced their liminal status while connecting them to the animal world: androgyny, large ears, long hair, exaggerated nonhuman facial features, tattoo-like markings, and nudity. Many of these traits also appear in visual and textual depictions of foreigners, suggesting a general connection with those living outside the Chinese political, cultural, and spiritual sphere.

On most reliefs, immortals are depicted as lithe beings whose sex is not clearly defined. This ambiguity is stronger in figures that are more animal than human and
can be seen on two figures from Sichuan who lack any distinguishing sexual characteristics except for their small protruding breasts (fig. 10). Rather than clearly defining these creatures as female, however, the breasts only seem to heighten their genderless identity. The sexual ambiguity of immortals is stressed in a passage from the Liezi 列子, which is dated to the fourth century ce but is thought to be a compilation of many passages from earlier texts:

Upon the mountains there lives a Divine Man, who inhales the wind and drinks the dew, and does not eat the five grains. His mind is like a bottomless spring, his body is like a virgin’s. He knows neither intimacy nor love, yet immortals and sages serve him as minister.26

The representation of immortals as sexually ambiguous beings suggests that their transformative powers were not associated with sexual reproduction. It may be the case that their spiritual powers were considered irreconcilable with normal reproductive capabilities suggested by gender or that these beings were believed to combine the principles of the feminine (yin 阴) and the masculine (yang 阳) in their physical form.27 It may also have been believed that once a person had transcended mortality he or she would no longer be concerned with the sexual desires associated with worldly existence.28 This is the only one of the secondary physical characteristics that does not connect immortals to the animal world but instead expresses their marginal status through sexual ambiguity.

In an article about the depiction of barbarians in Han art, Zheng Yan notes that these figures are often placed beside immortals and mythical animals in tombs (fig. 11). In physical terms, he sees the immortals’ long ears and flowing hair as visual counterparts to the high noses and deep-set eyes that are characteristic of representations of foreigners in Han tombs (see fig. 4 for long hair and figs. 1–3, 6, 8, 10, 13 16, and 18 for long ears).29 In addition, a tradition claimed Laozi had long ears, which were considered a sign of wisdom.30 Unkempt hair, however, clearly demarcates immortals as separate from the (civilized) world of the living. As Hayashi Minao showed in a detailed study of hairstyles and headdresses in Shang and Zhou China, only figures that are demons or associated with the dead do not wear their
hair pulled back or in some kind of special headdress. Long, free-flowing hair visually separates immortals from their mortal counterparts. Zheng Yan also notes that both foreigners and immortals have “strange non-human faces, and mysterious god-like qualities.” Although it is very difficult to pinpoint an exact facial type, immortals are often depicted with accentuated features such as protruding chins, noses, and large eyes.

Two other attributes—which are not noted by Zheng Yan but clearly are associated with animals and people who live on or beyond the borders of Chinese civilization—are tattoo-like markings and nudity (figs. 4 and 10). As Carrie E. Reed has pointed out, in ancient China the tattoo was often cited as the epitome of the practice of many foreign and, in the mind of the Chinese, uncivilized people as it was like the skin of an animal or a water creature. Immortals that appear to be naked or at least “clothed” only in their feathers or wispy, feather-like dresses also suggest an identification with the animal world and foreigners, who are often described in textual sources as part-animal or as following customs contrary to Chinese norms.

A counterpoint to depictions of immortals as naked “wild men” with exaggerated features is found in images where immortals, dressed in garments that contemporary Chinese would have worn at court, are shown worshipping the goddess Xiwangmu or her male counterpart Dongwanggong 東王宮 (figs. 1 and 6). These winged, well-dressed figures are found predominantly in tombs from Shandong, sometimes directly above representations of Confucian worthies where, as Powers has argued, the world of immortals has been transformed into a Confucianized paradise. These images bear witness to a growing bureaucratization and secularization of the spirit world that culminated in immortals being shown in successive dynasties as fully human without hybrid characteristics.

**Hybridity, Marginalization, and Spiritual Power**

Although a thorough visual and textual analysis of hybrid figures in ancient China lies beyond the scope of this paper, my analysis of the physical characteristics of immortals in tomb reliefs points to a common conception of marginalized but spiritually empowered figures. In ancient China, figures who could control certain aspects of nature or the world beyond the grave were often described as part animal and part human. It is clear from the cited examples that both the primary and secondary physical attributes of immortals were created from a dichotomy that posited the natural (animal) world against the (civilized) world of man and also saw
these categories as transparent and mutable. Physical ambiguity established a connection with the natural world from which immortals, sages, and deities derived some of their power. Hybridity in the case of immortals most clearly referred to their ability to metamorphose, which was the basis of their spiritual power over death and the malignant forces that were believed to lie beyond the grave.36

Hybridity, however, was not always viewed as a positive attribute. This can be seen in the depictions in visual and textual sources that debased foreign peoples and legitimized the established Chinese world order. As Poo Mu-chou noted in his study of the representation of foreigners in ancient China, Egypt, and Mesopotamia, “others” were often compared with the native self in a culture versus nature dichotomy. Therefore, the state of being “other” was equated with the animal world and foreigners described as acting like animals.37

A very similar rhetoric seems to have operated in terms of the representations of sages, deities, and immortals, but their ability to defy ontological categories was seen in a positive light and as a source of spiritual power. In this sense, immortals gained their power within Han dynasty tombs similar to the ways in which representations of barbarians functioned in tombs during the Tang dynasty (618–906 CE). Marc Samuel Abramson points out that, during the Tang dynasty, “the barbarians’ ambiguity and their transgressive nature as crossers of frontiers and violators of boundaries … made them potent sources of power and prestige.”38 As Zheng Yan has noted, similar motivations were also why foreigners were placed alongside immortals and mythical animals in Han dynasty tombs.39 The danger and instability of occupying such an ambiguous position, however, perhaps is made most clear by the gradual loss over time of the hybrid characteristics of sages, deities, and immortals. Although a topic for further research, this suggests that such attributes became increasingly incompatible with the idea of immortality and divinity as the Han dynasty progressed.40

The World of Immortals

The physical ambiguity of immortals in Han dynasty tombs was grounded in a tradition that saw such characteristics as indicating both liminality and spiritual power. Similar themes are also stressed in Eastern Han tomb reliefs through the depiction of immortals amid mountainous terrain and swirling cloudscapes or in compositions devoid of landscapes or architectural features. In the following analysis, I will address the significance of these two trends, arguing that the frequency with which immortals are depicted on or near mountains was based upon Han ideas of immortal paradise and the ancient Chinese conception of mountains as sacred but dangerous realms. At the same time, reliefs devoid of background elements show the desire to depict immortals as incessantly mobile beings roaming...
Animals frolicking with an immortal amid an undulating landscape/cloudscape, Mizhi, Shaanxi, Eastern Han dynasty. After Zhongguo huaxiangshi quanji, vol. 5 (Jinan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 2000), fig. 63.

Line drawing of a panel from an inlaid bronze chariot ornament showing the fusion of the yunqi motif and mountain imagery popular during the Western Han dynasty. Sanpanshan, Hebei, Western Han dynasty. After Zheng Luanming, "Dingzhou Sanpanshan cuo jin yin long che santing wenshu fenxi," Wenwu chuqiu, no. 3 (2000), fig. 2.


14 Line drawing of a panel from an inlaid bronze chariot ornament showing the fusion of the yunqi motif and mountain imagery popular during the Western Han dynasty. Sanpanshan, Hebei, Western Han dynasty. After Zheng Luanming, "Dingzhou Sanpanshan cuo jin yin long che santing wenshu fenxi," Wenwu chuqiu, no. 3 (2000), fig. 2.

the realms between heaven and earth. An analysis of both sets of reliefs will demonstrate that it is the journey to and not the characteristics of paradise that are stressed in these images.

In Eastern Han tomb reliefs, immortals are most commonly represented climbing treelike mountains or in a stylized landscape that dualistically functions as clouds and undulating hills (figs. 12 and 13). This stylized landscape was an outgrowth of the fusion of the yunqi cloud motif with elements of mountain imagery popular during the Western Han dynasty (fig. 14) and suggests that immortals were believed to inhabit a mountainous world that was also directly associated with the heavens.

During the Eastern Han dynasty, these motifs were grounded in the conception of mountains as the gate or location of immortal paradise and as a sacred, but perilous wilderness. In Han literature, immortals lived either in the east on the Islands of the Blessed, in the west on Mount Kunlun, or on several of the sacred mountains of China, such as Taishan or Huashan. Descriptions of these mountains clearly refer to them as an axis-mundi connecting the profane and sacred worlds. The Liezi offers a picture of the Five Islands of the Blessed in the East China Sea:
To the East of the Gulf of Chi-li, who knows how many thousands and millions of miles, there is a deep ravine, a valley truly without bottom … Within it are five mountains, called Tai-yü, Yüan-chiao, Fang-hu, Ying-chou, and Pêng-lai. These mountains are thirty thousand miles high, and as many miles round; the tablelands on their summits extend for nine thousand miles. It is seventy thousand miles from one mountain to the next, but they are considered close neighbors … The men who dwell there are all of the race of immortal sages, who fly, too many to be counted, to and from one mountain to another in a day and a night.  

The Islands of the Blessed figure prominently in stories that highlight the First Emperor and Han Wudi’s obsession with becoming immortal and seem to have been popular during the Western Han. Mount Kunlun is described in the Huainanzi:  

If one climbs to a height double that of the Kunlun Mountains, (that peak) is called Cool Wind Mountain. If one climbs it, one will not die. If one climbs to a height that is doubled again, (that peak) is called Hanging Garden. If one ascends it, one will gain supernatural power and be able to control the wind and the rain. If one climbs to a height that is doubled yet again, it reaches up to Heaven itself. If one mounts to there, one will become a god …  

Kunlun, the Western Paradise where the goddess Xiwangmu dwelled, is frequently mentioned in other Han texts. By the Eastern Han dynasty, this view of immortal paradise had become the most popular.  

Mountains in ancient China were also conceptualized as divine but treacherous realms. Although gradually the potentially malignant elements that inhabited mountains were replaced by dead humans who filled official posts in the supernatural bureaucracy, originally most beings on mountains were regarded as dangerous because of their unpredictability, amorality, or supernatural powers. The Shanhaijing describes a number of mountains deities and spirits that are monstrous hybrids and must be ritually pacified. In a later text, the Baopuzi (Master Embracing Simplicity), Ge Hong (283–343 CE) eloquently describes the wonders and dangers of mountains:  

All mountains, whether large or small, have gods and spirits. If the mountain is large, the god is great; if the mountain is small, the god is minor. If someone enters the mountain possessed of no magical arts, he will certainly suffer harm. Some will fall victim to acute diseases or be wounded by weap-
ons. When frightened and uneasy, some will see lights and shadows, others will hear strange sounds. Sometimes a huge tree will topple, though there is no wind, or a cliff will collapse for no reason, striking and killing people. Sometimes the man will flee in confusion, tumbling down a cavern or into a gorge; other times he will encounter tigers, wolves, and poisonous insects that attack men. One cannot enter a mountain lightly!¹⁷

I argue that both the benevolent and malignant elements of mountain lore are referenced in Eastern Han tomb reliefs that depict immortals amid mountainous terrain. In addition to serving as the gateway or location of the land of immortality, mountains also suggest the borderlands through which the soul must pass after death. During the Han dynasty, it was believed that the soul would encounter many dangers on its journey to paradise, including malignant ghosts, spirits, and ferocious beasts. Wu Hung has argued that these fears were the central motivation behind the development of various shamanistic practices in ancient China to guide or protect the soul in its journey.²⁰ Such dangers are related in “Zhao hun” 招魂 (Summons of the Soul) and “Da Zhao” 大招 (Great Summons), poems from the Chuci that describe shamans who work to keep souls from departing or revive corpses. Menaces are also referenced in an inscription on an Eastern Han tomb excavated in Suide 綏德, Shaanxi,¹⁹ and mountainous terrain would have provided an excellent background for such dangers.

The same dual conception of mountains as representing both the land of immortality and the dangerous regions through which the soul would pass can be seen on the “magic mountain” censers (boshan lu 博山爐) that were popular during the Han dynasty (fig. 15). These objects are usually interpreted as representing Penglai 蓬萊 or Kunlun, but a number of them are populated with figures whose connection to the theme of immortality is unclear.⁵⁰

In Eastern Han tomb reliefs such incongruous and potentially noxious elements have disappeared. Instead animals are depicted frolicking alongside immortals in cloudsapes, ascending mountainous terrain, or on reliefs where no landscape elements are present (figs. 3, 12, 13, 18). I argue that these compositions
depict the dangerous realms between heaven and earth from which hazardous elements have been exorcised. Such scenes suggest the liminality upon which the spiritual power of immortals was based as well as their power to pacify such dangerous regions.\textsuperscript{51}

Beyond mountainous terrain or stylized cloudscapes, however, representations of immortals rarely depict land formations, fauna, or architectural features.\textsuperscript{52} This is noteworthy because immortal paradise and all its wonders were eloquently described in ancient prose, poetry, and ballads. The discrepancy between text and image is partially because in most ancient Chinese representations landscape elements are absent. But the primary reason many of these images do not depict the heavenly realm is because immortals are purposely depicted as beings who roam the world between heaven and earth. This incessant mobility is noted in an inscription on a Han dynasty mirror:

The \textit{Shang-fang} made this mirror and truly it is very fine. Upon it are immortal beings oblivious of old age. When they thirst they drink from springs of jade, when they hunger they feed on jujubes. They roam at large throughout the world, wandering between the four oceans. They rove at will on the well-known hills, plucking the Herb of Life.\textsuperscript{53}

In tomb reliefs, the itinerant nature of immortals is suggested by cloud-like formations that become one with the bodies of animals and immortals or, more commonly, in reliefs where the plumage of the immortal conveys a sense of movement through space. In these reliefs, movement is indicated by the feathers (or cloud forms) that fly away from the immortal’s arms and legs in the opposite direction from the forward movement of the body (figs. 2 and 3). This technique was based on the Western Han pictorial conventions seen on the black lacquer coffin from Mawangdui Tomb No.1, where movement through time and space is indicated by swirling clouds and the animals and spirits that scamper upward through the composition. Powers has argued that this sense of movement is achieved through the “extension-oriented” structure of individual components within the composition that show how the immortal’s body parts were created by separate dendritic vectors. According to Eugene Wang, the form of the clouds and animals on the black lacquer coffin express movement across time and space, mapping out the process of rejoining the forces of yin and yang in order to rejuvenate the deceased.\textsuperscript{54}

The dearth of landscape elements and architectural features in scenes that depict immortals in Eastern Han tomb reliefs, combined with the focus of many on movement through space, indicates that the liminal spatial nature of immortals
and the journey to paradise is emphasized in these compositions. Similar ideas are also stressed in reliefs where immortals are depicted on or approaching mountains, or in stylized cloudscapes that highlight their location between heaven and earth and the pacification of the dangerous realms believed to exist beyond the grave.

**The Habits of Immortals**
The physical and spatial liminality of immortals is further stressed by the actions they perform on Eastern Han tomb reliefs, which include:

1. carrying the fungus or elixir of immortality
2. playing game called *liubo* 六博
3. serving Xiwangmu
4. frolicking with various animals
5. riding birds and beasts
6. being pulled in a chariot by birds or animals

I will discuss the first three individually as they relate to specific aspects of immortality lore and the worship of Xiwangmu and then examine those that deal with animals. The group of reliefs that feature animals, combined with the physical characteristics of immortals and their environment, are essential to understanding the prevalence and function of immortals on Eastern Han tomb reliefs.

**Carrying the Fungus/Elixir of Immortality**
One of the most common images found in tombs is of an immortal with its arms outstretched and holding a plant (figs. 2, 7, 12, 13 and 18). Representations of this flora vary, but it is meant to symbolize the fungus of immortality (*lingzhi* 靈芝) that, according to ancient Chinese legend, grew on secluded mountains and in the Eastern and Western paradises. Once a person had consumed the fungus, he could become an immortal and ascend to heaven. Slightly less common are images of immortals holding round spherical objects (fig. 4). These balls signify the elixir of immortality, after it was pounded by the jade hare and then rolled into balls by the hare’s companion, the toad. Such procedures for making and ingesting the elixir of immortality are referred to in a Han dynasty ballad:

The command comes: “Mortal obey my word! Gather the sacred herb from the tip of the Illusion Tree.” A white hare kneels and pounds the herb, a toad makes the pill. I offer up to the throne a jade dish: “Eat this drug, it will make you divine ...”
The recipient of the fungus and therefore the elixir in these images is undoubtedly the deceased whose soul, upon death, could devour them and be transformed and transported to paradise.

**Playing Liubo**

Immortals are also depicted on mountaintops or hovering mid-air playing the game *liubo* (fig. 10). Although most prevalent in Sichuan, such scenes appear in all regions during the Eastern Han dynasty and have been interpreted as the performance of magic or divination. Images of immortals playing *liubo* may also be linked to the cult of Xiwangmu; members of a mass movement in 3 BCE are said to have “... held services and set up gaming boards ... they sang and danced in worship of Xiwangmu.” Yang Lien-sheng has also suggested that in pre-Han and Han times, a number of ambitious mortals sought to defeat deities at *liubo* in order to obtain magical powers. Although the exact ritual or magical implications of this game are unclear, it appears to have had some connection with the immortality cult and ascension to paradise.

**The Court of Xiwangmu**

The only time immortals are not depicted as incessantly mobile creatures is when they are shown at the court of Xiwangmu (figs. 1 and 6). During the Han dynasty, Xiwangmu was a cult figure who was believed to preside over the Western Paradise and direct the production of the elixir of immortality. Based on the model of an earthly imperial court, Eastern Han representations of Xiwangmu’s realm bear witness to the growing bureaucratization and secularization of the immortal world. In these reliefs, immortals are usually depicted as supplicants and members of the divine court of Xiwangmu and sometimes welcome the deceased to paradise.

**Images of Immortals and Animals**

These three motifs—the fungus, *liubo*, and Xiwangmu—suggest several functions or habits of immortals. Although all three motifs relate to immortality and the development of the immortality cult, the primary function and significance of immortals in the tomb can be found in reliefs in which they are depicted with animals. I have already argued that scenes of immortals frolicking with birds and beasts on treelike mountains or in stylized cloudscapes symbolize the pacification of the dangerous borderlands between heaven and earth. Here, I will focus on reliefs in which animals serve as a vehicle for immortals or pull chariots in which immortals ride as the charioteers (figs. 16 and 17), including deer, dragons, tigers, cranes and other birds, turtles, fish, and *tianma* 天馬 (heavenly horses).
Based on these scenes and textual corollaries, I will argue that immortals were placed in tombs because they were believed to act as shaman-like intermediaries between heaven and earth. This combined with their related role as the purveyors of the elixir of immortality was the reason for their popularity during the Eastern Han dynasty.

Reliefs that depict animals as mounts or pulling chariots form a complimentary set of images in which animals are used as spirit vehicles that transport immortals in their roles as shamanistic mediators between heaven and earth. Shamans and shamanism are concepts that have given way to a variety of inclusive and exclusive interpretations, but shamans usually serve communities as intermediaries between the sacred and profane worlds to control the unknown and bring a balance to society as a whole. They communicate with spirits on multiple levels, including the worlds above and below and that of man, and are often aided by spirit helpers in the form of animals, whose species vary in different geographic regions. According to Siberian shamans, their journeys to various spiritual realms may be used to recover the lost soul of an individual, exorcise spirits that are causing sickness, escort the soul of the dead, and conduct various other spiritual consultations when problems face the community. The amount of power that a shaman possesses during séances in which he or she is possessed by or in control of a spirit is a point of debate, but it appears that the degree of control and the exact relationship between the shaman and spirits varies among cultures. The exact role of spirit helpers also depends on context; some journey with the shaman to other spiritual planes while others may be sent as envoys to contact or search for spirits in different worlds.

Although Eastern Han immortals did not perform all the functions of shamans, in reliefs they are depicted as mediators between heaven and earth who guide the souls of the dead through the dark spiritual realms of the afterlife. In many reliefs they perform this task with the help of the above-listed animals, exorcising malignant forces and transforming the realm between heaven and earth similar to the ways shamans used their spirit-animals to aid journeys through spiritual planes. The utilization of animals as vehicles or spirit mounts is also suggested in an inscription on a mirror from the Han dynasty:
If you climb Mount T’ai, you may see immortal beings. They feed on the purest jade, they drink from the springs of manna. They yoke the scaly dragons to their carriage, they mount the floating clouds. The white tiger leads them … they ascend straight to heaven.

The pictorial arrangement of many scenes in which immortals are represented with animals further supports the argument that they were thought of as shamanistic mediators, as they are shown on pillars or walls horizontally ascending or descending or on door lintels or on the boundaries of ceilings traveling across cloudscape (figs. 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, and 18). In addition, immortals possessed this power because they had ingested the elixir of immortality, similar to the hallucinatory drugs used by shamans in some cultures to achieve union with the spirit and travel through various realms.

Several visual and textual precedents link depictions of immortals on Eastern Han tomb reliefs to the *wu* 万物 (often translated as shaman) tradition of ancient China. A number of passages from textual accounts that relate to shamans and shamanistic traditions in ancient China can be connected to images of immortals on Eastern Han tomb reliefs. These passages refer to snakes and snake-handling, shamans that ascend and descend the axis-mundi, the use of birds in shamanistic practices, and the role of shamans and medicine in ancient China.

The motif of snake-handling is found on Warring States lacquers (fig. 19) and in *Shanhaijing*:

Shaman Xian is north of Women Chou [niú chou, “second woman”] Mountain. In his right hand he grasps a blue-green snake, in his left hand he grasps a vermilion snake. He dwells on Dengbao Mountain, where the assembled shamans ascend and descend.

Snake handling was a common feature among north Asian shamans who were believed to be invulnerable to snakes while they were possessed by a deity. This imagery probably served as a precursor for the immortal figure from Shanxi that is shown grasping two snakes (fig. 8) and may be another reason why some immortals are depicted as serpentine hybrids. The concept of approaching or ascending mountains in tomb reliefs may also draw on the idea of the ascension of shamans via an axis-mundi that is referred to in the above passage.

The imagery of costumed immortals may be related to figures of costumed dancers with feathers and winged tails who served as ritual specialists in festival dance performances, a common shamanistic practice in many cultures. Birds also play a central role to shamans as spirit helpers in many cultures. Furthermore, in ancient
Detail of a lacquer zither showing a shaman grasping two snakes.
Changtaiguan Tomb No. 1, Xinyang, Henan, Warring States period. After Teng Rensheng, Chiu ts'ui yan'tju
(Xianggang: Liang mu chubanshe: Taiwan jingxiao Yi yuan shufang, 1991), fig. 73.

Chinese texts, the *fangshi*, some of whose practices were descended from the *wu* tradition, were known to analyze bird calls, bird movements, and bird anomalies in order to tell the future. ⁷¹

As Joseph Needham points out, in the *Shanhaijing*, the *wu* are connected with immortals and the immortality cult due to their association with the elixir of immortality and drugs in general. This includes one passage in which six *wu* carry the elixir in their hands and guard the corpse of Zhaoyu near Mount Kunlun. In another section, ten *wu* ascend and descend a sacred mountain gathering elixirs. ⁷⁵ Images of immortals grasping the fungus of immortality or approaching Xiwangmu's throne with long stalks in their hands may be connected to the practices of male shamans in ancient China; as Chow Tse-tsung notes, the shamans invoked deities by holding young branches of plants or ears of grain. ⁷⁶

These visual and textual corollaries suggest a close connection between immortals and the *wu* tradition during the Warring States period and the Han dynasty. Links between shamans and descriptions of immortals also continued after the Eastern Han. In later Daoist texts and imagery, the powers of immortals are often similar to the powers of shamans, including their ability to heal the sick, exorcise demons or beasts, control the weather, tell the future, prevent disasters, use wild animals as helpers, and remain unharmed by the elements. One interesting difference between post-Han immortals and shamans is that the immortals usually used their powers as a demonstration of their might rather than for the benefit of mankind. ⁷⁷ This does not appear to be the case in depictions of immortals in Eastern Han tombs, which were thought to aid individuals, if not the society at large. This change in the conception of immortals from selfless beings that facilitated the ascension of the living and the dead to self-centered individuals may have had its beginnings in the secularization of the immortal realm during the Eastern Han dynasty. Such a change, combined with modifications of the immortals' physical characteristics, suggests that although Daoist immortals are based on Han dynasty texts and images, ideas relating to them as well as the process of becoming one had evolved by the time the first immortal hagiography was compiled in the third century CE. ⁷⁸ By that time, the winged creatures that guided the soul of the deceased during the Eastern Han dynasty had been forgotten and were left to haunt the tombs they decorated, replaced by a growing pantheon of Daoist figures and associated beliefs.
Metamorphosis, Postmortem Immortality, and the Afterlife in Han China

In Eastern Han tomb reliefs, images of immortals stress their ability to transcend the mortal world by depicting hybrid figures acting as shaman-like mediators between heaven and earth. Although it is clear that some sort of bodily transformation was necessary to become an immortal, exactly how this occurred after death is unclear. From textual and visual sources it appears three coexistent views of immortality were prevalent in Eastern Han China: 1) longevity in the present world, 2) the possibility of escaping death altogether, and 3) achieving immortality after one died. Such a threefold division, however, cannot be seen on tomb reliefs. These kinds of immortality could be achieved by a number of methods, and as Livia Kohn has pointed out:

During the Han dynasty philosophy, longevity concerns, and shamanism were joined into one complex, also incorporating cosmological, astrological, and medical theories. At this time, transcendence was primarily understood as a mechanical process: one received the divine materials from the immortals already residing in paradise, then transformed them for human use in ritual procedure, applied them to oneself and thus could become immortal. ²⁹

One Han dynasty ballad tells of an acolyte receiving the fungus of immortality and reverting to a youthful appearance but never mentions the hybrid winged or serpentine creatures that decorate tomb reliefs:

The fairy riding a white deer,
Has short hair and ears so long,
As he leads me up Great Mount Hua,
He grasps the mushroom, seizes red-fringe fungus.
When we reach the Master’s gates,
He offers up the drug in a jade casket.
The Master eats the drug,
His body in a day grows strong and fit,
His white hair turns black again,
His lifespan lengthens, his years are increased. ³⁰

It is also important to note that this passage is speaking of longevity, not the hope that some part of the soul would survive and ascend to heaven. Such concepts, however, grew increasingly blurred during the Han dynasty. ³¹ This study has sug-
gusted that images of immortals were placed in the tomb to facilitate similar processes after death.

Based on texts and images, however, it is unclear whether the deceased returned to a youthful state or became an empowered hybrid humanoid like those represented in tomb reliefs. The possibility of actually being transformed into a bird-like figure may be suggested by an image from Feicheng, Shandong, where it appears that a pair of wings were added to the central standing figure, who probably represents the deceased (fig. 20). It may have been that both ideas coexisted and were not mutually exclusive or the process may have been different depending on the individual. During the Han dynasty, the contradiction inherent in burial and the belief in the possibility of immortality after death was explained by stories that told of individuals who seemed to die a regular death, were buried like everyone else, and then ascended to immortality. In 110 BCE, Han Wudi was surprised to discover that there was a tomb for Huangdi, who was believed to have ascended to heaven. His advisors explained that the tomb housed only Huangdi’s hat and robe. Wang Chong in the Lunheng also discussed the belief in contrived death, calling it “deliverance from the corpse” (shi jie 解), a concept that would become central to later religious Daoism.

For a time, the cult of immortality and the hybrid figures in Eastern Han tombs held the keys to eternal bliss. The idea of immortals and an immortal paradise offered an alternative conception of the afterlife that coexisted with the belief in a bleak underworld whose bureaucracy mimicked that of the living and the view that the deceased would become an ancestor who needed to be annually pacified and cared for through sacrifices. It is not clear how such ideas were synthesized in Han dynasty China, if at all, but individuals who became immortals could escape the desolate underworld and may also have been believed to become ancestors. The benefit was twofold, providing a pleasant afterlife while also promising prosperity to the living, as a happy ancestor was believed to be a helpful ancestor. Despite such initial incongruities, it seems that in all three conceptions of the afterlife one of the most important things was that the dead be separated from the living. Hybrid
Immortals were chosen to decorate Eastern Han dynasty tombs because they were believed to facilitate this dangerous process while giving individuals a happy alternative to the bleak afterlife in the bureaucratic underworld.

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NOTES

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1 Although Western Han depictions of immortals exhibit many of the characteristics outlined in this paper, between the time when immortals first appear in the second century BCE and the creation of Eastern Han tomb reliefs, these characteristics were expanded and standardized. In addition to the figures from Mawangdui noted in this paper, see also the thin, hairy immortal with large ears depicted on a Western Han tomb mural unearthed in Xian in 2004. Xian shi wenwu kaogu baohu kaogu suo, "Xian ligong daxue Xian bianmu mu fazhe baogao," *Wenwu*, no. 5 (2006), pp. 7–44. Although the mural is damaged, a similar figure also appears on a Western Han tomb mural discovered at Xianxiaoqiong University. Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan, *Bi shang danqing: Shaanxi chupu bianmu ji*, vol. 1 (Beijing: Ke xue xue ban she, 2008), p. 7. Immortals also appear amid the swirling cloudlike patterns found on Western Han lacquerware and on other materials. For lacquerware, see Martin J. Powers, "A Late Western Han Tomb Near Yangzhou and Related Problems," *Oriental Art* 29, no. 3 (autumn 1983), pp. 275–90; for mirrors, see Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise, the Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), and Zhang Jinyi, *Han jing suo fanying de shenhua chuanshuo yu shenxiu sishang* (Mythology and Immortal Thought as Reflected on Han Dynasty Mirrors) (Taipei: Guo li Gugong bowuyuan, Mingzuo 70, 1981).

3 For several examples of studies along these lines, see Hayashi Minao, Kandai no Kamigami (Gods of the Han Dynasty) (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1989); Ni Ruan, "Qin Han zhi xiannen sixiang de dezhenghe yu dingwe" (On the Conformity and Orientation of the Immortal Idea in the Qin and Han Dynasties), Zhongguan wenwu, no. 6 (2003), pp. 49–63; Florence Waterbury, Bird-deities in China (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1952), pp. 110–36; Xin Lixiang, Handai huaxiang shi zonghe yanjiu (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2000), pp. 143–61; Yang Xiaohong, "Handai yuhua shengtian jiben tuixiang moshi lungao" (A Sketch of the Foundation of Images of Ascending to Immortality from Han Dynasty Tombs), Dongnan wenxue, no. 6 (1992), pp. 110–22; Yang Xiaohong, "Handai yuhua yitai ji jiben zang tuixiang gouzao" (The Han Dynasty Motivation to be Transformed into an Immortal and the Structure of Images Buried in Tombs), Sichuan wenxue, no. 4 (1995), pp. 23–29; Zhang Jinyi, Han jing suo fanying de shenhua chuanzhuo yu shenxian yangshang; Zhour Baoping, "Han hua zhong de sheng xian tuixiang" (Images of Ascending to Immortality in Han Pictures), Lao xue, no. 2 (1993), pp. 76–84.


11 A Feather-People Land (yanmin guo 羽民國) and the Undying People appear in Shanhaijing 6 ("Haiwai nanjing") while the Land of Feathered People (yanmin zhi guo 羽民之國) and an Undying Land (busi zhi guo 不死之國) are mentioned in Shanhaijing 15 ("Da huang nanjing"). Guo Fu, Shanhaijing zhucheng (Beijing: Zhongguo shenhui kexue chubanshe, 2004), 6.1.6 (572–74), 6.1.16 (585–87), 8.2.5 (798–99), and 8.2.8 (801–2). For an analysis of textual references to feathered men and immortals see Sun Zuoyun, "Shuo yuren," and Max Kaltenmark, Le Lie-Sien Tchouan (Paris: Université de Paris; Publications du Centre d'Études Sinologiques de Pékin, 1953).

12 For a discussion of the imagery from Mawangdui, see Loewe, Ways to Paradise, pp. 17–59, and Wu Hung, "Art in a Ritual Context." For a description and discussion of other figures on a Western Han mural and coffin, see Jean M. James, A Guide to the Shrine and Tomb Art of the Han Dynasty, pp. 9–33. James, however, argues that these figures are not immortals.

13 Powers, Art and Political Expression, p. 325.


15 Hawkes, Chu tz'u, p. 81.

16 Ma Maoyuan, et al., Chu ci zhushi (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, Minguo 82, 1993), pp. 441–42. For translation, see Hawkes, Chu tz'u, p. 83.


20 See Wang Chong, Lunheng 7, pp. 105–6 for a criticism of the myths surrounding the ascension of the Yellow Emperor. For translation, see Alfred Forke, Lun-Heng, part 1, pp. 332–35.


24 Lewis, Flood Myths, p. 71.


26 "Huangdi pian," Yan Jie and Yan Beiming, Liezi yizhu (Xianggang Jiuong: Zhonghua shuju Xianggang fen jwu, 1987), p. 29. For translation, see A. C. Graham, trans., The Book of Lieh-tzu (London: John Murray, 1960), p. 35. A similar description of a "divine man" can also be found in Zhuangzi nei pian 1 ("Xiao yao yu"). Zhuangzi jishi (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, Xinhua shudian Beijing faxing suo faxing, 1961 [1978 printing]), p. 28. For translation, see Burton Watson, trans.,

It is unclear if or how the androgynous depiction of immortals in Eastern Han dynasty tomb reliefs relates to the tradition of sexual techniques for achieving immortality. The earliest texts that describe sexual practices intended to lengthen life have been excavated from Warring States Period sites in Yan and Qi and associated with the farangi. Isabelle Robinet, Taoism: Growth of a Religion, trans. Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 38.

Zheng Yan, "Barbarian Images in Han Art," Orientations 29, no. 6 (June 1998), pp. 50–59.

Anne Birrell, Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China (Honolulu: University Of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 69, 189, n. 26.

Hayashi Mino, "Inshūjidai no ibutsu ni arawasareta kishin (Spirits and Deities as Represented on Artifacts from the Shang and Zhou Dynasties)," Kökogaku zasshi 46, no. 2 (1960), pp. 105–32. Hayashi has also suggested that losing one's hair was equated with losing one's life or vitality; hence immortals were depicted with long, flowing hair. Hayashi Mino, Isši ni kizamareta sekai: gazōseki ga katara kodai Chūgoku no sekaito to shiso (The World Imprinted on Stones: Ancient Chinese Life and Beliefs Depicted on Stones) (Tokyo: Toho Shoten, 1992), pp. 174–76.


Sun Zuoyun, "Shuo yuren," has argued that immortals as feathered men were based on earlier totemistic beliefs.

Powers, Art and Political Expression, pp. 44–45, 62–63, 185, 265–68, and 277–78; Powers, pp. 354–55, also discusses a figure, probably an immortal from the Zhu Wei 朱韋 Shrine, that hovers wingless in midair but appears in the guise of a normal mortal. The change in the appearance of immortals after the Han dynasty has also been noted by Kiyohito Munakata, Sacred Mountains, p. 33; Gong Yunbiao, "Yuren"; Sun Yan, "Han Wei Nanbei chao yuren"; and Sun Zuoyun, "Shuo yuren," p. 39.

For a discussion of the power of metamorphosis (bian hua 變化) in later Daoism, see Isabelle Robinet, "Metamorphosis and Deliverance from the Corpse in Taoism," History of Religions 19, no. 1 (August 1979), pp. 37–70.

Poo, Enemies of Civilization; see in particular chapters 3 and 4.


Zheng Yan, "Barbarian Images." In general it appears to have been auspicious to include foreign objects, materials, and motifs of all kinds in tombs. See Jessica Rawson, "The Eternal Palaces of the Western Han: A New View of the Universe," Artibus Asiae 59, nos. 1/2 (1999), pp. 5–58.

See Hayashi Mino "Kandai kishin to sekai" (Mythological Scenes in Han Tomb Reliefs), Tōhō Gakuhō 46 (March 1974), pp. 223–306, for a discussion of some of the changes that occurred in the late Han spirit world.


Huashan and Taishan figure in some mirror inscriptions as well as in Han dynasty ballads. For mirror inscriptions, see Bernard Kalgren, Early Chinese Mirror Inscriptions, Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities 6 (1934), and Zhang Jinyi, Han jing, pp. 70–72. For ballads, see Birrell, Songs and Ballads.


Terry F. Kleeman, "Mountain Deities in China: The Domestication of the


48 Wu Hung, “Myths and Legends in Han Funerary Art: Their Pictorial Structure and Symbolic Meanings as Reflected in Carvings on Sichuan Sarcophagi,” in *Stories from China’s Past: Han Dynasty Pictorial Reliefs and Archaeological Objects from Sichuan Province, People’s Republic of China*, organized by Lucy Lin (San Francisco: The Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco, 1987), p. 75. This inscription reads: “Ah, the enlightened does not follow, oh, the refined has died an early death, he has left the white sun and descended, his honorable name was cut short and not extended. His spirit floats among animals, roaming to the east and west. I am fearful his soul will be confused, I sing for him to return and be restored. Do not go about recklessly, still something poisonous may befall his spirit, and he may encounter misfortune…” Zhang Li, “Shanbei Hanbai huaxiang shi yu Chu wenhua” (Han Dynasty Tomb Reliefs from Shanbei and Chu Culture), *Wenbo*, no. 3 (2005), pp. 62–63.


50 For more on the fungus of immortality, see Powers, *Art and Political Expression*, pp. 77–78, and “A Late Western Han Tomb Near Yangzhou and Related Problems,” pp. 287–88. Shih Hiso-yen, in “Han Stone Reliefs from Shensi,” also discusses the decoration of a “symbolic plant” that most likely refers to the *lingzhi* in reliefs from Shaanxi. In several scenes immortals and other figures approach Xiwangmu carrying long stalks or shish-kebab-looking objects. Such objects should not be confused with the fungus of immortality that mortals frequently carry in tomb reliefs. Instead, as Wu Hung has noted, these objects are identified by a passage in the *Han Shu* (History of the Han Dynasty) that describes a mass religious movement surrounding the goddess in the BCE in which stalks of straw or hemp were used by worshippers. Wu Hung, “Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West,” *Orientalia* 18, no. 4 (April 1987), p. 29, and The *Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 128, 130.

51 In a similar vein, Munakata, *Sacred Mountains*, pp. 25–26, has suggested that several immortal figures depicted singing and dancing on objects dating to the Western Han dynasty may represent attempts to appease mountain gods. Powers has also discussed how the representations of the gathering of beings that often include immortals in Eastern Han tomb reliefs are similar to descriptions of the paradisical “Plain of Riches” in the *Shanhaijing* and the social and natural harmony of an ideal Confucian world described in a poem by Cai Yong (132–192 CE). Powers, *Art and Political Expression*, pp. 271–77.

52 For a discussion of the representation of *que* 領 as gateways to the immortal world, see Jiang Sheng, “Han que kao” (The Imperial Palace and the Immortal Ideal: A Textual Study of the Imperial Palace—Que of the Han Dynasty), *Zhongguo daxue xuebao (shihui kexueban)*, no. 1 (1997), pp. 60–65.


55 Immortals also occur in two other scenes. In one scene, they perch atop roofs alongside phoenixes or other birds signifying the prosperity and good fortune of the household. Such scenes do not directly relate to the immortality of the soul after death or the immortality cult. Immortals also appear in a number of reliefs worshipping a stepp-like image. For the conflation of the Buddha and certain aspects of Buddhism with the immortality cult, see Wu Hung, “Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries AD),” *Artibus Asiae* 47, nos. 3–4 (1986), pp. 263–352.

56 See Zhang Congjun for a discussion of this process and how it may possibly
relate to the popular motif of archer(s) shooting at bird(s) in a tree. Zhang Congjun, "Han huaxiang shi zhong de shenxiao tuxiang ya sheng xian (Images of Shooting at Trees on Han Dynasty Tomb Reliefs and Ascending to Immortality)," Minsu yunxia, no. 3 (2006), pp. 152–59.

From "Dong tao xing," Huang Jie, Han Wei yuexu fengjian (Xianggang: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1961), p. 19. For translation, see Birrell, Songs and Ballads, p. 70.

Lucy Lim, Stories from China's Past, p. 175.

Wu Hung, "Myths and Legends," p. 76.


For a comprehensive study of images related to Xiwangmu, see Li Song, Lü Handai yishu zhong de Xiwangmu tuxiang (Han Dynasty Images of Xiwangmu) (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000). On changes in the conception of the spirit world in the Eastern Han, see Hayashi Minao, "Kanbun kan shi no sekai?" See also Powers, Art and Political Expression, pp. 265–68 and 277–8, for a discussion of imagery related to Xiwangmu and immortals.

For a discussion of the representation of chariots in Eastern Han tomb reliefs and their relationship to the status of the deceased see Hayashi Minao, "Gōkan jidai no shaba gyoretsu," Tôhô Gakuhô 37 (March 1966), pp. 183–226.


For a discussion that focuses on birds as spirit helpers in historical and contemporary Siberian Shamanism, see Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, "Flights of the Sacred: Symbolism and Theory in Siberian Shamanism," American Anthropologist, n.s. 98, no. 2 (June 1996), pp. 305–18.


The role of spirit helpers is touched upon in Jakobsen, Shamanism; Peter Knecht, "Aspects of Shamanism"; and both works by Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, "Introduction" and "Flights of the Sacred."

Looewe, Ways to Paradise, p. 200.

For a discussion of the functions of Wu and terminology, see Chow Tse-tsung, "The Childbirth Myth and Ancient Chinese Medicine: A Study of Aspects of the Wu Tradition," in Ancient China: Studies in Early Civilization, ed. David Roy and Tseun-hsien Tsien (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978), pp. 43–89; Hawkes, The Songs of the South: An Anthology, pp. 42–51, and Needham, Science and Civilization in China, vol. 2, pp. 134–39. For a large selection of translated texts regarding the Wu, see J. M. M. de Groot, The Religious System of China (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1892–1910), pp. 1187–211. For shamanism and late Chu religion, see Major, "Late Chu Religion," pp. 135–39. Michael Puett, in To Become a God, argues against the existence of shamanism in ancient Chinese religion, specifically refuting claims that religion was based primarily on shamanistic practices and the traditional reading of the Chu Ci spirit journeys as shamanistic. Based on visual evidence, I would have to disagree with Puett's general conclusions because representations of immortals as well as a number of figures that predate the Eastern Han dynasty strongly suggest the existence of a religious system that had shamanistic elements. Munakata has noted that, "the immortality ... cult started as an intellectual twist on shamanism, an ingenious transfiguration of the idea of the shaman's ecstatic cosmic trip into the image of the free-flying mountain man (xianren) and further, that of the "achieved man" (zenren), who attained a cosmic vision and life freed from earthly bounds of space and time." Munakata, Sacred Mountains, p. 11. Suzanne Cahill has also observed that Xiwangmu, who in tomb reliefs is accompanied by immortals, in both the Shanghijing and Chu ci is described as a shamanistic deity further connecting the immortality cult to shamanistic traditions. Suzanne Cahill, Transcendence and Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 17.

Shanhijing 7 ("Haiwai xijing"). Guo Fu, Shanhijing, 6.2.13 (607–9). For translation, see Major, Heaven and Earth, p. 199.

Major, "Late Chu Religion," p. 130.

Balzer, "Flights of the Sacred."

Kenneth J. DeWoskin, Doctors, Diviners and Magicians: Biographies of the
84 WANG CHONG, LUNHENG 7, p. 112. For translation, see FORKE, LUN-HENG, part 1, p. 345.
85 On the development of the idea of “deliverance from the corpse,” see ROBINET, “Metamorphosis and Deliverance from the Corpse,” pp. 57–66.
87 The possibility of the belief that the dead could become both immortals and ancestors is suggested in a mirror inscription that dates to the Early or Middle Eastern Han: “Blessing and advancements are daily before you. / You will eat jade flowers and drink from sweet springs. / As extravagant pleasures become laid out, you will encounter divine immortals. / You will nurture long life and cause your longevity to reach ten thousand years. / Reverting, you will return to the origin…” The last line, which mentions “returning to the origin,” refers to ancestral worship. K. E. BRASHIER, “LONGEVITY LIKE METAL AND STONE: THE ROLE OF THE MIRROR IN HAN BURIALS,” *toung pao* 81, nos. 4–5 (1995), pp. 224–25.
The late Ming witnessed renewed interest in this Tang anecdote, not only as an allusion in poetry, fiction, and drama but also as the subject of plays and pictorial representation in woodblock prints and paintings. Visually, the story is recalled by the moment of production—a beautiful woman in a garden setting, her brush-wielding hand poised over a leaf, ink, and ink stone nearby. While this image evokes the romantic associations that a female writing poetry had come to emblematize, the woodblock prints, only some of which were illustrations for plays, also recall the boundaries breached by this act through the garden walls that surround the woman. The dialogue, songs, and stage business of the plays further developed this tension between the public nature of poetry production and social expectations that women should confine themselves to the domestic realm. By comparing the evolution of “inscribing a poem on a red leaf” as both a literary and visual theme, I will illuminate various ways that drama and the visual arts simultaneously shaped and participated in contemporary views on women’s capacity for authentic emotion as well as the romantic entanglements and the poetry that developed from this capacity. This discussion also suggests the utility of considering the overlaps and interactions between drama and the visual arts as we map the contours of the late Imperial imagination.

A BEAUTIFUL, BUT LONELY WOMAN inscribes a poem upon a leaf, describing her longing for love. She sends the leaf out into the world beyond her quarters where it is eventually discovered by a handsome young scholar who matches her capacity for sentiment. This story is one of a great many “scholar and beauty” (cai zi jiaren 才子佳人) romances that were in circulation during the Ming and Qing periods of China—the most popular of all being the love story between the scholar Zhang and Yingying in the drama Romance of the Western Wing (Xixiang Ji 西廂記). Like Romance, the story of inscribing a poem on a red leaf was retold and alluded to in a variety of literary forms and visual media. Indeed, the two stories intersect at a number of points in their evolution. Much has been written about Romance and the play’s prominence in Ming print culture, within the late Ming valorization of women and romance, and as a theme in visual art. However, the overwhelming popularity of Romance has somewhat obscured the large number of
other story complexes that were also in circulation and participated in this confluence of trends shaping the late Imperial imagination.

In this study, I will trace the development of the theme of “inscribing a poem on a red leaf” (hongye tishi 紅葉題詩) in literature and art from its origins in Tang and Song classical anecdotes to its later reproductions in a variety of Ming and Qing anthologies. In the late Ming drama anthology, One Hundred Yuan Plays (元曲一百種) (published 1615–16), the theme is represented by the play Wutong Leaf 堆桐葉; it was also the subject of other plays, most notably Record of the Drifting Red Leaf 流紅記 (published 1583) by Wang Jide. Finally, the theme is represented in Ming and Qing print illustrations, paintings, and decorative art. An exploration of its evolution as a text- and an image-based theme illuminates the various ways that literature and the visual arts simultaneously participated in and shaped both the late Ming printing boom and a contemporary equation of the feminine with authentic sentiment; this exploration also reveals the commercial possibilities and cultural anxieties that these phenomena gave rise to.  

The Origins of “Inscribing a Poem on a Red Leaf”: Accounts in Tang and Song Anthologies

Stories about inscribing a poem on a red leaf first appeared in several Tang and Song collections of anecdotes. The two that are most closely related to later dramatic versions of the story are “Hou Jitu” 侯給圖 in the Tang anthology Taiping Guangji 太平廣記 (compiled 976–83) and “Record of the drifting red leaf” (Liu hong ji 流紅記) in the Song collection Qingsuo Gaoyi 青瑣高議 (attributed to Liu Fu 劉斧, active circa 1023–1100). These two texts allow us to better appreciate Ming developments of the story, and thus merit special attention.

“Hou Jitu” begins with the erudite and diligent young scholar Hou Jitu leaning on a balustrade; suddenly a leaf floats by and drops in front of him. On this leaf the following lines are written:

Attempt to rub black eyebrows knit
by pent up emotions within my heart.
Taking up a pen, I ascend to the terrace in front of the hall;
write them into words of longing.
These words are not written on stone.
These words are not written on paper.
They are written onto an autumn leaf,
hoping they will ascend with the autumn wind.
Those in the world with a heart,
will understand what it is to die from longing.  

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Entranced by the verse, Hou carefully preserves the leaf with the poem. Five or six years after this incident, he marries a woman from the Ren family and happens to recite the verse on the leaf to her. She recognizes it as her own.

The Song story "Record of the drifting red leaf" is more elaborate. According to the story as it appears in Qingsuo gaoyi, in the time of Emperor Tang Xizong (reigned 874–89) the scholar Yu You plucks a red leaf inscribed with a poem out of a canal flowing from the garden of the imperial palace. The poem reads:

Why must the flowing water be so hasty?
(While I am) deep in the palace, idle all day.
I courteously thank the red leaf,
It easily goes to the world of men.  

Yu is fascinated by the verse and reads it constantly. Suffering from lovesickness and heedless of the mockery of his peers, he pens an answering verse on another leaf. He then puts this leaf into the imperial canal, and it goes against the flow back into the garden. Yu later goes to work for a man with a high position named Han Yong. Han proposes a match between Yu and Lady Han, who has just retired from the ranks of the palace women hoping to be favored by the emperor. After their marriage, Yu and Lady Han discover that each had found the poem written by the other.

The story ends happily. Due to the marvelous circumstances surrounding his marriage, Yu You comes to the attention of the emperor and attains official success. Lady Han gives birth to five sons and three daughters, who all distinguish themselves by becoming officials (the sons) or marrying well (the daughters).

The author's closing commentary on "Record of the drifting red leaf" prefigures Ming concerns with authentic sentiment (qìng) and at the same time distinguishes this Song rendition from later Ming versions:

Flowing water is without sentiment (qìng 情); a red leaf is without sentiment as well. To have written on an object without sentiment, and to have entrusted it to another entity also without sentiment in order to search for a person with sentiment, to ultimately have a person with sentiment attain it, and further to be united with that person—I am sure that this is something unheard of in previous generations. As for a match that heaven has ordained, no matter if you are at the opposite ends of the empire the match will come about. If heaven doesn't permit the match, then you can be as close as next door, and it still won't be attained. Those who take pleasure in attaining and delight in seeking may read this and take warning.
In this commentary, we see an invocation of the term *qing* that became so loaded with meaning centuries later, during the late Ming. However, in contrast to Ming concerns, the sentiment in the story is appreciated as a novelty, “something unheard of in previous generations,” but is not considered the primary impetus for the described events. Fate, rather than sentiment, has brought the two lovers together. The commentator sees the story not only as proof that fate is the most important determinant of a happy match but as a cautionary tale for those inclined to seek out romance on their own.

The Tang short anecdote about Hou Jitu and Madame Ren and the more elaborate Song story of Yu You and Lady Han both feature a lonely woman writing a poem on a leaf and the coincidence that the finder of the poem is later united in matrimony with the author. They share other significant similarities as well. In both these stories, the poet herself does not appear until almost the end of the action; the stories begin with the male protagonist and his discovery of her poem. The poems written by these lonely ladies contrast the physically immobile woman to the movement of the natural force to which she entrusts her sentiment. In the poem discovered by Hou Jitu, the writer will get only as far as the “porch in front of the hall,” but the leaf will “ascend with the wind.” Lady Han contrasts the rushing water with her own idleness and her position deep within the palace walls to the leaf’s ability to flow out of the palace into the world beyond.

Ming dramatic versions of these stories reproduce the women's poems. In these plays, both the arias and the illustrations further underline the contrast created in the poems. The original poems, the arias, and the illustrations all combine to emphasize that natural forces circulate the sentiment that would otherwise be hemmed in by the walls that surround the women.

The Tang and Song renditions, however, focus very much on the moment the leaf is found by a sympathetic reader and thus on the man who discovers the leaf. As we will see, this emphasis changes in Ming renditions of the story, which pay equal, if not more, attention to the heroine’s actions of inscribing the poem and sending it out beyond her domestic space.

**Circulation of the Stories in the Ming Dynasty**

Both “Hou Jitu” and the story of Lady Han and Yu You circulated in a variety of late Ming publications as a result of the vitality of the print industry during this period. The Tang and Song anthologies in which the stories originally appeared became more widely available as part of the general surge in print production; the reappearance in print of stories about inscribing a poem on a leaf seems to have led to a revival of interest in the theme. *Taiping guangji* was published twice between the years 1522 and 1566, and again in 1626 by the late Ming writer, editor, and publisher
Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646). The Qingsuo gaoyi was published in 1585. The two stories also appeared, both individually and together, in a wide assortment of other sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century anthologies of classical language anecdotes, poetry, and drama (see appendix).

The inscribing a poem on a leaf stories in Ming anthologies of classical language fiction and poetry evidence a switch in focus—from the male protagonist to the female protagonist—similar to what we will see in dramatic renditions of the theme. Concomitant with this shift is a stronger emphasis on the women’s poems and the authentic sentiment that prompted their production.

An entry in the encyclopedia Shuntang sikao 出堂肆考 published sometime between 1595 and 1619 represents this trend toward heightened attention on the female protagonist and her sentiments. The Hou Jitu story is abbreviated to little more than two sentences, one introducing Hou and describing his discovery of the poem and one commenting that Hou and Madame Ren were eventually married. In contrast, Madame Ren’s poem is reproduced not only in its entirety but in an even longer version. After the original conclusion come four more lines:

Those in the world without a heart,
will not recognize the meaning of longing.
With a heart, or heartless;
who knows where the leaf will fall?11

These lines draw further attention to the woman poet and also emphasize the random possibilities inherent in the act of entrusting a leaf with a poem. This addition portrays Madame Ren’s search for someone “with a heart” as the courageous action of someone totally committed to passion and thus reflects the late Ming valorization of women as vessels of pure sentiment. Other Ming compendia in which this story appears reproduce this version of the poem rather than the original version that appeared in the Taiping Guangji.

A late Ming equating of Madame Ren and her poem with authentic sentiment is seen even more clearly in A History of Sentiment (Qingshi leilüe), the anthology of classical language anecdotes published after 1628. The editor of this anthology, Feng Menglong, the publisher of one edition of Taiping Guangji, was a primary proponent of the late Ming “cult of sentiment.”12 In prefaces to his vernacular short story collections, Feng expounds on the socially ameliorative aspects of these works precisely because they express authentic sentiment. In the preface to A History of Sentiment, he makes a similar claim for classical stories:
Again, my intent has been to choose the best from among the stories concerning sentiment, both ancient and contemporary, and to write up a brief account for each, so that I might make known to men the abiding nature of sentiment, and thereby turn the unfeeling into men of sensitivity, and transform private feelings into public concern.\textsuperscript{13}

This focus on sentiment is also apparent in the collection's individual entries on stories related to “inscribing a poem on a leaf.”

Feng had published an edition of \textit{Taiping Guangji} only a few years earlier and thus was surely familiar with Madame Ren’s poem as it appeared in the Tang collection. Yet, while he quotes almost verbatim the “Hou Jitu” story from \textit{Taiping Guangji}, he concludes Madame Ren’s poem with the four extra lines found in the \textit{Shantang Sikao} and other Ming anthologies. Feng then adds his own comments to the story, focusing on the woman’s emotions:

Five or six years earlier Madame Ren already understood longing; her wind-blown sentiment surely surpassed others. The hidden jade was not sold and ultimately returned to the one who picked up the leaf. Once the red cord has been tied, it cannot be forced.\textsuperscript{14}

Feng begins with praise for Madame Ren and her \textit{qing}, which “surely surpassed others,” but he also points out that the woman’s action was ultimately vindicated by fate. His comments place the story firmly in his chosen category of “fated \textit{qing}” 情缘, which, as another preface to the collection points out, “makes readers understand the inevitability of fate.”\textsuperscript{15} Feng’s words also suggest that while he did not necessarily deem the story a “warning,” as did the Song commentator of the \textit{Qingsuo gaoyi}, he was still acutely aware that it raised the possibilities of dangerously transgressive behavior. Thus, he is at pains to justify her \textit{qing} as fated, as he does in his final assertion: “Once the red cord has been tied, it cannot be forced.”

In the Yu You and Lady Han story titled “Yu You,” which appears in “Matchmakers of sentiment,” section 12 of \textit{History of Emotion}, we see a similar shift in narrative attention to the female protagonist.\textsuperscript{16} While the title suggests a focus on the male, this much abbreviated retelling of the story actually concentrates on Lady Han and her poetry. Feng not only leaves out Yu You’s poem, he also elides most of the details regarding Yu You found in the original Song story.

Feng further draws attention to the romantic aspects by connecting the story to drama in a closing statement: “Wang Boliang has written the \textit{chuanqi} (drama) \textit{Ti hong}.” Here, Feng refers to the thirty-six act play \textit{Record of Inscribing on a Red Leaf} by Wang Jide (explored in more detail below), which represents the most detailed
and expanded version of the love story. Feng's mention of the play reflects his deep involvement with popular literature, which, as noted above, he championed as being of comparable moral value to the classics.; in the same statement, he demonstrates his familiarity with the various classical sources of the story.17

While Feng presented his publications as morally uplifting, they were still a moneymaking enterprise.18 The commercial appeal of romance can be seen even more clearly in another collection of anecdotes published in the Ming, Compilation of the Captivating and Extraordinary (Yan yi bian 艳異編), which also incorporates the story of Yu You and Lady Han. A comparison of Compilation of the Captivating and Extraordinary with A History of Sentiment reveals both the relatively more intellectually serious stance taken by Feng as well as a shared focus on the romantic and the unusual. The two collections have many stories in common. For example, the editions of Compilation that feature the Yu You and Lady Han story include it in a section titled "Assignations" along with "Record of Jiao and Hong" (Jiao Hong ji 嫣紅記), another love story in the classical language that also appeared in A History of Sentiment. Like "Yu You," "Record of jiao and Hong" was the basis of a chuanqi play of the same title by the late Ming dramatist Meng Chengshun (1599–circa 1684).19

Unlike the stories in History, those in Compilation for the most part appear without editorial comment. And overall, Compilation of the Captivating and Extraordinary is more blatant in its attempts to be commercially appealing; witness its titillating title.20 Nevertheless, the similarities of the two collections reveal the subtle ways in which A History of Sentiment was produced with the market in mind, specifically, readers of literary works featuring women and romance.

Anthologies of Women's Poetry in the Late Ming and Qing
This market was a major impetus to another vogue within late Ming publishing that also featured stories on inscribing on a red leaf; that is, a surge in the publication of women's poetry.21 In several of the Ming collections mentioned above, the stories are abbreviated to the point where there is almost nothing left but the women's poems. Over time, this trend led to the poems appearing with other works by female poets in a number of Ming and Qing anthologies, and both Madame Ren and Lady Han acquired a quasi-historical status.

An early instance of Madame Ren and Lady Han presented as historical figures occurs in the collection of biographies titled History of Women Poets (Shi nü shi 詩女史), published in 1558.22 Lady Han's poem on a leaf appears in a group entry dedicated to palace women who wrote poetry on leaves; the story of Madame Ren and her poem is told in a separate entry.23 This collection is also the earliest instance I have located of the longer version of Madame Ren's poem which, as I have argued above, emphasizes her deep commitment to sentiment.
The “leaf” poems and biographical notices describing Madame Ren and Lady Han as historical figures appeared in several late Ming and Qing poetry anthologies.\textsuperscript{24} This blurring of the lines between history and fiction culminated in the inclusion of poems by both these fictional characters in the \textit{Complete Tang Poems} (Quan Tang Shi 全唐詩) commissioned by the Qing Kangxi emperor in 1705 and completed some two years later.\textsuperscript{25} The poems also appeared in later collections of women’s poetry.\textsuperscript{26}

These poetry anthologies reflect the commercial appeal of women’s poetry as well as the strong hold that romantic fiction and drama had on the late Imperial imagination. Madame Ren and Lady Han were not the only subjects of fiction and drama whose poems appeared in the \textit{Complete Tang Poems}. This anthology, like many of the others mentioned above, includes the poems of Cui Yingying, the heroine of the Tang tale “The Story of Yingying” and the play \textit{Romance of the Western Wing}.\textsuperscript{27} It seems that the late Imperial market for women’s poetry led editors to cast as wide a net as possible when searching for historical precedents.

While commercial interests might have spurred these conflations of history and fiction, it should be remembered that the late Ming was a period in which people delighted in the blurring of these boundaries, particularly when it came to drama performance and publication.\textsuperscript{28} Dorothy Ko, for example, has described how women readers of \textit{Peony Pavilion} played with notions of the real and the imaginary.\textsuperscript{29} The strong responses to drama described by Ko and others as well as the upsurge in women’s production of poetry affirmed and encouraged a view of women as more capable than men of experiencing and expressing deep and authentic emotion. Within fictional and dramatic works, these qualities became the catalyst for the love stories. This equation of expression of authentic emotion with women writing poetry can also be seen in the development of the “inscribing a poem on a leaf” theme in drama.

\textbf{The Hou Jitu Story in Drama: The Zaju Play Wutong Leaf}

Drama publishing was another part of the industry that flourished in the late Ming. More than sixty editions of \textit{Romance of the Western Wing} were published during the Ming dynasty.\textsuperscript{30} Major anthologies of drama were published during this period as well.\textsuperscript{31} The theme of “inscribing a poem on a leaf” was represented in one of these anthologies, \textit{One Hundred Yuan Plays} (Yuanqu yibai zhong 元曲一百種, published 1615–16). This collection, which established the genre of \textit{zaju} as canonical, includes the play \textit{Li Yunying Sends a Wutong Leaf by Wind} 李雲英風送梧桐葉 (short title \textit{Wutong Leaf}), a dramatic rendition of the Hou Jitu story.

The publication history of \textit{Wutong Leaf} suggests the particular attraction this theme held for late Ming readers. While there is no evidence that the play existed
prior to this time, three editions were published between the years 1573 and 1622.\footnote{111} Not only was it included in One Hundred Yuan Plays, but two other editions of the play also exist—a manuscript copied from the Gu mingjia anthology (published sometime during the Wanli period, 1573–1620) in Zhao Qimei’s personal collection of drama texts, and an edition from the Gu zaju collection edited by Wang Jide \footnote{112} and published sometime between 1615 and 1622.

*Wutong Leaf* adds a number of emendations and embellishments to the Hou Jitu story, apparently drawn from two sources—stock situations in vernacular fiction and drama and traditions connected to poetry. In this play, the heroine is named Li Yunying rather than Madame Ren. She writes the poem on a leaf not to a stranger who eventually becomes her husband but directly to her husband, renamed Ren Jitu, from whom she has been separated due to the political unrest caused by the An Lushan rebellion (755–63). The prime minister, Niu Sengru, rescues and adopts Li Yunying and takes on the responsibility of finding her a husband. A family separated by civil insurgency is a conventional starting point in fiction and drama, and the plot device of a family of high status adopting a young woman and then making arrangements for her to marry is also fairly common.\footnote{114}

Practices related to poetry feature prominently in the play. Li Yunying makes several attempts to contact her husband through her verse. In act 1, she writes a poem on a wall in response to one that she believes is written by her husband. In act 2, she inscribes another poem on a leaf.\footnote{113} Ren Jitu retrieves the leaf, and husband and wife are finally reunited in the fourth act of the play.

*Wutong Leaf* is clearly based on “Hou Jitu,” but the emphasis of the play is different. Just like the stories in *History of Sentiment*, the play shifts the focus from the male to the female protagonist. In accordance with *zaju* convention, the female lead, Li Yunying, is the only character who sings in all four acts; thus, she is the mouthpiece for lyrical expression in the play. The Tang story begins with Hou Jitu finding the leaf, but in the play, Yunying’s action of inscribing the poem and sending the leaf off on the wind is central, taking up almost the entirety of act 2. In this act, Yunying’s writing of the poem on the leaf and the accompanying recitation is followed by a ritualized invocation to the wind to carry the leaf to her husband. The four arias that make up this invocation underlie her sincerity as well as her gravity of purpose. Moreover, she rehearses the act of inscribing poetry in a public forum in act 1 when she writes a poem on a wall and recapitulates the action in her arias of act 4 as well.

Two characters unique to the play, Niu Sengru and his wife, act as **deus and dea ex machina** and facilitate the eventual reunion of the couple. Their comments also serve another purpose: they emphasize the social risks that Yunying dares to take in pursuit of this reunion. When Niu’s wife catches Yunying writing the poem on
a wall, she articulates societal disapprobation for a woman writing poetry: "Yunying, you're a member of the petticoat set; won't writing a poem to match another's lead to scandal?" Later, she scolds, "You're a girl. I'm afraid that by writing poetry you will be scorned by onlookers." While the chastised Yunying promises to never behave that way again, she does not let her oath stop her from inscribing a poem on a leaf and sending it into the wind in the next act. In act 4, when Yunying's act of writing on a leaf is revealed, Niu Sengru initially questions her loyalty precisely because of this action:

You're a girl. Why would you write a poem on a Wutong leaf? What's more, in that secluded courtyard, who could send it out for you? At that time you also didn't know where the prize scholar had ended up. Could it be that you had another love in mind?36

Just as his wife did in act 1, Niu voices the apprehension that a woman who would send her poetry beyond domestic borders is one who is indiscriminate in her passion. Yunying refutes Niu's suspicions with arias, arguing that her poems were written expressly for her husband, that her emotion was thus focused and authentic, and finally that if her emotions had not been sincere then nature (in the form of the wind) would not have been moved to come to her aid.

Various choices made by the Ming editors of Wutong Leaf further foreground the centrality of Li Yunying, her poem, and the authentic emotion that prompted it. Comparisons of the three extant editions of the play show that Zang Maoxun, the editor of One Hundred Yuan Plays, was fairly restrained in his editing. However, one of the few places where he did intervene is in Li Yunying's poem. In the other two editions of the play, the poem is a somewhat garbled version of the one that appears in the Taiping Guangji rather than the longer one that appears in other Ming anthologies. All the drama texts substitute the word sentiment (qing) for the word heart (xin), which links the poem and the play to Ming concerns. Zang Maoxun follows this substitution and at the same time restores the final two lines that appear in the Ming anthologies. As a result, he further extends the moment Li Yunying sends off the poem, thus emphasizing the action's centrality.

Visual Representations of the "Hou Jitu" Story: Illustrations of Wutong Leaf

Another important editorial choice was how to present the play visually. The two illustrated editions, One Hundred Yuan Plays and Gu zaju, both feature an illustration of act 2, that is, Li Yunying writing on the leaf. Yunying begins and ends her appearance on stage in this act with descriptions of the autumn wind. The illustra-
Illustration from *Wutong Leaf*, act 2, from the Guquzhai edition. After *Gu ben xi qu cong kan si ji* 古本戲 曲叢刊四集 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1958), vol. 2.

Illustration in *One Hundred Yuan Plays* (fig. 1) depicts a Wutong tree partially denuded of leaves. The leaves flying through the air, the flowing lines of the women's clothing, and the windswept vegetation in the background bring to mind the wind that is the focus of the act's arias. In the *Gu zaju* illustration (fig. 2), the animated lines that detail the background clouds also suggest atmospheric movement caused by wind. The exuberant rendition of these clouds are mirrored by the ripples of the flowing water that begins at the middle left of the scene and arcs around Yunying to reappear in the left front. The ripples are drawn tightly and vibrantly, thus accentuating the force of nature and the strength of the woman's emotions.

In the arias of act 2 there is an implicit contrast between Yunying's immobility and the liberty enjoyed by the wind. She entrusts the leaf to the wind precisely because, unlike her, the wind is free to come and go. Both illustrations of this scene clearly indicate the boundaries that confine her. The walls that surround the female figures are geometrical frames that contrast with the fluid lines used to depict the natural elements.

These illustrations locate Yunying's passionate act within a domestic frame. They are thus analogous to other alterations made to the Tang classical story within the plot of the play. Specifically, Yunying is a married woman seeking her husband, rather than a young girl sending lines of passion to a stranger. Her search for emotion is in service of a domestic and thus orthodox goal: a reunion with her husband and a restoration of their marriage. Her husband is also guided by orthodox values. Although he is loyal to Yunying, he does not allow his search for her to interfere with his pursuit of success in the imperial examinations. These ideals are reiterated in the four-line poem with which the play ends:

Husband and wife maintaining their chastity is a matter worthy of empathy. Bestowing benevolence on righteous behavior, the minister is wise.
Examination rolls list the names and two have made the grade;
By the candlelight of the nuptial chamber there are two reunions.37

By the logic of this poem and indeed the play itself, the just rewards for chastity and righteousness are first, success in the examinations, and second, a happy marriage.

In the One Hundred Yuan Plays edition, the illustration of act 4 of the play underlines this triumphant denouement by depicting the moment when Yunying and her husband come face to face while he parades through the capital after having passed the imperial examinations (fig. 3). Within this public scene celebrating Ren Jitu’s success is a diagonal telling of the private love story between husband and wife. Ren, seated on a horse in the right forefront, lifts his hands and directs his gaze upward and toward Li Yunying, who in turn gestures and gazes down at him. Following this diagonal space upward one can see a cluster of Wutong leaves hanging off a tree in the background. In this illustration, as in the play itself, the sentiments of husband and wife play out within a public arena but are simultaneously safely contained by their relationship.

The Chuanqi Play Record of Inscribing on a Red Leaf
The chuanqi drama Record of Lady Han Inscribing on a Red Leaf (Han Furen ti hong ji 韓夫人題紅記), an expansion of the story “Record of the Drifting Red Leaf,” provides an interesting example of the involvement of literati in drama publishing during the late Ming.38 The author of this chuanqi, Wang Jide, the editor of the Gu zaju series of plays, is an important figure in the history of Ming drama. An author of both zaju and chuanqi, Wang is particularly famous for his collation and annotation of Story of the Western Wing, and also for his influential contribution to drama criticism and theory Qu liu.39
Wang wrote his version of Record in his youth, as early as 1561. The play was probably published in 1583, slightly before our extant editions of Wutong Leaf. Wang Jide was apparently familiar with how the story of Yu You and Lady Han had been represented in zaju. In his introduction to the play, Wang states that he derived Yu You’s style name (Youzhi 輝之) and the names for the two female characters, Han Cuiping and her maid Yuying, from Yuan plays. We can also infer that Wang was also well acquainted with Wutong Leaf as he included it among the plays he published in the Gu zaju series.

Record shares many similar features with Wutong Leaf, the zaju adaptation of the Hou Jitu story. Like the zaju, the chuanqi includes many stock situations from romantic drama and fiction to flesh out the story. Most notably, in Record the female lead, Han Cuiping, is the daughter of the prime minister, a typical beauty (jiaren 佳人), and thus, according to the expectations of romance, a fitting match for Yu You, the talented scholar (caizi 才子).

The conventions of chuanqi drama dictate that, until they come together, the male and female leads take turns in the spotlight, usually appearing in roughly alternate scenes. While a shift of focus from the male protagonist to the female protagonist is therefore not as marked in Record as it is in Wutong Leaf, nevertheless, it is still apparent. While in the classical story Lady Han does not make an appearance until she is wed to Yu You, the play introduces Han Cuiping even before she enters the palace.

As in the zaju rendition of the theme, the act of writing on a leaf and entrusting it to a moving element is central in the chuanqi. In fact, Cuiping explicitly parallels her story to Wutong Leaf by citing “Hou Jitu” as an inspiration for entrusting her feelings to a leaf. And she too ritually invokes the flowing water to aid her, just as Li Yunying does with the autumn wind.

The very structure of the chuanqi play emphasizes the centrality of Cuiping’s act. Acts 17, 18, and 19, which fall in the middle of the thirty-six-act play, depict Han
Cuiping sending the leaf out of the palace garden (act 17); Yu You discovering the leaf, inscribing a poem in response, and sending it back (act 18); and finally Cuiping discovering the leaf with Yu’s response (act 19). Attention is further directed toward Cuiping in that while Lady Han’s poems from the original story are incorporated into the dialogue, Yu You’s poem is not.

**Illustrations in Record of Inscribing on a Red Leaf**

The two-page illustrations that accompany acts 17 and 19 not only focus on Han Cuiping and her emotions but also visually tie the play to Wutong Leaf. In the illustration to act 17 (fig. 4), we see her at a stone table, her writing utensils in front of her, as she watches her maid place the leaf in the canal. In the illustration to act 19 (fig. 5), she seems to be showing the leaf she has just plucked from the canal to her friend Lady Xu. The walls surrounding Cuiping and the flowing water that escape this confinement form an important component in both these illustrations. The illustration to act 17 reflects the action in the play and also creates visual connections to Wutong Leaf, particularly the Guzaju edition, through the barriers framing Han Cuiping, the leafless trees and sweep of clouds in the background, and the small Wutong tree and Taihu rock in the foreground. All these elements are repeated in the illustration for act 19.

While the natural elements reoccur in the act 19 illustration, the depiction of the background scenery at the same time contrasts with that in act 17, reflecting the development of the love story. In act 19, the movement of the clouds and the water are much more emphatically rendered through agitated swirling lines, while the barriers, although still present, are correspondingly less obvious as they are shrouded by clouds. The Wutong tree in this scene is large and powerful, and the Taihu rock is also significantly larger than the one illustrated in act 17. The force of Yu You’s sentiment, represented by the leaf he has sent back, has triumphantly breached the barriers surrounding Cuiping.

If the illustrations accompanying acts 17 and 19 reflect the development of the love story, the one accompanying act 33 (fig. 6) reflects its denouement. Act 33 relates the discovery Han Cuiping and Yu You make on their wedding night: each has kept the poem written on the leaf by the other. The illustration depicts them seated across from each other. On the table in front of them two Wutong leaves of equal size point to each other, thus signifying that their emotions are equally matched. The figures of Han Cuiping and Yu You are similarly matched in size and gesture. Even their chair backs, which curve around and embrace the couple, are symmetrical. The natural elements that brought the couple together are represented by the garden scenery, including a Wutong tree, that frames the building.
Sentiment within Limits

Again, as in Wutong Leaf, while sentiment is a major theme in Record, propriety keeps sentiment firmly in check. In a preface to the play, Wang Jide's fellow dramatist Tu Long 楚隆 (1542-1605) begins by identifying sentiment as "life." Before her maid places the leaf in the water, Cuiping admonishes the leaf to find her one "with sentiment." Details added to the original story however, both bring it more in line with the "talented scholar and beauty" plot typical of chuanqi drama and also place the love story within a framework of social and even supernatural ratification. Yu You is a bosom buddy of Cuiping's paternal cousin; Cuiping's father actively promotes the match after his daughter has been excused from her service as a palace
woman. Immediately before Yu You comes on stage in act 18, a god appears and reverses the flow of the canal so that his leaf can travel to the palace garden and be found by Cuiping—a clear sign that their alliance has the blessings of heaven. After Cuiping has been released from the palace, she refrains from enlisting her parents' help to find the one who has written on the leaf, as her maid Yuying suggests she do, and instead leaves it up to fate, which, it turns out, is on her side.

To all the powers that be then, Yu You and Han Cuiping form a match as perfect as the two leaves that they discover in each other's possession on their wedding night. While there is a slight nod to possible social recriminations—Cuiping is somewhat embarrassed to confess her action to her parents—for the most part, the sense of inevitability contains the love story just as the palace walls once contained Cuiping.

Drama and its visual representation are not reflections of reality; rather they act as an arena in which social ideals and even social fantasies can be collectively imagined. The two plays Wutong Leaf and Record of Inscribing on a Red Leaf and the illustrations of their central scenes suggest that even while fantasizing, their male authors and editors were so uneasy about women's romantic expression that they needed to keep it in check.

Nevertheless, while these plays emit mixed signals on the propriety of women sending their words beyond the walls that enclose them, the centrality of their action to the plays seems, especially in comparison with the classical tales, to reflect a fascination with the female expression of "authentic emotion." This idealization was affirmed by and at the same time further promoted the increasing publication of women's poetry discussed earlier in this essay.

Ming and Qing Dramatic Song Collections
We find further evidence for the appeal that the image of "inscribing a poem on a leaf" held in the late Ming if we turn to another type of drama publication—dramatic song collections. Songs and song sets excerpted from plays on the theme of "inscribing a poem on a leaf" appeared regularly in dramatic song collections from the early and mid-Ming until well into the Qing dynasty. These song anthologies demonstrate a steady interest in the theme. Moreover, in their selection strategies, we can also get a sense of which aspects of the dramatic renditions of the story were seen as particularly compelling.

Three collections of song sets provide special insights into the place of Wang Jide's play in the Ming and Qing imagination. Nanbei ci guangyun xuan 南北詞廣韻選, Yuelu yin 月錄音, and Qunyin leixuan 群音類選 all reproduce partial song sets from various scenes within Record. All three include portions of the song sets from scenes 17 and 18—the middle scenes of the play in which Lady Han writes

her poem on the leaf and Yu You discovers it and sends one back. Two of the collections, Yuelu yin and Qunyu leixuan, include scene 19 (in which Lady Han discovers the leaf Yu has sent) and scene 33 (the wedding night) as well.

The editors of Yuelu yin display a marked preference for Record. More extracts from Record appear in this collection—nine in all—than from even the immensely popular Peony Pavilion.18 Yuelu yin is illustrated; the illustrations in Record that accompany scene 17, “Inscribing on a Red Leaf,” and scene 18, “Returning an Inscription” enrich our understanding of how the story was visualized. These illustrations repeat the elements depicted in the dramas discussed above. In the illustration for “Inscribing on a Red Leaf,” we see the Wutong tree, the autumnal vegetation in the form of chrysanthemums, the Taihu rock on which the leaf is placed, the palace walls, and the running water that flows out of the enclosure. All these elements also appear in the illustration for “Returning the Inscription.”19

The theme of “inscribing a poem on a leaf” is represented visually in an illustration found in another collection of dramatic songs, Great and Eloquent Northern Palace Tunes Ancient and Modern (Gujin daya beigong ciji 古今大雅北宮詞紀), published in 1604. While songs from Record appear in its counterpart Great and Eloquent Southern Palace Tunes Ancient and Modern, this collection of northern songs features none from the zaju plays on the theme of “inscribing a poem on a leaf.” Nevertheless, a two-page illustration of a woman inscribing a poem on a leaf (fig. 7) appears in the table of contents of the sixth volume. In more than one extant copy of the anthology, this illustration is the only one in the whole collection.20

In this print, we see all the elements present in the drama illustrations we have been viewing: the leaf by the woman’s hand, the Taihu rock upon which she writes, and the Wutong tree in the background. The barriers that enclose her run to the left-hand page. In a split that, as Robert Hegel has noted, is often seen in Wanli play illustrations, the left-hand page depicts a nature scene with both running water and
atmospheric movement rendered by tight, swirling lines. While Hegel states that this half of the scene typically represents nothing more than a chance to add the “intrinsic beauty” of nature to the print, in this case, the split between nature and the human world very effectively emphasizes the mobility of the natural elements and the stillness of the woman.51

This illustration is a wonderful example of the high level of artistry achieved by Wanli woodblock prints; it also suggests that, just as Madame Ren and Lady Han had become standard figures in poetry anthologies, “inscribing a poem on a leaf” had become an integral part of the visual culture, at least for literati readers of dramatic songs. Apparently, references to the story, whether in words or image, were part of an arsenal of allusions that playwrights and illustrators could draw upon to evoke romantic associations. Tang Xianzu, for instance, has his heroine, Du Linliang, allude to “inscribing a poem on a red leaf” in the drama Peony Pavilion.52 Several different characters mention it in Meng Chengshun’s drama Record of Jiao and Hong.53 I explore this possibility and its implications in more detail below.

Drama and the Ming–Qing Imagination: Evidence from the Visual Arts
Did the theme of “inscribing a poem on a leaf,” along with its romantic connotations, extend into a broader visual field? Evidence is somewhat limited, but from what little I could find, the answer is yes. I noted earlier that Feng Menglong concluded his entry on Yu You in the History of Qing by citing Wang Jide’s play. I would argue that another, this time visual, allusion to Record of Inscribing on a Leaf occurs
in *Lady Scholars of the Green Windows* (Lüchuang nushi 綠窗女士), the seventeenth-century anthology focused on women.

*Lady Scholars of the Green Windows* includes, as Katherine Carlitz has observed, “every possible category of good story.” I would further assert that the collection attempts to present every possible aspect of a woman’s experience as an object of aesthetic appreciation. The various texts included in *Lady Scholars of the Green Windows* range from treatises on women’s virtue to recipes to palindromes written by women to classical short stories featuring female protagonists. The compendium begins with sixteen woodblock prints depicting women engaged in activities that range from the quotidian to the extraordinary. Among these prints is one titled *Inscribing on a leaf* (fig. 8).

Neither the story of Lady Han nor that of Madame Ren appears within the print portion of the anthology, but the print titled *Inscribing on a leaf* clearly reflects the influence of drama illustrations. Not only do the circular tunnel representing the imperial canal and the exuberant movement of water within the canal resemble illustrations in *Record of Inscribing on a Red Leaf*, but in the foreground there are barriers that confine the woman. Moreover, the Taihu rock on which she places her writing utensils, the Wutong trees, and other autumnal vegetation in the background all recall the drama illustrations examined above.

Pictures of Madame Ren and Lady Han were also included in Qing print collections of portraits of famous beauties. These collections seem to be popular and (relatively) mass-produced responses to the painting albums of beautiful women (shìnǚ仕女) composed by Qing artists connected to the court. While the painting albums depict generic women engaged in upper-class leisure activities—such as appreciating paintings, playing on swings in a garden, playing chess, etc.—the print collections depict women from myth, history, and fiction. However, the woodblock-print portraits of these historical and fictional women are equally generic; visually, they are only distinguished from each other by props that suggest their identity. In sum, both the painting albums and the print collections present women as aesthetic objects to be collected and catalogued. Thus, they also resemble *Lady Scholars of the Green Windows* and late Ming and Qing anthologies of women’s poetry. All these collections clearly aim for comprehensive coverage of the feminine, whether images or writing. Furthermore, in their quest for comprehensiveness, just like the poetry anthologies and *Lady Scholars*, the print portrait collections also blur the lines between fiction and reality: the women portrayed encompass goddesses, historical figures, and heroines from fiction and drama.

The influence of drama is apparent in the illustrations of Madame Ren and Lady Han in the Qing woodblock print collections. For example, in *New Chants on One Hundred Beauties: Pictures and Biographies* (Bai mei xinyong tu zuan 百美新詠
The late Qing artist Wang Su 王素 (1794–1877) includes two pictures on the theme in a collection of one hundred prints of beautiful women. The narrative that accompanies the print titled *Inscribing a poem on a red leaf* (fig. 10) explicitly ties the image to Han Cuiping, and in the print itself we see the familiar elements of the Taihu rock, the balustrade enclosing the scene, and the autumnal vegetation in the background. Like Yan Xiyuan’s print, and unlike the drama illustrations, there is no moving water in this portrait of Han Cuiping.

The nineteenth-century illustrator Wu Youru 吳友如 (1850–1893) composed images of both “Han Cuiping” (sic, fig. 11) and Madame Ren among his *One Hundred Beauties Ancient and Modern* (Gujin baimei tu 古今百美圖). The inscription next to the titles briefly retells the two women’s stories, including complete reproductions of their poems. Both illustrations feature barriers and autumnal veg-
etation. We do see running water in the portrait of Han Caiping, but unlike most of the drama prints, the lines representing the water undulate in broad curves, suggesting a leisurely flow.

The contrast between the immobile woman and dynamic natural forces is absent in all three of the Qing woodblock prints discussed above. Lacking this contrast, the possibility of breaching the barriers fades away. The scenes are beautiful, but static. We will see a similar trend in Qing paintings.

There is some evidence that the theme of "writing a poem on a red leaf" in painting existed as early as the Northern Song. However, the earliest extant example that I could find dates from the Ming dynasty. These paintings suggest that images from drama illustrations began to influence visualizations of this theme in the late Ming and continued to do so into modern times. At the same time, like the Qing prints on the theme, later paintings highlight the romantic beauty of the moment while erasing any hint of transgression.

An early example of a painted rendition on the theme of "inscribing on a leaf" is a hanging scroll (fig. 12) by the Ming painter Tang Yin (1470-1523). In Tang Yin's painting, the woman is standing. In one hand she holds a pen above a red leaf resting in her other palm. The sweeping lines of her clothing suggest movement. Overall, the image reflects the third line of Madame Ren's poem: "Picking up a pen, I ascend to the terrace in front of the hall." The natural elements featured in drama illustrations—agitated clouds, flowing water, the Taihu rock, and Wutong trees and other autumnal vegetation—are all absent.

Tang Yin died some forty years before Wang Jide wrote Record and sixty years before the illustrated versions of Record and Wutong Leaf were published. Furthermore, the scroll is inscribed with the line "(After) Wang Juzheng of the Song. Painting of Inscribing on a Red Leaf." This reference to a now-lost painting by a Song artist known for his paintings of beautiful women sug-
suggests that Tang's painting represents the theme as it appeared in visual art before the dramas were published.

However, in the painting titled *Red Leaf, Inscribing Verses* (fig. 13) by Chen Hongshou (1598–1652), the imagery differs from Tang Yin's portrait in ways that resemble the drama illustrations. Rather than standing, the woman is seated on a Taihu rock. In one hand she holds a sprig of chrysanthemum to her nose while the other hand rests on top of a red leaf; her writing utensils are arranged in front of her. While Chen Hongshou's painting is not as clearly related to the drama illustrations as is the woodblock print from *Lady Scholars of the Green Windows*, the placement of the writing instruments on the Taihu rock does recall the poses of the women in many of the Ming prints we have seen. Furthermore, in place of trees denuded of leaves, the woman holds a chrysanthemum, which signals the autumn season in a manner similar to the autumn foliage in the drama illustrations.

In describing Chen Hongshou's painting, James Cahill has spoken of an "uneasy relationship to tradition on the one hand and popular culture on the other" and has further noted that this relationship reflected Chen's own situation.⁶⁰ In addition to being a renowned painter from a literati family, Chen participated—as illustrator, preface writer, and commentator—in late Ming commercial drama publishing. He was credited with designing the woodblock illustrations to three different editions of *Romance of the Western Wing* during the Chongzhen period (1628–44) as well as the illustrations for *Record of Jiao and Hong* in 1639.⁶¹ Chen also wrote prefaces and marginal commentary for *Record of Jiao and Hong* as well as other plays.⁶² In a recent article, Tamara Heimarck Bentley discusses
how Chen's preface to *Record of Jiao and Hong* resonates with the ideas of Li Zhi on the value of authentic emotion.\(^{63}\)

Given Chen's familiarity with late Ming drama and his expressed sympathy for Li Zhi's thought, the pose of the woman in his painting *Inscribing Poetry on a Red Leaf* might also signify his appreciation of the authenticity of emotion that playwrights attributed to the leaf-writing women and their poetry. The sprig of chrysanthemums that the woman holds is also an allusion to Tao Qian, who is pictured appreciating chrysanthemums in many paintings and woodblock prints. This Six Dynasties poet was known for his integrity and purity (as evidenced by his refusal to take part in official life) and was the subject of several paintings by Chen Hongshou. In one of these paintings, a scene from a handscroll titled *Episodes in the Life of Tao Qian*, the poet's pose is virtually identical to that of the woman's in the painting *Red Leaf, Inscribing Verses*. Tao sits on a Taihu rock that seems to float in space on the canvas; rather than writing instruments, his zither is laid out next to him, and he holds a sprig of chrysanthemum to his nose.\(^{64}\)

Another reference to the "inscribing poetry on a leaf" theme can be seen on the cover of *Women Writers of Traditional China*, the anthology of women's poetry and criticism edited by Kang-i Sun Chang and Haun Saussy. It features a detail from a painting by the eighteenth-century artist Gai Qi. Even without knowing that the title of this painting is *Hong Ye* [i.e., *Red Leaf*] *Inscribing Verses*, we can recognize the allusion through the now familiar compositional elements: the Taihu rock on which her writing utensils are placed, the autumnal references in the background vegetation, and of course, most important, the red Wutong leaf she holds in her hand.
Like Chen Hongshou, Gai Qi was both a painter and an illustrator of popular literature. This similarity might account for their common application of this theme in romantic drama and painting. I have also found another example of the theme in a painting by a nineteenth-century artist who similarly straddled this divide: Ren Yi 任颐 (1840–1896), one of the “Four Rens” who were an important influence on the late nineteenth-century Shanghai school. In a painting by Ren Yi titled Red Leaf Inscribing Verses, the common visual elements are curtailed to the Taihu rock on which the woman writes, the autumnal vegetation, and the red leaf in her hand.

We can see a similar curtailment of the visual elements in a painting by a modern artist, Yu Jingzhi 余静芝 (1890–?), in the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, titled Young woman and red leaf. This painting is one of a number of modern and contemporary paintings on the theme executed by artists specializing in traditional Chinese painting (guohua). As in the Qing prints discussed above, in these paintings from the nineteenth century and later, the scene is static; there is only a motionless woman and no wind or water to convey her sentiments to the outside world. In addition to paintings, the theme also appears in contemporary folk crafts, such as New Year’s paintings and paper cuts; the ephemeral nature of these materials makes it difficult to find Ming and Qing examples for comparison.

With the exception of the Tang Yin painting, all the other paintings on the theme seem to have been inspired by drama illustrations, as discussed above, in abbreviated form. Examples on ceramic decorations are much less obviously indebted to illustrations from drama. However, in at least one instance the inspiration for the image might have been the stage. A plate held by the Musée Guimet depicts a young woman writing on a red leaf as her maid looks on. The background is blank, but in the foreground there are a stool, a desk and chair, and a small table—typical stage props. Given that plays titled Inscribing a Poem on a Red Leaf remained a part of the repertoire of southern local dramas until well into the twentieth century, this plate thus might be based on a New Year’s print of a stage performance or on the performance itself.

Conclusion
While the primacy of Romance of the Western Wing in late Imperial Chinese culture remains undisputed, the cluster of textual and visual materials discussed in this essay provides another example of the ways in which drama played a part in the circulation of images and ideals during the late Ming and beyond. Furthermore, this exploration of the ties between the dramatic and visual renditions of “inscribing a poem on a red leaf” has allowed us to better appreciate not only the late Ming fascination with women’s authentic sentiment and women’s poetry but also the variety and complexity with which women were imagined and with which artistic works
by or of women were disseminated. We can also see how this fascination changed somewhat in the Qing dynasty.

The development of the theme of “inscribing a poem on a leaf” is a story of circulation on a number of levels. The Ming narratives, poems, plays, and illustrations on the theme underline that the sentiment of the female protagonist circulates by means of poetry inscribed on a leaf and the force of wind or water, and both the poetry and the natural forces reflect the strength of her sentiment. These versions of the story, imbued with a peculiarly late Ming valorization of sentiment, were disseminated to a wider public by means of print technology. This wider circulation in turn incorporated the story into a broad complex of romantic allusions that could be called upon to evoke both the seductive lure and the subversive danger of feminine sentiment by anthologists such as Feng Menglong, Wang Jide, and Zang Maoxun; playwrights such as Tang Xianzu and Meng Chengshun; and artists such as Chen Hongshou.

As the stories spread even more broadly in the Qing, they also were assimilated in abbreviated fashion into large print collections of women’s poetry, dramatic song, and portraits of women. Accompanying this contraction of details was a corresponding loss of the subversive possibilities of which the Ming dramas were so conscious. A question still remains as to whether this was a precondition or a result, but it seems that as Lady Han and Madame Ren were historicized and turned into emblems of female beauty, their stories, as noted by Jan Stuart about the controversial Romance of the Western Wing, were eventually accepted as “a wholesome love story” and their image as just another pretty picture.65

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APPENDIX

Textual Development of “Inscribing a Poem on a Red Leaf”

Source Story


Ming Prose Anthologies


Yanyi bian 雅疑编 (Yu You story); titled “Liu Hong Ji,” it appears in the “Assignations” section in some editions, but not in others. Attributed to Wang Shizhen 王世贞 (1526–1590); pub. during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).


Ming yuan shi gui 名媛詩歸. Poems by Lady Han. Zhong Xing 鍾惺, comp.; pub. 1621–44.

Ming yuan hui shi 名媛彚詩二十卷十冊. Poems by Lady Han and Madame Ren. Zheng Wenyi 郑文议, ed.; pub. in first year of Ming Taichang era 明泰昌元年 (1620).
Gu jin nü shi 古今女史. Poems by Madame Ren and Lady Han, discussion of Liu Hong Ji story. Zhao Shijie 趙世杰, comp.; pub. during the Chongzhen era (1628–44) by the Wenqi ge 嚴奇閣 publishing house.

Quan Tang shi 全唐詩. Poems by Madame Ren and Lady Han. Cao Yin 曹寅 (1658–1712), comp. The Kangxi emperor ordered the compilation in April 1705; Kangxi’s preface is dated May 17, 1707. Both poems appear in a section devoted to women poets.

Li chao ming yuan ci shi er juan ba ce 理朝名媛詩詞十二卷八冊. Poems by and biographical entries for Madame Ren and Lady Han; pub. 1764. National Library, Taipei M13960.

Gu jin nü ming yuan ji 古今名媛集. Poems by Lady Han and Madame Ren. Qian Fengji, ed.; pub. during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Shanghai Library 線普 371587-90.

Complete Play Texts

Wutong Ye 梨園葉, “Hou Jitu” story. MS copy from Gu ming jia 古名家 anthology. Wanli period (1573–1620); included in Zhao Qimei’s Maiwangguan collection.


Ti hong jì 題紅記, “Yu You” story. By Wang Jide 王驍德, written as early as 1561; pub. 1583 by the Jizhi zhai 彼志齋 publishing house.

Excerpts in Dramatic Song Collections

There are song sets from Ti hong ji in:

Yue lu yin 月露音, pub. in Wanli era (1573–1620). Scene 8 (eight songs); scene 15 (eight songs); scene 18 (twelve songs); scene 20 (two songs); scene 5 (four songs); scene 12 (eleven songs); scene 17 (eleven songs); scene 19 (four songs); scene 33 (eighteen songs).

Nan bei ci guang yun xuan 南北詞廣韻選 in Xuxiu siku quanshu 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chubanshe, 1995–99), vol. 1742. Attributed to Xu Fuzuo 徐福祚 (1560–ca. 1629). Xu Shuofang sets date of compilation as 1617 or slightly later; see discussion in Wan Ming qu jia nian pu, vol. 1, p. 340. Scene 3 (eight songs); scene 27 (four songs); scene 18 (ten songs); scene 8 (seven songs); scene 10 (two songs); scene 14 (three songs); scene 17 (eleven songs); scene 12 (two songs).

Xin ke qu yin lei xuan 新刻辭音類選 in Xuxiu siku quanshu vols. 1777–78. Attributed to Hu Wenhuan 胡文煥 (act. 1593). Scene 17 (eleven songs); scene 18 (eleven songs); scene 19 (four songs); scene 33 (eighteen songs).
### NOTES

1. The first version of this paper was written for a panel at the Association for Asian Studies 2003 annual meeting titled “Envisioning Spectacle/Spectacular Visions: Interactions between late Ming Drama and the Visual Arts.” Thank you to Kathleen Ryor, organizer of the panel, for encouraging me to pursue this topic, and to Judith Zeitlin, the commentator, for her helpful critique. Thanks are also due to Joseph Chang and Søren Edgren for encouragement and advice at a crucial stage of my research. Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my colleague Ankeney Weitz, who read and commented on several drafts of the paper. Her insightful suggestions regarding the images I discuss greatly enriched my argument.


4. For the Ming equation of the feminine with authentic sentiment, see Maram Epstein, Competing Discourses: Orthodoxy, Authenticity, and Engendered Meaning in Late Imperial Chinese Fiction (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 61–119; for commerce and the anxiety it evoked, see Timothy Brook, The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).


7. Qing Suo Gaoyi 清瑣高議, p. 51.

8. Qing Suo Gaoyi 清瑣高議, p. 54.

9. Roland Altenburger, The Sword or the Needle: The Female Knight-errant (xia) in Traditional Chinese Narrative (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 153–55, describes a similar renewal of interest in the theme of the Female Knight-errant subsequent to the Ming publication of Tang and Song classical story collections.


12. For more on Feng, his ideas and his publishing activities see the discussions in Patrick Hanan, The Chinese Vernacular Story (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 75–97; Shu-hui Yang, Appropriation and

Translation from Hua-yuan Li Mowry, Chinese Love Stories from "Ch'ing-shih" (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1983), p. 12; I have substituted "sentiment" for ch'ing. Martin Huang also discusses Feng's advocacy of sentiment in this preface, see Desire and Fictional Narrative in Late Imperial Drama (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 36–37.

Qing shi leitai 情史略略 (Changsha: Yueli shushe, 1984), p. 54. The "red cord" refers to a marriage determined by fate and is based on a legend that the man in the moon attaches a red cord from the heel of a man to that of the woman fated to be his wife at birth.

Mowry, p. 14: "fated sentiment" is my translation of the category qing yuan 情緣, which Mowry translates as "conjugal affinities"; for more details, see her discussion, p. 45.

Qingshi leitai 情史略略, pp. 332–33.

Feng's commentary on this anecdote, unlike his commentary on "Hou litu," is more concerned with its bibliographical history rather than its content. Feng reviews the sources and variants of the story and ends with a summary of another version in which the male protagonist is named Li Yin 李因 and the female protagonist is a palace maid named Yun Fang 雲芳 who eventually turns out to be a ghost. He states, "This story is even more extraordinary 此說更異. Although Feng does not name the source, the story titled "Yun fang" appeared in Mei Dingzuo 梅鼎祚, Cai gui 戴鬼記 (n.p.: 1606); this anthology was reprinted in the 1646 collection Shen fujia Shuju, p. 56.

See Epstein, pp. 112–16, for an illuminating discussion on the blending of the commercial and the philosophical in History of Emotion.

This play has been translated into English by Cyril Birch under the title Mistress and Maid (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), for more on the story complex the play was based on and its connection to the late Ming cult of qing, see Richard G. Wang, "The Cult of Qing: Romanticism in the Late Ming Period and in the novel Jiao Hong Ji," Ming Studies 13 (August 1994), pp. 12–55.

The textual history of the Yanyi bian is somewhat convoluted. There are at least two different editions extant, none of which can be dated with anymore precision than some time in the Ming dynasty. There is a tradition of assigning authorship of the collection to Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526–1590), but this attribution seems doubtful. The edition that includes "Record of the Flowing Red (Leaf)" has the lines "Gu 古 yanyi bian" on its title page along with the claim that it has been "re-collated by the Anya tang 安雅堂重校" and is held in the Harvard Yenching Library. Several copies of another edition with the full title Yuming tang zhaoping Wang Yanzhou xiansheng Yanyi bian 玉茗堂校評王弇州先生號異編, which does not include the story and has different illustrations, can be found in the National Library, Beijing.


Shi nu shi, juan 6, pp. 10a–11b; Shi niu shi, juan 9, p. 15b.

See appendix. For characterizations of these anthologies, see Kang-i Sun Chang, "Ming and Qing Anthologies of Women's Poetry," pp. 151–53.


See appendix.

Quan Tang shi, p. 2252.


Chen Xuyao 陳緯耀, Xinchuan Mingkan Xixiang ji zonghu 現存明刊西湘記目錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2007); Denda Akira 市田卓, Minkan Genzutsu kogei seishô ki mokuroku 明刊元雛劇西湘記目録 (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Toyo Bunka Kenkyuujo Fuzoku Toyogaku Bunkan Senta linkai, 1970).

Katherine Carlitz uses the term "competitive publishing" (p. 292) to describe this burgeoning of sumptuously produced drama anthologies during the late Ming; see "Printing as Performance: Literati Playwright-Publishers of the Late Ming" in Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China, ed. Cynthia J. Brokaw.

32 Our earliest sources on zaju drama, the 
Lugui bu (呂規簿, pub. ca. 1330) and the 
Taihe zhengyin pu (太和正音譜) compiled by the Ming prince Zhu Quan (1378–1448), do not mention this play 
title. However, the Lugui bu does include the title Han Cuiping Floats a Red Leaf in the 
Imperial Waters 紅翠蘋藻流紅葉 in a list of plays attributed to Bai Pu 白朴 
as well as a play titled Golden Waters, 
Resemblance Inscribed on a Red (Leaf). 金 
水題紅葉 attributed to the playwright Li 
Wenwei 李文蔚. See Wang Gang, coll., 
Fuzong Lugui bu sanzhong (Zhengzhou: 
Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1991), pp. 8, 
62, for the Bai Pu play, pp. 10, 64, for the 
Li Wenwei play. See also Guo Yingde 郭 
英德 ed., Ming Qing chaqiu zang lu 明清 
傳奇緒餘 (ShijiaZhuang: Hebe jiaoyu 
chubanshe, 1997), p. 230. The Taihe 
zhengyin pu also lists both plays and 
further reproduces three songs, all said to 
be from the third act of the play Floating 
Red Leaf 流紅葉 by Bai Pu. Two songs, 
stated to be from act 3 of Bai Renfu’s 
Floating Red Leaf, “Liu qing niang” and 
“Dao he”, appear in the zheng li section. 
A third song, “Jiu qi er”, appears in the 
yue diao section and is also stated to be 
from act 3 of Bai Renfu’s Floating Red 
Leaf. This is clearly a mistaken attribution 
since it is of a different mode from the 
other two songs; however, it is impossible to 
tell whether the song belongs to 
another act of the same play or the third 
act of another play. “Liu qing niang” and 
“Dao he” appear as part of a song set in the 
zheng gong mode in three collections of 
dramatic songs published in the 
sixteenth century: Sheng xin shixing (盛 
世新聲, pub. 1517), Cihun zhuyan (詞林 
摘要, pub. 1525), and Yongxi yueju (雍熙 
樂府, pub. 1566). The song set preserved 
in these three anthologies consists of 
seventeen songs. In this set, the singer 
seems to be Lady Han, as she begins by 
placing herself in the imperial gardens 
and later describes how she had floated a 
leaf in the waters leaving the palace. At 
one point, she addresses a character, 
presumably her maid, who she calls 
Yuying (玉英).

33 For more on Wang’s editorship of the Gu 
zuji collection, see Zheng Qian, “Yuan 
Ming chaoke ben Yuanren zaju jiuzhong 
tiyao,” repr. in jingshi congjian (Taipei: 
the identification of the manuscript copy 
of Wutong Leaf found in Zhao Qimei’s 
collection as a copy of the Gu mingjia 
zaju edition, see Sun Kai, Shu Yeshi 
yuan jiu guang qi zaju (述也詩事元九 
僕卒劇), see Sun Kai, Shu Yeshi 
yuan jiu guang qi zaju (述也詩事元九 
僕卒劇). For a concise English-
language introduction to the anthologies Gu 
mengjia zaju and One Hundred Yuan 
Plays, see Stephen H. West and Wilt L. 
Idema, eds. and trans., Monks, Bandits, 
Lovers, and Immortals (Indianapolis: 
Hackett Publishing Company, 2010), 
pp. xxvii–xxxi.

34 For an English-language translation of 
an early drama in which both these plot 
elements occur, see A Beauty Pining in 
Her Boudoir: The Pavilion for Praying 
to the Moon by Guan Hanqing, in Monks, 
Bandits, Lovers and Immortals, 
pp. 82–104.

35 For the connections between these two 
practices and a summary of their history 
within the poetic tradition, see Wu 
Chengxue 吳承學, “Lun tiba shi—jian jyi 
xiang shu de shi ge zhao yu chuan bo 
xing qin shi yin qi xin de jin qi shu 
shicai wo jin qi shu shu,” Wenxue 

36 Yuan ku xian, p. 1232.

37 Ibid. This constitutes an interesting 
example of Zang’s editing in order to as-
sert genre identity. In the manuscript 
copy of the play found in Zhao Qimei’s 
private collection, this poem is 
freestanding and thus resembles the 
poems that typically conclude scenes in 
chuanqi plays. In Zang’s edition, Ren 
Ji recites the poem. The final pages of 
the play are missing from the Gu zuji 
edition.

38 Han furen lishi jì, facsimile reproduction 
of the Ming Izhizhai 明繼志齋 edition 
in Guben xiqu congkan weiyuanhui 古本戲曲叢刊委員會 ed., Guben 
xiqu congkan er jì 古本戲曲叢刊二集, 
vol. 40 (Shanghai: Zhongguo 
shuju, 1989).

39 Li Huimin 李惠敏, Wang Jide Qu hun 
yangwu 王翼德曲論研究 (Taipei: Taida 
wenzuxueyuan, 1992), pp. 86–98; Ye 
Changshai, Zhongguo xiqu xueshi, pp. 
259–61; for discussions of Wang Jide’s 
edition of Romance of the Western Wing, 
see Patricia Sieber, pp. 137–47, and Jiang 
Xingyu 蒲星熠, Xixiang ji de wenzuxueyuan 
yangwu, 西湘記的文學學研究 (Shanghai: 
Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), pp. 
156–66.

40 According to Xu Shuofang 徐紹芳, in Qu 
li Wang states that he based his play on a 
draft originally written by his 
great-grandfather, Wu Ming qiju jianpu 戰明曲劇家年谱, vol. 2 (Hanzhou: Zhejiang guji 

41 Xu Shuofang, Wu Ming qiju jianpu, 
vol. 2, p. 254.

42 “Chong jiao Tihong jì hui mu 重校題紅記 
例目,” reprinted in Cai Yi, ed., Zhongguo 
gudian xiqu xueba lu (Jinan: Qilu 

43 Xu Shuofang, Wu Ming qiju jianpu, 
vol. 2, p. 243, lists a number of stock 
chuanqi scenes in the play.

44 Record was published a good thirty years 
before the plays of the Gu zuji collection; 
the illustrations to the chuanqi could have 
been the model for those to the zuji.
45 "Ti hong ji xue" in "Zhongguo gudian xiqu xue huibian," pp. 1294–295. While he praised it in this preface, Fu Long was himself profoundly ambivalent about sentiment; see Martin Huang, Desire and Fictional Narrative in Late Imperial Drama, pp. 5–23.


47 Xu Zun (Duxu Zun), ed., Nanbei ci guangyun xuan (Peking: Beijing chubanshe, 1988). The two volumes of this collection have been reprinted separately by the Freer Gallery of Art, the Harvard-Yenching Library, and the National Central Library, Taipei. The text found in the Harvard-Yenching Library has a different set of illustrations; the sixteen prints in the National Central Library text include images of women sewing, weaving, and engaging in sericulture as well heroines from history and literature; see, e.g., the print of Wang Zhaojun published in Kimberly Besio, "Gender, Loyalty, and the Reproduction of the Wang Zhaojun Legend: Some Social Ramifications of Drama in the Late Ming," Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 40, no. 2 (1997), p. 267.

48 Catherine Swatek, Peony Pavilion on Stage (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, the University of Michigan, 2002), ch. 4, p. 324, n. 7.

49 The excerpts from the two acts and their accompanying illustrations appear separately in the anthology; act 18 actually appears earlier than act 17.

50 Copies held in the Harvard-Yenching Library and the Capital Library in Beijing have only the one illustration. However, two copies in the National Library, Beijing (one with colophons by Wang Licheng, one with colophons by Zheng Zhenhao) have five illustrations.

51 Robert Hegel, Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 207.


53 The story is the last of what Cyril Birch dubs the "Thirteen Signposts of Romance" in the play; see Mistress and Maid, p. xxvii.


56 Wu Hong, "Beyond Stereotypes: The Twelve Beauties in Qing Court Art and Dream of the Red Chamber" in Writing Women in Late Imperial China, pp. 306–65.

57 Various dates are given for Wu; these follow Michael Sullivan, Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 318.

58 Painting held by the Freer Gallery of Art, F1917.335. Many thanks to Joseph Chang, former associate curator of Chinese art, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, for this reference.

59 Wang Juzheng was a Northern Song painter whose dates are unknown. He was known for his paintings of beautiful women in the style of Zhou Fang 周昉. Two paintings attributed to Wang are still extant: The Spinning Wheel (Fang che tu 纡車圖) held in the Gugong Bowuyuan (China), and a fan painting titled Teasing a Parrot in the Boudoir (Xuanyao tu 睥熙圖) held in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Zhao Luxiang 趙祿祥, ed., Zhongguo Meishu jia da cidian 中國美術家大辭典 (Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 2007), p. 128.


62 Chen was a close friend of the author of shenhong ji 持紅記, Meng Chengshun, and also wrote commentary on Meng's plays that were included in two anthologies of Yuan and Ming zaju drama, also edited by Meng, collectively titled Famous plays old and new (Guijin mingju hexuan 古今名劇合選).


64 This handscroll, dated 1650, is held by the Honolulu Academy of Arts. See The Compelling Image, pp. 134–40, for this image as well as a discussion of the significance of Tao to Chen.

65 "Two birds with the wings of one," pp. 22–24.
MEDIA TRANSFER AND MODULAR CONSTRUCTION

The Printing of Lotus Sutra Frontispieces in Song China

Abstract
The appropriation, transformation, and exchange of images between Chinese printmaking and painting marks a new chapter in Song (960–1279) visual culture studies. The earliest extant Lotus Sutra frontispiece prints associated with Song Hangzhou offer excellent visual examples for a reevaluation of this new phenomenon from the perspective of media transfer and modular construction. Frontispiece artisans created standard templates and modular motifs in order to mass-produce illustrated prints. While some of the motifs derived from earlier pictorial conventions, others were new inventions that had a lasting impact on East Asian visual culture beyond time, place, and religion. This article responds to the broader discourse surrounding imagery transformation in the Tang–Song transition, the aesthetic dimensions of mass production, and the interrelationship between tu 圖 (graphics) and hua 畫 (painting) in Chinese visual culture.

THE TENTH TO THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY saw the proliferation of illustrated woodblock printing in China. These printed images are among the earliest examples of what we now refer to as banhua 版畫 or “woodblock print paintings”—mass-produced painterly images printed from woodcuts, which were in turn based on pictorial designs that resemble paintings. The media transfer from painting to printing and the convergence of printmaking and picture-making thus marks a new and significant chapter in the study of Chinese visual culture that is worthy of further investigation.¹

Making a printed product look like a painting requires not only a painterly design but also a series of complex technical processes. These include the carving of the woodblock and the tedious procedure of preparing the ink, which together result in the final printed products, most of which were on paper. The multitude of illustrations accompanying Song Buddhist texts suggests the use of a standard repertoire of templates and motifs. This notion of “pictorial modules” can be compared to “the interchangeable building blocks” that were “put together in varying combinations,” a classic concept eloquently proposed by Lothar Ledderose in his series of studies on Chinese art.² According to Ledderose, by the thirteenth century, motifs and figural types from religious set paintings (taohua 套畫), such as those of the Ten Kings of Hells (Shiwang tu 十王圖) manufactured by Ningbo 聿波 workshop painters, were demonstrating “interchangeable formulas” or “the modular structure” used in the Chinese script system, casting of ancient bronze ritual vessels, and factory-line porcelain manufacture.³ Like the workshop paintings, the Buddhist illustrations printed during the Song demonstrate a similar modular system and standard repertoire. It is likely that such works, though they do not always
survive in multiple copies, were originally produced in large numbers by teams of artisans who were constantly reassembling and recycling motifs and compositional schemes to create new images.

Previous scholarship has identified Buddhism as the major stimulating force behind the development of Chinese woodblock prints during the Tang (618–907), Five Dynasties (907–960), Song (960–1279), Khitan Liao 遼 (907–1125), Jurchen Jin 金 (1115–1234), and Tangut Xi夏 (1038–1227) periods. Furthermore, the technology of printing, which guaranteed the accuracy of replicating texts, provided Buddhism with a new means for transmitting knowledge that was more authentic and efficient than hand-copied manuscripts. As first noted by the book collector Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077–1148), prints made in Hangzhou 杭州 at that time demonstrated superior quality. Ye's evaluation remains valid for the abundant extant Buddhist illustrated prints dating from the tenth to the thirteenth century. Modern scholars of early printing in Hangzhou, such as Jan Fontein, Sören Edgren, Su Bai 宿白, Miya Tsugio 宮次男, and Cui Wei 崔巍, have offered a solid point of departure for my current inquiry. Their studies resulted in a substantial bibliography of printed books produced in Hangzhou; established the complex relationship between different versions of the same Buddhist texts; documented the network of itinerant carvers, printers, and publishers; and called attention to the artistic quality of some Buddhist pictorial prints.

One notable genre of Buddhist illustrated prints associated with Hangzhou during the Song period is represented by the multivolume sets of frontispieces (feihua 屏畫) accompanying the text of the Miaofa lianhua jing 妙法蓮華經, or the Lotus Sutra. It should be noted that this represented the first occasion a frontispiece—i.e., a square or elongated pictorial composition placed before the opening of a religious text—was used to illustrate the Lotus Sutra. The content often features figural depictions, such as Buddha preaching to the audience, and narrative scenes directly or indirectly related to the text that follows. The format of the Buddhist frontispiece is unique and reflects the domestication of Buddhist visual culture during the Tang–Song transition. The format also served as a prototype for later Daoist frontispieces.

While previous scholarship of Song Lotus Sutra frontispieces compared multiple versions and was preoccupied with finding the correlation between the illustrations and the accompanying texts, certain issues related to the relationship between printing and painting deserve further examination. Among the most intriguing are the issues of media transfer and modular construction. This study will explore these two crucial elements underpinning the painterly practice in Song Buddhist prints, especially the Lotus Sutra frontispieces associated with Hangzhou. It is divided into three parts. To establish a historical framework, the first part discusses the gen-
eral perception of the printed image in Song visual culture. Primary textual sources suggest that there was a growing practice of borrowing from paintings for prints, which were intended for a wider audience beyond Song China. Parts 2 and 3 are case studies of the exquisite Buddhist frontispieces of the Lotus Sutra produced in Hangzhou during the Northern Song (960–1126) and Southern Song (1127–1279) respectively. I will identify select pictorial motifs and compositional templates in the modularly constructed frontispieces. While some motifs were connected to earlier pictorial conventions in other media, such as painting, others may have been invented by the artisans who designed the frontispieces. All of these became part of the legacy of printing in Song Hangzhou that influenced later visual cultures and moved beyond the visuality of the Lotus Sutra.

Media Transfer from Painting to Printing

Copying and borrowing from painting in printmaking caught the attention of art connoisseurs in Northern Song China. In the late eleventh century, many scholars who were personally involved in making and collecting art documented this activity in their writing, paying special attention to prints copied from high-quality paintings by well-known masters. Mi Fu 米芾 (1015–1107) recorded that a "certain scholar" (shiren 士人) who owned a Tang dynasty copy of the Lienu tu 列女圖 (Wise and Virtuous Women) handsroll by Gu Kaizhi (active 344–405) had it copied for a woodblock-printed edition, which was then used to decorate a new standing screen. The opening of the eleventh-century illustrated book Xinkan gu lienu zhuan 新刊古列女傳 (Newly Printed Biographies of Virtuous Women from Ancient Times), reprinted by the Qian'an 建安 publisher Yu Renzhong 余仁仲, listed Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BCE) as the compiler of the text and Gu Kaizhi as the illustrator, although the printed illustrations minimally reflect Gu's painting style.

Mi Fu's contemporary Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) was amazed at the quality of a certain type of yinban shuizi 印版水紙 (water-patterned printed paper), which was used mainly for interior decoration on walls to symbolically extinguish fire and keep it away from the house. In a colophon he wrote in 1080 on the water painting by his friend Pu Yongsheng 蒲永昇, Su confessed that the liveliness of the water image he saw on the water-patterned printed paper compared favorably with the first-rate water paintings by masters of the past and present.

Even contemporary Song paintings from scholarly circles were made into prints for religious purposes. As Chen Shidao 陳師道 (1053–1102) recalled, the elite Datong chanshi 大通禪師 (Chan Master Datong; died in 1108), who was befriended by many well-known Northern Song scholars, once made printed copies from Li Gonglin's 李公麟 (1049–1106) painting of the Guanyin 觀音 Bodhisattva and "distributed [the prints] for free among scholars (yishi xuezhe 以施
It is likely that the mass-produced Guanyin prints distributed by Master Datong ended up in either domestic residences or temples. The eleventh-century monk and writer Wenying recorded a single-sheet printed Guanyin mounted as a hanging scroll and hung (xuan guanyin yinxiang yizhou) in the Beichan jingshi (Northern Chan Buddhist Scriptural Studio) in Changsha, Hunan province. From the perspective of display, it is possible that the Guanyin print was designed to mimic a hanging scroll so it would be suitable for "hanging" (xuan). Although Wenying's record does not specify its format, it is likely that it imitates select tenth- to twelfth-century single-sheet prints discovered in the Dunhuang library cave, Liao Buddhist pagoda, and among the documents in Khara Khot (Heishuicheng), an archaeological site in Inner Mongolia. A good example is the Jin dynasty (1115-1234) print known as the Four Beauties (fig. 1), printed by the Ji family of Pingyang, Shanxi, and discovered in Khara Khot. Although most reproductions fail to show this, the Pingyang print is in vertical format, with darkened sections in the upper and lower areas beyond the ornamental border of the central pictorial scene. The darkened sections resemble the brocade that frames the upper and lower parts of a hanging scroll painting.

The Guanyin print in the Scriptural Studio also calls to mind the oft-cited print of the Maitreya Bodhisattva designed by the Northern Song court painter Gao Wenjin (active 950-after 1022), now in the collection of the Seiryōji (fig. 2). A colophon on the left dates it to 984 and stresses that the purpose of printing was "for universal distribution, and to be used perpetually as an offering." suggesting that the print was mass-produced. As He ping Liu noted,
the painterly design of the Seiryōji Maitreya may be related to a now-lost votive painting by Gao Wenjin originally kept in a private Buddhist chapel at court in honor of Empress Liu (969–1033, reigned 1022–33 as empress dowager regent).²² Although the Seiryōji Maitreya was deposited inside the wooden Buddha statue after the Japanese monk Chōnen acquired it in China (where he was based between 983 and 986),²³ we may well imagine that other copies derived from the same block might have been displayed as hanging scrolls at temple altars or domestic residences, like the Guanyin print in the Scriptural Studio in Changsha.²⁴

If properly stored, the same woodblock can last for a long time and can be used to produce multiple reprints. In 1073, the Japanese monk Jōjin (copies, 1011–1081) visited the Northern Song capital Bianjing (modern Kaifeng) with his assistant monks. There, they borrowed the Wubai luohan moyin 五百羅漢模印 (Five Hundred Arhats woodblocks) and the Damo liuzu mo (woodblocks of the Six Chan Patriarchs of Bodhidharma Sect) commissioned by the government and preserved in the Chuanfa yuán (Institute for Propagation of the Tripitaka) repository in conjunction with the Buddhist Monastery Taiping xingguo si (Monastery of the Great Peace and Prosperous State); their goal was to print more copies on paper.²⁵ A thirteenth-century Japanese ink drawing (fig. 3) deriving from a Song print may give us a hint of what Jōjin saw in Kaifeng.²⁶ Titled the Six Patriarchs of the Bodhidharma Sect, it was said to be based on the Six Chan Patriarchs print Jōjin acquired in China.²⁷ Although he stayed in China until he passed away, he had the printed copies delivered to Japan as soon as they were made.²⁸
Illustrated prints were produced not only in Buddhist monasteries but also at the imperial court. Literary records show that Song emperors supported the mass-production of prints copied from court paintings. This was especially clear in three large printing projects during the Northern Song\textsuperscript{29} in which illustrations of didactic and historical themes were made to educate the young Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (reigned 1023–63). Leading court artist Gao Keming 高克明 and others illustrated three lengthy texts composed by court officials.\textsuperscript{30} These illustrations were carved onto blocks and the printed versions distributed to Renzong’s closest officers and family members. Commentators of the time marveled at the illustrations in one particular project, Sanchao baoxun 三朝寶訓 (Illustrated Instructive Mirror of the Three Courts), noting the comprehensive layout of palace buildings, landscape settings, imperial carriages and guards, and the minute executions of human figures, which were “less than one inch tall” (renwu caiji cunyu 人物纖及寸餘).\textsuperscript{31}

Even Emperor Renzong may have been involved in the painting-to-printing efforts. Sometime before 1052, he painted the healing bodhisattva Longshu pusa 龍樹菩薩 (Nāgārjuna) after he learned that his Aunt Xianmu 献穆 was going blind. Renzong ordered a daizhao 待詔 (painter-in-attendance) to copy his painting and make a woodblock-printed version for distribution.\textsuperscript{32}

Although none of these prints survive, the four extant printed illustrations of the 1108 reprint of the Yuzhi mizangquan 御製秘藏詮 (Imperially Composed Explanation of the Secret Treasure; referred to as the Mizangquan hereafter), originally commissioned by Emperor Taizang 太宗 (reigned 976–97) (fig. 4),\textsuperscript{33} now in the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, attest to the sophisticated level of the Northern Song imperial prints and their close ties to painting. The extant prints reflect a small portion of the original project, which may have contained fifty illustrations.\textsuperscript{34} According to Chen Yuquan 陳昱全, their designs adopt landscape-painting conventions popular in the transitional period between the Tang dynasty and the tenth century; stylistically, they reflect a now-lost print originally made by the court in the late tenth century.\textsuperscript{35} It is likely that leading court painters first drafted exquisite and complex pictorial designs, and the imperial printing office later transferred those designs to woodblock prints.\textsuperscript{36}

**Reshaping the Art of the Lotus Sutra in Northern Song Frontispieces**

Among the extant Song illustrated prints are some of the earliest Lotus Sutra frontispieces (figs. 5, 6) excavated from the Song pagoda in Xinxian 营縣, Shandong.
山東，and dated to the 1160s. Inscriptions on the prints indicate that they were published by the Qian family (Qian jia 錢家) (fig. 5) and the Yan family (Yan jia 姚家) (fig. 6) in Hangzhou, two of the early non-government publishers in Chinese printing history.

The Qian and Yan frontispieces reshaped the art of the Lotus Sutra. Departing from the earlier visual convention reflected in the large-scale murals or bianxiang 變相 (paintings of the sutra tableaux) crowding the cave temples in Dunhuang, the frontispieces suggest the more private experience of reading a Buddhist text, whose earliest printed format was the handscroll, which was sometimes folded like a book. Furthermore, their composition derives from the earlier convention, as reflected in the 868 Diamond Sutra frontispiece (fig. 7) originally discovered in the Dunhuang library cave and now in the British Library. In a palatial setting paved with square floral tiles, the seated Buddha is flanked by his attendants in front of an elongated table. Turning his face toward the lower left, the Buddha preaches to a kneeling monk crawling on a mattress in the foreground. This generic Buddha-preaching scene forms a basic template for later frontispiece designs. The Hangzhou Lotus Sutra frontispieces depict not only the Diamond Sutra’s preaching scene on the right but also a variety of narrative scenes. These narrative elements were not seen in the tenth-century Dunhuang frontispiece drawings but were featured in multiple versions of the Dharani Sutra frontispieces commissioned by Qian Shu 錢俶 (929–988), the king of Wuyue 吳越，and discovered in the twentieth century in the Leifeng 雷峰 Pagoda, Hangzhou, and other sites such as Huzhou 湖州 and Shaoxing 紹興, not too far from Hangzhou. It is thus likely that these Dharani frontispieces associated with the Wuyue royal patronage may have been local predecessors of the Northern Song frontispieces published in Hangzhou.

Decorative Motifs
Some of the decorative motifs in the Northern Song frontispieces reflect the Hangzhou tradition. For example, a series of repeated fringed and tasseled curtains made of net textiles and pearl-like pendants appear at the upper border of most of the extant frontispieces published by the Qian and the Yan families, dated 1060, 1063, and 1069 respectively (figs. 8a–b). They are further comparable to the Dharani frontispieces (dated 975) excavated from the Leifeng Pagoda and the tenth-century hand-painted version of the Lotus Sutra frontispiece (fig. 8c) excavated from the Ruiguang 瑞光 Pagoda in Suzhou (fig. 9), possibly a Hangzhou product as well.
Another recurring decorative pattern repeated in these Hangzhou frontispieces is a cluster of leafy botanical branches sticking out of the Buddha’s seat as “stage props” (figs. 10a–b). Because these decorative motifs are not seen in the extant frontispieces produced in northwestern China (such as Dunhuang, Gansu province) or northern China (such as the Khitan Liao kingdom) during the tenth and eleventh centuries, it is likely that they too reflect a local decorative convention shared by the designers working in the Hangzhou network.

The tasseled curtains and clusters of leafy branches can be seen as “stock motifs” used repeatedly by the designers or carvers of the Northern Song Hangzhou frontispieces. Their longevity is manifested in a seven-volume illustrated set of the Lotus Sutra dated to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) (figs. 11a–b). The upper borders of the fifth (fig. 11a), sixth, and seventh frontispieces are all decorated with wavy curtain designs, with minute tassels hanging at the lower borders. Furthermore, the Buddha-preaching scene depicted in the third frontispiece of the Ming set (fig. 11b) preserves the motif of the botanical clusters seen in the Northern Song version.

Similar visual features are reflected in a twelfth-century Korean painted frontispiece (fig. 12) in the collection of the Danzan Jinja 諏山神社, Nara 奈良. The upper border is decorated with similar arch-shaped curtains with net patterns and sashes. Executed in gold ink on indigo paper, it resembles the tenth-century Ruiguang Pagoda frontispiece (fig. 9). This frontispiece, however, places the Buddha-preaching scene in the center front, reflecting the more archaic template seen in Tang murals in Dunhuang Mogao caves. It is possible that the Danzan Jinja frontispiece is a Goryeo (918–1392) copy whose original design is linked to a Hangzhou frontispiece.
The Drum-striking Motif
Select pictorial motifs within the narrative illustrations had a continuous impact on later works of the Lotus Sutra outside China, though examples had existed outside the Lotus Sutra tradition before the Song. For example, an intriguing motif in the fourth frontispiece (fig. 5) of the set published in 1060 by the Qian family shows a figure striking a drum on a stand (fig. 13a). This motif refers to the tale about a king who renounced his throne by striking the drum and then sought out Buddhist teachings. 50 It may have served as the inspiration for a similar motif in the Ming hand-painted set (fig. 13b) 51 as well as for the Goryeo frontispiece of the Lotus Sutra (1325) painted in gold (fig. 13c), 52 although their overall compositions are different from that of the Northern Song print.

The drum-stricking theme in the Northern Song Lotus Sutra repertoire closely resembles the Goddess of the Luo River handscroll in the Palace Museum, Beijing (fig. 13d). 53 In this famous handscroll, the figure striking the drum represents the mythological river god Feng Yi 鳳夷, and the scene refers directly to the poetic text Luoshen ji 洛神賦 (Goddess of the Luo River) composed by Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232). 54 Based on the style, previous researchers such as Chen Pao-chen and Shih Shou-chien date this painting to the early twelfth century and consider it a copy produced at the court of Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (reigned 1100–25). 55 Nevertheless, the drum-striking motif may be derived from Gu Kaizhi’s original and thus may be linked to an even earlier pictorial convention.
Indeed, the earliest extant example of this pictorial module is a Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) tile from Pengxian, Sichuan, China (fig. 13c). The tile depicts a male figure, perhaps a ritual master, wearing a long robe and a ceremonial cap, striking a drum that is supported on a pole outside a building covered with a rooftop. Pictorial designs on Han clay tiles exemplify the early stage of modular production and workshop practice, which anticipates printmaking in later times. The pictorial connection linking this Han tile, the Goddess of the Luo River handscroll, and the Northern Song printed frontispiece suggests an underexplored connection between early clay tiles, paintings, and woodblock prints.

**The Ox Rider and the Fenced Hut**

On the left of the third frontispiece of the 1069 Yan family version (fig. 6), a narrative scene depicting an ox rider and two walking farmers returning to a fenced hut (fig. 14a) suggests a further connection between painting and printing. It makes references to the fifth episode of the “yaocao yu pin” 藥草喻品 (parable of the medicinal herbs), which compares the Buddha’s preaching to the great moisture-laden clouds that bring the beneficent rain to nurture plants, grasses, and all sentient beings on earth. The specific details of the ox rider and the farmers returning to a fenced country house surrounded by lush trees and grasses are not described in the text, and thus can be viewed as the frontispiece designer’s visual interpretation. It is possible that the designer used these motifs to reflect the contentment associated with an agricultural lifestyle blessed by the Buddha’s preaching. The two farmers standing in front of the fence wear wraps and hats, suggesting the nurturing rain evoked by the Buddha.

A later copy of this narrative scene in the third frontispiece of the Ming painted version (figs. 11b, 14b) vividly captures the meticulous details that are difficult to scrutinize in the Northern Song print (figs. 6, 14a). The detail from the Ming painting may reflect a modular motif that became available to the Lotus Sutra frontispiece designers in the eleventh century. Through the fence, the viewer can see a hut with no walls, only a roof. A kettle is placed on a table near a bench. Two farmers wearing hats and raincoats made of rushes are conversing outside the fence. A little further away, another farmer riding on the ox is coming around the corner. The overall scene depicted in this Ming painting is similar to the Northern Song print.

The set motif of an ox rider and a fenced hut may derive from a tenth-century painting convention reflected in the famous yet much debated Xian tu 景廂圖
14A-C

Ox rider and fenced hut motifs
(a) Detail, third frontispiece of the
Lotus Sutra, printed by the
Yan family, Hangzhou, dated
1069. Woodblock print on paper.
Discovered in a Song pagoda in
Xinxian, Shandong province. After
Cui Wei, "Shandong sheng Xinxian
Songta chu tu Bei Song feijing" (b)
Detail, third frontispiece of the Lotus
Sutra, Ming dynasty (1368–1644).
Folding booklet, silver on blue
paper, 26 x 54.3 cm. National
Palace Museum, Taiwan. (c) Detail,
Riverbank, attributed to Dong Yuan,
10th century. After Maxwell Hearn
et al., Along the Riverbank: Chinese
Paintings from the C. C. Wang
Collection (New York: The
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999),
cover 2.

(Riverbank), attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), dated by Shou-chien Shih to the tenth century. In this masterfully executed misty landscape, a "returning home scene," a buffalo rider and a barefoot farmer in raincoats made from rushes proceed toward the entrance of the fenced dwelling (fig. 14c). This is similar to the 1069 Yan family frontispiece (fig. 14a). Here, however, the buffalo, a farmer, and a fenced residence are paired with servants, women, and children. Together, they represent the domestic life of the hermit overlooking the water in a pavilion.

In sum, the ox rider returning to the fenced hut, like the drum-striking motif, may reflect an archaic tradition that originated in early pictorial art and was adopted by the Northern Song Buddhist printmaking culture. Thanks to the mass production and wide circulation of the Lotus Sutra frontispieces, this template was later revived in the Ming frontispiece drawing.

The Liao Counterpart
The local features of the Northern Song Hangzhou frontispieces become more clear when compared to those produced in North China during the rule of the Khitan Liao (907–1125). Take the extant Lotus Sutra frontispieces (figs. 15a–b) excavated from the Buddhist statue on the fourth level of the mid-eleventh-century Timber Pagoda at Fozong si 佛宮寺 (Monastery of the Buddhist Palace), Yingxian 延慶, Shanxi 山西 province. Originally designed as a set of eight volumes, its format is different from the seven-volume set from Northern Song Hangzhou. The four complete extant frontispieces from multiple copies of the eight-volume Lotus Sutra may have been printed by the Feng family (Feng jia 馮家) in Yanjing 燕京 (modern Beijing) in the early eleventh century and sealed up in the statue between 1110 and 1125.

The Liao depiction of the "parable of the medicinal herbs" (fig. 16) in the third-volume frontispiece (fig. 15a) is not comparable to the "ox rider returning home" scene illustrated in the 1069 Yan family edition (fig. 14a). It highlights the mythological rainmakers in the sky: a dragon, a thunder god striking wheeled drums, and a wind god releasing the wind, who fly amid the swirling clouds that cover the plants and trees on the earth below. This points out the possible regional differences between frontispiece prints in eleventh-century China, particularly with landscape elements. In the Yan and the Qian family prints, there is little reference to landscape beyond the depiction of a mound (fig. 5), the sparse horizontal
The third (a) and seventh (b) frontispieces of the *Lotus Sutra*, Liao dynasty (907–1125). Woodblock print on paper. 24.7 x 53 cm (a), 24.1 x 50.8 cm (b). Excavated in the mid-11th-century Timber Pagoda of the Fogongsì, Yingxian, Shanxi province. After *Yingxian muta Liaodai micang*, ed. Shanxi sheng wenwu ju et al. (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1991).

The Xi Xia Connection

Though the designers of the Northern Song Hangzhou prints and the Liao versions adopted different templates, archaeological finds beyond Hangzhou suggest that the circulation of the Song Hangzhou prints may extend to the Xia 夏 kingdom ruled by the Tangut (or Dangxiang 党項) people from 1038 to 1227. Traditionally referred to as the Xi Xia 夏 in Chinese sources, this was a “multi-ethnic kingdom with a Tangut core” and “Chinese, Uighur, Tibetan, and Turkic communities.” Its hybrid, Sino-Tibetan-inspired religious visual culture is reflected in the vast amount of Buddhist woodblock-print frontispieces excavated in Khara Khoto. According to Anne Saliceti-Collins, the Xi Xia state sought the Northern Song copies of the Buddhist canon six times from the 1030s to the 1070s. In addition, Chinese monks and carvers working for the translation bureau and printing projects sponsored by Xi Xia rulers played crucial roles in transmitting Song Buddhist printmaking culture to the Xi Xia state.

A great visual example attesting to the Song–Xi Xia connection is the little-studied *Lotus Sutra* frontispiece (TK 167) bearing the colophon of the Yan family publisher that was discovered in Khara Khoto (fig. 18). It features the twenty-fifth episode of the *Lotus Sutra*, “Guanshiyin pusam pumon pin” 觀世音菩薩普門品. On the right border, an incomplete colophon reads “Large-character Guanyin [episode] reprinted by the Yan family from Hangzhou” (Hangzhou Yanji aozha ozi Guanyin 杭州樊家重開大字觀音). The Guanyin bodhisattva is seated at the center and framed by rock formations that imitate the profiles of birds with pointed beaks. Depicted in the upper right corner is a thunderstorm, represented by a thunder god striking the circle of chained drums and a bag-like object releasing wind and rain. Below this scene is a man encountering a snake. To the left of Guanyin, a figure standing on an overhanging cliff is a reference to a story about an evildoer who pushed people off the mountain. The overall composition is very similar to the seventh vignette depicted in the 1069 frontispiece published by the Yan family and discovered in the Song pagoda in Shandong.
A closer examination of the Buddhist frontispieces produced under the Xi Xia rule helps us to further evaluate the Song Hangzhou–Xi Xia connection. One example discovered in Khara Khoto is a Xi Xia frontispiece accompanying the printed Sutra of the Peacock King (Mahâmâyârvidyârajñâ) (TANG 61) carved in Tangut characters (fig. 19). The frontispiece depicts a multi-armed icon flanked by a cluster of leaves behind its halo. Because these leaves resemble those seen in the Northern Song Hangzhou frontispieces (figs. 10a–b), it is possible to assume that carvers and illustrators working for the Xi Xia kingdom had direct access to Song Hangzhou Buddhist prints.

Modular Examples in the Southern Song Frontispieces

Previous scholarship of Southern Song Hangzhou prints has called attention to several seven-volume sets of the illustrated Lotus Sutra whose texts are carved in large characters (duzi ben 大字本). These include the Rikkoku-an 架嶺庵 version and two versions in the Taipei Palace Museum. The Rikkoku-an version was carved by the block-carver Chen Zhong 陳忠 (active 1146–64) and his fellow carvers, and one of the Taipei versions was carved by Qin Meng 秦孟 and Bian Ren 邊仁. The other Taipei version (figs. 20a–e) does not include the carvers’ information but does bear the name of a little-known illustrator, Wang Yi 王儀 (fig. 20f). Scholars have suggested that Chen Zhong, Qin Meng, and Bian Ren as well as the carvers who worked with them were teammates active in Hangzhou and the neighboring Ningbo area in the mid-twelfth century. While no identifiable patrons are associated with the Wang Yi edition, the repeated imagery of two monks (fig. 20g) at the lower-left corner of each frontispiece suggests a possible monastic patronage. When examined as a whole, the compositional scheme and pictorial repertoire of the Southern Song Hangzhou frontispieces can be seen to have a lasting impact on Buddhist frontispieces produced in the Xi Xia Kingdom, Yuan China, and Goryeo Korea.

A Chess Party in the Mountains, 10th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 106.5 x 54 cm. Excavated from a tomb at Yemaotai, Shandong province, Liaoning Provincial Museum.


Frontispieces from the Lotus Sutra, Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), designed by Wang Yi. Woodblock prints on paper; 31.4 x 59.5 cm (each). (a) First frontispiece. (b) Second frontispiece. (c) Fourth frontispiece. (d) Fifth frontispiece. (e) Seventh frontispiece. (f) Detail, seventh frontispiece. (g) Detail, first frontispiece. National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

Jiehua Elements

Compared to their Northern Song counterparts, the Southern Song frontispieces (figs. 20a–e) show further standardization, evident in more identifiable modular motifs that are repeatedly employed throughout seven pieces within the same set. Unlike the artisans associated with the Liao frontispieces (figs. 15a–b) and the Northern Song Mizangquan (fig. 4), the Southern Song frontispiece designers in Hangzhou downplayed landscape elements. Instead, they favored manmade architectural motifs, such as buildings with bracketing clusters under their roofs, ornamented terraces with balustrades, and couch/bed furniture pieces whose attached screens are imbedded with picturelike or calligraphic “imagery within an image.”

Take the Wang Yi edition. The generic scene of the Buddha preaching now takes up a larger space; the elaborate balustrades framing his entourage extend to occupy almost three of the four folding panels that constitute each frontispiece. Within this standardized format, the seven frontispieces deploy a variety of decorative patterns to furnish the balustrades, ranging from floral (fig. 21a) to geometric to honey-
21A–D
Balustrade designs from the frontispieces of the *Lotus Sutra*, Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), designed by Wang Yi Woodblock prints on paper. (a) Detail, first frontispiece. (b) Detail, fourth frontispiece. (c) Detail, fifth frontispiece. (d) Detail, seventh frontispiece. National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

21A–D
Frontispiece, fourth Woodblock frontispieces of the *Lotus Sutra*, Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), designed by Wang Yi Woodblock prints on paper. (a) Detail, first frontispiece. (b) Detail, fourth frontispiece. (c) Detail, fifth frontispiece. (d) Detail, seventh frontispiece. National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

combs (fig. 21b) to phoenixes (fig. 21c) to meandering water (*qu shui* 曲水) (fig. 21d). These patterns are similar to those widely cited in Song *jiehua* 界画 (ruler-lined painting) conventions, such as the architectural templates of doors and windows (fig. 22a), balustrades (fig. 22b), and ceilings (fig. 22c) illustrated in the 1103 treatise on architecture titled *Yingzao fashi* 影造法式. Compiled by Li Jie 李诫 (1035–1110) under the reigns of Emperors Zhezong 哲宗 (reigned 1085–1100) and Huizong, this artistic architecture manual was not only beneficial to builders and carpenters but also to painters and illustrators, who translated the technical nuances of manmade things into the rich visual vocabulary that constitutes the *jiehua* tradition.

**Furniture Designs**
Southern Song designers also creatively incorporated furniture designs into Buddhist frontispiece prints. This is evident in a variety of screened couch designs. One such modular motif features a couch/bed, as illustrated in the first and fourth frontispieces (figs. 20a, 20c, 23a–b). In the first one, a narrative scene depicts what appears to be an artist's studio (fig. 23a). On a screened couch/bed, a man dressed like a scholar or official is painting. Holding a brush in his hand, he adds touches to a hanging scroll depicting a seated Buddha, which is mounted on a supporting panel and rests against the screen. Painted images of rocks and plants are partially revealed on the screen. A side table beside the couch/bed displays a miniature screen decorated with mock cursive-script calligraphy, and cups of pigments—very likely the painter's utensils.

This scene is comparable to the scholar's studio depicted in the Northern Song album leaf *Scholar*, dated to the early twelfth century, in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (fig. 24). A scholar is seated on a couch/bed that has been placed before a screen painting of reeds and waterfowl, painterly motifs favored by the Song literati. A nicely mounted hanging scroll hangs on the screen and shows a lifelike portrait of the scholar. More books are displayed on the side table to the right, forming a direct connection to the Southern Song print.

A painted image sharing a similar modular motif appears at the upper-left corner of the fourth frontispiece (figs. 20c, 23b). This indoor scene depicts a figure
lying on a couch/bed flanked by bamboo paintings mounted on two horizontal screens. It refers to the parable of a drunken man who lies down to sleep, unaware that his friend has tied a priceless jewel to the back of his robe. A similar motif is depicted in the Southern Song court painting titled *Odes of the State of Pin* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (fig. 25). Another type of furniture design features a seated monk or lay Buddhist preaching on a stand for a screened couch, i.e., a screen on top of a couch raised on four legs. The screen is decorated with intricately painted bamboo or mock cursive-script calligraphy (figs. 26a–c). It is likely that once such a modular design was established in local practice in Hangzhou, it was also transmitted to Xi Xia, as reflected in the 1196 Xi Xia frontispiece of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經) (TK 98) discovered in Khara Khot (figs. 27a–b).

**The Hut Motif**

In the second frontispiece of the Wang Yi edition, the motif of a dome-shaped hut is illustrated near the center left (fig. 20b); outside the hut stand three figures conversing (fig. 28a). The hut and the figures illustrate *Xinjie pin* (Belief and understanding), the story of a poor son who gave up the support of his wealthy father and lived alone in a poor village. Two of the figures outside the hut are the attendants sent by the wealthy father to his son, who is shown facing them. The hut motif may derive from the earlier prototypes seen in ninth- to tenth-century Dunhuang murals, in which the son is shown lying in a dome-shaped hut inside the horse ranch where he worked for his father. What makes the Wang Yi edition different from the earlier murals is that the hut is presented without the ranch but with meticulously drawn straw and details of furniture.

The design of the hut and the placement of the furniture and figures recall the Northern Song *Mizangquan* illustrations (fig. 28b). The knob attached to the top of the hut, the multiple layers of straw on the hut, the arch-shaped entrance, and the furniture inside are found in the Wang Yi edition. Even the way that the figures are positioned is similar. In the *Mizangquan*, a layman and a monk stand outside the
hut. The layman’s gesture suggests that he is paying tribute to an older monk seated on a chair inside. In the Wang Yi frontispiece, the two monks and the layman are replaced by the two attendants the king sends to his son; the humble display of a bed and a table are partially revealed through the open entrance.

This set of motifs became the standard “iconography” for telling the story of the poor son in later Hangzhou frontispiece prints and Korean paintings accompanying the Lotus Sutra. It is interesting to see how the hut motif was employed by illustrators in both religious and secular narrative scenes. In the Xi Xia–printed Maitreya Sutra frontispiece (1189), the motif has been revised into a small vignette that shows a lay person paying tribute to a Buddhist practitioner clothed in religious garments and seated inside a hut. A similar motif is recycled in the fourth frontispiece of the Ming dynasty Lotus Sutra. In the fourteenth-century illustrated fictional work Xin quaxiang sanguo zhi pinghua 新全相三國志平話 (Plain Tale from the Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms), published by the Yu family (Yushi 崔氏) Wuben tang 務本堂 (Studio of Cultivating the Fundamental) in Jian’nan, Fujian 福建, the hut motif is featured on the cover page (fig. 28c), a reference to the often-cited story of Liu Bei’s 劉備 three visits to the hut of Zhu Geliang 諸葛亮 (sangu maolu 三顧茅廬).

The Construction Scene
Another modular motif that has had a long-lasting impact on East Asian art is the construction scene depicted at the lower-left corner of the fifth frontispiece in the Wang Yi edition (figs. 20d, 29a). This scene refers to the seventeenth episode in the fifth chapter, in which the Buddha compares the merit of cherishing and studying the Lotus Sutra to building quarters for monks. In what appears to be a depiction of “lodging making,” two crouching workers put roof tiles in place one by one. Another worker standing on the right passes a load of bricks with a rope to the workers on the roof while one at the front of the building is about to throw a brick up to a colleague.

The vivid depiction of workers at the construction site was so successful that it became part of the stock repertoire of the fifth frontispiece of the printed Lotus Sutra...
Screened couch furniture designs from the frontispieces of the Lotus Sutra, Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), designed by Wang Yi. Woodblock prints on paper. (a) Detail, fourth frontispiece. (b) Detail, fifth frontispiece. (c) Detail, sixth frontispiece. National Palace Museum, Taiwan.


In several Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) editions produced in Hangzhou as well as many Goryeo sutra frontispiece paintings dated to the fourteenth century. Among the often-cited Goryeo examples is the 1315 sutra frontispiece in the Tenrinji 天倫寺 collection, Matsue City 松江市, Japan. In a later version commissioned by Prince Ik-an between 1400 and 1404, now in the collection of the National Museum of Korea (D2466), the workers delivering a load of rocks have been moved from the right to the front of the building. This early fifteenth-century Korean design may be a direct prototype for the entertaining scene of carpenters in the album known as the Genre Paintings by Danwon 椙圖 by the eighteenth-century Joseon painter Kim Hong-do 金弘道 (circa 1745–1815), also in the National Museum of Korea (fig. 29b). This album shows the artist's humorous depictions of ordinary people, such as villagers wrestling, farmers threshing rice, schoolboys in class, women doing laundry along the river, and so on. One album leaf depicts construction workers placing tiles on a roof, which clearly borrows the modular motif and the figurative types from the Southern Song Hangzhou frontispiece (fig. 29a).

Conclusion
The exchange of images between painting and printmaking marks a new chapter in the cultural history of the Tang–Song transition. On the one hand, painting had been advancing for hundreds of years by the time illustrated prints came into vogue in the tenth century. It is only natural that printmakers borrowed visual conventions from painting. On the other hand, the efficiency that printing brought to the mass production of images may have provided a conceptual and methodological stimulus to painters. The extant Lotus Sutra frontispiece prints associated with
Hangzhou during the Northern and Southern Song periods are among the best examples. As this article aims to demonstrate, artisans employed more and more recyclable modular motifs to compose their prints. While some of these motifs derive from earlier pictorial traditions in Chinese art, others were created in the Song and had a lasting impact on art beyond the Hangzhou locale and Buddhist practitioners.

The eleventh-century Hangzhou frontispieces represent some of the earliest extant prints published by non-government publishers. Decorative motifs, such as the tasseled curtains framing the upper borders and the clusters of leafy branches flanking the preaching Buddha, speak to a local Hangzhou tradition inherited from the Wuyue period in the tenth century. They are thus different from their contemporary counterparts associated with the Liao Kingdom or the Northern Song court. Two specific motifs are particularly comparable to earlier pictorial conventions outside Hangzhou. In the first instance, the drum-striking motif in the Qian family frontispiece bears a striking resemblance to Goddess of the Luo River attributed to the Eastern Jin painter Gu Kaizhi as well as to a carved image in a Han dynasty ceramic tile that originally decorated a tomb in Sichuan. Second, the depiction of an ox rider returning to a fenced hut in the Yan family frontispiece recalls Dong Yuan’s Riverbank. While these motifs do not appear in the Southern Song Lotus Sutra frontispieces associated with Hangzhou, they do emerge in later frontispiece drawings, such as those associated with Goryeo Korea and Ming China.

During the Southern Song period, the Lotus Sutra frontispieces in Hangzhou obtained a higher level of standardization. Though no specific publisher can be identified, suffice it to say, carvers worked as itinerant artisans. One exquisite example is the set bearing the name of the little-known illustrator Wang Yi. Like other Southern Song Hangzhou frontispieces, the Wang Yi set is noted for recurring modular motifs. The overall design indicates strong interests in architectural patterns or manmade objects—pictorial elements that constitute the basic visual vocabulary of the so-called jielu paintings, such as balustrades and terraces filled with floral or geometric patterns and couches accompanied by screens decorated with pictorial or calligraphic decorations. This suggests that artisans were familiar with and shared standard templates with each other and with carpenters and builders.

The legacy of the Lotus Sutra frontpiece prints produced in Southern Song Hangzhou extends beyond Buddhism and bridges religious and secular visual culture. The hut motif, for example, which is traceable to the Northern Song Mizangquan, became Zhu Geliang’s residence on the title page of a fourteenth-cen-
century popular work of fiction celebrating the heroic stories of the Three Kingdoms. More unexpectedly, the construction scene that represents the accumulation of merits by building cells for monks was creatively adopted in an eighteenth-century Korean genre painting. This was likely based on pre-eighteenth-century Korean frontispiece drawings copied from Chinese examples, which were in turn based on Southern Song Hangzhou versions. This further demonstrates the mutual borrowing of imagery between printing and painting: while Song illustrated prints appropriated painting motifs, they also offered a new visual paradigm for later painting in a cross-cultural context. Seen in this way, it is likely that what may seem to be a new modular system in twelfth- to thirteenth-century Ningbo workshop paintings may in fact have been inspired by or related to the modular construction of Song woodblock prints, such as those being produced in eleventh- to twelfth-century Hangzhou.

There are not many extant frontispieces from Song Hangzhou. But the multitude of printed frontispieces produced under Xi Xia rule may provide additional visual sources for tracing Song Hangzhou printmaking culture. Preliminary comparative study suggests that Xi Xia Buddhist frontispieces share some notable modular motifs with those from Song Hangzhou. The Xi Xia and Song Hangzhou connection is further supported by the Northern Song Hangzhou Buddhist print discovered among the Xi Xia ruins in Khara Khot.

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I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for his or her input.

Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077–1148), Shilin yangyu 石林燕語 8.6b.


Julia Murray defines the sutra frontispiece as “a picture” that “served as a pious embellishment for a sacred text and brought merit upon its sponsor” and describes two kinds: the generic type, which shows “the Buddha preaching to assembled beings,” and the synoptic type, which includes “pictorial allusions to many of the sutras’ stories,” “in addition to the image of the preaching Buddha.” See Julia Murray, “The Evolution of Buddhist Narrative Illustration in China after 850,” in Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850–1850, ed. Marsha Weidner (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art; University of Hawai‘i Press, 1994), pp. 136–37. For more on Buddhist frontispieces, especially the tenth-century drawings from the Dunhuang library cave, see Drège, “Du texte à l’image : les manuscrits illustrés,” pp. 107–19.

For visual examples of Daoist frontispiece drawings, see the manuscript on the Three Officials dated 1470 and the frontispiece associated with salvation dated 1568 reproduced in Stephen Little

12 Mi Fu 米芾, *Hua shi* 華史, in *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu* 中國書畫全書, ed. Lu Fusheng 陸脯聖 et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1992–99), vol. 1, p. 978.


16 Chen Shidao 陳士道, *Houshun jì* 后山集 17: 4b–5a; Su Bai, *Tang Song shihui de diàobàn yînsîhu*, p. 76. For more information of Monk Datong, see Qian Yueyou 翁說友, *Xianchuan luînâ zhî* 喜淳臨安志 70: 10b–11a.


19 The jin print is in the State Hermitage Museum. For an illustration, see James Watt et al., *The World of Kublai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010), p. 216, fig. 232.


21 Heping Liu, "Empress Liu’s Icon of Maitreya: Portraiture and Privacy at the
Early Song Court,” *Arhubus Asiae* 63, no. 2 (2003), pp. 29–190.


24 For studies of Buddhist monasteries as sites of art viewing and art collecting, see Marsha Weidner, “Fit for Monks’ Quarters: Monasteries as Centers of Aesthetic Activity in the Later Fourteenth Century,” *Ars Orientalis* 37 (2010), pp. 49–77.


27 Jan Fontein et al., *Zen Painting and Calligraphy*, pp. 2–4.


33 The four printed illustrations from the Fogg Museum of Art are incomplete illustrations accompanying the thirteenth volume of the text. For a classic study of the printed illustrations accompanying Taizong’s commentary, see Loehr, *Chinese Landscape Woodcuts*, for a reproduction of this illustration, see fig. 4; for dating, see p. 34. Yi Song-mi 李成美 argued that the Northern Song version is a later copy based on the Goryeo version; see Yi Song-mi, “Goryeo Chojø Daejanggyeong uii ‘Ejeebignon’ Panhwa—Goryo chogi sansubwa uii yeongu” 高麗初韓大藏經的《御製秘藏詮》版畫—高麗初韓山水畫의 연구, *Kogo misu* 考古美術, vols. 169–70 (1986), pp. 14–70. Chen Yuquan, however, proposes that the *Northern Song version reflects the original version commissioned by Emperor Taizong in the late tenth century; see Chen Yuquan, “Beisong Yuzhi mizang quan banhua yanjiu,” pp. 9–32. For illustrations of the *Goryeo version*, see Egami and Kobayashi, *Nanzenshito* 観世音 no mokuhanga.


35 This includes the iron-wire linear brushstrokes framing the rock formations inherited from blue-and-green landscape painting; see Chen Yuquan, “Beisong Yuzhi mizang quan banhua yanjiu,” pp. 41–46.

36 The Song imperial printing office was the *Yining yuan 印經院* (Bureau of Printing Scriptures), first established by Emperor Taizong. It was later changed to the *Chuanfa yuan 崑法院*, see Chen Yuquan, “Beisong Yuzhi mizang quan banhua yanjiu,” pp. 12, 143, 158–59. This printing office contained different departments in charge of translating, collating, editing, and printing. See Su Bai, *Tong Song shi de diaoban yinshua*, p. 17; and Ogawa Kan’ichi 小川賢一, trans. Shijue fo xue mingzhu yicong bianwei hui 世界佛學名著叢編編委會, “Beisong chibian dazing jing ye yijing yuan” 北宋敕版大藏經和經版院, in *Dazangjing de chengyi ju bianqian* 大藏經的成立與變遷 (Taipei: Huayu chuban, 1984), pp. 35–46.

37 Of the five published examples, the two frontispieces from the 1060 and 1063 editions were printed by the Qian family, and the three frontispieces from

38 Cui Wei, "Shandong sheng Xinian Songta chutu Bei Song fanjing," pp. 147–54.

39 For more studies of the Tang murals of the sutra tableaux related to the Lotus Sutra, see Fahua jing huaqian and Wang, Shaping the Lotus Sutra.


42 The tenth-century frontispiece drawings discovered in the Dunhuang library cave and introduced by Jean-Pierre Drège all focus on the iconic representations of deities without any obvious narrative depiction; see Drège, "Du texte à l'image," pp. 107–19, figs. 1–16, and p. 161.

43 For more on these Dharani frontispieces and related scholarship, see Huang, "Early Buddhist Illustrated Prints in Hangzhou," pp. 137–42; and Tsai, "Buddhist Printed Images and Texts," pp. 207–14.


45 For an illustration, see Huijia Yuyan sita Ruiguang sita wenwu (2006), pp. 162–63.

46 For more on tenth-century frontispieces (mostly hand-painted versions) from Dunhuang, Gansu province, see Drège, "Du texte à l'image: les manuscrits illustrés," pp. 107–119, figs. 1–16. For the Liao frontispieces discovered in the Yingxian pagoda, Shanxi province, see Yixian maota Liu dao miang, pp. 7, 109, 173, pls. 6–7, figs. 17, 26.

47 Miaofa lanhua jing tulu, pp. 88–89.

48 Miaofa lanhua jing tulu, pp. 47, 88–89.

49 Although the work is now labeled as an early twelfth-century Korean painting, whether it is Goryeo, Song, or Japanese is still open to debate; see Julia Meech-Pekarik and Pratapaditya Pal, Buddhist Book Illuminations (New York: Ravi Kumar Publisher, 1988), pp. 262–63; and Kungnip Chunang Pangmugwan, Kographyangbo tonggan ed., Sagyong Pyōnsangō iṣ bygye, Puchō kūrigo māin (Seoul: Chaeha Kōmyuninkaisyō, 2007), p. 7, pl. 12.

50 Watson, Lotus Sutra, p. 183.

51 Miaofa lanhua jing tulu, pp. 46, 88.

52 For an illustration of the fourth frontispiece from the 1325 set in the collection of the Hagi-ji temple in Fukai 前, see Higashi Ajiro no hotoketchi, p. 209.

53 For an illustration, see Zhongguo luohua quanjì, vol. 1, p. 43, pl. 37.

54 Xiao Tong, Wen xuan 19, p. 336.


56 The tile is now in the collection of the Sichuan Provincial Museum. For an illustration, see Zhongguo meishu shi 中國美術史, ed. Wang Chaoen, Wang Chaoen et al. (Jinan: Qiul chubanshe, 2000), vol. 3, pl. 19.

57 Ledderose, Ten Thousand Things, p. 156. Tseng Lan-yong, "Gaztaoyu du yu diyou zhuangtong—long Shandong Anqiu Dongjia Hanmu de zhihou henji tanki" (Fujian guqi gonghu mart, 2000), pp. 33–86. The Han tile motif can be traced back to similar motifs found on Warring States bronze and lacquer artifacts. For a visual example, see Kyō Sibēn 戃詩文, "Sengoku jidai no seidō ni arawasareta sankagū shuryō zu" (Wajun féngde zhuàngzhuàng de zuòchǎng yào, Gansu Museum, 2006), pp. 368-70, pl. 12.

58 For the text, see Watson, Lotus Sutra, pp. 98–106.

59 Cf. the eighth-century mural in Mogao cave 23 in Fanlu jing huaqian, p. 75, fig. 65.

For an illustration, see Maxwell Hearn et al., Along the Riverbank: Chinese Paintings from the C. C. Wang Family Collection (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), cover 2. For dating, see Shou-chien Shih, "Positioning Riverbank," in Hearn et al., Along the Riverbank, pp. 115–27; and Shih Shou-chien 石守謙, Cong Feng'ge dao huayi fansi zhongguo meishi shi 從風格到圖畫—反思中國美術史 (Taipei: Shitou chubanshe, 2010), pp. 89–118.

The fence surrounding the hut complex is also seen in Dong Yuan’s Hanlin chongting 寒林重汀 (Wintry Forests and Layered Banks) in the collection of Kurokawa Kobunaka Kenkyūjo 川川古文化研究所. For an illustration, see Shih Shou-chien, Cong Feng'ge dao huayi, p. 95, pl. 27.

For more discussion of the pictorial theme of “a lofty hermit residing amid mountains and streams” (jiangshan gaoyin 江山高隱) as depicted in the Riverbank, see Shih Shou-chien, Cong Feng'ge dao huayi, pp. 108–11; for the detail of the hermit, see p. 109, pl. 46.

The ox rider returning to the fenced hut and the figure striking the drum do not appear in the extant Southern Song and Yuan Lotus Sutra frontispieces associated with Hangzhou; cf. Minofa lianhua jing tulu, pp. 19–31.


For the extent four complete specimens of the Yingxian frontispieces corresponding to the third, fourth, and eighth volumes of the Lotus Sutra, see Yingxian muta Liaodai mizang, pp. 7, 109, 116, 170, 173; for more discussion of the list of texts and artifacts discovered in the pagoda, see the preface by Zhang Changgeng 張昌勤, Zheng Enhuai 鄭恩淮, and Bi Sujuan 碧素娟, pp. 9–67.


For an illustration, see Yingxian muta Liaodai mizang, p. 109; and Drège, "De l’icône à l’anecdote," pp. 56, fig. 13. A similar motif of a thunder god and a lightning agent striking gongs appears in the Southern Song and Xi Xia frontispieces, a reference to a different episode in the seventh volume; see Huang, "Early Buddhist Illustrated Prints in Hangzhou," pp. 161–62.


For a complete view of the painting, see Shih, Cong Feng'ge dao huayi fansi zhongguo meishi shi, p. 99, pl. 32.

For an illustration, see Loehr, Chinese Landscape Woodcuts, fig. 4.

Saliceti-Collins, "Xi Xia Buddhist Woodblock Prints," p. 52.


82 This 1069 frontispiece is one of the five discovered in the pagoda in Xinxian. Its composition is awkwardly divided into eight vignettes, with the one at the upper-right corner depicting a generic scene of the Buddha giving a sermon and the other seven referring to different chapters (juan) of the sutra. The seventh vignette in the lower-left corner is comparable to the TK 169 frontispiece. For an illustration, see Su Bai, Tang Songs shi qi de diaoban yinshu, p. 145, fig. 32.

83 See TANG 61, inventory no. 1 in Lost Empire of the Silk Road, p. 269, pl. 82.


89 Huang, "Early Buddhist Illustrated Prints in Hangzhou," p. 155.

90 Cf. the images of lay figures dressed in Mongolian fashion—illustrated in the same poses as in the Yuan edition (dated around 1331–46)—in frontispieces of the Lotus Sutra prints commissioned by lay devotees from Jiaxing (嘉興) county; see Miao Fa lianhua jing tuilu, pp. 82–83.


93 Miaofa lianhua jing tulu, pp. 19, 21.

94 For an illustration, see Songdai shuhua ceye mingpin tezhan 宋代畫帖明品特展 (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowu yuan, 1995), pl. 45, pp. 171–73; and Daguan: Beisong shuhua tezhan, p. 216, pl. 34. Chen Yun-ru dates this painting to the early twelfth century and proposes that it depicts a scholar in his studio; see Daguan, pp. 217–20. For more evidence supporting its Song date, especially the mounting style of the hanging scroll depicted in the painting and a Southern Song collection seal that is impressed upon it, see the entry by Lin Po-ting 林柏亭 in Songdai shuhua ceye, pp. 276–79. Wu Hung, however, dates the painting to the early Ming; he cites James Cahill's observation regarding the "Ming fashion" of the mounting style of the hanging scroll depicted in this album leaf; see Wu Hung, The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 231–32, fig. 163, and p. 278, n. 271. James Cahill, An Index of Early Chinese Painters and Paintings (Berkeley: University of California, 1980), p. 221. For a comparison with the small hanging scroll depicted in the Taipei album leaf, see the Southern Song scroll in the set of 500 Lobans by the Ningbo artists Lin Tinggui 林庭珪 and Zhou Jichang 周季常 in Nihon Bukkyō 1300 nen no genryū, pl. 104, p. 131. See also the Southern Song to Yuan Album of Daoist and Buddhist Themes in the Cleveland Museum, reproduced in Ting Wu Doozi no bao 唐吳道子墨寶, ed. Yu Yi 余毅 (Taipei: Zhonghua shuhua chuban she), p. 29. For comparable Qing paintings of Emperor Qianlong's portraiture, drawing on the compositional template of the Northern Song scholar album leaf, see the two versions in Wu Hung, "Emperor's Masquerade—'Costume Portraits' of Yongzheng and Qianlong," Orientations 26, no. 7 (1995), p. 36, figs. 12a–b; and The Double Screen, pp. 234–35, figs. 167–68.


96 Miaofa lianhua jing, p. 29. Watson, Lotus Sutra, pp. 150–51. Cf. the tenth-century depiction of the same episode in Mogao cave 61, Fuhua jing, p. 115, fig. 105.


100 Similar scenarios are found in the Qin Meng/Bian Ren edition and the Rikkoku-an edition. See Miaofa lianhua jing tulu, p. 24; and Chūgoku kodai hinu ten, p. 84.

101 For mural examples in Dunhuang Mogao caves 237, 61, and 98, see Wang Jinyu 王進玉 ed., Kōzuki jishu bunshū: Gōka gakuryō kōzoku bunko dokokan zenshū, vol. 23 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2001), pp. 82, 84, 86, pls. 71, 75, 77.

102 Loehr, Chinese Landscape Woodcuts, fig. 15. For a Goryeo version based on the Song original, see Goryeo Dynasty, pp. 106–7, pl. 25. There are more comparable hut motifs depicted in the Koryo version of the Mitzangyuan frontispieces, now in the Nanzenji collection; see Gami and Kobayashi, Nanzenji shozō "Hizōsen," pls. i, vi, vii, ix, xxi, xxxii, xxxiv, xxxv, xxxix, xlii.

103 For examples of the Yuan frontispieces, see Miaofa lianhua jing tulu, pp. 29, 80, 82. For an example of the Goryeo sutra painting dated circa 1340, see Arts of Korea, pp. 72–73, pl. 78.

104 The Maitreya frontispiece survives in two copies: TK 38 and TK 81–83. For illustrations, see Ecang Heishuicheng, vol. 2, pp. 42, 308. The caption that reads "Shenru zhengshou 深入正受" (deeply in concentration) refers to the phrase from the Maitreya scripture; see Foshuo guan mile pisa shangsheng doushuai jing, p. 420.

105 See the episode labeled "Gongyang xianren" 供養仙人 (Offering to the Deity) in the fourth frontispiece; Miaofa lianhua jing tulu, p. 46.
106 Hegel, Reading Illustrated Fiction, pp. 172–73, fig. 4.6. Chia, Printing for Profit, p. 113.


110 For an illustration, see Chosôn sidae p’ungsokhwa 朝鮮時代風俗畫 (Seoul: Haigung Pangmulgwanhoe, 2002), p. 191.
Abstract
Animal motifs were prevalent throughout Early China (circa 7000–221 BCE), particularly during what I call the golden age of zoomorphic imagery, the Shang and Zhou dynasties (circa 1300–771 BCE). In recent decades, research into the pre-Qin period (i.e., before 221 BCE) has focused more on mammal-related and imaginary iconography and less on crawling creatures. In fact, crawling-creature motifs, such as those featuring arachnids and insects, were rare but important features on carvings in Early China, with most examples produced exclusively during the Western Zhou period (1046–771 BCE). Through research into both the fragmentary archaeological evidence and collections in museums, this paper aims to investigate this exceptional phenomenon in ancient China as well as reconstruct the ancient cultural mindset of the Zhou people during the early first millennium BCE. By examining two types of jade carvings, depicting spiders and praying mantises, I consider the cultural underpinnings for the taste in and enthusiasm for crawling-creature artifacts and mimetic art during the Western Zhou period. I propose that the reproductive habits and powerful physical features of spiders and praying mantises attracted the people of the Western Zhou, who assimilated them into their iconography using valuable materials—jade and bronze. In addition, depictions of the crawling creatures indicate that they were closely observed and that the secular interests of the Zhou people included both the natural environment and luxury items. Moreover, I trace the exotic geographical origins of crawling-creature imagery and the interactions between the Western Zhou and other people in the western and northern frontiers of China around three thousand years ago.

ANIMAL IMAGERY is a representation of the human perception of nature. Artistic choices reveal how human beings in different periods interacted with nature and are closely related to a society's cultural practices and perceptions of the environment. In China, animal images and zoomorphic motifs were a prevalent artistic theme throughout the Neolithic and Bronze Ages (circa 6000–221 BCE). Eagles, water buffaloes, and domesticated animals such as rams and cows were produced in a range of formats and media, including bronze, ivory, jade, stone, and pottery. Archaeological evidence shows that in Early China (circa 7000–221 BCE) animal-shaped jade carvings were mainly distributed in the tombs of the high-ranking elite classes.

The Shang and Zhou periods (circa 1300–771 BCE) were what I describe as the golden age of zoomorphic imagery, when both actual and imaginary animals were depicted on artifacts, particularly jade carvings. In this period, the quantity and
the variety of animal-related artifacts increased radically. For example, more than sixteen types of animals were found on 168 jade pieces, about twenty-two percent of the 755 pieces excavated, in the tomb of Lady Fu Hao, the consort of a late Shang emperor, dated to the thirteenth century bce.³ And thirty-seven percent of the sixty-three jade pendants found in a late eighth-century BCE tomb belonging to a duke from the state of Guo, Henan province (fig. 1), were animal shaped; there were twenty-three types of animals in total.⁶ Zoomorphic designs from the Western Zhou dynasty (circa 1046–771 BCE) suggest that they were inherited from the late Shang dynasty (circa 1300–1045 BCE) in terms of variety, artistic style, and quantity. However, most scholarly discussions make no clear distinction between the artistic approaches of the two dynasties.

Among the many zoomorphic motifs found in the art of Early China, crawling creatures such as spiders and praying mantises have drawn little scholarly attention. One reason is that scholars have tended to concentrate on other types of zoomorphic iconography.⁷ As a result of new archaeological discoveries in China, for example, numerous studies of Shang and Zhou animal images have been conducted over the last three decades. These studies have concentrated on the typological classification of animal-shaped artifacts and anthropological discussions about imaginative zoomorphic imagery, and have recently provided a wider context, such as the function of animal motifs in mortuary and ritual art, the cosmological and political significance of animals, and animals as didactic images.⁸ Furthermore, most have focused on imaginary bird-related creatures, dragons, and animal hybrids. A second reason for the exclusion of spider and praying mantis images from scholarly discussions is their limited quantity and short period of production. Spider and mantis artifacts are proportionally rarer than mammal or bird artifacts produced during the Shang and Zhou periods, and they have never been a prevalent artistic choice in Chinese art. As such, the cultural importance of crawling-creature artifacts has been overlooked and underestimated.

Spider and mantis motifs, though rare, were depicted in the medium of jade in ancient China. Spider motifs were not present during the Shang dynasty, but mantises were. Surprisingly both types were prevalent during the Western Zhou dynasty but had practically disappeared by the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–221 BCE).⁹ In addition, the development of these unusual jade carvings was different from that of other artifacts with animal themes, such as the stylized bird-shaped pendants and dragon-shaped jade carvings that were popular in both the late Shang and Western Zhou periods.¹⁰ Jade, renowned as a precious gemstone and for its translucence and toughness, has been revered as an aristocratic and prestigious medium in China for more than five thousand years. As I will demonstrate in this essay, these unusual, striking spider- and mantis-shaped objects indicate key aspects of a material cul-
ture and the perception of the environment, including the reproductive activities of animals, that are not evident in other types of animal imagery produced in China at that time.

This article focuses on spider and praying-mantis decorative objects produced in the Western Zhou empire during the first half of the first millennium BCE, with reference to a remarkable bronze scabbard decorated with a spider in the Freer Gallery of Art as well as a spider-shaped jade sculpture and a pair of praying-mantis jade carvings excavated from China's Central Plain. The study of material culture is an essential methodology for understanding society and history in Early China, an era of limited textual documentation. Specifically, I will consider how these motifs were distinctive icons of a new pattern of cultural behavior and artistic choices among Western Zhou elites in the Central Plain. Given that artifacts were moved over the physical barrier of the Qinling Mountains during the Zhou dynasty, I propose that the few images of this type that survive be evaluated in the broader context of the interaction between Western Zhou China and the outside world. I will make comparisons between local designs and exotic artistic practices and illustrate subtle stylistic distinctions between the jade animals produced during the late Shang and the Western Zhou dynasties. This article cuts across conventional scholarly boundaries, benefiting not only from the humanities and social sciences but also from the insights of modern science, particularly entomology, a branch of biology. Entomology offers an empirical and scientific method for studying insects and has helped me reconstruct the perception of animals in the mindset of ancient people during the Western Zhou period.

Crawling Creatures in the Western Zhou Period
Jade carvings depicting crawling creatures such as spiders, praying mantises, silkworms, grasshoppers, and cicadas first appeared in China during the Western Zhou dynasty. These crawling-creature images can be divided into two groups. Jade silkworms and grasshoppers were usually mass-produced; they have similar appearances and form part of chain sets. Jade spiders and praying mantises had realistic details, were unique in shape, were used as individual pendants or for display, and represented very distinctive craftsmanship.
Since insects and other crawling creatures are relatively small and not as noticeable as other animal species, it is surprising to see little difference in size between the crawling creatures and mammals carved in jade during the Western Zhou dynasty. Carving jade is hard work, and the material is not easily accessible. Large and beautifully carved jade ritual items from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages in China are always found in the tombs of the elite. The larger and better quality of the jade carvings, usually the higher the status of the original owners. Jade and bronze were the most precious materials in Western Zhou China. Therefore, the size and the quality of the jade piece often reflects social status or military rank. Why did the people of the Western Zhou use such precious materials, jade and bronze, to represent these crawling creatures? What does this curious phenomenon tell us?

In 1991, two spider-shaped jade carvings were excavated from a circa 850–771 BCE tomb belonging to a noble at Sanmenxia in Henan province, an important Western Zhou archaeological site along the Yellow River. One is a three-dimensional, realistic sculpture; the other is a symmetrical silhouette (figs. 2, 3). More specific, these are the only known spider-shaped jade carvings produced in Early China. So far, only six spider-related artifacts from the pre-Qin era (i.e., before 221 BCE) have been found in the world; these include the two carvings from Sanmenxia. The third is the willow-shaped bronze scabbard with the spider decoration in the Freer collection (fig. 4). The fourth is an undated bronze ornament in the Von der Heydt Museum, Vienna (fig. 5). The fifth is an Ordos plaque excavated in Siberia, dated circa 500 BCE–circa 300 BCE (fig. 6). The sixth is a jade plaque decorated with an incised symmetrical spider motif excavated from Jinsha archeological site, dated circa 1100 BCE–circa 850 BCE (fig. 7).

It is worth noting that the jade spider from Sanmenxia (fig. 2) shares many similarities with the one on the bronze scabbard (fig. 4). Both are three-dimensional and are rendered realistically. The jade spider is 6 centimeters long and 3.5 centimeters tall and has a swollen abdomen with some parallel lines incised underneath. The bronze spider is 6.9 centimeters long, approximately one-third the length of the sheath. It is upside down, with its head pointing to the tip of the sheath. Two circles for eyes are located where an actual spider's eyes would be. The jade spider has four pairs of legs plus a pair of pointed appendages that probably represent its chelicerae and palps (fig. 2). The bronze figure has two pairs of legs. As we all know, actual spiders have eight legs, and insects have six. Entomological
studies show that spiders are often hold their legs in pairs when standing still, giving the appearance of a total of four legs, as is represented on the bronze scabbard.\textsuperscript{20} Thus it appears that the jade and bronze spiders share the same naturalistic design. In fact, the naturalism can be seen not only on the spider sculptures but also on other kinds of animal iconography produced during the Western Zhou dynasty, reflecting the development of a new artistic style. (For more on this topic, see the last section of this essay.)

While extant examples of spider-decorated works are limited in number, they all seem to have been made with exceptionally high artistic and technical skill. The spider, considered by many to be a harmful species, is the subject of folk stories and legends in many parts of the world.\textsuperscript{21} Its careful depiction in jade and bronze during the first millennium BCE is an indication of its importance to the elite classes in Western Zhou China. As discussed above, only a few spider-related objects have been collected by museums or unearthed by archaeologists in the last two decades; all are lucky survivors from ancient China. They may have been preserved because of their durable materials, but it is more likely that they were possessed by a small group of high-ranking people.

**Traces of a New Design**

In searching for the origins of the spider iconography in China, we have to deal with several questions: Was the willow-shaped bronze scabbard (fig. 4) in the Freer’s collection manufactured in the Zhou empire? If so, where did the inspiration for the spider imagery come from? Was it of non-Chinese origin?\textsuperscript{22} Is it possible that these objects were imported rather than made by local artisans?

According to modern scholars, the knife inside the scabbard is similar to weapons produced by nomads outside southwestern or northern China.\textsuperscript{23} Before the Zhou dynasty, the willow-shaped knife had been a portable weapon as well as a handy utensil—used either as a knife or a fork—among nomadic people in the northern steppe. From the eleventh to the tenth century BCE, local designers in the Zhou empire made decorative and openwork scabbards to accommodate the knives; the sets fit the needs of Western Zhou nobles. In my opinion, the scabbard was a new design that arose in China during the early Western Zhou and combined exotic cultural influences with local Zhou aesthetics.\textsuperscript{24} The few other willow-shaped scabbards excavated in China support this point of view.
Bronze scabbards decorated with a sculptural spider (F1916.393) and two Europoid faces (F1998.6). Photo by the author. Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1916.393; gift of Therese and Erwin Harris in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Freer Gallery of Art, F1998.6, Freer Gallery of Art.

Two examples dating from the early to middle Western Zhou dynasty were excavated in western China, including Baoji in Shaanxi province and Lingtai Baicaopo in Gansu province. Both were decorated on each side with a local motif, such as a stylized water buffalo or dragon. One example from the early Western Zhou dynasty was unearthed near Beijing. Kneeling human figures with curly hair are at the top of each corner; their facial features are unclear due to corrosion. But a scabbard decorated with two similar figures, with pronounced European faces and curly hair, in the Freer Gallery of Art (fig. 8) suggests that European faces originally decorated the Beijing scabbard. These figures are different from the stylistic human figures with flat noses, round eyes, and long-sleeved clothes carved on Western Zhou jades and bronzes found in the Zhuyuan valley. I believe the European faces are more likely linked to people from Central Asia or the Near East, who had access to ancient China via the northern steppe.

It is interesting to note that bronze scabbards have been excavated on the outskirts of Western Zhou China, including Baoji and Baicaopo in the west and Beijing in the north. These places were accessible to the areas populated by nomads outside northern and western China. For instance, some vessels, such as the pointed-base pottery and bronze vessels excavated in Baoji, were probably inspired by the artistic tastes in the Shu area beyond the western border. Some scholars suggest that the willow-shaped knife and scabbard were inspired by objects that came from the Mongolian plains via Tianshan Mountain in Central Asia and northern China, or Sichuan in western China. The locations of the excavated bronze scabbards, as well as their combination of local and exotic elements, suggest that the bronze scabbard was a regional product with foreign influences, initially manufactured in the
Late Shang triangular bronze ge blade decorated with a huge centipede motif excavated at Wulangmiao in Chengdu, Sichuan province. After Zhongguo qingtongqi quanj (1997), vol. 4, p. 170.

9 west and north. The scabbard not only protected the knife and enhanced its portability, allowing it to hang from a noble's waist, it also had a decorative appeal. Eventually, its function shifted from a practical utensil to a symbol of status and personal adornment.

Two excavated bronze weapons are critical for understanding the functions of crawling-creature iconography and confirming the inspiration for the spider motif. The first is a triangular ge blade, dated to the late Shang and decorated with a huge centipede, that was excavated at Chenggu Wulangmiao in Hanzhong city, south of Shaanxi province (fig. 9).\(^{30}\) Chenggu Wulangmiao is located on the south side of the Qinling Mountains, where one end of a narrow pathway connects two sides of the mountain, historically named Shudao (蜀道), the Corridor of Shu.\(^{31}\) Archaeologists have excavated many similar Western Zhou triangular ge blades in the Guanzhong area and the middle of Shaanxi province. For example, tombs at Baoji Zhuyuangou, located at the other end of the Corridor of Shu, held a large amount of triangular ge blades. Eighteen triangular blades have been unearthed from the site and between one and eight willow-shaped scabbards were found in each tomb.\(^{32}\) Therefore, scholars believe there was a geographical and iconographical relationship between the blades and the scabbards during the late Shang and early Western Zhou periods.\(^{33}\)

The Freer scabbard and the Chenggu blade are both decorated with a huge three-dimensional crawling creature in the center, and since both weapons seem to be related by period and geography, it is reasonable to compare and discuss them together. Similarly, the Shang ceremonial triangular ge blade with the centipede motif may help to explain the origin of the poisonous crawling creatures in Zhou iconography.

The Chenggu blade was unearthed in unclear archaeological circumstances, so we can analyze it only in terms of style, surface decoration, and typology. Many researchers claim that triangular ge blades were not connected to the bronze weapons produced in the Central Plain during the late Shang dynasty but more likely came from the remote Shu area in modern Sichuan.\(^{34}\) (Chengdu Plain in eastern Sichuan province, traditionally named Shu (蜀), was settled by a
foreign civilized society, “Ba-Shu” 巴蜀, before the unification of China by the Qin Empire in 221 BCE. From the thirteenth to the tenth century BCE, various civilized societies were located in different areas of China, including the Royal Shang Kingdom in the Central Plain, along the Yellow River at Anyang in Henan province; the Sanxingdui culture at Chengdu in Sichuan province; and the indigenous Shang Kingdom of Xing’an Dayangzhou near the Yangzi River in Jiangxi province. The transmission route of the triangular ge blades could have been from the Shu area to western Shaanxi province during the Shang and Western Zhou dynasties. The Chenggu blade probably was not from the Central Plain but from the remote Shu area.

If that is the case, poisonous-creature imagery may have been transmitted with bronze weapons from Shu via a southwest route, reaching the area south of the Qinling Mountains in Shaanxi as early as the late Shang (see fig. 1). Another example may help to prove this point. A bronze spearhead decorated with a lizard (fig. 10) was excavated in 1959 at Pengzhou Zhuwajie in Sichuan province; it has been dated to the first half of the first millennium BCE. Made and excavated in the Shu area, it has a realistic lizard in low relief on a shaft that extends into the midrib of the willow-shaped blade. Lizards, spiders, and centipedes live in tropical or subtropical
Chinese clothes for children decorated with the "five poisons" pattern. After Zhongguo minjian meishu quanjji (1994), vol. 6, p. 31.

Embroidered purse with appliquéd creatures representing the "five poisons." After Arts and Crafts of China (1996), p. 68.

In regions like the Shu area. They also have a place in traditional Chinese belief. They are three of the Five Poisonous Creatures (or Animals)—the others are the snake and the frog—that symbolize power over illness.37

Even today, children in Shaanxi province wear clothes or accessories with a "five poisonous animals" pattern (fig. 11). And people in rural villages use amulets or paper cutouts decorated with the pattern to ward off sickness. I propose that the "poison attacks poison" concept may have been adopted as early as the twelfth to eleventh century BCE. It may be one reason only certain kinds of crawling creatures were chosen to decorate bronze weapons during the Zhou dynasty. In nature, spiders and centipedes usually prey on other small creatures, using their strength and poison; some large spiders even attack birds.38 These crawling creatures likely attracted the Western Zhou social elites because they symbolized strength and military power.

Moreover, the location, proportion, and style of the three crawling creatures on the weapons strengthen their connections to each other. Like the spider, the centipede and the lizard take up one-third of their weapons. All are located centrally as focal points. The great size of the centipede weakens the attacking function of the two beveled edges on the blade but enhances its decorative purpose. Even though the lizard-decorated bronze spearhead was probably manufactured a century later than the Chenggu blade found in southern Shaanxi province, their iconographical connection indicates that crawling-creature imagery was utilized along the Corridor of Shu during the Shang and Zhou periods.

The similarities between these three strange bronze weapons indicate that there was artistic interaction between the two sides of the Qinling Mountain range: the Shu area and the Central Plain (fig. 1). A small jade plaque with a spider motif supports a Shu origin for the arachnid imagery. A colorful, small nephrite plaque (fig. 7), excavated in the Jinsha archaeological site in 2001 and decorated with a symmetrical spider motif in intaglio, has been dated to the early Western Zhou dynasty (circa eleventh to mid-ninth century BCE).39 Interestingly, the contours of the incised lines are very similar to the Sanmenxia spider-shaped jade silhouette (fig. 3) from the late Western Zhou. Both are stylized and symmetrical, with several strong pairs of legs extending from the body.40

The above examples help explain the choices made by artisans in the Shu and Central Plain areas to use certain types of animal imagery. The Freer bronze
scabbard, a local product with exotic features, seems to have been manufactured in the Western Zhou area rather than imported from beyond the borders of China. The non-Chinese origin of the spider iconography is indicated by several distinctive and crucial objects with small crawling-creature imagery produced along the Corridor of Shu, where many foreigners lived. Even though the Ordos plaque is decorated with a realistic spider (fig. 6) and has been dated to the second half of the first millennium BCE, we still require more information to determine whether there was any interaction between China and the northern steppe during this period.

Depictions of Fertilization
An unusual jade carving from the Western Zhou dynasty was unearthed in tomb 63 belonging to the Marquis of Jin in Shaanxi province. It depicts two praying mantises carved from one piece of jade, a rare form of representation (fig. 14). During the Shang and Zhou periods, praying mantises were usually depicted separately. Based on published information, seven late Shang and Western Zhou jade praying mantises have been excavated: one from the tomb of Lady Fuhao (fig. 12), one from Yinxu (fig. 13), and two from Yinzu Dasikongcun (fig. 15), all dated to the late Shang dynasty. Several pieces date from the Western Zhou dynasty: one from the tomb at Tengzhou Qianzhangda in Shangdong province (fig. 16) and one from the burial site of Changping Baifu in Beijing (fig. 17). All of the above examples are naturalistic representations, but we can distinguish differences between the Shang and Zhou jades. For example, the Shang examples feature geometric outlines and stylized cloud-like patterns. Stylistically, the Western Zhou insect bodies are more realistic and well-proportioned, with protruding eyes; small heads; big, knife-like arms; and segmented bodies.

In particular, the unique, combined praying mantis from the Marquis of Jin’s tomb provide insight into the ideology of the Western Zhou people. The larger praying mantis is riding the other one, using its huge, sickle-shaped upper limb to grasp the smaller one’s head as its abdomen presses on the back of the other. I interpret the pose in two ways: as a mating process or as a praying process.

Praying mantises and some species of spiders practice “sexual cannibalism,” in which a female organism kills and consumes a male of the same species before, during, or after copulation. This special biological process has attracted writers, sci-
suggest propose, JADE xuebao, mantis Early in Two quanjí Baifucun, mantis Early chutuyuqi Shangdong 16 Qiangzhangda 2007, jade Yinsu Western (2005), excavated vol. Henan 3 Daisikongcun (2008), jade Western province. After 1, tomb Changping 203, Zhongguo praying vol. 129. After 4, Kaogu 264. p. 35.9, site 175 (figs. 19a–b).

entists, and artists throughout human history, so the same was probably true of the Western Zhou elites as well. The linhou jade piece of two praying mantises recalls the biological process of sexual cannibalism; a male and female approach each other, the smaller male jumps onto the larger female, and copulation begins. After mating, the female turns its head around and kills the male to get enough nutrients for producing eggs (fig. 18). Jade is a precious material, which indicates the importance of the themes or the images carved on it. I suggest that a great interest in the natural environment, particularly on the biological processes of arthropods, which the ancient Chinese called cong 蟫, developed among Western Zhou people with high social status. Artisans used luxury materials to realistically depict these unusual crawling creatures for their patrons' personal enjoyment. This new artistic style illustrates the Western Zhou perception of nature and the animal world.

When we look at this carving (fig. 14) carefully, we see that the bigger mantis is riding the smaller one, which is contrary to the process of sexual cannibalism. However, perhaps this is the final stage of sexual activity, in which the female attacks the male. Or perhaps it is simply two praying mantises wrestling with each other. I propose, however, that it was the reproductive behavior of these insects that encouraged Western Zhou people to incorporate it into their iconography.

One more example supports my argument. Certain species of spider carry their young in egg sacs. Female spiders can lay up to three thousand eggs in one or more silk sacs (also called cocoons), which maintain a fairly constant humidity. Baby spiders pass through all their larval stages inside the eggs until they hatch as spiderlings. It is not difficult to imagine that the huge abdomen of the Sanmenxia jade spider is a sign of pregnancy. In this case, it could be holding thousands of eggs (figs. 19a–b).


The Realism of the Jade Carvings

Realism has long been regarded as a Western aesthetic rooted in Greek and Roman art and philosophy. Throughout the twentieth century, Western art historical scholarship has used realism to evaluate art from around the world. Art historians such as Kenneth McKenzie Clark (1903–1983) and Ernst Hans Josef Gombrich (1909–2001) consistently linked civilized societies to realism, a reflection of their own artistic tastes. However, more and more scholars have been reviewing ambiguous concepts, such as “civilized versus primitive,” which have created unnecessary conflicts between the West and the East. In the past two decades, for instance, Martin J. Powers and Jack Goody have critically discussed the problems that arise when Western perspectives are applied to Chinese art.

One theory suggests that realistic representation of landscapes in Chinese painting developed during the Five Dynasties and the Northern Song dynasty (circa tenth–twelfth century), when Neo-Confucianism, a philosophy characterized by humanism and rationalism, was prevalent in China. And Roel Sterckx has concluded that the ancient Chinese had no interest in the “scientific” description and observation of animals. He argues that the ancient Chinese thought of animals in terms of morality and of the animal realm as characterized by human self-perception; because they gave human qualities to animals, they had no “scientific impetus” to investigate the animals themselves. The evidence Sterckx uses, however, was drawn from texts produced mainly between the Warring States and the Han periods (771 BCE–220 CE), and he provides no visual examples of animal designs. In my opinion, his argument is not applicable to the period before the mid-eighth century BCE, particularly the Western Zhou period.

It is my belief that animal-shaped artifacts produced during the Western Zhou are evidence of a newly formed artistic taste, a style of accurate depiction
based on close observation. I argue that the ability to depict realistic art was established in China during the Zhou dynasty, and the desire originated because of the secular concerns of Western Zhou elites, which differ from the ideological and cultural contexts imposed on them by some Western art historians. Even though Western Zhou artisans did not develop a perfect approach to anatomical representation or linear perspective, they did intend to represent the animals realistically. Depicting the powerful physical features and interesting biological activities of crawling creatures in luxury objects or as personal accessories was not a feature of the earlier Shang empire, during which the focus was on ritual objects. The change may have been due to the increased secular interest in nature.
and luxury objects on the part of the Western Zhou elites. Excavations of Western Zhou tombs indicate that the realistic jade animals were often placed directly on the bodies of the deceased. They were probably important possessions, serving as ornaments in people's daily lives.

Western Zhou China inherited an interest in depicting animals on jades and bronzes from the Shang, but the artistic approaches in the two dynasties were different. Late Shang jade animals are usually decorated with detailed incised lines, capture the most characteristic poses, and are rendered from above or in profile; they are not anatomical. Western Zhou jades are usually plain, with deeply beveled contours that create more sculptural surfaces. This naturalism is found not only in spider- and mantis-related artifacts but also in a variety of animal images produced during this period. To conclude this discussion, I will demonstrate the subtle differences between the Shang and Zhou artistic approaches and how a realistic style of art became established during the Western Zhou dynasty.

Two patterns of artistic practice in late Shang and Western Zhou animal jade carvings can be established by the following example. The animal-shaped jade carvings on the left column of figure 20 (a, c, e, g) were produced in the late Shang dynasty. Figures 20a, e, and g were excavated from the late Shang tomb of Lady Fuhao, and figure 20c was excavated from an early Western Zhou tomb.56 Those on the right column of figure 20 (b, d, f, h) were manufactured and excavated from tombs of Western Zhou nobles.57 Shang jade animals are generally more geometric, retaining the gemstone's original rectangular shape; see the cylindrical shape of the bulky bird sculpture (fig. 20a) and the rectangular contour of the bird pendants (fig. 20e). Artisans applied stiff and unnatural postures to the jade pieces, leaving little space or openwork on the surface. For example, I suggest that the necks of the bird-shaped pendants were highly compressed and bent ninety degrees to fully utilize the surface area of the material (fig. 20e).58 Jade is a precious and tough material, so it is possible that Shang artisans were mainly concerned with reducing waste.
Furthermore, a new artistic practice is revealed in the jade animals made during the early Western Zhou dynasty, as illustrated by the excavations at the Qianzhangda burial site, which dates to the eleventh century BCE. Some Shang animal-shaped jade carvings were collected from these tombs. Another type of water buffalo, such as one made of jade and decorated with double incised lines (fig. 20c) was smoothly carved, with a big, hollow space underneath the belly (fig. 20d); it was produced during the Western Zhou period. Many comparatively realistic carvings were also found at Qianzhangda, such as a bird-shaped pendant (fig. 20f) and an alert stag with elaborate antlers from the Western Zhou (fig. 20h). Compared to the stiff and distorted shapes of the Shang birds, the Western Zhou bird has a well-proportioned head, sharp beak, and gracefully curving neck, which could have been achieved only by eliminating a large section of jade. Sharp edges and plain surfaces are characteristic of animal-shaped jade pendants made in the late Shang dynasty (fig. 20g), but a Western Zhou animal-shaped jade pendant such as the stag excavated from Zhouyuany valley has a nicely carved edge that shows the musculature of its body (fig. 21). Surprisingly, although it is only three to four millimeters thick, it has two gently slanting slopes at the top to create the back, enhancing the illusion of a sculptural body on a fairly flat surface. This subtle yet difficult carving technique shows the artisan's intent: to create a realistic depiction of the creature, regardless of the materials used. This marks a change from the late Shang dynasty during which, as mentioned earlier, waste reduction seems to have been the main concern. Similar examples can also be found in many animal-shaped jade carvings and bronze sculptures from the Western Zhou, including a bronze boar-shaped ritual vessel and jade horse excavated from the tomb of Marquis Jin in Shaanxi province (fig. 22). For example, compared to the simple design of the horse-shaped jade pendant excavated from the Shang dynasty tomb of Lady Fuhao (fig. 23), the complex structure of the Western Zhou horse's skull and its muscles were rendered faithfully on a very hard stone, indicating that the sculptor must have closely observed a real horse.

Searching through fragmentary archaeological evidence and collections in museums, we can now to a certain extent reconstruct the geographical origins of crawling-creature imagery and the interactions between the Western Zhou and other people three thousand years ago. Realistic crawling-creature imagery was used for the first time in China during the early Western Zhou dynasty. Exotic
A late Shang jade horse pendant excavated from the tomb of Lady Fuhao, after Yinxu dixia gui bao: Henan Anyang Fuhao tomb (1994), fig. 64.

Influences from the west or the north as well as an interest in the natural environment led to depictions of strong or poisonous crawling creatures. The presence of such imagery demonstrates the creatures' powerful and tangible value among the Western Zhou elites as well as the latter's close observation of the natural world. Extant ornaments of the period reflect not only an enthusiasm for realistic art but also that the early Chinese craftsman's ingenuity in relation to animal imagery has been greatly underestimated.

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NOTES

1 Early China includes the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age. This article defines "Early China" as ending with the unification of China by the Qin Empire, i.e., before 221 BCE.

2 The Zhou people occupied lands north of the Yellow River early in the second millennium and settled in the Zhouchuan valley of the Wei River, which is identified as the Central Plain of the Zhou empire in the first half of the first millennium BCE.

3 The zoomorphic iconography discussed here includes imaginary and real animals. In Early China, the classification and qualities associated with animals varied from era to era. See Chan Lai Pik, "The Animal-shaped Jade Carvings in the Western Zhou Dynasty" (PhD diss., Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2009), pp. 3-6. In fact, zoological terms in Early Chinese texts are either generic categories or collections of different species. Roel Sterckx discusses different terms and genres used during the Warring States and the early Imperial periods. See Roel Sterckx, "Defining Animals," in The Animal and the Daemon in Early China (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 15-43; "Animal Classification in Ancient China," East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine 23 (2005), pp. 28-29. Modern science's biological definition of "animal," however, refers to all members of the kingdom Animalia, from insects to humans. The six animal species groups in Linnaean taxonomy include mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, and invertebrates. To a certain extent, these six classifications are comparable to the taxonomy of animals in a Han work known as Chuanqiu fanlu 春秋繁露, which can be seen in the titles of "zoological focused" chapters like shi chong 釋蟲, shi yu 釋魚, shi niao 釋鳥, shi shou 釋獸, and shi chu 釋畜. See Sterckx, The Animal and the Daemon in Early China, pp. 22-23.


7 Bird-related imaginary creatures, like dragons and zoomorphic hybrids, have been popular themes for scholarly study. For example, see Chang, "The Animal in Shang and Chou Bronze Art," pp. 527–54; Wu Hung, "Bird Motifs in Eastern Yi Art," Orientations 16, no. 10 (October 1985), pp. 30–41; Jessica Rawson, "Animal Motifs on Early Western Zhou Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections," Orientations 18, no. 9 (September 1987), pp. 14–25, and...

This situation applies to most jade arachnids and insects in Early China, with two exceptions: jade silkworms and cicadas. For instance, jade silkworms have been found since the Neolithic period. Jade cicadas appeared in China not only during the Western Zhou dynasty but also in the Neolithic period and from the Shang to the Han dynasties. Jade cicadas have been discussed widely; for example, V. Sylwan, “Silk from the Yin Dynasty,” Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities 9 (1937), pp. 119–26; Yoshitake Narumi 吉武成美, 汲勇隆, 薫, “Jiachen de jiyuan he fenhuayani 鼬類的起源和分化研究, Nongye kaogu 農業考古, no. 2 (1983), pp. 316–24; 418; Mu Chaona 莫朝娜, “Shiqian shiqi de yuchan 史前时期的玉蟬, Wenwu chunchu 文物春秋, no. 6 (2006), pp. 11–20, 68.

Nevertheless, arachnid- and insect-shaped jade carvings produced during the pre-Qin dynasty deserve further study.

The stylized bird-shaped jade pendants in the Western Zhou period are mainly rectangular or triangular in shape with a standardized format originally developed in the late Shang dynasty, see Yang Boda 楊伯達, ed., Zhongguo yuqi guanji 中國玉器全集1 (Shijiazhuang shi: Hebei meishu chubanshe, 2005), p. 201; Chan, “Animal-shaped Jade Carvings,” p. 128.

As archaeologists and scholars such as Cho-yun Hsu and Katheryn M. Linduff have documented, artifacts (including ritual jades, bronze vessels, and weapons) excavated in Sichuan were similar to objects found in the Central Plain and perhaps were made over Qinling Mountains during the Shang and Zhou dynasties. For example, bronze spears and halberds excavated in Pengxian resembled their Shang counterparts. The jade pieces unearthed from Guanghang were also similar to ritual materials manufactured during the Shang and Zhou. See Cho-yun Hsu and Katheryn M. Linduff, Western Zhou Civilization (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 214–17. These few arachnid images should be evaluated in the broader context of the interaction between Western Zhou China and the outside world. For the landscape and environment of the Qinling Mountains, see Li Feng, Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045–771 BC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 30–33.

See n. 9.


The official archaeological report of these spider-shaped jade carvings has not yet been published. However, the two jades have been exhibited several times, including Jade: Jades of Jīn’s Empire, November 8, 2002–January 5, 2003, Temporary Exhibition Gallery, Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM), Macao and The Dialogue of Purified Stone: The Selected Pre-Qin Jades, January 15–April 15, 2006, Guangdong Province Museum, China.

So far, three early Chinese spider-decorated nephrite carvings have been excavated. Only the two mentioned in this paragraph were carved in the shape of a spider. The third one is a small jade plaque decorated with a spider motif in intaglio. See Chengdu wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 成都文物考古研究所, ed., Jinsha yuqi 金沙玉器 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2006), p. 155; see also n. 40.

19 Chelicerae are the first set of appendages near the spider’s mouth. They are used for defense or attack or as “pilers” for grasping. Palps generally resemble legs; however, they are not usually used for locomotion but to manipulate prey. See Rainer F. Foelix, Biology of Spiders (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 21–22, 24; Jan Beccaloni, Arachnids (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), p. 12.

Dr. Edward A. Chapin, curator, Division of Insects, United States National Museum, from 1926 to 1954; identified the spider as being of the family Epeiridae (Epeiridae). For a study on the movement of spiders’ legs, see the curatorial remarks file, Freer Gallery of Art, and Foelix, Biology of Spiders, pp. 188–90.

21 The general perception of spider nowadays is that they inject their prey with venom; an example is the infamous black widow spider, Latrodectus mactans, which can be lethal to humans. However, the vast majority of spiders are not harmful at all. See Beccaloni, Arachnids, p. 27. Folk stories and myths all around the globe incorporate spider motifs; one

22 In this article, the term “non-Chinese” refers to people other than the Shang or Zhou located in the Central Plain of China or the styles of art they used.  

23 For the origins of the willow-shaped knife in the Sichuan area, see Jiang Zhanghua 江章華, “Bashu liuyexing jian yuanyuan shitan” 巴蜀柳葉形銅劍源流試探, Sichuan wenwu, no. 1 (1992), pp. 81–84; Duan Yu 段玉, “Bashu qingtong wenhua de yanjiu” 巴蜀青銅文化的演進, Wenwu, no. 3 (1996), pp. 36–47; Sichuan sheng wenwu guanwei weiyuanhui 四川省文物管理局委員會等, “Guanzhong saoxingdai weizhi yihao jisikeng fajue jianbao” 廣漢三星堆遗址一號祭祀坑發掘簡報, Wenwu, no. 10 (1987), pp. 1–15. Another argument suggests that the knife came from the Near East to Central Asia and then via the Ordos Steppe area to China; See Lin Meicun 林梅村, “Shangzhou qingtongjian yuanyuan kao” 商周青銅劍源流考, in Han Tang Xiyu zhongguo wenwu 黃唐西域與中國文(Heijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), pp. 39–63. Another scholar, Lu Liancheng, suggests, “The Northern bronze short daggers and the Early Western Zhou willow-shaped knives might be influenced by the Jemdet Nasr Culture (ca. 3100–2900 BCE) and later the Akkadian bronze culture of the Sumerian Empire (2334–2083 BCE), via the plateau of Iran to Central Asia, Siberia and the plateau of Mongolia. Short bronze daggers were prevalent weapons in the Jemdet Nasr Culture during 3100–2900 BCE.” See Lu Liancheng 蘭連成, “Caoyan sichou zhi lu—Zhongguo tong yuwe qingtong wenhua de jiaoluo” 草原絲綢之路——中國同域外青銅文化的交流, in Shangguan Hong Nan 上官鴻南, Mi Shiguang 米世光, eds., Shi neihai xiansheng bashi shouduan xuexue wenji 史念海先生八十壽辰學術文集 (Xian: Shangshen shifan daxue chubanshe, 1996), p. 719. Recently, Duan Yu modified his previous argument to suggest that the willow-shaped knife originated in Anatolia in early 3000 BCE, then was transmitted via India and Central Asia (between mid-3000 and 1500 BCE) and to southwestern China (the Shu area) around 1300 BCE. See Duan Yu 段玉, “Shangdai Zhongguo Xianan qingtongjian de layuan” 商代中國西南青銅劍的來源, Shehu kexue yanjiu, no. 2 (2009), pp. 175–81.  


26 So and Bunker, Traders and Raiders on China’s Northern Frontier, p. 48.  

yuan yu yuan he fazhan“寶雞茹家莊、周原
溝壑地出土兵器的初步研究——兼論
鉤式兵器的源和發展, Kaogu wenyi
34 For a discussion of bronze triangular ge
blades, see Zhao Conggang 趙叢蒼,
“Zhenggu yangxian tongqi zonghe
yanjiu” 鄭國洋縣銅器綜合研究,
Wenbo, no.4 (1996), pp. 17–18; Duan Yu
段瑜, “Bashu qingtong wenhua de
yanjiu” 巴蜀青铜文化的演進, pp.
39–42. The triangular ge blade is typical of
weapons in the Zhengyang area. One
hundred and eleven triangular ge blades
from Yinxu periods I and II were
unearthed there, representing 76.6
percent of the total number of bronze
weapons found. However, no more than
twenty pieces were unearthed in the
Royal Shang Kingdom, located in
modern Zhengzhou and Anyang in
Henan province. Therefore, the trian-
gular ge blades probably did not come
from the Royal Shang Kingdom. See Tang
Jinshu 唐金裕, Wang Shouzhi 王壽芝,
and Guo Zhangliang 郭張亮, “Shanxi
sheng Chengguxian chutu yinshang
qingtongqi zhengji jianbao” 陝西省澄
城縣出土殷商銅器整理簡報, Kaogu,
no. 3 (1980), pp. 215–16. For a discussion
of the transmission route of triangular ge
blades from the Shu area to the South, see
Duan Yu 段瑜, “Bashu qingtong wenhua
de yanjin” 巴蜀青铜文化的演進, p. 41;
Liu Hong 劉弘, “Lun zhushi ge de
nanchuan: xianan qingtongge de
daiyianju” 論蜀式戈的南傳——西南
青铜戈的再研究, Sichuan Wenwu,
no. 5 (2007), pp. 66–74; Yin Can 岳成,
“Shangzhouch zhi jin shanqiu yu qingtong-
ge yu Shuren sui wu wang fazhou” 商周
之際三角銅戈與周人隨王伐紹,
Qilu xuekan, no. 6 (2008), pp. 34–38; for
an argument that the transmission route
was from the Shu area in Huan province
to the Central Plain, see Li Xinqin 李新
秦, “Guanyu sanjiaoxing yuange de
xinrenshi” 閃出三角形援戈的新認識,
in Baoji qingtongqi bowuguan, ed., Zhou
qin wenming luncong II 周秦文明論叢
(第二輯) (Xian: Sanqin chubanshe,
35 The term joins two cultural and political
entities known from ancient texts; the
state of Ba was located in east Sichuan
and the state of Shu was in west Sichuan.
These states probably arose in the eight-
to the sixth century BCE. Since the third
century BCE, people have combined their
names as it is hard to distinguish between
them, given current knowledge. See
Michèle Pirazzoli-t’serstevens, “Sichuan
in the Warring States and Han Periods,”
in Ancient Sichuan: Treasures from a Lost
Civilization, ed. Robert Bagley (Seattle:
Seattle Art Museum and Princeton
36 Bagley, Ancient Sichuan, p. 198, fig. 70.
37 See Yao Weijun 姚偉君, Changjiang liuyu
de yinshi wenhua 長江流域的飲食文化
(Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004),
p. 361.
38 The arthropod phyllum is divided into
several subphyla and classes, which
include arachnids, insects, and centi-
pedes. See Beccaloni, Arachnids, pp. 5–6.
For a description of bird-eating spiders,
see Preston-Matham, Spiders of the
39 Chengdu wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo 成都
文物考古研究所, ed., Jinsha yaqi 金沙
玉器 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2006),
p. 155.
40 Although both images resemble each
other, the Sanmenxia jade silhouette has
three pairs of legs instead of four. The
spider motif on Jinsha jade pendant has
three pairs of legs too and also a pair of
appendages above and below the legs.
The Sanmenxia jade silhouette is
described as a dragonfly in The Dialogue
of Purified Stone, p. 163. However, this
image is too abstract to determine wheth-
er it is a spider or an insect.
41 Beijing Daxue Kaoguxue Xi 北京大學考
古系, and Shanxi Sheng Kaogu Ynjiusuo
山西省考古研究所, “Tianma-Quecum
beizhao jinhou mudi dixi jiaju baogao”
天馬—曲村北趙晉侯墓地第四次發
掘, Wenwu, no. 8 (1994), pp. 18, fig.
26.10.
42 Zhongguo shenhui kexue yuan kaogu
yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院考古研究所,
ed., Yinshu huihua mudi feiqi haoji
(Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980),
p. 173, pls. 85.7, 139.1.
43 Zhongguo shenhui kexue yuan kaogu
yanjiusuo Anyang gongzuodui 中國社會
科學院考古研究所安阳工作隊, p. 382,
figs. 35.9, 35.10, 10.5. Gu Fang 古方, ed.,
Zhongguo chutu yaqi quanjii, vol. 4 中
國出土玉器全集 4 (Beijing: Kexue
44 Gu Fang 古方, ed., Zhongguo chutu yaqi
quanjii, vol. 4 中國出土玉器全集 4,
p. 127.
45 Yang Boda 楊伯達, ed., Zhongguo yaqi
quanjii, vol. 1 中國玉器全集 1 (Shijiu-
zhuan she: Hebei meishu chubanshe,
2005), fig. 264.
46 Jae C. Choe, and Bernard J. Crespi, eds.,
The Evolution of Mating Systems in Insects
and Arachnids (Cambridge: Cambridge
47 See nn. 3, 38.
49 Ibid., p. 259.
50 Linda Nochlin, Realism (Harmonds-
Matthew Beaumont, Adventures in
Realism (Oxford: Blackwell Publication,
51 For example, see E. H. Gombrich, Art
and Illustration: A Study in the
Psychology of Pictorial Representation
(New York: Pantheon Books, 1961);
“Action and Expression in Western Art,”
in The Essential Gombrich: Selected


55 Ibid., pp. 240–41.


57 The jade water buffalo was excavated from tomb 2009 of the state of Guo at Shangcunling in Sanmenxia, Henan province. See Guangdong sheng bowuguan 廣東省博物館, ed. *Zhenshi zhi yu: Xianqin yuqi jingpin zhanshi tuji* 貞石之語——先秦玉器精品展圖集 (Guangzhou: Lingnan meishu chubanshe, 2006), p. 161. The other jade animals were excavated from the Qianzhangda burial site; see Gu Fang 古方, ed., *Zhongguo chutu yuqi quanj* 中國出土玉器全集 4, pp. 82, 107, 176.


59 Gu Fang 古方, ed., *Zhongguo chutu yuqi quanj*, p. 49.
AN ILLUSTRATED MECMUA

The Commoner’s Voice and the Iconography of the Court
in Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Painting

Abstract

A small Mecmua, a seventeenth-century manuscript that includes a variety of narratives and paintings and is currently housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, is a rare example of commercial painting production outside the Ottoman palace workshop. The Mecmua includes nineteen single-page portraits of sultans, specific individuals, and heroes of popular literature as well as paintings of animals. Most of the illustrations are accompanied by texts that relate a brief story about the depicted person.

Using the Mecmua as an example, I will attempt in this essay to show how certain aspects of popular painting functioned in two specific environments. I will describe how court-based narratives and images became popularized; how the interaction between two spheres, the court and the city, was manifested in the oral literary tradition and visual culture; and how text and images changed as a result. In addition, this essay will address the following questions: what was the relationship between images and text? Were they changed at the same time? Did the text change in different ways than the images did? Was the textual transformation more substantial when compared to the images, or vice versa?

OTTOMAN BOOK PAINTING is best known for the lavishly illustrated copies of various texts that were prepared for Topkapı Palace courtiers by distinguished artists of the royal workshop. Lesser examples of the same or similar manuscripts, however, were probably made in city markets for an urban clientele.\(^1\)

This essay evaluates one of those rare examples of painting outside of the Ottoman court to show how certain aspects of popular painting functioned in this specific environment and time, and how the voices of ordinary people can be heard in the manuscript’s images and texts. The small (11.0 x 16.8 cm) Mecmua, a manuscript housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, includes a variety of narratives and paintings and has not yet been the subject of a monographic study.\(^2\) It is an example of so-called bazaar painting; its iconography and text show that it may have been produced as a compendium for a storyteller. It consists of thirty folios and includes nineteen single-page portraits of Ottoman sultans, individuals identified by their names, and heroes of popular literature as well as paintings of animals. None of these follow a thematic order; rather, the subjects seem to have been arranged randomly. On the initial page, which has an illuminated heading, there is a kasîde (ode) eulogizing Murad IV (reigned 1623–40) written by a seventeenth-century Ottoman poet, Nef‘î.\(^3\) This suggests that the date of the Mecmua is around the middle of the seventeenth century as well.\(^4\)
Thirteen illustrations in the Mecmuā are enclosed within medallions placed in the center of the page, while three of them are placed in rectangular frames. The remaining three pictures do not have any frame. Most of the illustrations are accompanied by texts written in black naskh script in the medallions on the opposite page or around the paintings; they give a brief story related to the person depicted. Both texts and pictures are enclosed in medallions that are almost the same size and shape. Some illustrations have relatively long texts that continue on subsequent folios and cover the whole surface of the page. Nine paintings in the Mecmuā do not have any text at all.

Bazaar Painters and Storytellers
Although the most prominent examples of Ottoman painting were created by artists in the royal workshop, a great corpus of works with a similar iconography but a rather simplified style indicates that paintings were also produced outside the palace. In 1983 Metin And attributed costume albums—pictorial anthologies featuring the sultan, high-ranking officials, and ordinary individuals—to “bazaar painters” (çarşı ressamları). He did not discuss the organization of these bazaar painters—who they were, how they worked, and who bought their work, etc. Instead, he drew attention to the style and iconography of their paintings; compared to the lavishly detailed examples of the palace production, they are simpler versions with fewer figures and less detail. The existence of numerous costume albums, most of which are housed in European collections and repeat almost the same iconography and style, indicates that the main task of the bazaar painters was to produce these albums for European clients. However, many of the albums include single-page paintings of young women and men, probably from the court, that date to the seventeenth-century Topkapı Palace treasury, suggesting that similar paintings were probably produced for Ottoman courtiers as well.

The royal workshop’s production of lavishly illustrated manuscripts came to an end after the 1618–22 reign of Osman II, when artists began to produce single-page paintings for courtiers. The end of court patronage probably led to an increase in works by bazaar painters in the city; perhaps these unattached painters were searching for new clients who would be able to purchase their works. Although the term “bazaar painters” is used to describe these city-based artists, it needs to be clarified by detailed research and, in particular, by examining their methods of production. Unfortunately, since the publication of And’s article, there have been no in-depth studies analyzing the bazaar painters, and many scholars in the field have used the term without any reflection.

In addition to the costume albums, a group of single-page album paintings depicting religious and historical personalities and sultans as well as paintings in
royal picture albums have been attributed to the bazaar painters. Banu Mahir has suggested that they might have been made by Ottoman painters in Istanbul for the use of fortunetellers, such as those described by the celebrated author Evliya Çelebi (died 1682), whose account is crucial since it not only is the only known source on bazaar painters but also provides invaluable data that contextualizes these single-page album paintings. According to Çelebi, the Esnafl-ı Faličyan-ı Musavvir (guild of fortune-tellers/diviners) practicing their trade in the Mahmud Pasha Bazaar used images drawn on large, cut, and firm İstanbul (made in Istanbul) paper. They depicted all the heroes and kings of old, a multitude of apostles and prophets, and countless fortresses, war scenes, and the most marvelous naval battles and destruction of ships at sea.  

Çelebi also mentioned the Esnafl-ı Nakásañ-ı Musavviran, the guild of illuminators/painters, which had forty members and owned four shops in the marketplace. They made large-sized paintings depicting popular heroes from the oral narrative tradition, portraits of legendary champions and kings of the past, and scenes of combat between two champions. A certain Tāsbaz Pehlivan Ali was renowned for his extraordinary talent, which he displayed in his paintings of the Ottoman conquests of Baghdad and Revan, modern Yeravan. Unfortunately, Tāsbaz Pehlivan Ali’s paintings do not survive, but in all likelihood they were related to the seventeenth-century Ottoman visual tradition, of which some examples do survive. Like fortune tellers, storytellers probably used these large and single-page paintings—depicting sultans marching with their attendants and scenes showing the miracles of the prophets—as visual aids while they were narrating tales of Ottoman conquests or other popular stories.

An illustration in the album of the prophet Hamza ibn Abdul-Muttalib (died 625), the paternal uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, seated on the mythical simurgh bird may have been one of those paintings (fig. 1). According to the note at the upper right of the painting, it depicts Hamza when he was flying to Mount Qaf, the mountain where the simurgh was thought to live. Dressed as an Arabian warrior, he is depicted with a big moustache and holding a lion-headed mace in his hand. The size of the painting, larger than the typical manuscript illustration, as well as the topic permit us to speculate that it was used by a storyteller. Hamza’s legendary life and extraordinary adventures constituted the contents of the works collectively known as the Hamzanâme (Story of Hamza) in folk literature. The Hamzanâme is thought to have been born in Persian oral literature and to have survived largely within that tradition. One of the most popular themes among storytellers, it was told and retold in many different versions and many different languages throughout the Islamic world, including Anatolia.
Some of the *Hamzanâme* copies preserved at libraries in Istanbul contain records indicating when, by which reciter, and in which coffeehouse they were read. Kâtip Çelebi (died 1657), an Ottoman literary historian, noted that many versions of the tales of Hamza circulated in Istanbul. A story indicating Hamza’s popularity among storytellers is recounted by Lâmi’i-zâde Abdullah Çelebi (1472-1537) in his *Letâif* (Book of wits). According to Abdullah Çelebi, a former storyteller was appointed to pray for a mosque; during his sermon, since he had taken some opium, he suddenly started to recite the story of the prophet Hamza. Although there is no evidence that this painting of the prophet on the simurgh was used as part of a storytelling performance, it is clear that it was a product of the cultural milieu in which Hamza’s story was widely circulated.

Similar paintings depicting the sultan marching with his attendants likely were used for the same purpose. One of the most popular themes among Ottoman storytellers was the military exploits of the sultans, and it is surely not a coincidence that the depicted rulers were well known for a considerable number of conquests; Murad II (reigned 1421-44, 1446-51), Mehmed III (reigned 1595-1603), and Murad IV, for example, were frequent subjects. In his *Mecmua* portrait, Murad IV, dressed as an Arabian warrior, sits on his horse surrounded by his attendants...
(fig. 2). According to the note on the picture, it depicts the sultan on his way to the Baghdad campaign.⁸⁴

Halil İnalcık suggests that the first Ottoman chronicles, such as *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân* (Chronicle of the House of Osman) by Aşık Paşazâde (died after 1484), most probably were written to be read aloud in public.⁸⁵ Narratives of bravery may have played a crucial role in encouraging the masses. For instance, the chronicler Na’îmâ Mustafa Efendi (died 1716) mentioned that one advantage of narrating stories of bravery, such as Firdawsi’s (died 1020) *Shahnama* (Book of kings), to the crowd was to encourage and excite them in times of war.⁸⁶ Another historian, Celâlzâde Mustafa Efendi (died 1567), stated that the folk poets of Anatolia (*ozan*) would sing, “Go, Sultan Selim, the age is yours,” a reference to the bravery of Selim I (reigned 1512–20).⁸⁷ Narrating the glorious conquests of the past was a leisure-time activity at the Ottoman court as well. Mehmed IV (reigned 1648–93), for example, ordered chronicler Abdurrahman Abdî Paşa (died 1692) to recite history books relating the conquests of the sultan’s predecessors, such as the battle of Çaldiran, which took place between Selim I and Shah Ismail (1487–1524) in 1514.⁸⁸ The written sources lead us to speculate that the large-size, single-page paintings might have been used as visual props during the recitation of these conquests. Although it is not known where and how these images were used, all the extant paintings survive in court albums, suggesting that at least these examples were used in court circles. Support for this premise includes some clues on picture recitation in the palace, which will be discussed below. Of course, books were read and their pictures viewed at various other places in Istanbul as well.

**Meeting Places, Audiences, and Picture Recitation**

Based mostly on Latif’s *Risale-i Evsâf-i İstanbul* (Essay on the Description of Istanbul) of 1525 and other contemporary sources, Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı’s study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman poetry provides a vivid picture of the *meclis* (poetry gathering) in Istanbul. During the *meclis*, poets read their new works, or selections from works of prose, while they enjoyed wine and food that had been prepared for them. One of the most popular pleasure spots in Istanbul was Galata, a European enclave famous for its taverns (*meyhane*), such as the well-known ones run by Efe and Yani. By the second half of the sixteenth century, coffeehouses had joined the city’s gathering places.⁸⁹ Gelibolulu Mustafa ‘Âli (1541–1600), a famous Ottoman historian and author, describes coffeehouses as the meeting point for people ranging from the well-educated classes (*ehl-i irfân*) to the so-called “idle populace” (discussed below), such as cavalrymen and janissaries seeking gossip.⁹⁰ An album painting dated to the turn of the sixteenth century
depicts such a coffeehouse: the customers, who appear to be from different strata of society, sit and enjoy the coffee prepared by a young servant as they read their books.\textsuperscript{31} This painting documents that public readings were among the activities of the coffeehouse customers.

Besides taverns and coffeehouses, \textit{bedesten} (marketplaces) and neighborhoods near mosques were used as public spaces for readings in Istanbul. Antoine Galland (1646–1715), a French book collector, wrote that in return for three or five akçes (silver coins also known as aspers), readers in the \textit{bedesten} would recite the \textit{Iskandarnâma}, the romance of Alexander the Great, to people seeking entertainment during the long winter nights.\textsuperscript{32} A note at the end of a copy of the \textit{Süleymânnâmê} (Book of Solomon), an anonymous prose version of a folk tale, states that the manuscript was read aloud by Osman Agha during the night of August 17, 1812, near the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, one of the major mosques in Istanbul, built by Sultan Ahmed I (reigned 1603–17).\textsuperscript{33}

The houses and gardens of poets and other individuals functioned as meeting places as well. The \textit{meclis} evidently were open to various classes of Ottoman society, including the elite, the well-educated, and the non-slave urban classes. However, people belonging to the lower classes also attended public readings and meetings. Reader notes in the margins of popular storybooks indicate that public readings were among the popular leisure-time activities of the Ottoman “middle class” during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{34} A reader’s note at the end of the aforementioned \textit{Süleymânnâmê} provides invaluable data on the identity of the audience. (It is an example from the nineteenth century but still useful for gaining insight into the audience’s identity.) Among the listeners were a certain Ahmed, son of a tailor, and Münir Molla, a religious man.\textsuperscript{35} Since Ahmed is identified by his father’s occupation, he presumably did not yet have a profession of his own. Yet, as the reader’s note documents, this young person and Molla, who apparently belonged to the \textit{ulama} (religious and judicial hierarchy), could have sat side by side during the public reading of popular book. Thus, different classes of people might assemble to listen to a reader.

There is no information about whether or not pictures were definitely used as visual aids during readings for the general public. But a story implying that they were used during the \textit{meclis} was recounted by Kinalzâde Hasan Celebi (1546/7–1604) in his famous \textit{tezkire} (biographical dictionary of poets). Kinalzâde writes that he met the famous \textit{şehnameci} (official court historian) Fethullah 'Arîf, who was known for his many “unusual” innovations in his father’s \textit{meclis}. 'Arîf brought a picture of a \textit{mahbûb} (beloved) he had made himself, and during the \textit{meclis} wrote a verse couplet for each part of his body.\textsuperscript{36} Such information allows us to imagine that paintings were at the very least present at poetic gatherings.
Supporting information related to picture recitation comes from the chronicle by the historian Selâniki (died 1600?). As he recounted, during the circumcision festival of the son of Grand Vizier Cerrah Mehmed Pasha (died 1604) in May 1597, a banquet was given for the statesmen in the divanhâne (a building in the second court of the palace). Wondrous images, allegedly gifts from the Persian ruler, were displayed on curtains and wooden fences in the Has Oda (privacy chamber) of the grand vizier, where they could be examined by guests as they listened to music and verbal recitation. In this case, the paintings probably were illustrated by Persian artists, but the single-page paintings by Levni, a prominent painter of the eighteenth century, suggest that Ottoman artists produced pictures for storytelling performances as well.

In a court album dated 1710–20, forty-two full portraits by Levni can be identified through the names and professions written on the folios. They include portraits of individuals from the Turkish city of Bursa, such as Yusuf Bey and Shah Mehmed, as well as Persians like Durşaz Bey. Gül İrepoglu suggests that these paintings were made to depict certain characters and were used by palace storytellers. Levni’s album includes only one portrait of a sultan, that of Osman II, whose depiction was presumably related to the perception of him by eighteenth-century spectators. To be precise, after his tragic murder in 1622, Osman’s story became one of the most popular told by seventeenth-century storytellers, which may be the reason his portrait was included in an album produced sometime during the 1710s. Perhaps he was regarded not only as an Ottoman sultan but also as a fictional character, similar to the others depicted in the album, which would strengthen the argument that Levni’s paintings were used by storytellers. As discussed above, written and visual evidence, although limited, suggests that the tradition of using illustrations during public storytelling and readings existed in both palace and city in the Ottoman Empire.

The Seventeenth Century
The single-page paintings by bazaar painters that are related to storytelling mostly date from the seventeenth century. At that time, Istanbul was one of the world’s most populated cities. During the period between 1600 and 1800, there was urban growth in all regions of the Ottoman Empire. By the middle of the sixteenth century, Istanbul was the largest metropolis in the world, a status it maintained until 1730. Along with the demographic growth, attitudes toward city life and city dwellers also changed. Because country people (sipahi and reaya) were regarded as ideal social types, their counterparts in the city were disparagingly referred to as city boys (şehir oğlanlari) by Ottoman authors of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. They were described as the idle populace because they lounged about in coffee-houses, even though the city itself was viewed as a place of pleasure and comfort.
Yet this new class was the main actor in shaping a new cultural structure. A story book titled Hikâyât-i Sipâhi-yi Kastomoni ve Tûtî (Story of a Cavalryman Man of Kastamonu and Tûtî) includes the adventures of Kastamonulu Sipahi Ali, a cavalryman from Kastamonu in northern Turkey. The manuscript was probably copied at the beginning of the eighteenth century, although the events must have taken place at the beginning of the seventeenth century; at the end of the story, Sipahi Ali is associated with the famous Grand Vizier Gûzelce Ali Pasha who died 1621. According to the text, Sipahi Ali came across a friend in Istanbul. When his friend tried to warn him about a storyteller who was famous for his beauty and a real danger for young men, Ali defended himself as follows: “These dangers are for the city boys such as you. Being in love and to be loved is the most important thing in your life. But we are Turks, and our passion is only for beautiful carpets and horses.” Ali’s words reveal seventeenth-century Ottoman society perceptions about young urban dwellers and their counterparts in the country. The city boys, described as beloved and as lovers in the story, were part of the culture—the new urban dynamics and the changing demography within Istanbul—that produced and consumed the pictures and books discussed in this essay.

In her inspiring study on book production in Ottoman Cairo, Nelly Hanna states that books became a widespread commodity in the main centers of the Islamic world such as Cairo, Aleppo, Damascus, and Istanbul between the seventeenth and eighteenth century. She adds that the development of a book culture was the result of a combination of different factors, including the economic ability to purchase them, a level of literacy, and last but not least, a decrease in book prices, which was tied to the availability of cheap paper imported mainly from Europe. The production of inexpensive books also created wide job opportunities for copyists. Numerous extant manuscripts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries suggest that many people were involved in writing and copying them.

The availability of books to the public at large prompted the emergence of a great number of libraries in Istanbul. Several private libraries endowed by the sultans and their households had been in existence in Istanbul before the seventeenth century, but the first public library was established by Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha in 1678. It is interesting to note that compared to earlier centuries, the restrictions on book loans became quite rigid during the seventeenth century. This was a time when taste favored Turkish storybooks, and popular literary works gained an acknowledged place in the cultural mainstream. To protect their collections, librarians enforced strict borrowing conditions on readers, especially in small libraries whose collections consisted of popular books.

The availability of inexpensive paper probably prompted the production of paintings in the bazaar as well. In Ottoman Istanbul, the production of album
paintings reached its real flowering during the seventeenth century. While album production at the palace began as early as the latter part of the sixteenth century, the production of loose-leaf paintings and albums in the real sense became widespread during the reign of Ahmed I. Lavish costume albums were produced both for the Ottoman court and outside the palace, usually for European clients. In the sixteenth century, these costume albums were made by European artists; however, in the seventeenth century, they were produced by Ottoman painters for European consumers. Leslie Meral Schick suggests that costume albums were made to “decode the social structure of societies, and place each individual in his proper position within this structure.” Furthermore, she draws attention to the relationship between the costume albums and literary forms of encyclopedic compilations such as the tezkire, silsilename (genealogy), and şehrengiz (city thriller, a poetic genre listing the beauties and beautiful inhabitants of a city).

The iconography and style of the Paris Mecmua reflect all of the characteristics of the cultural milieu in which it was produced; most probably, it was made by the same painters who produced the costume albums. Like them, it includes portraits rather than narrative paintings. However, unlike the costume albums, the Mecmua has not only brief notes identifying the individuals but also relatively long stories related to the sitters of the portraits. The costume albums’ short captions are in languages such as Italian and French, to help their European audiences identify the name or profession of the individuals represented. The Mecmua’s long narratives are written in Ottoman Turkish, addressed to local spectators and presumably were intended to remind the narrator what he was supposed to say.

Schick points out that in the costume albums, each figure represents a social type belonging to different strata of Ottoman society rather than a specific individual. Each subject is identified by his particular garb and is depicted on a plain ground, devoid of any social context. Most of the figures of the Mecmua, however, depict specific individuals who are identified by their names and hometowns. In this way, these illustrations are much more reminiscent of Levni’s single-page portraits. However, the Mecmua’s images also share stylistic features with the costume albums. The portraits are depicted on colored plain backgrounds in a more simplified style than are the palace examples. Instead of bright and high-quality pigments seen in the palace works, the painter(s) of the Mecmua used pale and inferior quality colors and portrayed the characters in rather stereotypical manner, as opposed to the “accurate” portraits by the court artists.

The Mecmua: The Heroes of the Stories
The first group of portraits in the Mecmua depicts individuals from different social groups in the city and famous people who lived in the past. In one of these

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portraits, a young beardless man wearing a red, plain robe and carrying a dagger in his belt stands upright in a respectful pose (fig. 3). According to the text, which is written on the edge of the painting and also on two additional folios, it depicts a certain Abdurrahman, son of a famous merchant, Abdurraûf, who passed away in AH 1012 (1603-4), leaving an enormous estate to his son. After his father’s death, young friends who wanted to spend his money surrounded Abdurrahman and told him about a famous and beautiful married woman. He sent her a message and many presents through an intermediary, and asked to be with her one night. Since her husband was away, the young woman accepted him, and they spent the night together. In the morning, Abdurrahman left.

The hero of this story, Abdurrahman, was probably a real person who lived in Bursa rather than an imaginary character. In the course of the seventeenth century, stories derived their themes from daily life and the experiences of city dwellers; “realist folk stories” or “stories written by a [particular] author” became popular in Ottoman literary tradition. Pertev Naili Boratav states that these stories—such as the one about Abdurrahman—were probably written versions of the stories told by the storytellers. Abdurraûf of Bursa was also the protagonist of a famous folk story written by Vahdi Cafer Çelebi at the end of sixteenth century. In this story, Abdurraûf spends all his property on a woman in Isfahan, just like his son. Although I haven’t come across another written version of Abdurrahman’s story thus far, it is possible to speculate that, inspired by the story about his father, it was created in the oral or written literary tradition of the seventeenth century.

Another portrait in the Mecmuâ, placed within a medallion, depicts a half-naked and beardless Bektashi dervish (fig. 4). He wears a short skirt and a shawl...
on his torso and has bangles on his ankles, an armband, and a small bag on his belt. He also carries a small book in his hand. According to the text written on the edge of the medallion, he was the son of a merchant in Anatolia. He was offended by his father and asked his lover to get a Bektashi outfit for him. After disguising himself as a Bektashi, he traveled with his lover to Iran and other countries. 57

Young lovers, usually from the artisan or merchant class, who were offended by society and left their cities disguised as dervishes were popular protagonists in the seventeenth century. For instance, a tale in Nev'izâde 'Atayi's Heft Han (The Seven Stories), written in 1627, recounts the adventures of Tayyib, the son of a jeweler, and Tahir, the son of a merchant. They grew up together, and when they reached maturity, they became interested in love, wine, and music. After their fathers passed away, they started roaming the taverns of the Galata district and other pleasure spots of Istanbul. They spent all of their inheritance quickly and found themselves destitute. All of their friends began to disappear and even to censure them. In dervish outfits, they boarded a ship and went to Egypt to become Sufis. Their story continues with many adventures 58 and is reminiscent of stories of the heroes in the Mecmua: Abdurrahman, who belonged to the merchant class and spent his inheritance very quickly, and the Bektashi dervish who had been offended by his father. This suggests that the individuals depicted in the Mecmua were protagonists of the stories that were read and told in the seventeenth century.

On another page, a young beardless man in a long dress is depicted sitting in a tree, looking very upset (fig. 5). According to the text written on the edge of the medallion, this is Nûruddehr, son of Mirhân. After spending years in the service of the Timurid ruler Sultan Husayn (reigned 1470–1506), Nûruddehr
was killed by the sultan himself. Although the narrator states that Nüruddev's story has been cited in the biographies of poets, he does not give any additional details.\(^5^9\)

All the individuals depicted in the portraits, some of whom are unfamiliar to modern readers, were probably well known to seventeenth-century spectators. Their identities and the nature of the narratives recall the şehrengiz (city thriller) genre that was introduced into the Ottoman literary tradition in the sixteenth century. In these city thrillers, verse narratives described certain types of urban dwellers, like the kazi-asker (military judge), ma'zûl (civil servant), ıtlak (courier), meddâh (storyteller), and cânbâz (acrobat) as well as the beautiful inhabitants of Turkish cities such as Istanbul, Bursa, and Edirne.\(^6^0\) Schick was the first to draw attention to the similarities between pictorial albums and city thrillers. The important point for this study is that the city thrillers were read aloud in the meclis and at various other spots in the city.

A clue supporting this observation comes from the introduction to the şehrengiz of 'Azizi Misrî (died 1585). Speaking of a meclis that took place at his home, he relates that he and his guests:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{At times from journal and book of days} \\
\text{We read out works of prose and praise} \\
\text{Now, joy-enhancing poems we read} \\
\text{From city-thriller tomes we read} \\
\text{A city thriller was read aloud} \\
\text{One of the party guests avowed.}\)
\]

Similarly, 'Azizi Mustafa Efendi of Yedikule (died 1585) recorded how he came to write his book: one day, while reading a city thriller aloud at a meeting of poets, one of his friends asked him to write his own version about the beautiful women of Istanbul.\(^6^2\)

City thrillers were probably read in the periphery of the city as well. Zdenka Veselá, for example, mentions an anonymous treatise housed in the Brno State Archive, Czech Republic. From the verses excerpted in the article, it is clear that it must be a copy or an updated version of the Şehrengiz-i Fakiri, written by Fakiri in 1534–35. After analyzing the text, Veselá proposes that this text was most probably written to be read aloud in the suburbs of the city.\(^6^3\) Although it is hard to know the exact relationship between the city thrillers and the Mecmuâ, they both belonged to the same cultural environment. We can imagine that when a city thriller was read aloud, the audience might have looked at the pictures of an album depicting the same or similar individuals as those being described.
Because of its subject matter, another portrait in the Mecmua seems even more likely to have been used by a storyteller. It illustrates the fight in a dark cave between Rustam and the White Div (Div-i Sefid), one of the most popular themes of Firdawsi's celebrated Shahnama. In the painting, Rustam, wearing lion-headed headgear and traditional outfits, is depicted lying on the div (demon) (fig. 6). The text is a brief story about the combat. As is well known, the Shahnama was one of the leading tales recounted by storytellers. Furthermore, an ability to memorize its tales was regarded as a determining factor in being a successful storyteller. In Iranian oral tradition, there were people called Shahnama-khan (Shahnama reciter [reader]) a word that evolved into designation as a storyteller and was used as a synonym for it. This painting might have been one of the examples mentioned by Evliya Çelebi, who noted that paintings depicting Shahnama heroes such as Zal and Neriman or Rustam and Afrasiyab in combat hung on the walls of painters' workshops in the bazaar.

The Mecmua: The Rulers of the Past
The second group of portraits in the Mecmua illustrates Ottoman sultans and courtiers. In contrast to the first group, the texts here are much longer and continue onto successive page(s). However, like the first group, some of the portraits have short notes identifying the person depicted.

The most interesting portrait in this group depicts Sultan Osman II with his courtiers (fig. 7). The account following the illustration is the longest text in the manuscript, and the iconography is different from that of other portraits in the Mecmua. The text narrates the murder of Osman II by his soldiers stationed in
Istanbul, which was one of the most exceptional events in seventeenth-century Ottoman history and was still fresh in people’s minds at the time the Mecmua was produced.

After the soldiers deposed the sultan, they enthroned his uncle as Mustafa I. Osman II was then murdered on May 20, 1622, in the Seven Towers, the prison where prestigious captives were kept. This was the first clear-cut regicide in Ottoman history. Soon afterward, the first narrative of the incident was written by Hüseyin bin Sefer, a retired janissary known by the pen name Tûghî. It was the janissary corps that were implicated in the murder of Osman II.

As recent studies have shown, Tûghî’s chronicle was written to establish the innocence of the janissaries blamed for the murder. Different editions of the chronicle were written within the course of a year following the regicide. Scholars in the field, such as Gabriel Piterberg and Baki Tezcan, have proposed that Tûghî’s chronicle was used by storytellers; Tezcan goes further and argues that Tûghî was a folk poet. The dirge on the murder of Osman in the chronicle was written in a certain form of folk poetry (semai) and was meant to be sung. Since poets usually recited the semai while strumming a stringed instrument such as a saz, one can imagine that Tûghî played such an instrument as well.

Tezcan says that Tûghî was also a meddâh, which has two meanings. Literally, it means eulogist, but it evolved to mean “public storyteller” as well. According to Tezcan, the pen name Tûghî is the most telling clue that he was a storyteller. Tûghî is the adjectival form of tûgh, which usually refers to a horsetail attached to a helmet or flagstaff as a sign of rank. It also was one of the tools of a meddâh because it was waved by the storyteller to attract listeners and to coordinate the crowd that developed. What is even more important is that he wrote his chronicle to be read aloud to an audience.

Tûghî’s text was used by seventeenth-century Ottoman historians, such as Na’imâ and Kâtip Çelebi. It is significant that the many surviving editions show that the tale was very popular among the storytellers in the years following the regicide. In the popular mind, it was more than the killing of a sultan, it was the tragic murder of an eighteen-year-old sultan.

The text associated with the portrait of Osman II in the Mecmua is not a copy of Tûghî’s chronicle, but there are indications that the anonymous writer was a supporter of the janissary corps. According to the text, Osman was a very young and enthusiastic sultan and was fooled by his courtiers into conducting a military assault on Khotin (in modern-day Ukraine) and Moscow; the courtiers did this because they were very excited about the possibility of getting rich from war booty. After deciding to go to war, Osman charged Grand Vizier Yemişçi Hasan Pasha (died 1603) with making the necessary preparations.
Up to this point, there are two historical mistakes in the narrative. First, Osman’s main aim was to go only to Khotin, not Moscow. Second, Yemişçi Hasan Pasha was not Osman’s grand vizier. He had been killed in a janissary revolt in 1603, eighteen years earlier. These mistakes may reflect the author’s real concerns.

Tezcan argues that Osman’s military campaign against Poland was probably an ambitious one. In addition to besieging Khotin Castle, he probably also wanted to reach Krakow because that would have given the Ottomans an invaluable base of operations for an attack on Vienna, an important target for Ottomans since the reign of Süleyman I (reigned 1520–66). Tezcan states that unfortunately one will never know what the real target of the campaign might have been. But in the Mecmuası, when the anonymous writer of the text mentions Moscow, we see the rumors in Istanbul finding expression in a popular narrative and perhaps revealing the sultan’s real target. Although the sultan’s aim was not to besiege Moscow, this inaccurate information implies that the people of Istanbul were at least aware of his ambitious plans. Furthermore, the Şehnâme-i Nâdirî, a verse account of the Khotin campaign written by Ottoman poet Ganizâde Nâdirî (1572–1627), records that the prince of the Poland, who was also governor of Moscow, led the army since the king was old and sick during the siege. This may be a possible reason Moscow is mentioned in the Mecmuası’s text.

Another question is, why would the late Yemişçi Hasan Pasha be described as Osman’s grand vizier? Didn’t the author know who the sultan’s grand vizier was? Even if that were true, why did he choose someone who died at least eighteen years before the Khotin campaign began?

Yemişçi Hasan Pasha was the grand vizier of Ahmed I from 1601 to 1603 and one of the most influential courtiers of his time. He was appointed leader of the janissary corps twice, in 1594 and 1595. His promotion into the hierarchy of the military system was not appropriate since he was appointed by the grand vizier instead of then-Sultan Murad III. He might have been well-known to the public because of the uprising of the Kapukulu Sipahisi (the six cavalry troops of the palace), who rose against him at the Hippodrome (Atmeydani) in 1603. Hasan Pasha quelled this uprising, and many of the cavalrymen were killed. Yemişçi Hasan Pasha is described as Osman’s vizier in another folk story, probably created in the seventeenth century and placed in a different mecmua used by eighteenth-century storytellers. Although it is impossible to know the reason the authors of the stories made him the fictitious vizier, it is certain that he had become a story character in the social memory of the seventeenth-century Ottoman public.

After Osman’s unsuccessful campaign on Khotin, he blamed the janissaries for the failure. According to the narrative, Osman had his craftsmen build twenty boats for his bostancı officers (who oversaw the palace garden and served as the his
personal guards) and five special boats for himself. He took the boats and started visiting the famous taverns of Istanbul with 150 bostancı officers. On the first day, they went to the neighborhood of Kumkapı. All of the janissaries boarded the boat as well and were taken to the pier of Fenerbahçe on the Anatolian side of the city, where they were thrown into the sea and drowned. After resting for two days, the sultan and his companies visited the taverns of the Galata district; they picked up all the janissaries they could find, took them to Fenerbahçe, and threw them into the sea with stones tied to their throats. The sultan took a break of five or ten days in the palace. Then he and his bostancı officers went to the Balat district; this time, without determining who was or was not a janissary, they took everyone to Fenerbahçe and threw them into the sea. In the end, one thousand or two thousand people were killed.\(^8\)

According to the text, the drowning of the janissaries was the principal reason for the murder of Osman II, a statement that is repeated again and again. The repetition might have increased the anger and excitement of the storyteller's audience and emphasized the reasons underlying the sultan's death. Although Osman's punishment of the janissaries is mentioned in the official histories of the time, none of them give details. They briefly mention that Osman II went to the taverns to find the janissaries; however, they do not describe his actions or provide the names of the neighborhoods. On the contrary, they put the blame on the courtiers and accused them of misleading the sultan.\(^8\) However, Tâghi's description of the punishment of the janissaries corresponds to the Mecmua's text.\(^8\) Because this event took place in the city, it probably had more of an effect on the urban public of Istanbul, specifically the janissaries, than on the court. In other words, it was more important in popular culture than in courtly culture.

At the end of the narrative, the janissaries are acquitted. According to the text, they only wanted to depose Osman II and enthrone Mustafa I, but Mustafa's mother persuaded them that if Osman was left alive he would take revenge.\(^8\) Thus, Mustafa's mother is ultimately blamed for the murder. It may have been very fitting for the storyteller's male audience to blame a woman for this murder.

Another mistake in the narrative records Mustafa I as Osman's brother.\(^8\) In fact, we know that Mustafa I was the uncle of Osman II. When Ahmed I died in 1617, there was a change in the Ottoman hereditary tradition; instead of his son Osman, the eldest member of the dynasty, Ahmed's brother Mustafa, was appointed to the throne. Due to his mental illness, however, Mustafa reigned only three months, and Osman II was appointed to the throne in 1618.\(^8\) Although this was an untraditional event in Ottoman history, it is obvious that the author of the Mecmua was unaware of it, since he recorded Mustafa I as Osman's brother.
As we can see, the narrative that accompanied the portrait of Osman II was far from "formal" history; it was adapted to meet the expectations of the audience. All of the emphasis of the narration helps to acquit the janissaries blamed for the sultan's murder. I am not suggesting here that the storyteller or the author was a janissary like Tüghi, but rather that the narrative originated in the same political climate in which Tüghi created his text. The author probably narrated an oral story that arose from Tüghi's text and that subsequently spread in the oral literary tradition. However, it can certainly be suggested that the audience of the Mecmua would not have been displeased with the emphasis of the narration.

In the illustration (fig. 7), the sultan sits on a throne, surrounded by the courtiers who played a role in his murder. To be precise, the janissary standing on the right side of the sultan is the one responsible for the uprising that led to the murder. The bostancı officer next to the janissary helped the sultan punish the janissaries. The black figure behind the sultan is the dârüssaâde ağası, the chief black eunuch of the harem; in Ottoman sources, he was among the courtiers accused of misleading the sultan. However, in the text of the Mecmua, he is not mentioned. Instead, as stated before, Yemişçi Hasan Pasha is the one accused. At this point, image and text have acquired a different character.

The iconography of Osman's portrait in this context differs in most respects from the illustrations in other manuscripts of this period. For instance, a double-page painting of Şehnâme-i Nâdirî, written by Ganızâde Nâdirî, includes a verse account of the military campaign against Khotin and was probably illustrated in
the royal workshop soon after the campaign. In the portrait (fig. 8), likely executed by a painter who was an eyewitness to the event, Osman is portrayed as a beardless young man on his horse, leading his army, similar to depictions of him in single-page portraits produced in the mid-seventeenth century.

In the Mecmua painting, Osman II looks older; he has a moustache and is kneeling on the throne. In an album painting dated to the same period that was likely used as a visual aid during storytelling performances, Osman is depicted with a moustache as well. Portraits of sultans sitting on thrones are very common in the iconography of seventeenth-century Ottoman painting; kneeling, however, is rarely seen. The first portrait series of Ottoman sultans occurs in Kıyıfetül-insâniye fi Şemâ'îl-âl-osmâniye (The Human Physiognomy and the Likeness of the Ottomans) or Şemâ'ilnâme (Book of Fine Features), written for Murad III in 1579 by Lokman Aşuri, the official historian of the court, and illustrated with portraits of the first twelve sultans by Nakkaş Osman, the famous sixteenth-century painter. The Şemâ'ilnâme was meant to be prepared as a model book for the “accurate” depiction of the sultans. Gülru Necipoğlu argues that imperial iconography is seen in its portraits and that the Ottoman sultans who are depicted kneeling were captured in battle. So it should be asked: is the Mecmua’s depiction of a kneeling Osman II simply a coincidence? Or was it an example of a reinterpreted imperial iconographic model used outside of the court context, that is, in the bazaar?

One clue supporting the premise that bazaar painters reinterpreted palace models can be seen in the image of the imperial ship in the Taeschner Album, produced in the second half of the seventeenth century and attributed to bazaar painters. A parallel image is in the Şehnâme-i Nâdiri as well. The painting in the Taeschner
Album was a simplified version of the one in the Şehnâme-i Nâdirî, and it is likely that bazaar painters employed masters from the palace workshops or used their copies as models.94

Although the Mecmua painter was familiar with the traditional Ottoman iconography, he was probably not acquainted with Osman’s physiognomy. The painter might have seen depictions of earlier sultans since portraits in the Şehnâme set precedents for artists working in both the court workshop and the bazaar. When the Mecmua was executed, the iconography of the court models were already circulating in the city. However, lack of time may have prevented the circulation of accurate, palace-produced portraits of Osman II to the city-based artists. In fact, the portraits of the other sultans in the Mecmua support this suggestion in different ways.

Portraits of Bayezid I, Murad II, Bayezid II, and Selim II are included in the Mecmua. Murad II (1404–1451; fig. 9) and Bayezid II (1447–1512; fig. 10) are depicted sitting on pillows in positions very similar to the portraits by Nakkaş Osman in the Şehnâme manuscripts (figs. 11–12). The forms of the headgear worn by the sultans are also identical to those in the Şehnâme; headgear was an important attribute for identifying a specific sultan in Ottoman portrait iconography. The Mecmua’s equestrian portrait of Bayezid I (1360–1403) is different from that of the Şehnâme, yet he has the same facial features in both portraits. It is possible that the painter of the Mecmua had access to copies or sketches of the portraits of earlier sultans.
sultans produced by court painters and that by the time the Mecmua was produced, those copies had already spread outside the court. However, the bazaar painters probably did not have access to copies of portraits of Osman II produced by the royal workshops.

As mentioned earlier, in this Mecmua, text and image are enclosed in medallions; the text gives brief information about the sultan depicted on the next page. However, every text has its own story and emphasis. For instance, Murad II is presented as an important patron of architecture, and the narrative mentions buildings he erected in Bursa and Edirne.95 This is similar to other Ottoman sources in which his architectural patronage was highly praised.96 The text accompanying the portrait of Selim II (1524–1574) mentions the Selimiye Mosque, which is regarded not only as his most important work but also as the most prestigious example of Ottoman architecture.97 The emphasis on such architectural accomplishments indicates the expectations of the audience: descriptions of architectural patronage were probably the simplest way to remind the public about sultans from the past.

In the text about Murad II, the famous Ottoman vizier Mahmud Pasha (died 1474) is introduced as the sultan’s grand vizier and also as a saint endowed with extraordinary talents. Mahmud Pasha was one of the most influential viziers in Ottoman history. Although there is a debate about his origin in the sources, he was probably Serbian and descended from some of the greatest Byzantine aristocratic families. Information about his arrival at the palace is also unclear, but he was probably educated at the court and then presented to Murad II. Later he entered into the service of young Prince Mehmed, the future Sultan Mehmed II. He occupied different posts at the palace. Although the date of his appointment as grand vizier is uncertain, he was certainly an important actor during Mehmed’s the siege of Istanbul in 1453.98

The life of the powerful vizier became one of the most popular themes of Ottoman menâkıbnâme literature (hagiographical narratives about legendary individuals). The Menâkıb-ı Mahmud Paşa (Hagiography of Mahmud Pasha) was probably written during the sixteenth century. We have no information about Menâkıb-ı Mahmud Paşa’s author or the exact date it was composed. There are eleven extant copies of the legend, most housed in the libraries of Istanbul; the earliest dated manuscript was copied in 1564.99 What is important for this study is that there is a textual link between the Mecmua and Menâkıb-ı Mahmud Paşa. The Mecmua relates that Mahmud Pasha was the grand vizier of Murad II and that his extraordinary miracles were witnessed in Edirne.100 Although Mahmud came to the court during the reign of Murad II, he was probably appointed as grand vizier by Murad’s successor, Mehmed II. So, what was the source of the “incorrect” information used by the anonymous writer of this text?
Similarly, the Menâkib-i Mahmud Paşa relates that Sultan Murad appointed Mahmud Pasha grand vizier—which is one of the inaccuracies in the text—because he was very knowledgeable and virtuous. He kept that position for three years and administered the state with justice. Then one day, after Mahmud Pasha was slandered by his enemies, Sultan Murad ordered the grand vizier’s arrest and execution. At the moment of his execution, Mahmud Pasha suddenly disappeared, and there were rumors that he had saved himself by magic.

It is interesting to note that the menakib (legendary story) of Mahmud Pasha was one of the most popular narratives recited by storytellers in Anatolia. In the oral tradition, Mahmud Pasha became a saint, and many fictitious episodes were added to the story during the time the Mecmua was produced. Mahmud Pasha is not depicted in the Mecmua; however, he is mentioned in the narrative about Murad II. The incorporation of his life into the Mecmua indicates its connection to the oral narrative tradition.

Another intriguing hero in this second group of portraits depicting the rulers and nobles of the past is a link to rumors or legends that were told in the city. In a painting of an Ottoman courtier, the figure stands upright in a medallion (fig. 13). He wears an armless, fur-collared robe and a tall turban. According to the note over the medallion, this is İbrahîm Khânzâde, the son of İsmihan Sultan (died 1585) by her first marriage to Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.
Ismihan Sultan was the daughter of Selim II. Although Ibrâhim Khânzâde’s descendants formed an important family in the history of the Ottoman house, it is interesting to come across his portrait in the Mecmuâ since he was also a chief subject of the rumors that were spread in Istanbul, as we will see below.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century, a rumor arose: if the Ottoman dynasty were to die out, the Ibrâhim Khânzâde family would succeed to the throne, and henceforth the sultans were bound to respect the life of every member of the Khânzâde family. Similarly, in the year of 1703, after the Edirne incident—in which the people of Istanbul rose against and deposed Sultan Mustafa II (reigned 1695–1703)—a council gathered to decide who would be heir to the throne. Some rebels, opposed to the heirs of Sultan Mehmed IV, Mustafa’s father, suggested the khan of the Crimea or a member of Ibrâhim Khânzâde’s lineage as an alternative. 

The depiction of Ibrâhim Khânzâde in the Mecmuâ may have been related to this rumor, which was widespread in the city. The illustration does not include any accompanying narrative, which indicates that Ibrâhim Khânzâde’s story may have been well known to the audience of the Mecmuâ.

Ottoman sources indicate that succession was a problem as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century. When Ahmed I succeeded to the throne, his son-in-law and grand vizier Nasuh Pasha (died 1614) invited Mehmed Giray, the khan of the Crimea, to take the throne instead. Once he discovered Nasuh Pasha’s intentions, the sultan immediately imprisoned Mehmed Giray in the Yedikule Fortress. The same problem arose during the overthrow of Osman II. Tüghi put all of the blame for Osman’s murder on Dâvud Pasha (died 1623), the vizier and brother-in-law of Sultan Mustafa, and further states that Dâvud Pasha intended to end the rule of the Ottoman crown princes in an alliance with the chief black eunuch of the court. Thus, although Ibrâhim Khânzâde’s family was suggested as an alternative option for the Ottoman throne at the end of the seventeenth century, the existence of his portrait in the Mecmuâ allows us to speculate that members of his family were seen as a threat as early as the middle of the century, at least in public opinion.

The second group of portraits in the Mecmuâ includes an interesting depiction of a figure on his horse; it is enclosed in a medallion (fig. 14). Unlike the subjects of the other portraits in the manuscript, he wears a crown, indicating that he is not an Ottoman sultan. However, his armless, fur-collared caftan is reminiscent of the ones worn by Ottoman dignitaries. In the note written around the medallion, he is identified as Râşunhova, çasar of Nemçe (king of Austria), who made a peace treaty with Sultan Süleyman the Lawgiver. Râşunhova is also mentioned in a later text about Süleyman I. According to the text, during the first twenty-eight years...
of Süleyman's forty-eight-year reign (more inaccurate information, as he ruled for forty-six years), he conquered many castles and cities. His triumphant conquests led to a peace treaty with Râşunhova that was so profitable, Süleyman and his heirs enjoyed lifelong benefits as a result. However, there is neither a Râşunhova nor someone with a similar sounding name among Austrian kings; this may refer to Süleyman’s contemporary, Ferdinand I (1503–1564) from the house of Habsburg. Ferdinand made a five-year peace treaty with the sultan in June 1547 that confirmed the territorial status quo and also instituted an annual payment of thirty thousand ducats as a tribute to Süleyman. I have not come across any clue to Râşunhova’s identity but presume that was the name given to Ferdinand by Turkish commoners. It is clear that the author of the text was unaware of the formal history; the inaccurate information strengthens the assumption that popular stories were the sources for the Mecmuâ narratives. Recent studies on oral traditions support this assumption. For instance, Adam Fox, in his study on the oral and literate culture in England, states, “There was a tendency to ‘telescope,’ to shorten or omit the entire portions of the past. For most people their understanding of times long ago was vague and episodic: theirs was a history with little sense of chronology, in which names and places, dates and events could be hopelessly conflated and confused ... When the short limits of memory were exhausted, myth began.”
Unfortunately, there are no prototypes that allow us to compare İbrahim Khânzâde's and Râşunhova's portraits in the Mecmua with examples from the court. However, further analysis of images and text featuring Ottoman sultans, excluding Osman II, shows that although the physiognomy, outfits, and postures were mostly based on imperial iconography, the texts were enriched by the oral tradition. The question is, why were these discrepancies incorporated into the same manuscript?

The Court and the City

The character of the Mecmua's text and images strongly suggests that it was a product of city culture rather than court circles. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the boundaries of elite and popular culture, it may be useful to point out comments from scholars on this matter. Peter Burke, in his work on popular culture in early modern Europe, criticizes the perception of the "little tradition" as belonging to the non-elite. He argues that this definition is too narrow because it omits upper-class participation in popular culture, which most definitely occurred at festivals. In towns, nobles and commoners attended the same carnivals and sermons. Clowns—usually the same people—were popular both at courts and taverns. According to Burke, the two great and little traditions in early modern Europe did not correspond symmetrically to the two main social groups, the elite and the commoners. Likewise, Hanna draws attention to the difficulties of establishing the boundaries between an educated culture, a mass culture, and a popular culture in terms of book consumption. She relates that the culture of the well-educated, well-read, urban middle class differed from that of the court and the learned culture of ulama as well as from popular culture. As argued before, while the meclis were open primarily to the members of the well-educated class, there were also readings for ordinary people.

In the Ottoman context, the interaction between palace and city relates to the movement of people. The portable nature of manuscripts and single-page paintings allowed them to be widely available in both the court and the city. For instance, according to the reader's notes in a storybook titled Hikaye-i Firuzsah (Story of Firuzsah), the manuscript was read aloud in the Enderûn (Inner section) of Topkapı Palace as well as houses in Istanbul at different times. It is more than likely that the books' portable nature enabled their widespread usage throughout Istanbul.

Other types of objects produced for the court were also accessible to city dwellers. Stephan Gerlach, who visited Istanbul as chaplain of the Hapsburg embassy in 1577, stated that because the royal treasury collections were so extensive, there was no space to house new objects. Many of them were sold in the bazaar, includ-
ing manuscripts and the turban of Selim I. This might have been one way images from the court were spread throughout the city. In addition, storytellers and book owners traveled throughout the empire, and many of them were in close contact with the palace. İsmail Belyiğ (1668–1729), the Ottoman author who compiled a biographical compendium of the famous people of Bursa, gives vivid information about the storytellers, including La'lin Kabâ, a storyteller who lived during the reign of Murad III; after traveling all over the world, he stopped in Istanbul. Another famous storyteller from Bursa, Kurbani Alisî, also went to Istanbul and joined the entourage of Geredeli Hasan Pasha, who helped the storyteller to gain acceptance into the sultan's court. For a time, Hasan Pasha lost his prestigious position and power and, as a result, Kurbani Alisî left the palace and went back to Bursa. After his departure, court officials realized that a murassa divit (special pen adorned with precious materials) belonging to the sultan was missing and accused the storyteller of stealing it. We do not know whether or not Kurbani Alisî stole the pen, but the important point is that he clearly had access to the sultan's personal objects when he was staying at the palace.

Painters also may have played a crucial role. We have no precise information on the bazaar painters' methods of working or on whether court artists interacted with city-based painters. Yet it seems likely that the movement of people between the palace and the city as well as the transportable nature of paintings and illustrated manuscripts facilitated their dispersal in Istanbul and even farther afield, as we shall see. The iconographic similarities between the court paintings and the bazaar paintings prompt us to speculate that the royal visual model was not as transformed in the city context as the royal textual model, which was constantly reinterpreted. Needless to say, analyzing one example is not enough to evaluate the complex relationship between the court and the city in the seventeenth-century Ottoman milieu. The movement of people who used images and texts during this period was also more complex than indicated by the one relationship I have outlined here. The next question to answer is where precisely this Mecmua may have been used.

Searching a Place for the Mecmua

The Mecmua text related to the portrait of Bayezid the Thunderbolt (Bayezid I) describes the Battle of Ankara that took place between Bayezid and Tamerlane (1386–1405), emphasizing the sultan's fierce character. According to the narrative, Bayezid was defeated, Timur took him prisoner, and subsequently Bayezid was rescued by his son, Mehmed. However, according to the historical record, Bayezid died as Tamerlane's prisoner in Akşehir; he either had an illness or, according to some sources, committed suicide by taking poison. His body was
then taken to Bursa and buried there. The happy ending in the *Mecmuia*, in contrast, was probably created for the approval of the storyteller's audience, who might have been unhappy to learn the real, tragic, and “dishonorable” story about the sultan. It might also even have been physically dangerous for the storyteller to provide such a tragic ending.

In fact, İsmail Beliğ, the aforementioned biographer of Bursa, relates an interesting story about the reaction of an audience. In 1616 at a coffeehouse in Bursa, a storyteller was telling the popular story of a fight between Bedi' and Kâsim, two of Hamza’s sons. While some listeners were supporters of Bedi', others were on the side of Kâsim. In the audience were the famous blind poet Hayli Çelebi and Saçakçızâde, another storyteller. Hayli Çelebi was a passionate supporter of Kâsim, and when the storyteller mentioned Kâsim’s name, he clapped his hands in excitement. At this, Saçakçızâde, mocking the poet’s blindness, asked how Hayli Çelebi could have seen that Kâsim was right? At that point, the poet fiercely attacked Saçakçızâde with a dagger and killed him. This indicates the level of intensity and excitement that an audience could reach during storytelling performances. Similarly, the end of the *Süleymânmâne* includes a note that states that during a reading, there was a fight among the listeners, since each one took the side of a different hero in the story. At the end of the fight, one of the listeners wanted to tear up the manuscript but was ashamed to do so in the presence of Münir Molla, a well-respected person in the crowd.

It is thus entirely understandable that the storyteller composed a fictitious ending to the story about Bayezid the Thunderbolt. More important, after telling about Bayezid’s rescue by his son, the author says, “the sultan died in this place.” As we know, Bayezid I was buried in Bursa, so we can assume that the author’s statement was referring to that city and that our *Mecmuia* therefore probably was a chapbook used by a storyteller from there as well.

Bursa, the capital between 1326 and 1362, was one of the prominent cultural centers in the empire’s history. İsmail Beliğ implied that there was ample opportunity there for the employment of storytellers. Evliya Çelebi spoke highly of the city’s coffeehouses; there were seventy-five of them in total, and each one was a destination for well-educated people. The coffeehouses also were full of talented storytellers such as Kurbânî Alisi Hamza and Şerif Çelebi, who was very gifted at reciting the stories of the *Shahnama*. The most famous one in Bursa was the Emir Coffeehouse, located next to the Grand Mosque. In addition, Evliya Çelebi records that after Murad IV banned coffeehouses in Istanbul, the storytellers moved to Bursa, after which the city became renowned for its coffeehouses. As stated at the beginning of this article, the *Mecmuia* was probably produced during the reign of Murad IV. Therefore we may plausibly suggest that this *Mecmuia* was used as
a chapbook by a storyteller who moved to Bursa after the sultan’s ban on coffee-houses in Istanbul. Bursa, with its lively environment, might have made a good place for our Mecmua.

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NOTES

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2 Mecmua, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Turc 140 (hereafter Mecmua); for catalogue information see E. Blochet, Catalogue des Manuscrits Turcs I (Paris: Bibliotheque nationale, 1932–33), pp. 57–58. According to the handwritten note in French on the first folio of the Mecmua, it was owned by Paul Lucas (1664–1737), a famous French merchant, naturalist, physician, and antiquarian, in 1718. He traveled extensively in Greece, Turkey, the Levant, and Egypt and probably bought the Mecmua during his journey in Turkey. Another note on the same folio gives March 27, 1878, as the date of purchase by the Bibliothèque nationale de France; there is also a stamp from the Bibliothèque regia.

3 Mecmua, fols. 1b–4a.


5 Mecmua, fols. 5a, 7b, 8b, 9b, 11b, 12a–b, 13a, 17b, 20a–b, 29b, 30a.

6 Mecmua, fols. 14b, 15a, 19b.

7 Mecmua, fols. 18b, 19a, 29a.

8 Mecmua, fols. 5a, 7b, 8b, 9b, 17b, 20b.

9 Mecmua, fols. 12a, 15a, 20b.

10 Mecmua, fols. 11b, 14b, 18b, 19a–b, 20a, 29a–b, 30a.


23 Using depictions of Hamza as a part of a storytelling performance is not solely a phenomenon of Ottoman visual culture. Given the size and format of an illustrated copy of the Hamzanâme produced for Mughal Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–65), it has been suggested that the manuscript was used in storytelling at the Mughal court. For detailed information, see John Seyller, “The Organization and Use of the Hamzanama,” in Adventures of Hamza, pp. 41–43.
34 For more on meeting places, see Andrews and Kalpakli, Age of Beloveds, pp. 63, 76. For more on public readings among the middle class, see, Tülin Değirmencî, “Bir kitâbi kaça kişî okur?” Osmanlı’da Okurlar ve Okuma Biçimleri Üzerine Bazi gözlemler,” Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşmalar, December 2011.
40 The story was introduced by Hasan Kavruk for the first time: Eski Türk Edebiyatında Mevsûr Hikâyeler (İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1998), pp. 97–99.
41 Hikâyât-i Sûbûh-i-yi Kasımsoni ve Tûti, Millet Library, Istanbul, Ali Emiri Roman 146, fol. 7a.


46 Similarly, in the case of Safavid Persia, throughout the seventeenth century, instead of precious manuscripts produced for the Safavid court, there were many less expensive, single-page paintings, drawings, and calligraphies probably produced for the new patrons who had little training and taste; some of them were not of the same high quality as those made for the royal patrons. Since the single-page paintings could be sold at relatively low prices, which was not the case with a whole manuscript, the consumption of painting became more popular among the wider public.


51 I use the term "individual" to refer to persons who were inspired by real life rather than people who actually lived; they may or may not have been fictional.

52 Mcmua, fol. 15a.

53 Mcmua, fols. 15b–16a.


57 Mcmua, fol. 13a.

58 For a summary of the story, see Andrews and Kalpakli, Age of Beloveds, pp. 59–62.

59 Mcmua, fol. 12b.

60 For detailed information on the city thrillers, see Ağah Sultan Levend, Türk Edebiyatında Şehr-Engizler ve Şehr-Engizlerde İstanbul (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Dernegi İstanbul Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1958).

61 Andrews and Kalpakli, Age of Beloveds, pp. 44–45.

62 Levend, Türk Edebiyatında, p. 46.


64 Mcmua, fol. 12a.

65 Mcmua, fols. 10b–11a.


68 Gökyay, Evlîya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi, p. 292.

69 Mcmua, fols. 21a–28b.

70 For detailed information on the deposition of Osman II, see Baki Tezcan, “Searching for Osman: A Reassessment of the Deposition of the Ottoman Sultan Osman II (1618–1622),” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2001).

71 For a recent study on the different editions of Tughî’s text, see Şevki Nezîhi Aykut, Hicâyeciliği, Müsîbetnâme (Tahîl-Metin ve İndeks) (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basmevi, 2010).


74 Tezcan, “History,” pp. 43–44.

75 Tezcan, “History,” p. 46.

76 Tezcan, “History,” p. 43.

77 Mcmua, fol. 21a–b.

Although 13 Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Serial Portraits of Ottoman Sultans in Comparative Perspective," in *The Sultan's Portrait*, p. 35.


95 *Mecmuâ*, vol. 18a.

96 The Ottoman chronicler Neşri (d. 1520(?) speaks highly of Murad II’s architectural patronage in the *Cihan-name*; see Mevlâna Mehmed Neşri, *Cihanname* [Osmanlı Taarihleri 1288–1485]), transcribed by Necdet Öztürk (İstanbul: Camlica, 2008), pp. 304–5.

97 *Mecmuâ*, vol. 10a.


100 *Mecmuâ*, vol. 18a.


104 *Mecmuâ*, vol. 29b.


110 *Mecmuâ*, vol. 8b.

111 Although there is a text related to Sultan Suleyman I in the *Mecmuâ* (vol. 9a), the portrait of the sultan was not included in the manuscript.

112 *Mecmuâ*, vol. 9a.


115 According to anthropologist Robert Redfield within some societies there exist two cultural traditions: the "great tradition" of the educated few and the "little tradition" of everybody else. See


118 For detailed information, see Şefik Peksevgan, “Secrecy, Information Control and Power Building in the Ottoman Empire, 1566-1603” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2004).


123 Meccua, fol. 4b.


125 Süleymanname, British Library, Or. 14944, fol. 91a.


Abstract
Darius I, the first Achaemenid ruler, reigned over the vast expanse of the Persian Empire during the years 522–486 BCE. Upon his seizure of the throne, he held before him the task of defining his empire in social, religious, and political terms. His definition of his role as ruler appears in a highly complex and well-developed program of imperial iconography, monumental architecture, and epigraphy. Within the context of a new royal ideology, a previously unattested phenomenon makes its appearance in the archaeological record: the trilingual inscription, which appears in major monumental architecture, such as the monument at Bisitun. Yet it also appears on a smaller scale, on the “royal name” seals from the Fortification Archives at Persepolis, a collection of more than two thousand Elamite texts recording the storage and distribution of food in the Persian Empire circa 500 BCE. In a practical sense, the trilingual inscription was an innovative way to define the geographic and political boundaries of Darius’s empire. Even more important, the ritual function of his royal texts and other royal texts from Ancient Mesopotamia reveals a complex relationship between the gods, the king, and the people.

The trilingual inscription was meant to add an entirely new level of “audience” to Persian kingship. The assumed audience for such iconography as the artistic representations at Persepolis has most often been the “terrestrial,” or human, one. However, I would like to suggest that another type of “reader” be considered in this context: the cosmic audience. Darius was the formative force behind the Bisitun monument, the most complex extant version of the trilingual inscription (which included as its centerpiece Old Persian, a previously unattested language). In this monument and in other examples, a “new cosmic order” is introduced, one made possible through Darius’s kingship. From a complete study of trilinguals appearing during his reign, we can come to a greater understanding of his own personal identification and legitimation techniques, and perhaps Achaemenid kingship in general terms.

Our record of trilingual inscriptions fades quickly after the reign of Darius’s son Xerxes, though it appears again during the reign of the Sassanids, and in Egypt under the Ptolemies. One of the most famous trilingual inscriptions, the “Gallus” inscription, is from the Augustan Age. Thus trilingual inscriptions provide an avenue for tracing important continuities in cultural memory and the political influence of the Achaemenids. Most important, the trilingual provides an opportunity to learn how we may expand our abilities to “read” a text. With interest in multilingual representations currently at the forefront of research in the Ancient Near East, this paper enters into a discourse with interpretations of “text.” Through a study of the trilinguals in Darius’s reign we can better appreciate text as imagery, “read” from both a “terrestrial” and a “cosmic” point of view, and understand the ritual functions of text.
IN THE INITIAL STAGES of his reign, Darius I, the first king of the Achaemenid dynastic line of the Persian Empire, faced the enormous task of defining his own legitimacy and expressing the terms of his royal power. Among the many monumental statements in text, image, and architectural/landscape presentation designed during his reign, the most famous and the earliest is the rock-carved inscription and relief at Bisitun, in the Kermansheh region of Iran. This monument marks the development of a new phenomenon in the record: the deployment of trilingually inscribed royal texts as a strategic and systematically orchestrated manifestation of imperial ideology. This ideology, I argue, presented a new “cosmic order,” embracing a notion of “Persianness” ushered in by Darius himself, one in which Persian kingship was the fulcrum between god and man. Key to this new order was the royally mandated expression in cuneiform of the Old Persian language, which heretofore had only been spoken.

I propose that in joining Old Persian with texts inscribed in Neo-Babylonian (Akkadian) and Elamite cuneiform for expressions of official written message, Darius drew inspiration from ancient Near Eastern numerological symbolism. Occurring on both large-scale imperial monuments (as architectural displays and freestanding sculptural and stele displays) and other items, such as portable cylinder seals and prestige vessels bearing the royal name and titulary, the trilingual inscription was conjoined with powerful vehicles of meaning that consolidated the importance of its message. That message, of a symbiotic relationship between god, king, and man, raised the locus of the audience for such symbolism from “terrestrial” to “cosmic.” The “cosmic read,” which I suggest for the trilingual royal name seals from the Persepolis Fortification Archive, emphasizes the central location of the divine figure in Darius’s iconographical program, emblematic of the way he viewed the new Persian kingship. The fluid symbolism of the trilingual also allowed for more practical manifestations of meaning. The orientation of the inscriptions, I argue, created a sort of hierarchy that often subtly implied political, geographical, and religious boundaries in Darius’s empire.

The inherent symbolic associations of the trilingual in the reign of the Darius were so pervasive that it continued to be utilized by powerful rulers in the Near
East long after his rule came to an end. Though often appearing in a more distilled format, the trilinguals of the first Achaemenid king permeated through the reign of his son Xerxes and for centuries thereafter, where it may have been a direct source of inspiration for the Rosetta stone. The last gasps of the trilingual format were a significant part of Sassanid propaganda and very much part of a reimagining of the ideology of the Achaemenids for their own self-presentation.

**Darius and His Iconographical Program**

Darius I ruled the Achaemenid Persian Empire from 522 to 486 BCE.¹ He followed in the footsteps of Cyrus the Great (reigned 559–30 BCE), the founder of the empire and a pioneer in empire-building. Yet the period after Cyrus was filled with dynastic uncertainty and rebellions. After the short reign of Cyrus's son Cambyses, Darius stepped into power amid revolt and conspiracy.² Once he defeated the pretender Gaumata (the Greek Smerdis), Darius's claim to the throne was secure. However, the issue of his legitimacy became an immediate concern. Lacking connections to Cyrus's prestigious Teispid bloodline, Darius was essentially forced to create his own legitimacy.³ He filled this dynastic vacancy with a new claim to Persian dominion, through an eponymous patrilineal ancestor, Achaemenes,⁴ and, in his inscriptions, accusing Gaumata of illegitimacy⁵ and emphasizing his special relationship to the Iranian deity Ahuramazda.⁶ Thus Darius was forced to introduce an entirely new type of political discourse in order to maintain his claim to the throne.⁷ His building projects and the inscriptions that accompanied them provide a window into how he conceived of this new program and used the novel entity of the trilingual inscription as a key component to its success.

Given the general milieu regarding his accession, it was most crucial for him to provide his constituency with a clear and concise definition of his role as a legitimate ruler, which required a drastic change in image and ideology. Darius was responsible for inaugurating and continuing several building projects throughout the area of Fars in ancient Persia. His most conspicuous project was the construction of a magnificent palace at the capital of Persepolis, the symbolic seat of his reign.⁸ At Persepolis, and other sites such as Susa, written proclamations and visual representations were meant to emphasize the timeless nature of the power of the Great King, exalting Achaemenid dominion over other people in the empire.⁹ Persepolis is the most concentrated area of evidence for Darius's activity in terms of his ideological program. Evidence discovered there provides a great basis for our study of Achaemenid art, its programmatic power, and the intentionality found at all levels in Achaemenid visual representations.¹⁰

Besides the massive project at Persepolis, Darius's most famous imprint on the Persian landscape was the monumental carving into a rock cliff at Bisitun (fig. 1)
along the so-called “Royal Road” from Ecbatana to Babylon, in the heart of Media.\textsuperscript{11} Created in 520 or 519 BCE, the relief measures seven by eighteen meters and was Darius’s first monumental expression upon seizing the Persian throne.\textsuperscript{12} The representation at Bistun spells out his victory, showing him suppressing Gaumata with his foot, with nine “liar-kings” standing before him, connected by ropes around their necks. The liar-kings are differentiated ethnically by their clothing and are meant to be viewed as individuals personally conquered by the king. A winged figure (thought to be a representation of Ahuramazda) claims center stage above the scene. The accompanying trilingual cuneiform inscriptions describe in detail the artistic representation of the victory over Gaumata and reference various other battles and victories in distant locales that occurred along Darius’s path to kingship. Throughout the inscriptions, the divine favor of Ahuramazda is constantly emphasized, and the strong connection between the king and Ahuramazda is transparent through the iconography and associated language. The only extant “historical” royal inscription from the Achaemenid period, the Bistun monument is especially important in understanding Darius’s self-definition and the roots of Achaemenid kingship.

The king’s artistic hand was present throughout the empire. His other projects included two burial places: Cyrus’s at Pasargadae and his own at Naqsh-i Rustam. Most important, in the context of all of these building projects, and some outside of the immediate region of Fars, inscriptions played an important role in tandem with the artistic iconography in creating a cohesive message of royal ideology specifically dictated to suit the needs of a particular monarchic ruler.\textsuperscript{13} The most conspicuous and elaborate statements are those contained within the trilingual inscriptions of the constructions completed during the reigns of Darius I and his son Xerxes.

In the several examples of imperial iconographical and architectural statements, the message intended by Darius remains consistent. His departure from the previous regime and the emphasis on his legitimization as a descendant of Achaemenes is paramount. Yet the reliefs and artwork at Persepolis and the rest of his building projects represent a reworking of old Near Eastern traditions for a new purpose.\textsuperscript{14} Primacy was laid upon Darius’s pious and reciprocal relationship to the god Ahuramazda, an analogy for the expected loyalty of the empire’s subjects to the Persian king. The successful collaboration between these entities led to what is typically described as the Pax Persica, a picture that clearly emerges from the imperial art of the Achaemenid period, as summed up by Carl Nylander: “The overall is Iran and empire—but the parts, both architecture and sculpture, are meaningfully and respectfully integrated symbols of the different parts of this commonwealth into an Achaemenid synthesis of the existing world, a cosmos in the real sense of the word: ordered beauty and beautiful order.”\textsuperscript{15}
The Bisitun monument is an intricate example of the general ideological program of Darius. Built soon after his accession to the throne (522–21 BCE), the monument represented the most elaborate statement of Achaemenid kingship in his reign. Cut 125 feet high into the side of a cliff along the “Royal Road,” it is a massive artistic expression of his rise to power and his victory over Gaumata. A crowned Darius is pictured stepping on the prostrate Gaumata, behind whom other rebel leaders (identified by dress and inscriptions beneath) are led in chains. The king is followed by two weapon bearers. Though novel in size and scope, the Bisitun monument was not entirely invented by Darius. Yet the brilliance of the monument is the use of old Mesopotamian examples to define a new ideology for a royal line that was still in its infancy. As will be discussed below, Bisitun was not the only place in which Darius took advantage of possible prototypes, though it was the most complex expression of his total royal ideology.

Most important for our purposes, the rendering of Darius’s victory on the Bisitun monument is located in the center of a carefully placed assemblage of cuneiform carvings in Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian (fig. 2). Though high in the sky, the artistic representation is visible to passersby. The inscriptions take up an even greater amount of space than does the actual sculptural narrative and thus have their own powerful force. They can be broken down as follows:

(a) titles/genealogy (paragraphs 1–5)
(b) subject peoples (paragraphs 6–8)
(c) Darius’s accession (paragraphs 9–14)
(d–l) revolts in Elam, Babylonian, Media, Parthia, Margiana, Persia (Fars) (paragraphs 15–51)
(m) recapitulation, royal virtues, instructions to future generations, creation of text (paragraphs 52–70)
(n –o) revolts in Darius’s second and third regnal year (paragraphs 71–76).

Thus the inscriptions give the autobiographical, historical, royal, and religious information that Darius deemed critical in his first years of rule.
The Bisitun monument was not only Darius’s first expression of kingship, it was also the first appearance in the record of the Old Persian language. Old Persian had long been spoken, but was a hitherto unwritten language, Iranian in origin, and a sub-branch of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. DB (the inscription of Darius at Bisitun) §70 is the hinge upon which scholars claim that Darius invented the writing system: “Darius the king proclaims: By the favour of Ahuramazda, this is the form of writing, which I had made, besides in Aryan. Both on clay tablets and on parchment it has been placed. Besides, I also made the signature.” DB §70 was a supplementary paragraph that was written in addition to the sixty-nine that appear in the other two languages, so clearly the writing of a new language was meant to imply that of Old Persian. This paragraph was added last (as was the Old Persian script version); and the supplementary paragraph was added to the Elamite version later too (in the field of the relief) but not to the Babylonian. This proves, according to Wiesehöfer, that Old Persian script did not yet exist at the time when the first (Elamite) version was conceived. Events during later years in Darius’s reign were also subsequently added. In later inscriptions, Old Persian occurs by itself, but in documents most associated with royalty, it occurs alongside Elamite and Babylonian. Even though Old Persian was certainly not the first language inscribed at Bisitun, it was nonetheless the most important. Considering that Bisitun represents the first written appearance of a previously unwritten language, we can then claim that Darius not only invented written Old Persian but also created a new strategic deployment of language, discernible in the trilingual inscription.

Since it is safe to assume that most of the people who contemplated Bisitun were well versed in only one of these languages (if that), it is important to note the multiple functions of the monument. The text is an artistic representation that can be described as “textual image.” In and of itself then, the text possesses a certain amount of power and indicates the prestige of the person behind the imagery. In the view of Mark Garrison, “TEXT is iconographic. Its primary semantic function was as a signifier of power via the control/application of specialized knowledge. That knowledge, moreover, was often mystified via connections to the divine; TEXT thus may also assume a numinous quality.”

In a similar manner, the image itself can function as a text, telling a story. Whether one could actually read the text may have had a bearing on how one would “read” the image; since the interpretation of the image could be so subjective, it was important for Darius to utilize well-known, prototypical “snippets” to make his presentation identifiable in terms that might have been recognizable to a wide audience. It is also important to note that “text,” just as it manifests in multiple ways in iconographical and epigraphical terms, was also experienced aurally. We
might imagine poets standing below the Bisitun monument reciting its contents to passersby, similar to the recitations that occur in the mausolea of poets in modern-day Iran. Thus we must assume a total experience: viewing the inscriptions and iconography while also hearing their message. It is part and parcel of a culture in which orality and literacy were comingled; in these ways “text” had several performative possibilities. The Bisitun monument is significant because it was the first experience Darius’s constituents would have had with the multivalent purpose of the image and trilingual inscription (the text was also disseminated in different languages: see note 50). It thus set an important precedent; as is apparent from the record, it was deemed a successful experiment.

Yet mortals were not the only beings represented and described on the Bisitun monument and Darius’s later iconographical representations. Throughout the inscriptions on the monument, the god Ahuramazda is cited several times as the vehicle by which Darius was able to come to power and to whom he owed his kingship. The king’s relationship to Ahuramazda was a signature element in this self-presentation. However, the Achaemenids’ relationship to the religious system of the Avesta (which encourages the worship of Ahuramazda) has been hotly contested. Therefore, it is necessary to briefly establish a basis for viewing the Bisitun monument and all subsequent royal representations in terms of the king’s relationship to the god.

In DB §9 (column I), Darius expresses his relationship with Ahuramazda as follows: “Darius the king proclaims: Ahuramazda bestowed this kingship on me; Ahuramazda gave me his help until I gained this kingship; by the favor of Ahuramazda, I possess this kingship.” There is evidence for the worship of many different gods in ancient Iran (including Babylonian and Elamite gods), but Ahuramazda remained in the forefront in the inscriptions, especially during the reign of Darius. One of the most enduring discussions in Achaemenid studies is whether or not the winged disk figure that appears on the Bisitun monument represents Ahuramazda or something else entirely. Our understanding of Darius’s program pivots on the identification of this figure, so it is useful to provide a brief overview of the prevailing arguments.

The issue of “Achaemenid religion” is always in contention. Much of the uncertainty deals with linguistic indications of god figures in religious texts. The most probable explanation is that there was some selectivity and mixture between traditions, where they probably accepted significant features of Mazdaistic theology without adhering to a codified doctrine of full-fledged Zoroastrianism. Based on his comparison of the Avesta and the royal inscriptions as literary documents, P. O. Skaerjvo comes to the conclusion that the Achaemenids either started out as Zoroastrians or had become Zoroastrians, at least by the time of Darius, inas-
much as their religion agreed with that of the Avesta. Much of their belief system was dictated by principles in the Avestan texts, maintaining that Ahuramazda (who created the ordered cosmos) chose the king to preserve order on his land. The king’s sacrifices “ensure the [god’s] status as ruler of the ordered cosmos; in return, the god gives support and rewards the king, ensuring his status as ruler of the ordered land, for him to overcome chaos and evil and reestablish and consolidate political order, peace and well-being.” This reciprocal relationship was a principle inherent in the Old Avestan writings and was a cornerstone of Darius’s ideological program.

Much of the attention regarding the possibility for Achaemenid Zoroastrianism centers on the winged disk figure prevalent at Bisitun and in other Achaemenid artistic representations, from which a figure is often emergent. Concerning the figure in relief at Bisitun, several theories as to its identity have been forwarded, often dependent upon specific details, such as a “crown” that seems to be hovering above it. Alireza Shahbazi has identified three prevailing ideas regarding the identity of the figure: a) it represents the fravahr (guardian angel) of the king above whom it hovers, a sort of duplicate of the soul and the guardian angel of an individual; b) it represents Ahuramazda; and c) it represents the Khwrenah (Glory, Fortune) of the Iranian king or nation. Ultimately, he sides with the third theory. Mark Garrison likewise rejects the “Ahuramazda” theory and posits that the winged disk figure should be seen as a sort of “index” for monarchical ideology and power. Margaret Root counters the arguments of Shahbazi and Garrison by insisting that the figure is Ahuramazda, using several points of mutually corroborative evidence. While it is not always necessarily the case that every figure in Achaemenid art represents Ahuramazda, Root cites the fact that the figure wears a Mesopotamian divine headdress topped with a star of Shamash (the Mesopotamian sun god) as a definite signal in that direction on this monument. The omnipresent figure over the king and the appeal to Ahuramazda in inscriptions with such iconography cannot be ignored. In addition, the figure on Bisitun faces Darius (as it does on his tomb relief), symbolizing the king’s relationship to the god. Based on the architectural and epigraphic evidence then, the argument for the winged disk figure as a symbol of Ahuramazda remains strong.

Root’s arguments seem compelling to me. It is my contention that all such figures appearing in Achaemenid art should be identified as the god Ahuramazda; if this is indeed the case, the following arguments may be made. Darius’s steadfast loyalty to Ahuramazda had led to the reward of kingship; this intense loyalty provided an analogy for Darius’s subjects. The other kings represented were adherents of the “Lie” (as opposed to the “Truth”) and were punished. Thus the god, named sixty-three times in the Bisitun inscriptions alone, was clearly an important
purveyor of the king's power, and their relationship was essential to the continuity of the Persian dominion. The reciprocal relationship between the king and the god was paramount, and Darius emphasized this by means of a special "communicative" device at Bisitun (represented by the trilingual inscription, with the winged disk figure prominent).

With the addition of the Old Persian language and the heavy emphasis on the king's relationship to Ahuramazda, it is now necessary to expand Garrison's vision of the "iconographical text." The trilingual inscription had to have some sort of power in and of itself, as everything on the Bisitun monument was chosen with a specific intent in mind. As discussed above, it is rather unlikely that most mortals would be able to recognize all three, let alone one, of the texts used in the inscriptions. Thus the text has a numinous quality, as Garrison has described, but that is because there is in reality only one true "reader" of all three of the Bisitun texts: the god. The Old Persian script was invented and paired with the other two prevailing languages of the empire so that the king could have a special "conversation" with the god. This was done not only through language but also through iconography: the trilingual inscription, in almost every circumstance in which it appears, is accompanied by a manifest symbol of Ahuramazda. Pierre Briant even makes an explicit connection between this new writing system and the god: "He [Darius] intended to control the tradition he wished to be transmitted to future generations: the royal word, inscribed for all posterity on the rock, was placed under the aegis of Ahuramazda as protection against all those who might want to destroy it."

The trilingual inscription and the king's relationship with the god were intimately connected: mortals subjectively viewed the Bisitun monument based upon the artistic representation and/or any combination of the languages upon the rock. But it was the god who "understood" the entirety of the monument in all of its constituent parts. Thus we should expand the definition of "audience" throughout our study of Darius's royal program past merely "mortal" and move into the realm of the "cosmic" or the "divine." In fact, Gernot Windfuhr even suggests that the relief "represents in stone the fundamental ritual of creating a new cosmic order." Thus the monument should be viewed as the central element in defining the regime of a new royal and cosmic order, from which we can base our understanding of the use of iconography and language in other environments during Darius's reign.

After the reign of Xerxes, the prevalence of royal prayers to Ahuramazda diminished, and other gods such as Anahita and Mithra were invoked in inscriptions. The trilingual inscription all but disappears from Achaemenid remains after Xerxes, though it does make interesting, yet brief, reappearances in the archaeological record. Thus Ahuramazda is immensely important to Darius's regime, and the king's sponsorship of Old Persian script and the trilingual inscription were influence...
ential tools in advancing his legitimization as ruler and his personal relationship to the god. This will be seen to be true also in the iconography of the seals from the Fortification Archive at Persepolis.

The Seals of the Fortification Archive at Persepolis: A Case Study
A spectacular find at the Persian royal capital of Persepolis yields a useful case study in the royal ideological program of Darius I. The Persepolis Fortification Archive, found in the rooms of a tower in the citadel of the city, is an archival collection excavated by the University of Chicago in 1933, including 2,087 Elamite administrative tablets (texts published by Hallock in 1969) with some 1,162 analytically legible seals.53 Also found in the Fortification Archive were tens of thousands more pieces of varied kinds, including sealed, uninscribed tablets. The archive dates to a brief period in Darius's reign (509–494 BCE) and therefore serves as a fitting snapshot for the definition of the artistic program at that time.

Though there are 1,162 distinct seals in the archive, those that are most pertinent to the discussion of Darius's royal program are the "royal name" seals, so-called because they contain a formulaic "signature" of the king (e.g., "I am Darius," "Xerxes the Great King"). We are not able to describe these seals in any other terms than "official," given the fact that we cannot possibly identify them as those of the king. Rüdiger Schmitt assumes that the royal name seals were used by high-powered officials who were closely associated with the king,54 though such an assumption is not always necessary.55 The tablets in the Fortification Archive contain many Aramaic tablets, and several "stand-alone" entities, including Greek, Babylonian, Old Persian, and what appears to be a Phrygian tablet.56 In addition to this archive, we can also glean information from seals from the Persepolis Treasury Tablets. This archive consists of cuneiform Elamite tablets featuring seventy-seven distinct seals. Though a great majority come from the reign of Xerxes, the PTS57 impressions also yield some royal names that will be useful in our study of Darius's royal iconographical program.

The royal name seals were produced in what John Boardman first termed the "Court Style," which he associated with eastern Achaemenid glyptic and defined through a set of iconographic features.58 Through Boardman's analysis, Court Style seals include those that include representations of items such as the Persian court robe, date palms, and figures emerging from winged symbols.59 Garrison and Root prefer to characterize these seals by their stylistic qualities, such as the careful detailing or hard outlines of the figures.60 The Court Style, which expresses elements of both style and iconography, was one of many styles that existed in the corpus of seals in the Fortification Archive, but it represented an important change in imperial iconography during the reign of Darius. The style, as Garrison has proved, was a
development of the court at the center of the Persian Empire; seals from the periphery of the empire may have been influenced by the Court Style but often show no thematic analogy, leading to misidentification in some cases. Elspeth Dusinberre points out that the Court Style "did not replace other styles, at least in glyptic art, but rather existed simultaneously as a stylistic option patrons might choose. It was part of the new artistic language expressing the balance and legitimate might of the new empire ..." Thus a study of the seals produced in the Court Style can provide a better understanding of the imperial propaganda program at the court of the first Achaemenid king.

Though it is not technically produced in the Court Style, the earliest extant royal name seal from the Achaemenid Empire is PFS 93* (fig. 3), an inscribed seal of Cyrus of Anshan, grandfather of Cyrus the Great. Written in Elamite, the seal was a royal heirloom, '"... perhaps consciously selected and preserved for [its] strong personal appeal within the royal family." It contains the patronymic of Cyrus and his area of origin, "Cyrus of Anshan, son of Teispes," and depicts a figure on horseback spearing a fleeing figure. This seal of Cyrus is an interesting case in that it was used as an antique seal through the reign of Darius, in the same administrative venue as PFS 7* (fig. 4), a royal name seal of Darius himself. As we will see, this seal was an important prototype, even more significant because of its close connection to PFS 7*.

The fullest manifestation of Darius's royal iconographical program (in a microcosmic setting) is the royal name seals contained in the PFS corpus. Though there are only three extant seals from the PFS corpus that contain Darius's name (PFS 7*, PFS 11*, and PFUTS 001346), these seals were used often and carried by important individuals. With its earliest dated application in 503–2 BCE, PFS 7* seems to have been particularly associated with the king. PFS 7* (fig. 4) shows a familiar motif in the royal name seals: a control encounter, with a heroic figure wearing a Persian court robe and a dentate crown. Thus, the figure may be considered representative of the king, or at least "royal" in a sense. He clutches two creatures by the horns, one in each fist, and a winged disk figure (the "Ahuramazda" figure, as we
have described it above) is placed above his head. Two date palms flank the control encounter, which in turn are flanked by a trilingual inscription that proclaims “I am Darius.” Thus the seal contains the elements of the Court Style described above, with the center of vision on the royal figure. It can be seen as a static manifestation of Darius’s royal ideology. As Garrison points out, “With its center of attention on the Great King [the royal figure] and the emphasis in the new Achaemenid imperial program on order and control, PFS 7* seems even more striking and evocative of Achaemenid concepts of world order.”

Furthermore, PFS 7* always appears on J texts, or those that dispense commodities “before” the king or “on behalf” of the king or other members of the royal family. Also present on these tablets is PFS 66a*, PFS 66b*, and PFS 66c*,70 and PFS 93*, the antique seal of Cyrus (figs. 3, 5, 6). One more indication that PFS 7* was especially important is that it was found outside of Persepolis, sealing an Achaemenid Elamite tablet from Susa.71

The other two royal name seals include PFS 11* and PFUTS 0018*, one of which (PFS 11*) is forthcoming in Garrison and Root’s Achaemenid Seal Volume II (fig. 7). PFS 11*72 is similar to PFS 7* in its symmetrical nature, though key elements are different. There is no heroic control, and instead the focus is upon some sort of central “altar.” Above the altar is a winged disk with royal figure emergent. On either side are royal figures in Persian court robes and dentate crowns, facing one another with staff in one hand and a symbolic gesture of the other. Flanking these figures are two date palms, which are in turn flanked by a trilingual inscription that reads “I am Darius.” The first-known date of application of this seal is 502 BCE, making it an early seal like that of PFS 7*. Though PFS 11* is an anomaly among the royal name seals because of its worship scene, it was nonethe-

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7 Composite line drawing of PFS 11*. Correspondence with Margaret Root. Reprinted with permission of M. B. Garrison, M. C. Root, and the Persepolis Seal Project.

8 Preliminary composite line drawing of PFS 1683* = PFUTS 0018*. Correspondence with Margaret Root. Reprinted with permission of M. B. Garrison, M. C. Root, and the Persepolis Seal Project.
The Darius Seal, said to have been found in Thebes, Egypt. Purchased in 1835, formerly in the Salt collection. Chalcedony; height 3.7 cm, diameter 1.7 cm. British Museum, London, Inv.-Nr. 89132a [facsimile]. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Reprinted with permission.

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The Darius Seal, said to have been found in Thebes, Egypt. Purchased in 1835, formerly in the Salt collection. Chalcedony; height 3.7 cm, diameter 1.7 cm. British Museum, London, Inv.-Nr. 89132a [facsimile]. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Reprinted with permission.

less produced in the Court Style and shows similarities to PFS 7* in that it contains a royal figure, the date palm, and the trilingual inscription. Finally, PFS 1683* (PFUTS 0018*) (fig. 8) is the last extant (trilingual) royal name seal of Darius. It depicts a heroic control encounter with a royal figure in dentate crown in the center of the image. Above the royal figure is a winged disk with figure emergent. The royal figure grasps two lion-griffins by the tail, flanked again by two date palms, which are in turn flanked by trilingual inscriptions. This seal is interesting because it always occurs alone on tablets it seals (not uncommon in the archive and also because the royal figure is supported by creatures below). Also, present on PTS 1*, PTS 3*, and PTS 6*, the supporting animals are an important innovation in Achaemenid seal design: "Before the Achaemenid period, such supporting animals seem to have been the representational prerogative solely of divinities [represented in Mesopotamian and eastern Anatolian art]. Under the patronage of the early Achaemenids, however, glyptic artists adapted this imagery to express the complex concept of a king." Thus the pedestal animals on these particular seals were another element that made the royal nuances on the seals that much more connected to divinity. Their close association with the trilingual indicates that they were indeed in step with the royal iconographical program begun by Darius during his early campaign of self-definition.

Thus, of the PFS corpus, PFS 7* and 11* seem to have been particularly important seals, especially in the environment of a new Achaemenid regime: "The royal-name inscriptions act as the final, definitive sanctioning of this Court Style as the official art of the empire. PFS 11* and PFS 7* may have been the paradigmatic exemplars." They indicate that for the trilingual to adopt substantial and loaded meaning on a seal, three elements are typically present: the royal figure, the date palm, and the trilingual inscription (fig. 9). These are the only symbolic elements that are present in all of the extant royal name seals, from both the PFS and PTS corpora. In all of the seals in the PFS and PTS corpora but one, the winged disk figure hovers over the image. The trilingual royal name seals would not have con-
tained the same ideological message that they did during the reign of Darius without these elements.26

On “Terrestrial” versus “Cosmic” Readings of Royal Name Seals
Now that we have established a basis of content for the royal name seals in the reign of Darius, it is important to identify how the propagandistic messages in them could be “read” by different “audiences.”77 Mark Garrison has established a theory using “panoptic” or “imperial” terminology,78 emphasizing the mirror imagery of these important royal name seals in the PFS corpus. All of the royal name seals from the Fortification Archive show a crowned figure “in symmetrical designs that fold back on themselves.”79 PFS 11* is his crowning example of the “imperial” or “panoptic” perspective in its most sophisticated form (fig. 10). Garrison claims that there is a centripetal dynamic forced by the “V” syntax of the seal (inscription—palm—king—altar—palm—inscription), which he compares to the ring composition style of oral poetry, pushing the focus of the reader to the edges (that is, to the trilingual inscription).80 The rigid geometry of the design, then, allows for movement both inward and outward and also continuously turns back on itself. The doubling, according to Garrison, elevates the seal to the realm of the “ideal” world, implying the divine. This same level of symmetry is existent in PFS 7* and PFS 1683* (PFUTS 0018*), other exemplars of his “imperial” perspective theory. Approaching a view of a seal in this way can be said to describe a “terrestrial” perspective: the simple and immediate human view of the imagery.

Yet it can be suggested that instead of looking at the syntax of the seal in doubles, we should look at the syntax in triple, and change the perspective. Since the trilingual is so important in the royal name seals—in the “panoptic” perspective, the gaze of the viewer is pushed out toward this signal element—it is beneficial to attempt to understand them in the triple, in what seems to represent the language of Darius’s iconographical program. Admittedly, the triple view of a royal name seal is not as easily identifiable, but a more complex view of the seal imagery is in sync with the more sophisticated ideology presented during the reign of Darius.

We have already discussed the importance of the trilingual for Darius’s special communication with the god. Therefore, it is necessary now to establish a distinct read of a seal for the god, what can be called the cosmic read, which suggests that the winged disk figure be viewed as a central element. If one looks outward in either direction from the winged disk figure (cutting the royal figure “in half” in PFS 7* and PFS 1683*, where his image is split equally into two fields), there are three elements present in the field to be read out from the divine symbol: the royal figure, the date palm, and the trilingual inscription (fig. 11).81 These three symbols are the three elements in all of the royal name seals. In PFS 7*, in cutting the seal at
the divine figure, the royal figure is similarly divided. This aspect of the seal would seem to be consonant with Darius's ideological program, reiterating the reciprocal relationship between the king and the god established in the royal inscriptions.82

In addition to cutting the divine image down the middle, the cosmic read of a seal makes two assumptions that Garrison's panoptic read does not. One is that the creature (or the altar, in the case of PFS 11* ) is a sort of "ideological appendage" to the royal figure, where his control over the figure (or his worship at an altar) is an index for his royalty. This allows a broader view for the interpretation of the figures in the seal rolling: now, it is unnecessary to assume that the creatures are "evil" per se, as they may well signify a creature like a bull, which had both positive and negative elements in Mesopotamian philosophy. Similarly, there is uncertainty related to the classification of the symbol in PFS 11* as an altar; it may very well be a palatial symbol, further strengthening the seals' associations with royalty.83 On the contrary, if the symbol does indeed represent an altar, we may wonder whether the divided divine figure, which then also halves the altar, is further emphasizing a supplementary feature of the cosmic realm.

The fact that the same symmetry in PFS 11* or PFS 1683* does not occur in PFS 7* (where the royal figure is divided) should not pose a problem for our cosmic read, as these sorts of inconsistencies can be accounted for depending on the owner of the seal. For instance, PFS 11*, the seal used by Zissawi, may be a case of a person inside the imperial hierarchy appealing to the ideologies of the imperial program in different ways than did the owner of PFS 7*. In either case, a construction of balance is achieved, with three elements remaining in the field and the Achaemenid message of power, royalty, and close association with religion staying the same.84

The other assumption made within the cosmic read is that the trilingual inscription in and of itself is a piece of iconography (where it is left outside of the discussion in Garrison's "terrestrial" perspective). The trilingual inscription itself encapsulates a "sub-3" within the whole tripartite system. Thus, just as on the Bisitun monument (which itself looks like a larger-than-life seal rolled onto the side of a mountain), the text functions as an image that relates a message of royal power to a mortal audience, while being a special communicative device with the god. The trilingual, then, accompanies a greater "tripartite" ideology to Darius's iconography as viewed
in the three elements typical of royal name seals. Though a more intricate view, the triple structure of the seals in the cosmic read is consonant with our evidence establishing the significance of the trilingual to Darius's self-definitive program, necessitating a more sophisticated reader and a special communication with the god.

The seals in the PFS corpus, just like the monumental architecture in the empire, express their brilliance in an appeal to a wide variety of audiences. Much of the imagery contained on the seals is in close artistic connection to the greater iconographic program represented in the images at places such as Persepolis, Pasargadae, and Naqsh-i Rustam. This centrality of the divine figure and the royal figure in PFS 7", 11", and 1683" is significant to the relief on Darius's tomb at Naqsh-i Rustam65 and the reliefs at Persepolis as well, where “...we see the figure of the king in the traditional position of the deity, lending the image a new multivalent meaning of simultaneous kingship and divinity within a context of universal empire.”66 In addition, the audience scenes on PFS 66" and all its variations (which are always connected to PFS 7") are reminiscent of the reliefs on the Council and Throne Halls at Persepolis.67 Finally, the formal display characteristics of the trilingual inscriptions (paneled, caselined, longitudinal axis of seal) are very similar to those seen in inscriptions of Darius on architecture at Persepolis (DPa, DPe, DPd, DPe, DPf, DPg) and also evoke Bisitun and Naqsh-i Rustam.68 The seals are thus on par with the ideological aims of the empire's trilingual inscriptions and form a continuous body of work that was meant to express a complex royal ideology during Darius's reign.69

Arrangement of the Trilingual
With a firm basis established for the iconography associated with the trilingual inscriptions, it is necessary to place these findings into a conceptual framework in which the use of the trilingual can be better understood. Having spoken generally about the terrestrial or mortal as opposed to the cosmic read of the Bisitun monument and the seals from the Fortification Archives at Persepolis, it can be seen that the trilingual performs complex functions in multiple media. Therefore, we must ask two important questions: for what purposes did Darius elect to highlight the trilingual and to what different types of audiences can we assume it appealed?

Before an interpretation can be made about the meaning of the trilingual, we must have a better understanding of the languages that appeared in these inscriptions. There was an implicit ranking system in the process of the creation of these inscriptions: when in vertical array, they are always arranged in the following order:

Old Persian
Elamite
Babylonian (also known as Akkadian)
What was the significance of each of these languages in the environment of the Achaemenid Empire? Old Persian was the language of the rulers, based on an already ancient grammar. Matthew W. Stolper describes Old Persian as having an "artificial idiom drawing forms from several Iranian dialects." It thus served a greater purpose of placing Darius and Xerxes at the center of a larger Iranian world. Geographically, Old Persian represented an all-encompassing Iranian empire, as it was composed from many different Iranian dialects. Thus the use of Old Persian is in harmony with the general program of the Achaemenids: a cooperative, collaborative, and all-encompassing melting pot.

The second language in the trilinguals, Elamite, had been the primary language of successive kingdoms in territories of western Iran. It was not limited to royal inscriptions or display but was used specifically as the written language of administration. Geographically, Elamite represented the areas in which the Elamite kingdoms were formed: Susa and modern Fars (Anshan). In its connections to Anshan, Elamite also represented ties to Cyrus. Although not on the same ideological or influential plane as Old Persian, Elamite still had a prestigious position at Persepolis, where it is presented (without Old Persian) in one of the four important inscriptions written on the south wall at Persepolis (DPf). A foundation inscription, DPf briefly describes the construction of the palace terrace at Persepolis.

The final language presented in the trilingual inscriptions was Babylonian (Akkadian). A language first written down in the third millennium BCE, Babylonian was the foremost written language of western Asia, used for everything from commerce to science. During the reign of the Achaemenids, it became confined to Mesopotamia in a unique dialect (Neo-Babylonian, which would have had a very different syntactical and grammatical appearance than Old Babylonian, though still readily recognizable in form). It was used to represent high civilization and learning, in much the same way as Latin was used in the Middle Ages. Geographically, various dialects of Babylonian were present in the areas of Babylonia, Assyria, and at times Egypt, Anatolia, and Syria-Palestine.

From this brief overview of the origins and use of the three languages prominent in the trilingual inscriptions, it is important to look further at the languages present in the trilingual inscriptions and attempt to discern any significance in their arrangement. The trilingual appears to be a "fluid" entity, in that it was possible to use it for the definition of many things: geographical and ethnic boundaries of the empire, administrative boundaries, and boundaries between the cosmic and the terrestrial. In geographical terms, for instance, the trilingual is used to define the inhabitants of the empire in seven out of eight instances where a list is given in an inscription. This is the case in DB, DPe, DSe, DNA, and DSaa. The geographical definition of the empire through the trilingual was accessible
to everyone from the common man to the royal family, in that the inscribed lists appeared on monumental architecture everywhere. Using these three languages together to encompass geographical and ethnic boundaries resonated with all the people in the empire and also expressed the power of the Persian dominion over all of them, through the specialized knowledge of the trilingual text. It was important for Darius to use these languages, which resonated throughout all of his territories, to establish a firm boundary for himself and his constituents in a not-yet-established regime.93

The extent of the area represented by the trilingual was an all-inclusive message, part and parcel of the imperial ideology of the first Achaemenid king. There was, however, a “ranking” of areas associated with the vertical arrangement of the trilingual (with Fars being the most central area). Similarly, the seal inscriptions most often represent the same order in a horizontal array from left to right.94 The only certainty that can be obtained from this these arrangements is that Old Persian took some precedence. The place of Elamite and Akkadian was more tenuous; the order of the three languages may have something to do with the evocation of empires, subdivided according to traditional capitals. Persia was considered the most central and important area of the empire, with its capital of Persepolis; Elam, tied to Cyrus and another capital city, Susa, was “ranked” second in prominence; and Babylonia, with its ancient capital of Babylon once conquered by Cyrus, was the third “ranked” area. The three capitals in these regions, Babylon, Susa, and Persepolis, remained prominent throughout the Achaemenid Empire.95 As Bruce Lincoln describes, “As a set, [the three different languages] thus make a statement about unity and diversity, while also describing linguistic and political relations at the central core of the empire.”96 The associations with Ahuramazda, associated iconographically with many of the trilingual inscriptions, signaled to Darius’s mortal audience that these areas had been conquered with the aid of the god and that through loyalty to the king, the Pax Persica would continue.97

The Symbolic Value of the Tripartite Distinction
The literal value of the trilingual inscription and tripartite iconography has been established through geographical/ethnic and administrative terms, and its resonance throughout the empire will later be seen through the Achaemenid priority of cultural exchange. I have argued through the seals that not only is the trilingual highlighted in Achaemenid glyptic specifically associated with royalty, but an inherent tripartite ideology inherent is also present. To fully understand the election of the trilingual as representative of empire, we must understand the possible precedents behind Darius’s decision to associate himself and his reign with “the three,” and what kind of significance these precedents held.98
Though conceptual leaps are often inherent in any study of precedents for an ideological program, several possible (not mutually exclusive) influences exist for Darius's election of the trilingual and tripartite iconography as a symbol of his empire. Margaret Root (9) speaks about the importance of Egyptian precedents for Achaemenid symbolism in general, with one of the most influential artistic elements surviving as the so-called "Nine Bows" motif. The Nine Bows played an important part in artistic and literary expressions of the pharaoh's relationship to his empire. The Achaemenids adopted the motif in their artistic program as well, especially in places outside Persepolis. The supporting figures on the Canal Stelae and the Statue of Darius at Susa (see below), similar to that in Egyptian architecture, were consciously reworked by the Achaemenids to fit their ideological program. 100 The ways in which the Achaemenids manipulated these ideas "indicate that Achaemenid planners understood the concept behind the Nine Bows idea; these changes further indicate that the Achaemenids had a clear perception of just how that idea and form had to be adapted in order to suit the Persian politic." 101 The origin of the Nine Bows symbolism is obscure, but the number nine became canonical for the Egyptians because the hieroglyphic script forms the plural by adding the sign for three. Thus the number nine was the plural squared and could stand for all enemies or foreigners, for "everything," or for "infinity." Therefore, the number three had the inherent power of representing a timelessness that ultimately became the basis for Darius's program.

The timelessness motif also may have roots in other systems of representation. The stele of Naram-Sin, an early Akkadian king, may provide another view of the significance of the ideology of "the three." This was a victory monument, erected around 2250 BCE in honor of at least three of the king's victories and appropriations while on military campaigns. 102 On the stele, Naram-Sin is depicted with his foot suppressing an enemy (fig. 12), leading many to believe that it is a direct precedent for the imagery of Darius and Gaumata on the Babylonian version of the stone relief on the Bisitun monument. 103 Unfortunately, the entire stele has not survived, and there is some debate over the reconstruction of the top. Though it is impossible to know for certain, scholars have attempted to reconstruct anywhere from three to seven celestial bodies in the upper right corner of the stele. 104 Depending on the number reconstructed, arguments have been made as to the possibilities for the symbolism behind the celestial bodies: the Pleiades; the Goddess Ishtar as the Venus star or planet; the sun-god Shamash. However, Irene Winter argues that three domains of meaning can be given to the three celestial bodies on Naram-Sin's victory monument: a celestial portent regarding a battle outcome; a divine favor or presence, especially with respect to the king's destiny and victory in battle; a narrative reference to space or time. 105 All of these motifs could perform an obvious
function in Darius's ideological program, especially in regards to his legitimization process. Yet it is the narrative reference to space or time that Winter chooses to highlight. She suggests that the three suns on the victory stele represent the visual translation of time: the third celestial element, at the apex of the composition, represents the sun at its midday zenith. The sun duplicated could indicate east–west as well as sunrise–sunset imagery; but three suns would indicate sunrise–noon–sunset imagery. Thus Naram-Sin's victory was represented by the three suns as occurring within the context of a single day, a “rhetorical single day” that constitutes a truly heroic achievement. Thus the duplication of the “three celestial bodies” on the Babylonian version of the Bisitun monument could have called to mind the symbolism behind the three bodies on the stele of Naram-Sin (fig. 13).

There is even more evidence for this on the Bisitun monument itself. There, numerology is used to a great extent, especially with relation to the numbers nine (as in the Egyptian precedents above) and three. Many of the inscriptions can be divided into three subcategories. Darius claims to have accomplished his signal victories just after the fall equinox, just after the winter solstice, and after the spring equinox. Thus, his proverbial “one year” in which he achieved all of these victories is represented in the macrocosm of the “rhetorical day” in the Naram-Sin stele. The patterns of rhetoric, numbering, and timing that dominate Darius's inscription clearly “show a reasoned compromise between, and co-existence with, the real and the idealized truth of space and time.” Why might Darius have wished to utilize this imagery? He could have known the Naram-Sin monument and recognized it as one of a great conqueror and military hero. This characterization of a king as legitimate by means of his ability to be militarily successful was an attractive motif for Darius, especially at the dawn of his reign; he certainly felt it an important point to drive home: Carl Nylander shows that within sixty lines of the Bisitun inscriptions, Darius repeats five times that his victories were completed in “one and the same year.” If Winter's theories are viable regarding the “time” element in the celestial bodies on Naram-Sin's stele, it would have provided a fitting precedent for Darius’s royal ideological program.

Besides the Egyptian and Assyrian precedents for the tripartite iconography, there are even more possibilities for the importance of tripartite symbolism through ancient Iranian beliefs in the cosmic primordial elements. The chain of creation, assumed by the single deity Ahuramazda, was thought to be such: landsky–man. The “bonheur de l'homme” follows this order of creation, though it can be combined with “man” in that it represents the development of his religious ideology. Thus the chain of creation was believed to have been in three distinct parts; a similar division of responsibilities was given to the Persian king, the mortal representative of Ahuramazda. The apportionment of duties is given in the formulaic
royal "signature" present in many of our trilingual inscriptions: "I am Darius the great king, king of kings, king of the countries, the king on this earth."

These distinct primordial parts carried over even into the elements of the Old Persian language. There were certainly very few readers of Old Persian in the ancient world, but the symbols were recognizable. The signs that embodied the concepts of the Achaemenid world order would appear thus: first the divine beings, then the inanimate things created by Ahuramazda and ruled over by the king (earth and land), then the king himself, represented by his title (not his name). This order of symbols showed the importance of the three in the Achaemenid ideology established by Darius: the king was the link between heaven and earth, and through these three symbols the world functioned in perfect order.¹¹²

The religious elements that are always intricately intertwined with political ideology appear no differently in the context of the trilingual. Alireza Shahbazi has located patterns appearing at Persepolis that seem to have their origins in the Avesta. The numbers three, five, and seven (and all of their potential multiples) were particularly symbolic for the Achaemenids. For instance, at Persepolis, there are three doorways to the "Gate of All Lands," three porticos in the Apadana, etc. Shahbazi points out that, even though Darius had several wives, he only constructed three vaults, with three cysts, in his rock-cut tomb, which Boyce called "a clear instance of 'the characteristic Zoroastrian triplicity.'"¹¹³ Other seemingly religious motivations apply; according to Clarisse Herrenschmidt, Émile Benveniste a long time ago recognized that "les trois maux" that threatened the Persians were measured according to the three functions that are found more or less clearly through the representation of the Indo-Iranian ancient pantheon.¹¹⁴ The three classes of the ancient order, "food producers, warriors, and priests" in accordance with the Scythian and Indo-Iranian social classes, are closely tied to elements in the Gathas, a portion of the Avesta. The three social classes are the human "representatives" of the corresponding elements of the living world: "boeuf, cheval, plante hauma."¹¹⁵ The "three evils," then, are the elements upon which this balance of order may be threatened, the "opposites" of these essential elements: famine, invasion, and impiety. To protect against these evils is the responsibility of the king, under the protection of Ahuramazda. Thus, just as Achaemenid religion dictated the three primordial elements, it also dictated that the king was to protect against the evils that may threaten those elements. In this view, the trilingual was a symbol that showed the Persian people that the king understood his political responsibilities, based on the terms of the sacred Achaemenid religion. Clearly not all official Achaemenid documents required the use of tripartite symbolisms but, as the evidence in appendix 1 shows, the strategy was especially prevalent during Darius's reign.¹¹⁶
Other Tripartite Messages in the Reign of Darius

Proof of the power of the trilingual inscription and the flexibility of its message in different environments is clear when one explores the instances of the trilingual outside the immediate region of Fars. Just as local traditions influenced the use of the trilingual in Fars, the ideology of the trilingual was an important element in the acculturation project of the Achaemenid Persians. A study of Asia Minor is useful on this point. The Persians had great influence in this area, as shown by the power of their satrapal presence. The Persian satraps were admirable in their ability to establish close relationships with the local ruling classes in areas like Sardis and Daskyleion (Turkey), though they also maintained close relationships with the Persian court at Persepolis. In these areas, archaeological evidence shows a high level of Achaemenid influence, which also accommodated local traditions and customs. One example is a seal from Gordian, a city located on the Anatolian plateau, about one hundred kilometers west-southwest of the modern Turkish capital of Ankara. The seal, labeled as Cat. 33 by Dusinberre, is an intricate Achaemenid period seal depicting a worship scene (fire altar) with two bearded crowned figures in court robes on pedestal animals flanking a half figure in a winged disk, and an Aramaic inscription in the terminal field (fig. 14). It exhibits striking parallels to the iconography on PFS 11*, with the mirror-image kingly figures worshipping at a central element including an "altar" and Ahuramazda figure. Thus the seal shows heartland Persian imagery, a lingua franca Aramaic inscription, and an Anatolian style. It indicates that areas in Anatolia had overtly embraced the Achaemenid styles on seals, showing that the relationship between the locals and the Achaemenid power structures was reciprocal: "The high percentage of Achaemenid styles indicates the clear tendency among the elite in western Anatolia and those in the satrapal courts towards choosing images that directly associated them with the Persian world." Though not a trilingual, the seal from Gordian recalls imagery from one of the most powerful trilingual seals we do have (PFS 11*) and may have evoked the same type of power. It was surely meant to recall the trilingual official seals. Thus a strong relationship between the Persians and their subjects existed, and the Gordian seal provides a useful paradigm for the evidence we can identify from outside of the immediate area of Fars.

Further manifestations of the trilingual in the areas outside Fars (Persepolis, Naqsh-i Rustam, Pasargadae) bear witness to the influence of this early Achaemenid ideology. Susa also played an important role during Darius's reign, perhaps in part because of its associations with Elam. A famous statue (DSab) was found at Susa in December 1972 (fig. 15); it is a better than life-sized image of Darius I that remains mostly intact from the chest downward. The statue has been dated to
the later years of Darius's reign and was commissioned by him to be made in Egypt by Egyptian artisans. It contains hints of the influences of Egyptian workmanship (especially in the pose of the statue, which has one foot forward), but also contains Persian elements (in the dress and the strong symmetrical elements). Thus, the statue is a fine artistic example of the melding of local and imperial traditions. Most important for our purposes, it is inscribed with a quadrilingual inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphics, Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian. Still, the statue actually is representative of the same form of trilinguals we have seen in Persia. The statue's belt of the statue carries Egyptian inscriptions; the left-hand pleats carry five longer ones. The right-hand pleats bear the usual pattern of Darius's trilingual texts (Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian). The trilingual, then, is still separated from the hieroglyphics, and the effect remains the same: the trilingual is closely related to the Persian king and his authority is expressed by this means to an Egyptian population.

It is tempting to see the statue as a “3+1” artifact, with the hieroglyphics as an added element, but it is also necessary to view this statue in its distinct milieu. Artifacts made in Egypt were the product of local heritage and tradition. For instance, Darius commissioned the Suez Canal stelae, like the statue in Egypt, to celebrate his construction of the canal. The four stelae that remain were inscribed with trilingual cuneiform inscriptions, with a fourth text in Egyptian hieroglyphics. Both these items and the statue of Darius were originally created to reside in Egypt (not in the statue's final location of Susa), and many pieces, such as alabaster vessels, incorporate the trilingual-plus-hieroglyphic textual pattern. Yet the hieroglyphic texts do not merely mirror the message of the trilingual texts in all cases and often go into more detail than the cuneiform texts. This trend is part of a general pattern of artifacts created in the Achaemenid period (and in the reign of Darius specifically)—which were part of the trilingual “discourse” but pandered to the interests of the local population—in which there were “formal readjustments ... to meet the
demands of a new ideology.”¹²⁷ One of the best examples of this type of document is the Babylonian version of the Bisitun monument, which translates the Bisitun text into Akkadian and portrays Darius in a milieu specific to Babylonian interests, distinct from the iconography at the actual monument.¹²⁸ Another example is the temple of Hibis in the Kharga Oasis, Egypt.¹²⁹ In antiquity, a temple to Amon stood in this oasis, upon which Darius later built his own temple; the influences of Egyptian architecture from this region are also manifest at Persepolis.¹³⁰ These “outliers” are testaments to the malleability of the message associated with the trilingual and its ability to hold significance for local populations within the Achaemenid purview.

Thus, besides being an important communication device with the god, the trilingual and its accompanying imagery provided great dividends for Darius in terms of the multifarious “mortal” audience with whom he could communicate by this means. The trilingual became a sort of index for the power of the king, his dominion over the people in his empire, and his relationship to the god Ahuramazda. This index was used throughout the empire to express the geographical, administrative, and cosmic boundaries, and the symbolism was recognizable to all people through the trilingual and its associated iconography. As we will see, the symbolism behind the trilingual was so influential that its power remained long after the Achaemenid Empire was extinct.

**Trilinguals in the Reign of Xerxes, Son of Darius I**

After the death of Darius, the pattern of dynastic succession was maintained with the accession of his son Xerxes, though again not without some controversy.¹³¹ Xerxes’s building projects continued to develop in the same vein as Darius’s royal ideological program. Some have suggested that the son’s “slavish” tendency to “copy” the father indicates a lack of creativity or independence. This impression is not a stretch, since many of the buildings first begun by Darius (especially at Persepolis) were completed by Xerxes. To make this assumption, however, is to misunderstand the archaeological evidence. For instance, though some¹³² have read XPI (Xerxes’s copy of Darius’s tomb inscription DNb) as a lack of independence on the part of Xerxes, the “timeless” nature of the Achaemenid inscriptions indicate that he was following an ideological and programmatic declarative formula, meant to “emphasize the validity of generally accepted principles for his own reign as well.”¹³³ Though many of his trilingual inscriptions contain similar or identical content to those of Darius (e.g., XPa carries equivalent connotations to DNa and DE; XPg to DPh; XPi to DPi; XPk to DPh, etc.), this was simply an adoption of the same royal ideology that had worked so well for his father. A strong example of father-son “mirroring” is in DPh and XPk, two trilingual inscriptions in the south doorway of the Tachara at Persepolis. The Darius inscription is carved on the garment folds
of the royal figure on the west jamb of the southern doorway of his palace. XPK is
carved in the mirror image of the figure opposite, which bears above it an inscrip-
tion of Darius (DPa). Amélie Kuhrt understands this as an example of Xerxes’s
emphasis on the “seamless continuity” of Achaemenid rule. Another example
can be seen at Mount Elwend in the Zagros chain, where XE is set next to DE and
presents mirrored wording. These particular examples serve to show that Xerxes
can be seen as “going on along the path indicated by his father and building on his
foundations.” Continuity in the fragile environment of the Persian Empire during
times of massive revolts (in Egypt and Babylonia) and large-scale campaigns
(the second invasion of Greece) was crucial.

That is not to say, however, that Xerxes embraced the trilingual as wholeheart-
edly as his father did. The number of extant trilingual documents indicates that
there was a general decrease in the reign of Xerxes. This tendency is especially
ture in royal name seals, where the trilingual appears only once in a royal name
seal of Xerxes, as opposed to all of the royal name seals of Darius (see appendix 2).
The same trend occurs in weights (DWa–d), official vessels that would have been
used in contexts of practical significance and visibility. In the reign of Darius, we
have at least four examples of trilingually inscribed official weights, as opposed
to none in the reign of Xerxes. Xerxes did seem to embrace the idea of inscribing
royal tableware; we have at least thirty-five examples of quadrigingly-
ual-inscribed vessels from his reign. These vessels even make an appearance in
diverse findspots throughout the empire and are extremely important as courtly
items that would have been gifted by the king. Yet though many monumental
inscriptions and some precious vessels of Xerxes maintained continuity in the tri-
lingual, the propensity for its use on smaller, official (sometimes even more visible
and accessible) media began to fade.

Despite these changes, examples of the impact of acculturation and the force
of the Achaemenid trilingual continued under Xerxes. More evidence of this sort
comes from by four bullae recovered from the area of Daskyleion (figs. 16–18). The bullae
from Daskyleion, two tentatively dated from Xerxes’s reign (DS2=Schmitt’s SXg
and DS3=Schmitt’s SXf) and two tentatively dated from the reign of Artaxerxes
I (DS4=Schmitt’s SA1a and DS4=Schmitt’s SA1b), are further case studies in
the impact of the iconography attached to the trilingual seals from the Persepolis
archives. DS2 shows two sphinxes facing each other, with a palm tree on the left
de and a winged disk figure above, with a bilingual inscription in alternating Old
Persian and Babylonian in the terminal field on the right. It is impressed on several
bullae and shows no royal figure. DS3, also a seal of Xerxes, shows a hero grasping a
labeled-griffin, with flanking date palms and a terminal inscription in Old Persian. The seal contains no winged disk figure and survives in thirty impressions. Finally, DS4, a seal from the reign of Artaxerxes I, shows an audience scene, also present on PFS 66a$^*$ and PFS 66b$^*$, with an Old Persian inscription on the top field.

Achaemenid seals at Persepolis make it clear that the motifs present on the seals from Daskyleion and Gordion adopt imagery that resonated strongly with Achaemenid power. The images on these seals had strong associations with those of the trilingual seals at Persepolis and the iconography present with other monuments expressing trilingual inscriptions (such as Bisitun). In some cases, these seals are directly connected to those from the Fortification Archive (Cat. 33 from Gordion and DS4 from Daskyleion). In other cases, such as with DS2 or DS3, we may be able to understand the singular Old Persian as “standing” for all three languages (a “synecdoche” construction; see below), a product of their being produced in another part of the empire or having a later manufacture date than the “original” trilinguals made during the reign of Darius. These seals in the western areas are thus an indication of the understanding that subjects had regarding the power of the images connected to the trilingual and the environment of common relationships and acculturation in the Achaemenid Empire.

**Variants on the Theme**

After the reign of Darius, the trilingual was still used in some measure, but variations and minimalizations in style began to appear. All of the royal name seals bearing the name of Darius in both the PFS and PTS corpora are trilingual inscriptions. Yet in the reign of Xerxes, some changes occur, which begs the question of how to understand variations on typical seal patterns, such as missing elements or monolingual inscriptions in lieu of the typical trilingual. An example of this type of variant is PTS 8$^*$, bearing the name of Xerxes, which exhibits the elements typically associated with trilingual inscriptions, such as the flanking date palms and the centered winged disk figure, but only a monolingual inscription (fig. 19). Perhaps after the “prototype” trilinguals were manufactured at the start of Darius’s reign (e.g. PFS 7$^*$ and 11$^*$), it became acceptable for one language to stand in for all three. In most cases, the monolinguals are written in Old Persian cuneiform, which may suggest that the Old Persian language eventually became a sort of marker for the trilingual itself. Thus we can explain this minimization of languages as an evolution in style of sorts, where the message remains but in a syncopated form.

A similar problem occurs regarding the seals (especially in the PTS corpus, many of which were manufactured in the reign of Xerxes) that do not contain the same sort of symmetry as those of the prototype trilinguals; seals that do not contain the winged disk figure, yet still have trilingual inscriptions, present a similar
issue. For instance, in the PTS corpus, only PTS 2*\(^{147}\) (reign of Darius) and PTS 6*\(^{146}\) (reign of Xerxes) have flanking date palms and the symmetrical imagery present in the PFS corpus (figs. 20, 21). PTS 1*\(^{147}\) and PTS 3*\(^{146}\), however, are not symmetrical images, but in both cases only contain one date palm (figs. 22, 23). The same is true for PTS 4*\(^{149}\), which is also missing the winged disk figure (fig. 24). Thus it seems that in the PTS corpus (first-known dates being around 495 or 494 BCE) there is some movement away from the standard trilingual. Yet this does not harm the gist of the theory. These seals still contain elements of the Court Style seals that we have previously identified: the trilingual, the royal heroic figure, and the date palm. The seals in the PTS corpus should still be considered a part of the same discourse as that of the PFS corpus, since they contain these elements.

We may be seeing in the PTS corpus a development of style during the later stages and after the reign of Darius. For instance, in PTS 1*, the trilingual is the center of attention as it frames the three elements discussed above. The lack of symmetry should not be considered a "dumbing down" of the style but rather a development, where the redundancies of the unnecessary double elements such as the second date palm were eliminated in favor of a more succinct message. Though we do not know enough about the actual practice of rolling out these seals, we might imagine that the PTS seals were produced in such a way as to preserve the three elements typically associated with royal name seals while conforming to the practicalities of rolling the seal. So PTS 4* and PTS 1*, with the iconography of three elements moving from left to right, can be imagined to have been designed to be rolled left to right. If the sealer did not roll the entire length of the seal, he still was able to maintain the three elements, and the message remained the same.

PTS 4* poses an additional problem in that it contains the royal hero figure, the date palm, and the trilingual inscription, but lacks the Ahuramazda symbol. This
is the only royal name seal in which the winged disk figure is missing. Because it occurs in the PTS corpus, I would argue that the elements that are present on the seal call to mind the other seals and iconography in the Fortification Archive with Ahuramazda figures, much as Old Persian often stands in for all three languages in monolingual inscriptions. Thus Dusinberre observes that “[s]ome images are particularly common on royal name seals and are only rarely carved on seals that are not inscribed with the name of the king. These images, even when they appear on nonroyal name seals, are still resonant with the significance of the royal name seals.” This tendency can be applied to monolingual inscriptions and those seals that do not contain a certain element, such as the Ahuramazda figure or symmetrical nature of the PFS royal name seals. It speaks to the polyvalence of the imagery from royal name seals and the possibility of making connections to a certain ideology even though a certain element seemed “necessary” by arbitrary guidelines may be absent. Contrary to this idea, the lack of some elements could suggest a devolution of style in the PTS corpus. However, given that Xerxes took great pains to maintain the tenets of the royal program set down by Darius, I believe this is unlikely. What it does reveal is that, in the reign of Darius specifically, the standardization of certain elements associated with the trilingual was uncompromised.

Developments in Royal Ideology after the Reigns of Darius and Xerxes

The Achaemenid regime continued after the reigns of Darius and Xerxes. Artaxerxes I, king from 465 to 424 BCE, succeeded his father, Xerxes. This succession, too, was not without confusion, as Xerxes had been assassinated, and there were three sons involved in the dynastic situation. Complicit in a conspiracy just like his grandfather Darius, Artaxerxes I came to the throne and eventually consolidated his power. Only one monumental trilingual inscription survives (A1Pa) from his reign, from Palace H at Persepolis, containing a typical formulaic expression of patrilineal succession from Xerxes and an invocation to Ahuramazda. Though Artaxerxes I did make some attempt to create the impression of an uninterrupted Achaemenid line in this inscription, some disruption of the continuity of ideology becomes apparent during his reign, as demonstrated by some changes in the decorative motifs at Persepolis. However, smaller vessels do exist with quadrilingual (cuneiform plus Egyptian hieroglyphs) or trilingual inscriptions.

Our most interesting study of a change in Achaemenid trilinguals occurs in the reign of Artaxerxes II. King from 404 to 358 BCE, Artaxerxes II came to
power after the death of his father, Darius II, though again not without some controversy. He is a most interesting study in a sort of resurgence (and then sharp extinction) of the trilingual inscription. Like his predecessors, Artaxerxes II consistently invoked Ahuramazda, by repeating the formulae of Darius I (e.g., A2Hc, 15–20). However, much more noteworthy is the fact that Artaxerxes II also invoked two other gods, Anahita and Mithra, in his inscriptions. This is the case in A2Sa, Sb, Sd, and A2Ha. Of these, A2Sa (Susa) and A2Ha (Hamadan) are trilingual inscriptions. According to Herrenschmidt, Darius had made Ahuramazda his personal god and the god of his family clan, replacing Mithra as the first-place god until the time of Artaxerxes II and III, where Mithra resumed that role once again. Herrenschmidt imagines that the institutionalization of Ahuramazda as the great god and the institution of an official cult in honor of the great king (what she calls an “opération Ahura Mazda”) was not a total success given the reappearance of Mithra under Artaxerxes II in the prayers. The attempt at using the trilingual for a nonconventional form such as an invocation of gods in addition to Ahuramazda (and its quick disappearance thereafter) would suggest that the trilingual did not work for this purpose, and further establishes a firm connection between the trilingual, Ahuramazda, and the ideological program of Darius I.

Artaxerxes III, king from 358 to 338 BCE, succeeded to the throne after the death of his father, Artaxerxes II. One monumental trilingual did occur during the reign of Artaxerxes III (A3Pb), an almost exact replica of DNe 1–30. Both are sets of thirty trilingual captions on relief figures on tombs (another multiple of three). It is important to remember that this trilingual inscription appears at Persepolis, the last remaining remnant of the old Achaemenid power established by Darius. Thus we can view this particular inscription as an attempt to continue the ideology so prevalent at Persepolis through the inscriptions of Darius and Xerxes. Admittedly, the epigraphic tradition during this period makes it impossible to make solid conclusions about the ideological leanings of Artaxerxes III. One last fleeting suggestion regarding Artaxerxes III and his interpretation of the Achaemenid tripartite ideology: In the Moscow Artaxerxes cylinder, attributed to Artaxerxes III, a king in a dentate crown pulls three captives behind him. Is there any symbolism in the choice of three captives? Is it possible that this cylinder is a strange perversian of the tripartite ideology of the Achaemenids, drawing the era of the dependence on the “three” for royal ideology to an inverted end? All of the elements discussed above in our royal name seals appear on this seal, so the possibility that it is drawing some sort of subtle connection to previous examples does exist. However, it is impossible to go much further than to conjecture that the imagery on this seal serves as some sort of allusion to the past.
Late and Post-Achaemenid Trilinguals

The last Achaemenid king before the dynasty came to a close was Darius III. He was conquered by Alexander the Great at the battle of Gaugamela in 331 BCE and died as a fugitive in 330 BCE. But before his reign and after the death of Artaxerxes III, there was a brief period where Arses (Artaxerxes IV), the son of Artaxerxes III, was recognized as king, before his murder by the eunuch Bagoas.161 During the period after the reigns of Darius I to Artaxerxes III, the trilingual inscription vanished from the Persian region, as far as we can tell from the archaeological record.162 Yet one important document, known as the Xanthus stele, survives from the reign of Artaxerxes IV. Discovered in 1973, the stele was found in the Leto sanctuary at Xanthus in Lycia. Inscribed in Lycian, Aramaic, and Greek, it describes the citizens of Xanthus in the process of founding a new cult to the god Basileus Kaunios.

The ranking of languages that appeared in the Achaemenid trilingual inscriptions is not as clearly defined in the case of the Xanthus stele, mostly because of its odd arrangement and uncertainties about the Lycian language. This is what we do know: the Lycian inscription, according to Kuhrt, was probably the “original” text.163 The Aramaic inscription is remarkable in that it is the shortest of the three translations and is also placed in the most inconspicuous position of all three. Lemaire has argued that the Greek text represents the position of the local authorities.164 In regards to all three languages, Le Roy has argued that Greek was the “mediateur du pouvoir,” Aramaic was “l’instrument de l’empire,” and Lycian was the language “des institutions locales et regionales.”165 Due to these prevailing arguments, and the fact that the Xanthus trilingual does not present itself in the same vertical form as some of our other trilinguals, it is impossible to reach a consensus on the significance of these languages with relation to one another.

Even if we cannot provide a clear argument regarding the possible ranking of languages on the stele per se, we can assume that the trilingual was probably adopted by the local officials because Xanthus was an area highly influenced by the Achaemenids. Briant corroborates this idea: “… à savoir que, tout au long de la domination achéménide, les communautés locales continuent d’utiliser leurs langues et écritures.”166 The officials in Xanthus hoped to draw upon the power of the previous examples of the trilingual and thereby make their own power an extension of the Persian kings, just as the satraps at the height of Darius’s empire.

The tradition of the trilingual text survived on the peripheries of the Achaemenid Empire in the third century. The Mauryan king Ashoka (reigned 269–232 BCE), a follower of the Buddha who may have had contact with the Seleucid kings,167 was fervent in his expression of royal edicts in the form of inscriptions on rock, in caves, and on pillars. Though no trilingual versions exist, many of his extant inscriptions were bilingual and utilized the Prakrit, Greek, and Aramaic languages.168 Though it
is a matter of debate, the edicts appear to "owe something to the pervasive influence of Achaemenid architecture and sculpture," while also exhibiting Greek stylistic elements. However it may be, the multilingualism of the inscriptions together with their choice medium (rock carving) provides evidence as to the force of the tradition begun by Darius at Bisitun (here, reimagined and recreated for a different temporal and cultural situation, albeit within the realm of the Achaemenid Persian Empire). The major rock edicts, sixteen in number, were heretofore unprecedented in India. Ashoka's reworking of Achaemenid traditions for his own purposes recalled the manipulation of the medium for local purposes during the Achaemenid period (e.g., the statue of Darius from Susa) while also foreshadowing the propagandistic revival of the trilingual that occurred under the Sassanians.

After the reign of Ashoka, it was a century before another trilingual text appeared in the ancient record. Probably the most famous of all, the Rosetta stone was a decree of Ptolemy V regarding taxes and the erection of statues. It was found in the purview of Ptolemy's empire in Rashid, on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt. In hieroglyphs, demotic characters, and Greek, the Rosetta stone was commissioned in 196 BCE. The stone itself maintains this linguistic organization in order from top to bottom: hieroglyphs ("the writing of the divine words"); demotic ("the writing of documents"); Greek ("the writing of the Ionians [local people]"). Its purpose, "to witness to the Pharaoh's benevolence towards his people and his piety towards the gods," was similar to that of the other previous trilinguals we have studied. Other priestly decrees from Egypt, recorded by Huss in a 1991 article, exhibit the same linguistic arrangement as the Rosetta stone. Thus, a trend emerges in the record of trilingual inscriptions: they were all located in the immediate area of Achaemenid Persia or in regions that the Achaemenids ruled and were used to express the power of the local regent with respect to his people and his god.

Achaemenid influence on Roman culture is the subject of new work, including a recent dissertation by Ben Rubin, who studies the Romans in Asia Minor during the Julio-Claudian period. In terms of the trilingual, one of our most interesting examples in the post-Achaemenid period is the inscription of Gallus in Egypt from 29 BCE, celebrating his accomplishments as Aegypti praefectus during the reign of Augustus. The inscription appears in Greek, Latin, and hieroglyphics. Though it occurs again in a complicated midst of a burgeoning regime (this time, the future Roman Emperor Augustus), we can discern some particular characteristics about the monument. Dorothy Thompson and Ludwig Koenen argue that the Egyptian priests erected this monument for Gallus. Though there are interesting textual differences between each language's depiction of what happened, ultimately Gallus appears in a pharaonic position, through his formulaic thanks to the Nile for its help in his victories. This is, of course, an unwelcome outcome...
Naqsh-i Rustam. Photo by Jennifer Finn.

Trilingual inscriptions on the horses of Ardashir I. From Schmidt, Persepolis III: The Royal Tombs and Other Monuments (1970), pl. 82. Reprinted with permission of the Research Archives at the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.

in Roman eyes, and we have to understand that the Egyptian priests would have known this would be the effect of the monument. Thus we can conjecture that the Egyptian priests might have been conspiring against Gallus while seeming to do him honor. In either case (whether it was at his own initiative or at the priests') the influence of the Achaemenid trilingual inscriptions maintains its symbolic power within this context. No matter the instigators for the construction of this stele, Thompson and Koenen prove that it was a cause for Gallus's recall back to Rome: "By using it for his own deeds, Gallus claimed what belonged to Octavian. [Though the literal meanings of all three texts should not have strained their relationship due to its panegyric nature], the Greeks, however, familiar with the rituals and myths of Egyptian kingship, would have understood Gallus' faux pas and could have caused the incriminating reports to Rome that finally lead to Gallus' recall ...[to] Rome." This implies that the problem with the inscription was its allusion to Egyptian kingship. But we must remember that cross-cultural interactions between the Achaemenids and Egypt likely effected some principles of Egyptian kingship, and the satraps in these areas may have used the trilingual (like the Gordion seal or Daskyleion bullae) to evoke the powers of the Achaemenid kings. Thus, we can infer that the association with the Achaemenid trilinguals and their symbolic powers might have been the most salient problem with the Gallus inscription. Octavian may have recognized Gallus's use of the Achaemenid example as an implicit threat to his own imperial power and thus recalled Gallus for insubordination. After Gallus's return to Rome, he received a renuntatio amici-


tiœ and committed suicide. Through the example of the Gallus monument, we can see that the symbolism of the Achaemenid trilingual remained commanding and memorable long after the extinction of the regime.¹⁷⁷

The last documented appearance of the trilingual inscription in the ancient world is during the period of the Sassanians, successors to the Persian Empire, during the third century CE. These rulers purposefully recalled the trilingual inscriptions of the Achamenids in their inscriptions on reliefs at Naqš-i Rustam (figs. 25, 26). The inscriptions, located on the king’s horses on the reliefs,¹⁷⁸ name the kings Ardashir I and Shapur I as “Mazda-worshipping.” The most important Sassanian inscriptions are located at the same site, alternating three languages on the walls of the Ka‘bah-e Zardusht (fig. 27), allegedly an Achaemenid fire temple.¹⁷⁹ The languages on these particular inscriptions are Middle Persian, Greek, and Parthian. Herrenschmidt posits for the Middle Persian language, which replaced Old Persian as the primary language: “The Achaemenid formulary, established under Darius in the final years of the sixth century, was resumed by the first Sassanian kings in the third century AD and was written in the language of that time, Middle Persian in Pahlavi script. The language changed and the writing system was entirely altered, but the symbolic status of the royal speech did not vary.”¹⁸⁰ Thus the Sassanians understood the power of the trilingual inscriptions to make a close connection between the king and religious ideas and placed them in a location widely known to have associations with Achaemenid iconography and ideology. We see, then, that the symbolism behind the trilingual inscription (the king’s reciprocal relationship
with the god, defining boundaries of the empire, etc.) remained recognizable to later generations and was deemed pertinent to their own royal associations with the cosmic and the terrestrial. This is made clear by the fact that the trilingual only survives after the Achaemenid period in areas that were heavily influenced by that regime. The use of the trilingual inscription in later periods proves Darius’s original intention in its utilization as a symbol recognizable to a multifarious audience with several layers of inherent meaning.

The trilingual inscription, then, stood as a primary element for the articulation of Darius’s power as the first Achaemenid king. Its influence spanned from the smallest seals used for administrative purposes to the largest monumental architectural reliefs, a definitive image of the empire in all its aspects for a wide array of audiences. The tripartite symbolism inherent in the trilingual and its associated iconography was reworked from earlier precedents to create a new ideology that would help form the basis for a legitimate kingship, encompassing the king’s special relationship to the god and his people. Thus we can understand Darius’s adoption of the trilingual as an action “on the basis of an awareness of the fact that the enlargement of [Achaemenid] rule required deliberate new solutions.”181 The trilingual’s inherent ideology of language ranking, royal power, and religious association even carried over into the post-Achaemenid period, where the continued influence of Darius’s invention remained.

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Appendix 1: Trilingual Texts from the World of Achaemenid Persia
This list only attempts to be comprehensive with respect to trilingual texts within the chronological and geopolitical sphere of the Achaemenid Empire. It incorporates (under separate categories) trilingual texts known from pre- and post-Achaemenid times in order to highlight their rarity and their persistence in specific contexts that demonstrate the prolonged impact of the Achaemenid experience in the wake of this empire. Monolingual and bilinguals are not included in this table (but see appendix 2 and numerous commentaries in the text). Quadrilingual texts of the Achaemenid Empire (Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian plus Egyptian) are included here because they develop out of the strategy of trilingual presentation while incorporating Egyptian as the fourth language in acknowledgment of specific circumstances of that regional context. The list is complete to the best of my knowledge; all omissions are mine and mine alone. I have listed the languages in order from top to bottom when they appear vertically in the ancient inscriptions, and from left to right when they appear horizontally. In cases where this system does not apply, I have added a note. All artifacts included in the table are discussed in the main body of the article; main references for these artifacts can be found in footnotes.

*List of abbreviations
The conventions for listing inscriptions on small objects or larger monuments is to indicate the reign of the king, followed by the place, followed by a small letter which identifies the number of the text at the site (a=first text at site, c=third text at site, and so on).

| C= Cyrus II | M= Pasargadae | OP= Old Persian |
| D= Darius I | P= Persepolis | El= Elamite |
| X= Xerxes | H= Hamadan | Bab.= Babylonian |
| A= Artaxerxes I | S= Susa | Eg= Egyptian hieroglyphs |
| A2= Artaxerxes II | Z= Suez | |
| A3= Artaxerxes III | E= Elvend | |
| | B= Bisitun | |
| | N= Naqsh-i Rustam | |
| | W= weight | |
| | V= vessel | |

Institute of the University of Chicago, 2001), p. 1. Two more volumes of Garrison and Root's project on the seals on the Fortification tablets are forthcoming. The seals impressed on tablets from the Fortification Archive are listed as PFS (Persepolis Fortification Seal). The seals are numbered by their frequency of use in the archive (e.g., PFS 1 is used with the most frequency), and are marked with a * when they are inscribed in any language. The PFS category refers to those Elamite tablets in the Garrison and Root corpus. These tablets were first treated by Richard T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969). Tablets recently determined to be of a different categorical nature are labeled according to their own distinct rubric (for which, see below PFS 1683*, which has now been determined to be of a different nature than the rest of the PFS corpus and thus has been renamed). Those labeled PFUTS indicate a Persepolis Tablet that is uninscribed but does exhibit a seal impression. Seals are listed by their first-known usage date as determined via information contained in tablet texts or the more general timeframe of an archive.

*Conventions for PTS seals originate from E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis II: Contents of the Treasury and Other Discoveries*, Oriental Institute Publications, vol. 60 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 4. The seals impressed on tablets from the Persepolis Treasury are listed as PTS (Persepolis Treasury Seal) and are given numbers; when inscribed they are appended with an asterisk (e.g., PTS 1*).

### Pre-Achaemenid Trilinguals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hymn (KUB 4.4)</td>
<td>Boghazköy, Turkey</td>
<td>Mid-6th c BCE</td>
<td>Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite</td>
<td>Hymn to the storm-god Iskur-Adad</td>
<td>Hymnic text, possibly with didactic function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Incirli&quot; trilingual: inscription on stone which served as a sort of road marker</td>
<td>Karamanmarash Valley in present-day Turkey</td>
<td>8th c BCE (Neo-Assyrian)</td>
<td>Neo-Assyrian, Hieroglyphic Luvin, Phoenician</td>
<td>Military victories of Awarikku, king of Que; pays homage to the Assyrian Empire</td>
<td>Later overwritten with Greek text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Achaemenid Trilinguals: Darius

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DB: inscription on rock face at Mount Bisitun</td>
<td>Media; royal road from Hamadan to Babylon</td>
<td>520–519 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Depicts and describes victory over Gaumata, pretender to Persian throne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSf: numerous exemplars found at Susa in the form of brick and stone tablets</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>ca. 520 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Construction of the palace at Susa; enumeration of people of the empire</td>
<td>One of the earliest foundation inscriptions from Iran (Darius mentions father Hystaspes as still living)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSe; numerous exemplars found at Susa in the form of stone and clay tablets, and a cask</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>ca. 520 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>List of peoples; pacification of empire; prayer to Ahuramazda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSc; column base in Palace of Darius</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>ca. 520 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSj; column base in Palace of Darius</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>ca. 520 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; prayer to Ahura Mazda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSm; glazed brick forming a frieze in hall of Palace of Darius</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>ca. 520 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>List of countries over which Darius became king</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSn; written on garment of a fragmentary statue of Darius</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>ca. 520 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Order of king for construction of statue and prayer to Ahuramazda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSy; column base in Palace of Darius</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>ca. 520 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; appeal to Ahuramazda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE; cut in cliff side near waterfall on Mt. Elvend</td>
<td>Gandj Nameh (near Hamadan; Elvend)</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; appeal to Ahuramazda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some have postulated that DE was inscribed posthumously along with XE (see below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalouf stele; inscribed on five separate pieces of granite (only this one survives)</td>
<td>Kabret, Egypt</td>
<td>518 BCE</td>
<td>Inscribed on two faces, one in trilingual (OP, El, Bab: DZb and DZc), one in Egyptian hieroglyphics</td>
<td>Trilingual: praise to Ahuramazda; royal titulary of Darius; building of canal. Egyptian hieroglyphs: similar text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSab; quadrilingual inscription on the statue of Darius</td>
<td>Susa (made in Egypt and later transported to Susa)</td>
<td>ca. 518 BCE</td>
<td>Trilingual (OP, El, Bab): inscribed on right-hand pleats of statue. Egyptian hieroglyphics: on belt, left-hand pleats, surface and sides of base</td>
<td>Trilingual: cosmogonic address, construction of statue in Egypt, glory of the Persian people, royal titulary, formulaic protective prayer. Egyptian hieroglyphs: Darius as son of Re; prosperity Darius has brought to kingdom; labels for figures of subject lands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPa; palace of Darius, inscription placed above figures of the king and attendants</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary and foundation inscription; arranged in mirror image so that person entering always sees OP version first</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPb; Reliefs on the palaces of Darius and Xerxes; south doorway of the Tachara</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPe; “A stone window frame made at the palace of king Darius” (acc. to Schmitt 2000, 55)</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Construction of window by Darius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extant in 18 identical copies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Text Content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPh; Gold and silver foundation tablets from the Apadana; discovered in stone box along with coin depositions</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>ca. 515 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Identical to DH, from Hamadan; royal titulary, indication of extent of empire, prayer for help from Ahuramazda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH; gold and silver foundation tablets</td>
<td>Purportedly from Hamadan</td>
<td>ca. 515 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; describes extent of empire and appeal to Ahuramazda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP; on &quot;doorknobs&quot; in the palace of Darius</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Doorknob produced by Darius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPj; on a block fallen from the west jamb of the eastern doorway of the palace of Darius; inscription placed above the king and his attendants</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Identical with DPb. King represented is Xerxes, not Darius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMa=DMa; originally located in Gate R, on northeast doorjamb above the winged figure; also survives in copies in Palace S and Palace P on stone anta</td>
<td>Pasargadae</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary of Cyrus, &quot;an Achaemenian&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMb=DMb; carved above the relief of Darius with attendants in Palace P</td>
<td>Pasargadae</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMc=DMc; carved on folds of royal garment on relief in Palace P</td>
<td>Pasargadae</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWa-d inscribed on pyramidal weights of basalt or diorite</td>
<td>a=unknown b=near Kirman c &amp; d= Persepolis</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab (order not uniform)</td>
<td>Royal titulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVS; inscribed on a vessel</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab (order unknown)</td>
<td>Royal titulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFS 7*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>First attested use: 503–2 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFS 11*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>First attested use: 503–2 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>PFS 1683*/PFUTS 0018*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Reign of Darius (522–486, per archival context)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DN</td>
<td>Naqsh-i Rustam</td>
<td>Early to middle reign of Darius (500 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Pacification of the people of the empire; political autobiography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNb</td>
<td>Naqsh-i Rustam</td>
<td>Early to middle reign of Darius (500 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Theological and moral testament</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNc</td>
<td>Naqsh-i Rustam</td>
<td>Early to middle reign of Darius (500 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Honorific text for Gobryas (accomplice? See Herodotus 3.70.1); lance carrier of Darius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNd</td>
<td>Naqsh-i Rustam</td>
<td>Early to middle reign of Darius (500 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Honorific text for Aspathines (accomplice? See Herodotus 3.70.1); bow bearer of Darius</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DNe</td>
<td>Naqsh-i Rustam</td>
<td>Early to middle reign of Darius (500 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Captions of the people who support the throne of Darius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFS 113* = PTS 4*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Carved in reign of Darius; first attested use: 495-494 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; Seal of Baradkama</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTS 3*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Carved in reign of Darius; first attested use date 489–88 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary of Darius; attested in use during the reign of Xerxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTS 1*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Carved in reign of Darius; first attested use 484 BCE during reign of Xerxes</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary of Darius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTS 2*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Carved in reign of Darius; first attested use 481–80 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary of Darius; used in the reign of Xerxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDa</td>
<td>Purportedly discovered at Thebes (Egypt)</td>
<td>Assumed to have been carved in reign of Darius I rather than a later Darius</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary of Darius (I?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Achaemenid Trilinguals: Xerxes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTS 7*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>486–65 BCE</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary of Xerxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPa</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Incorporates portions of DNa and DE; construction of the Gate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPb</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab (OP version separated)</td>
<td>Royal titulary, prayer to Ahuramazda</td>
<td>2 examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPe</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Construction of edifice by Darius</td>
<td>3 examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPs</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; appeal to Ahuramazda; construction of the palace of Xerxes</td>
<td>4 examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPs</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary</td>
<td>14 examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPg</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Formulaic praise to Ahuramazda; glorification of constructions of Darius and Xerxes; similar to DPh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPh</td>
<td>Persepolis, Pasargad</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>In beginning parts, identical to intro, paragraphs of DNa; list of people; repression of revolt of people who subscribed to the Daiva (demon?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPi</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Parallel to DPi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPl</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; construction of the palace of Xerxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPlm</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Construction of the palace of Xerxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Provenance</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>XPn; column fragment from terrace west</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Lineage of Xerxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Palace H (Palace of Artaxerxes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPP; garment of the figure of Xerxes in</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; identical to XPe, XPr, and XPr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>main hall of his palace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPq; window frames in the hadish of</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Identical to XPp, XPe, and XPr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xerxes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPr; frames of the doorways in the</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Identical to XPq, XPe, and XPr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hadish of Xerxes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>XSa; column bases</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; foundation attributed to Xerxes's father Darius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XSc; column bases on the portico</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; foundation attributed to Xerxes's father Darius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV; inscribed on cliff face</td>
<td>Van (capital of ancient Armenia)</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Darius prepared place for inscription but did not leave an inscription, so Xerxes left one claiming Darius as inscriber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XE; on rock face at Mt. Elvend, adjacent</td>
<td>Mount Elvend, at Ganj Nameh near</td>
<td>Early in reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>See DE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to DE</td>
<td>Hamadan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVS; inscribed on vessels (occur in</td>
<td>Some unknown; majority discovered at</td>
<td>Reign of Xerxes (486–65 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab (some with Eg attached)</td>
<td>Royal titulary</td>
<td>35 examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trilingual and quadrilingual format);</td>
<td>Susa, and one at the Mausoleum of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all but two are of aragonite</td>
<td>Halicarnassus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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**Achaemenid Trilinguals: Artaxerxes I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AlVa; trilingually inscribed on the inner</td>
<td>Trilingual vessels linked to both Hamadan and Persepolis; quadrilingual vessels found in Susa or purchased in Egypt</td>
<td>Reign of Artaxerxes I (465–24 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab (sometimes Eg included)</td>
<td>Genealogy of Artaxerxes I (sometimes including his production of the vessel)</td>
<td>At least 8 examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Achaemenid Trilinguals: Artaxerxes II

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2Ha; column base of black diorite</td>
<td>Hamadan (Ecbatana)</td>
<td>Reign of Artaxerxes II (404–358 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Invokes Ahuramazda, Anahita, Mithra</td>
<td>2 examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2Pa; on tomb façade above Persepolis platform</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Reign of Artaxerxes II (404–358 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>People who decorated the tomb of Artaxerxes II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2Sa; on four column bases</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>Reign of Artaxerxes II (404–358 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Foundation inscription for Apadana; Ahuramazda, Anahita, and Mithra all invoked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2Sb; on a column base</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>Reign of Artaxerxes II (404–358 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary and lineage</td>
<td>Many examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2Sd; on column bases</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>Reign of Artaxerxes II (404–358 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Royal titulary; foundation inscription</td>
<td>Numerous fragments</td>
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### Achaemenid Trilinguals: Artaxerxes III

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<tr>
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<th>Languages</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A3Pb; on tomb façade above Persepolis platform</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>Reign of Artaxerxes III (358–338 BCE)</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab</td>
<td>Captions identifying 308 throne bearers</td>
<td>Almost exact replica of DNe 1–30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Achaemenid Trilinguals: Artaxerxes IV

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Text</th>
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<th>Languages</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xanthus stele; found in Leot sanctuary</td>
<td>Xanthus, Lycia</td>
<td>337 BC, during reign of Artaxerxes IV (Arses)</td>
<td>Lycian, Aramaic, Greek</td>
<td>Citizens of Xanthus found a new cult</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Post-Achaemenid Trilinguals: Egypt

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<tr>
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synodal decree 3a</td>
<td>Elephantine</td>
<td>243 BC, during reign of Ptolemy III (Euergetes I)?</td>
<td>Greek, demotic, Eg.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synodal decree 5a</td>
<td>Tanis</td>
<td>238 BC, during reign of Ptolemy III (Euergetes I)</td>
<td>Greek, demotic, Eg.</td>
<td>Results of a priestly meeting in Alexandria, celebrating the birthday and anniversary of the kings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Synodal decree 5b | Kom el-Hisn | 238 BC, during reign of Ptolemy III (Euergetes I) | Greek, demotic, Eg. | Results of a priestly meeting in Alexandria, celebrating the birthday and anniversary of the kings.

Synodal decree 5c | Cairo | 238 BC, during reign of Ptolemy III (Euergetes I) | Greek, demotic, Eg. | Results of a priestly meeting in Alexandria, celebrating the birthday and anniversary of the kings.

Synodal decree 8a | Memphis | 217 BC, during reign of Ptolemy IV | Greek, demotic, Eg. | A decree in honor of Ptolemy IV, re: the victory in the 4th Syrian War.

Synodal decree 8b | Pithom | 217 BC, during reign of Ptolemy IV | Greek, demotic, Eg. | A decree in honor of Ptolemy IV, re: the victory in the 4th Syrian War.

Synodal decree 8c | Taphion | 217 BC, during reign of Ptolemy IV | Greek, demotic, Eg. | A decree in honor of Ptolemy IV, re: the victory in the 4th Syrian War.

Rosetta stone | Rashid (Med. Coast in Egypt) | 196 BC, during reign of Ptolemy V | Greek, demotic, Eg. | Decree of Ptolemy V regarding taxes and the erection of statues.

Synodal decree 10b | Elephantine | 196 BC, during reign of Ptolemy V | Greek, demotic, Eg. | Celebration of the coronation of the king.

Synodal decree 17 | ? | 112 BC, during reign of Cleopatra III | Greek, demotic, Eg. | Decree of the priests of Amun, not Egyptian priestly college.

Trilingual inscription of Gallus | Egypt | 29 BCE | Greek, Latin, Eg. | Celebration of Gallus’s accomplishments as praefectus Aegypti.

### Sassanian Trilinguals

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NRu1; carved on king’s horses</td>
<td>Naqsh-i Rustam</td>
<td>226 AD, during reign of Ardashir I</td>
<td>Greek, Middle Persian, Parthian</td>
<td>Commemorates coronation of Ardashir I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief NRa III; carved on the king’s horses</td>
<td>Naqsh-i Rustam</td>
<td>Reign of Shapur I (241–72 CE)</td>
<td>Middle Persian, Greek, Parthian</td>
<td>Identification of Shapur I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka’abah-i Zardusht; east, south, and west walls of the stone Achaemenid tower</td>
<td>Naqsh-i Rustam</td>
<td>Reign of Shapur I (241–72 CE)</td>
<td>Middle Persian, Greek, Parthian</td>
<td>res gestae of Shapur I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Royal Name Seals from the World of Achaemenid Persia

All seals for Darius I are referenced from M. B. Garrison, "The Royal Name Seals of Darius I," (forthcoming, 2011). Information for the Daskyleion bullae is derived from Deniz Kaptan, The Daskyleion Bullae: Seal Images from the Western Achaemenid Empire Vols. I and II: Achaemenid History XII (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut Voor Het Nabije Oosten, 2002). As in appendix 1, all dates for seals are listed by earliest known application date.

For the tablets upon which the seals are impressed, please see M. B. Garrison and A. Kuhrt, Persepolis Seal Studies: An Introduction with Provisional Concordances of Seal Numbers and Associated Documents on Fortification Tablets 1-2087: Achaemenid History IX (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1998).

Abbreviations

DS: Daskyleion Seal

All other abbreviations are the same as in appendix 1.

Pre-Achaemenid Seals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seal</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Language/Arrangement</th>
<th>Style/Iconographical Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PFS 93*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>559–30 BCE, during reign of Cyrus I; used for generations afterward in same venue as seals of Darius I</td>
<td>&quot;Cyrus of Anšan, son of Teispes&quot;</td>
<td>Elamite (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Figure on horseback spearing fleeing figure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seals in the Reign of Darius I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seal</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Language/Arrangement</th>
<th>Style/Iconographical Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PFS 11*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>503–2 BCE, during reign of Darius</td>
<td>&quot;I am Darius&quot;</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Ahuramazda figure above; altar symbol with &quot;worship&quot; scene; palm trees flank scene (Court Style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFS 7*</td>
<td>Persepolis; also appears on Elamite tablet at Susa</td>
<td>50–2 BCE, during reign of Darius</td>
<td>&quot;I am Darius&quot;</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Bearded hero holds two rampant bulls by the horn; Ahuramazda figure above; palm trees flank scene (Court Style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFS 113* = PTS 4*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>495–94 BCE; carved in reign of Darius; first attested use in reign of Xerxes</td>
<td>&quot;I am Darius&quot;</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Right-facing hero holds two rampant human-headed bulls by foreleg (Court Style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTS 3*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>489–88 BCE, during reign of Darius; first attested use in reign of Xerxes</td>
<td>&quot;I am Darius&quot;</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Right-facing hero in Persian court robe holds two inverted lions by the hind leg; date palm to left of field (Court Style)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Seals in the Reign of Xerxes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seal</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Language/Arrangement</th>
<th>Style/Iconographical Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTS 5*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>467–66 BCE, during reign of Xerxes</td>
<td>&quot;Xerxes the Great King&quot;</td>
<td>OP (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Right-facing hero in Persian court robe; holds two human-headed bulls by the foreleg; Ahuramazda figure above; date palm to left of scene (Court Style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTS 6*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>470–67 BCE, during reign of Xerxes</td>
<td>&quot;I am Xerxes the King&quot;</td>
<td>OP (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Right-facing hero holds two inverted lions above pedestal creatures; Ahuramazda figure above; palm trees flank scene (Court Style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTS 7*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>486–65 BCE (reign of Xerxes)</td>
<td>&quot;Xerxes [the (Great?) King]&quot;</td>
<td>OP, El, Bab (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Right-facing hero holds two rampant winged bulls; Ahuramazda figure above; palm trees flank scene (Court Style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTS 8*</td>
<td>Persepolis</td>
<td>466–65 BCE, during reign of Xerxes</td>
<td>&quot;I am Xerxes the [Great?] King&quot;</td>
<td>OP (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Two opposite-facing Persians stab two crossed lions; Ahuramazda figure above; date palm to right of right Persian (Court Style)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seals in the Reign of Artaxerxes I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seal</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Language/Arrangement</th>
<th>Style/Iconographical Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DS4 (SA1a)</td>
<td>Daskyleion</td>
<td>465–24 BCE, during reign of Artaxerxes I (?)</td>
<td>&quot;I am Artaxerxes the king&quot;</td>
<td>OP (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Audience scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA1b</td>
<td>Daskyleion</td>
<td>465–24 BCE, during reign of Artaxerxes I (?)</td>
<td>&quot;I am Artaxerxes the king&quot;</td>
<td>OP (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Audience scene</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fifth Century BCE Seals (uncertain date)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seal</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Language/Arrangement</th>
<th>Style/Iconographical Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cat. 33 seal</td>
<td>Gordion</td>
<td>5th c BCE (based on paleographic evidence)</td>
<td>&quot;Seal of B, son of Ztw, (hayashana).&quot;</td>
<td>Aramaic (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Two crowned “worshipping” figures face one another, standing atop winged pedestal creatures; Ahuramazda figure in circle at bottom with altar symbol atop; larger winged Ahuramazda figure hovers above scene</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seals in the Reign of Artaxerxes III (?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seal</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Language/Arrangement</th>
<th>Style/Iconographical Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artaxerxes Seal</td>
<td>Housed in Moscow</td>
<td>425–338 BCE (reign of Artaxerxes III)</td>
<td>&quot;I am Artaxerxes the Great King&quot;</td>
<td>OP (vertical panel)</td>
<td>Crowned figure in Persian court robe pulls three bound prisoners behind him by a rope; palm tree to left of prisoners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My sincerest gratitude to Margaret Root and Ben Fortson for their commentary on earlier drafts of this paper.

1 I distinguish between the "Persian Empire" and the "Achaemenid Persian Empire," where Cyrus is the founder of the former, Darius the latter. Daniel Potts, "The Elamites and their Contribution to the Creation of Iran" in Birth of the Persian Empire, ed. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Sarah Stewart (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004), p. 23, argues that Darius's reign indicated the commencement of the Achaemenid or Persian Empire, where Cyrus was a member of an Anshanite dynasty and was defined by his Elamite identity. Detractors include Henkelman, who stresses that Cyrus's Elamite roots must not be pushed too far, denying the distinction between the Achaemenid and Teispid lines proposed by Potts. He assumes a difference between Persian kingship and Persian identity, assuming that Cyrus was of a family from the highlands, which would have identified themselves with the "Persians" or "inhabitants of Parsa." See Wouter Henkelman, The Other Gods: Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation Based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts: Achaemenid History XIV (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2008), pp. 55–56.

2 Cambyses, the son of Cyrus (founder of the Persian Empire) had come to the throne. Soon, Cambyses killed his brother Bardiya, apparently with such secrecy that his death was not known to the people. On the murder of Bardiya: Herodotus 3.30; Ctesias (Persia; FGrH 688 F 13 11–15); Justin 1.9.4–13. After the death of Cambyses's brother, rebellions arose in Persia, headed by Gaumata, a Persian magus. Gaumata laid claim to the Persian throne, professing to be Bardiya, the son of Cyrus, and soon gained power in all the Persian territories. Cambyses, who had concentrated his attentions on the invasion of Egypt, soon died. The turmoil necessitated swift action if the Persian Empire was to obtain stable leadership. Darius, understanding that Gaumata was not the real Bardiya, headed a conspiracy against this pretender (the famous "Conspiracy of the Seven Nobles") and attained the kingship. This is the version of events given in DB §10–13 (Darius's inscriptions at Bisitun, to be discussed in much detail later). The same story occurs in Hdt. 3.1–38; 61–88, disagreeing with Darius's account only with respect to details. There is a vast literature on this subject. For a brief summary of the differences between the accounts of Darius and Herodotus, see Elias J. Bickerman and H. Tadmor, "Darius I, Pseudo-Smerdis, and the Magi," Athenaeum 56 (1978), pp. 239–61. See also Igor Gershevitch, "The False Smerdis," Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae 27 (1979), pp. 337–52 for a sometimes unsuccessful attempt to map Herodotus's story onto that of Darius. For a more positive view on Herodotus's knowledge and access to accurate Near Eastern resources, see Sarah Mandell, "The Language, Eastern Sources, and Literary Posture of Herodotus," The Ancient World 21 (1990), pp. 103–8.

3 Hdt. 3.139–40 declares as much: Darius was not yet "a person of power or consequence," meaning simply that he was not the son of a king. Instead, he was a "private citizen," an idiotes.

4 Darius adopted Cyrus into the new royal family by proclaiming him "king" and Achaemenid on the royal inscriptions of Cyrus at Pasargadai (CMA, CMb, and CMc), which have been attributed to Darius.

6  Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 109–10; DB § 1.

7  Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Political Concepts in Old Persian Royal Inscriptions," in Anfange politischen Denkens in der antike: Die natürlichen Kulturen und der Griechen, ed. Kurt Kaufalb (Schriften des historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien 24. Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1993), p. 157, comments: "Although for all practical purposes the reign of Darius may have represented a less clear break with the past than Herodotus' remarks on Darius's reform (III. 89) may lead us to believe, in the development of political thinking it is an important turning point." However, it may just be the case that the break in regime between Cyrus and Darius was certainly as monumental as Herodotus suggests, and perhaps even more so. This impression becomes clear through the novel ways in which Darius chose to represent himself, and is consistent with current scholarly thought regarding Cyrus as Perso-Elamite, Darius as very strictly "Achaemenid," as discussed in n. 1.

8  Persepolis, located in the Fars region of modern day Iran, was first excavated by Ernst Herzfeld in the 1930s. Darius began building there ca. 520 BCE, and has a significant presence at the site; Donald N. Wilber, Persepolis: the Archaeology of Parsa, Seat of the Persian Kings (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press), p. 32.

9  Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, p. 171. This image comes through in scenes of the king in worship, subject peoples bearing the royal throne, and royal audience scenes with gift-bearing people, all with the king and the god Ahuramaz-da central to the scene. The inscriptions accompanying these images similarly express loyalty to the king, a reciprocal relationship between the king and the god Ahuramaz-da, and peaceful collaboration with the people under Persian dominion.

10 For the programmatic nature of Achaemenid art, the responsibility of the king and his court for the art presented, and ways in which "empire" is interpreted in Achaemenid artwork, see Margaret Cool Root, "Circles of Artistic Programming: Strategies for Studying Creative Process at Persepolis," in Investigating Artistic Environments in the Ancient Near East, ed. A. C. Gunter (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), pp. 115–39.

11 See fig. 1.


13 "... the monumental royal texts and images are not reflections of any lived experience, but carefully constructed environments that serve first and foremost to project ideals of royal action and comportment." Mark B. Garrison. "By the Favor of Ahuramazda: Kingship and the Divine in the Early Achaemenid Period," (in press), p. 4.

14 The iconography at Persepolis especially was a "deliberate attempt to create new legitimizing ideology, using motifs which very often had a venerable past, but at the same time served to express new ideas." See Margaret Cool Root, The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire, Acta Iranica 19 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), p. 154.


16 "... Whatever models might have inspired the king and his advisors, it is clear that to their way of thinking this was not to be dependent on any existing monument; rather, it was to be an entirely new creation in which the borrowings were melted down and recast into a new work of art in service of a power for which no comparable precedent could be named." See Root, The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art, p. 124; for possible prototypes, see pp. 182–226.

17 The amalgamation of styles "may have been the result of a conscious attempt to give to this Achaemenid victory monument the association with archetypal power which, within the Persian heritage-memory, might quite naturally have been linked inseparably to the monuments of the Assyrian kings." Root, The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art, pp. 213–14.

18 The specifics of the monument could not have been clear to spectators from below without the proper equipment, though the visual "grandeur" of the monument was certainly conspicuous. See Ben Rubin, "(Re)presenting Empire: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor, 31 BCE–AD 6868" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2008), pp. 83–84. See also Root, The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art, p. 193, for the Bisitun relief as a monument for which the average traveler would have experienced "the generalized aspect of the relief in its function as a non-specific statement of royal power."

Old Gods, “Even Translation System” The and placement Persian Inscriptions (London: Empire, forthcoming 2007), p. 151, n. 1. For the layout of the languages on the monument, see fig. 2. Old Persian contains some loan words from Median, another Iranian language, though it does contain some artificial elements, as will be shown in the forthcoming discussion of the Bisitun monument.

For the placement of the inscriptions on the Bisitun monument, see again fig. 2. The latest edited version of the text can be found in R. Schmitt, The Bisitun Inscriptions of Darius the Great: Old Persian Text (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, vol. 1, Texts I: School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1991). Schmitt indicates that the Bisitun monument was not originally conceived as a trilingual, but rather that the placement of the texts reveals the creation of the idea during the period of construction (Schmitt, p. 18). Omitting §71-76, the Old Persian version is accompanied by renderings in Elamite and Akkadian (Babylonian).

Contra Igor Mikhailovich Diakonoff, “The Origin of the ‘Old Persian’ Writing System and the Ancient Oriental Epigraphic and Annalistic Traditions,” in W. B. Henning Memorial Volume, ed. Mary Boyce and Ilya Gershevitch (London: Lund Humphries, 1970), p. 105 and n. 21. He writes that in an additional portion of DB §70 Darius claims that the inscription “was written down and read aloud before me,” implying that Darius was illiterate and therefore could not have invented OP (with the assumption that he had to have command of at least two other ancient languages to invent a new one). The notion must be dismissed that Darius was illiterate and could not possibly be the creator of Old Persian.

For more discussion of all three languages and the reason for their use in these inscriptions, see below.


“Even if in some cases the old-Persian version of the texts is demonstrably secondary (e.g., Bisitun), old Persian as the language of the kings should nevertheless be regarded as the original text.” Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Political Concepts,” p. 152.

Some argue that Bisitun was indeed not the first time Old Persian appears in the record, as it is inscribed at Pasargadae, the tomb of Cyrus the Great (CMa, CMb, CMc). Various parties have attributed the inscriptions to Darius after Cyrus’s death. For the inscriptions of Cyrus at Pasargadae as written by Darius and various arguments on both sides, see Lecoq, Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide, p. 81. Lecoq decides that these inscriptions had to have been written by Cyrus. However, if one figures in the date of construction and the fact that Darius probably had to finish the buildings here after Cyrus’s death, the picture changes. This is also shown by the fact that CMc has the same decorations as those at the Palace of Darius. According to a reconstruction by R. Borger and W. Hinz of CMb, the fragments of which were found in the debris of Palace F, this text was written under Darius and states in part that Cyrus built the palace for himself and carved the reliefs, according to Root, The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art, pp. 52-53; see also p. 54 n. 27. Even if it is the case that Darius went back and added the Old Persian, it was only then that the inscriptions at Pasargadae became trilingual, so we can still maintain Darius as the agent for the deployment of that particular aspect.


See also http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/religion/arch/incipi/index.htm. The second pre-Achaemenid trilingual, ca. thirteenth century BCE, is a hymn to the storm-god Iskur-Adad, written in Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite, edited by Emmanuel Laroche in RA 58 (1964), pp. 69-78. Professor Ben Fortson has suggested to me that this text is analogous to a scribal didactic text, and would not have been used in state cult practices. For other examples of this variety of hymnic text, see Iamar Singer, Hittite Prayers (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 3, with reference also to Gernot Wilhelm, “Hymnen der Hethiter,” in Hymnen der Alten Welt im Kulturvergleich, ed. W. Burkert and F. Stolz (Freiburg, 1994), p. 70. Neither of these early examples seem to be contrary to my main argument, as
the trilingual did not make a concentrated appearance in the record until the period of Darius I, and, as I will show, his utilization of the combination of the three languages and the iconography with which they were closely associated had very specific ideological/cosmic and political implications.

30 See Garrison, "By the Favor of Aūramazda," p. 32.

31 The text of the inscriptions, in various languages, was circulated throughout the empire. See Anna Missiou, "The Politics of Translation," Classical Quarterly 43, no. 2 (1993), p. 387; Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, pp. 100-101.


33 He is most often invoked alone (cf. DPh, DPe, DSz, DSaa, for example), and rarely with other gods (DPd, DPa).

34 For a bibliography on the subject, see Bruce Lincoln, Religion, Empire, and Torture: The Case of Achaemenid Persia, with a postscript on Abu Ghraib (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), p. 115.

35 In Religion, Empire, and Torture, p. 15, Lincoln suggest two possibilities, not mutually exclusive: that the Achaemenids were Zoroastrians whose views were inflected by political considerations, causing differences from strictly religious priestly texts; the Zoroastrian texts and the Achaemenid inscriptions can be understood as two variants within a
drid Persian Kingship," in Every Inch a King: From Alexander to the King of Kings, ed. I. Mitchell and C. Melville.

43 Root, The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art, p. 170.

44 Root, The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art, p. 171. A last important observation emerges from the Babylonian version of the Bisitun monument, which contains native Babylonian gods instead of the half-length figure present at the original monument, suggesting that the figure on Bisitun was meant to represent a god. See Ursula Seidl, "Ein Monument Darius' I. aus Babylon," ZA 89 (1999), pp. 101–14, esp. 107–8.

45 "... what we see here [at Bisitun] is the development of the royal ideology: the king's god par excellence is Ahuramazda. Worship of Ahuramazda is a metaphor for being loyal to the king." Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Political Concepts," p. 157.

46 "It is to Ahura-Mazda that royal prayers are always raised in Darius' inscriptions ... we must recognize that in the official religion established by Darius, Ahura-Mazda had a supreme position." Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, p. 126.

47 Sabrina Maras's dissertation explores the connection of Darius to the winged disk figure of Ahuramazda, emphasizing Darius's use of the figure in close association to himself as an index of his elite "Persianness," becoming a potent symbol of Achaemenid rule. See Sabrina Maras, "Iconography, Identity and Inclusion: The Winged Disk and Royal Power During the Reign of Darius the Great" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2009).

48 The polyvalent audience of the trilingual inscription in this and other artistic contexts will be discussed in much detail below. It is important to note that one tablet has been discovered from the
Boardman's GODS, See Rhodes 49 50
Bisitun Greek even Briant, tablets ed. Society
Conflicts identified 345-61. Herodotus, "not Persian use
Persian tablet 1-28; the Fortification," J. Near
Empire," in Some Xin, 80-81. In vol. 1, no. 2, and especially

52 Skaerjvo posits an appreciation of Darius's self-representation as legitimate because he is a chosen human representative of Ahuramazda, with his dynasty founded on these principles. This would explain his single-minded insistence on Ahuramazda and the later inclusion of other gods in the inscriptions. Skaarjvo, "The Achaemenids and the Avesta," pp. 80–81.

53 See abbreviations in appendix 1.

54 See appendix 2 for a table of all of the royal name seals known from the Achaemenid period. Our glyptic record is skewed toward the reigns of Darius and Xerxes by the fortunate discovery of the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Archives; should there be more discoveries of a similar sort in the future we may have a better picture of the development of the trilingual royal name seal especially.


57 See abbreviations in appendix 1.


60 Garrison and Root, Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, Volume I, p. 19.


63 See fig. 3. For PFS* 93, see Mark B. Garrison and Margaret Cool Root, Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, Volume 2: Images of Human Activity (Chicago: for Oriental Institute Publications, forthcoming).

65 For a more recent discussion of the imagery on the seal, see Mark Garrison, "The Seal of 'Kuraš the Anzanite, son of Šēspēs' (Teispes), PFS 93," in Elam and Persia, ed. J. Alvarez-Mons and M. B. Garrison (Eisenbrauns, 2011), pp. 375–405, who argues that the glyptic style is reminiscent of nascent creativity in the Fars region (rather than in Susa) in the seventh century BCE.

66 Garrison and Root, Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, Volume 1, p. 14, n. 45.

67 PFS 1683* has recently been identified as distinct, classified as PFU18*, meaning that it occurs on uninscribed tablets from the Fortification Archive. The seal itself, however, is inscribed. See Mark B. Garrison, "The uninscribed tablets from the Fortification Archive: a preliminary analysis," in L'Archéologie des Fortifications de Persepolis: États et cultures orientales (Persika 12), ed. Pierre Briant, Wouter Henkelman, and Matthew Stolper (Editions de Boccard, 2008), pp. 149–238.

68 See fig. 4.


70 See figs. 5 and 6 for images of PFS 66a* and PFS 66b*. All versions of PFS 66* are always accompanied by PFS 7* on documents concerning the delivery of flour: "It thus seems that the office represented by PFS 66* could not authorize transactions of its own accord but needed the countersign of PFS 7*," Garrison, "Seals and Elite at Persepolis," p. 10. PFS 66* in all its variations are consonant with the imagery on the Council and Throne Halls at Persepolis. PFS 66a–c are to be published in the forthcoming volume of Garrison and Root, Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, Volume 2.

71 Garrison and Root, Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, Volume 1, p. 7.

72 See fig. 7.

73 See fig. 8.


76 One last trilingual royal name seal that bears the name of Darius II is the very famous "London Darius cylinder (SDa)," housed in the British Museum. See fig. 9. The seal does have some amount of uncertainty associated with it, in that it was purchased, purportedly having been found in Thebes. Two date palms flank a heroic chariot scene with an Ahuramazda figure above it and a trilingual inscription proclaiming "Darius the King." Though it does contain our three typical elements, it has so many disparities from our prototypical PFS seals that it can only be identified as a "regional variation on the Court Style." See Garrison, "Seals and Elite at Persepolis," p. 20. Thus, because it does not come directly out of the royal capital of the Persian Empire, we can assume that the order for the production of SDa may not have come directly from the king, and thus should be excluded from the discussion of the Persepolis Archive seals.

77 It is important to remember that not only were statements of monumental stature accessible to the people within the purview of the Persian Empire but smaller items such as seals were as well. Margaret Root reminds us that "Seals were held, displayed, handled, and discussed. They were applied to the tablets in a social context involving human engagement." See M. C. Root, "The Legible Image: How Did Seals Sealing Matter in Persepolis?" in L'Archéologie des Fortifications de Persepolis: États et cultures orientales (Persika 12), ed. Pierre Briant, Wouter Henkelman, and Matthew Stolper (Editions de Boccard, 2008), p. 109.

78 This terminology is only used with reference to the PFS corpus.

79 Garrison, "By the Favor of Auramazda," p. 36.

80 See fig. 10.

81 See fig. 11.

82 Other possibilities for reading "threes" into PFS 7* are: the division of Palm-Beast-King+Ahuramazda (P-B-K+A), can also be read anagrammatically as K+A-B-P); or as Margaret Root has suggested to me, with relation to the heroic control encounter in particular: Beast-King+Ahuramazda-Beast, etc. All of these suggestions maintain the importance of the king and Ahuramazda as a combined entity.

83 For altars in Achaemenid sealings and art, see Garrison, "By the Favor of Auramazda." Depictions of "fire altars" in monumental and pictorial art are common in the Achaemenid period, though Garrison favors Boyce's designation "fire holder" since the altars were not meant to receive a sacrifice and should be restricted to apparatuses that have a clear Zoroastrian religious context. Mark Garrison, "Fire Altars," Encyclopaedia Iranica, online edition (1999), available at
It is also possible to discuss PFS 11* in a similar manner to that suggested for PFS 7*, with regards to the tight coordination between the king and the altar (as with the king standing for the royal hero on PFS 7*). So here we may envision the tripartite situation in this way: [OP El Bab] Palm-King-Altar+Ahuramazda-King-Palm [OP El Bab].

See fig. 25 for an image of Naqsh-i Rustam. The mirror imagery at Naqsh-i Rustam is similar to that of PFS 11*, according to Garrison, "By the Favor of Auramazda," pp. 36–37. Further, it is interesting to note that Naqsh-i Rustam and Persepolis form their own "mirror," where the tomb faces the platform, albeit five kilometers away. We may like to think of Persepolis as the earthly throne of the kings, whose imagery is constituted on the tomb of Darius at Naqsh-i Rustam, a "cosmic" entity facing a "terrestrial" one.

Dusinberre, "King or God?," p. 159.

For the reliefs from the Council and Throne Halls at Persepolis, see Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, figs. 21 and 22.

Garrison, "By the Favor of Auramazda," p. 33.

The seals' concordance with the iconography on the wall reliefs at Persepolis "does not indicate that the seal artists copied the wall reliefs. Rather, it shows that both phenomena had the same ultimate source of formal inspiration: the imperial program carefully planned under the direction of the Great King and his closest advisors." See Garrison, "Seals and Elite at Persepolis," p. 17. These are, of course, only a few examples in a great body of imagery that can be compared between the seal corpora and the monumental architecture.


91 Lecoq, Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide, p. 51.
92 Cameron, "The Persian Satrapies and Related Matters," p. 47.
93 Darius divided his empire into twenty tax-paying districts, with Persis tax-free. This means that the empire was divided into twenty-one parts, a multiple of three. See A. S. Shahbazi, "Persepolis and the Avesta," Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran 27 (1994), p. 89.

94 This is certainly not a ubiquitous tendency, as some trilinguals would have been separated from one another, though professing the same goal; other trilinguals appear contiguously but do not relay the same message. The most conspicuous example of this tendency is the trilingual on the South Takht wall at Persepolis (DPe+DPf+DPg), contiguous monolingual inscriptions with different subject matter. Perhaps we envision here the creative process at work, the development of the full meaning of the trilingual.

The selection of the cities to be highlighted by the trilingual may have had a great pull: these are three important cities that Alexander the Great visited after his defeat of Darius III in 331 BCE (among many others), implying their continued importance in the royal environment of the Persian Empire.

Lincoln, Religion, Empire, and Torture, p. 223.

97 "... for the early Persians all this [monumental architecture and relief work] was the expression of a timeless idea of a universal and cosmic order upheld by divine assistance and mutual loyalty between king and subjects. This same idea is reflected in the trilingual inscriptions, whether through their emphasizing the qualities of the king or the importance of the subjects' loyalty to the stability of the empire, or through their references to divine support for the king or to the vast expansion of the empire." Wiesehöfer, Ancient Persia, p. 25.

My rigorous focus on the trilingual inscription is not meant to diminish or ignore the importance of other mono- or bilingual inscriptions of the empire. Monolingual inscriptions also support the greater program of Darius and contain the same sort of language; I maintain that the trilingual inscriptions have some sort of greater symbolic force in the context of the iconography, with Bisitun, etc., in mind. For important monolingual inscriptions in the Achaemenid Empire, see Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, passim. Though these other types of inscriptions are often important, trilinguals are present in contexts like building charters, geographical and ethnic identifications of the empire, most of the royal name seals that would have been visible throughout the empire, and in elaborate personal statements of kingship like Bisitun and Naqsh-i Rustam. (For an interesting study in this, see XPI, a twin of DNb [with the name of Xerxes replacing that of Darius] but for which only the OP version survives: Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, p. 503. One could even argue that the monolingual inscriptions perform a sub-function of the trilinguals, for example in the tetralogy of DPd and
DPc [Old Persian] with DPf [Elamite] and DPg [Babylonian] present on the terrace at Persepolis. These are monolingual inscriptions, but together perform the same function as a trilingual would-describing the honor of the Persian people, imploring the protection of Ahuramazda, recalling the construction of the palace, and listing the people in the Persian army [similar motifs as those seen in the trilinguals]. All of these perform the same function in representing the meaning of Persepolis: it is a political one, reaffirming the superior and eminent role of the Persian people with respect to others. Lecocq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide*, p. 98.


100 See Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire*, fig. 11.4, for a side view of the statue of Darius I from Susa.

101 Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*, p. 147.


103 For an image of the celestial bodies on the Babylonian version of the relief at Bisitun, see fig. 13.


107 Darius claims to have won nineteen battles in one year, though the number of known battles totaled eighteen, and occurred over the span of more than one year. For various scholarly interpretations on this "problem" and a useful graph of the battles mentioned, see A. S. Shahbazi, "The 'One Year' of Darius Re-Examined," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 35 (1972), pp. 609–14. I suggest below that we should be more concerned with those considerations ideological, rather than with those chronological.


109 Feldman, "Darius I and the Heroes of Akkad," pp. 274–82, seeks to prove that Darius would have in fact had first-hand experience with the stele of Naram-Sin at the royal "museum" in Susa. H. Tadmor, "History and Ideology in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," in *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons in Literary, Ideological, and Historical Analysis*, ed. F. M. Fales, pp. 13–33 (Rome, 1981), points out that it was a significant motif of the warrior-conqueror to illustrate his dominance in the matter of a year, especially in his first "term of office."


114 The "three functions" are a superficial term used by Dumezil to describe the categories he imposed upon the Indo-Iranian social structure. For a review of his ideas, see Emily Lyle, "Dumezil's Three Functions and Indo-European Cosmic Structure," *History of Religions* 22 (1982), pp. 25–44.


116 For instance, there are many examples of "subject lists" in the reign of Darius and his successors, one of the most famous being the "foundation inscription," from Susa (DSF), which lists twenty-three different subject peoples in the empire. I do not mean to denigrate any of these instances, or insinuate that the number three had to be included in all official documents of Darius, but rather I seek to highlight what was clearly an important expressive strategy in the early Achaemenid Empire.

117 The cultural exchange between the Persians and the areas outside of the immediate area of Fars was a central priority of the Achaemenids: see, for example, Quintus Curtius 5, 28–29.

118 See Xenophon *Cyropaedia* 8.6.10 on the satrapal court as a mirror of the royal court.


120 Dusinberre, *Gordian Seals and Sealing*, Vol. 1, p. 53. My earlier definition of Court Style is important here, as in the seals from Gordian we have an example of Achaemenid court iconography successfully fused with features of physical style, which can reflect local hybridities and artistic tendencies, all during the reign of one king: Darius.

122 We even have an inscription from the reign of Xerxes at Van (XV), the ancient capital of Armenia. The inscription is interesting not only for being a rare Achaemenid inscription outside of Iran (and a trilingual at that!) but also because of its strange nature. A monument carved into a rock by Darius, it was left without an inscription during his reign. So Xerxes left an inscription in place of the one we might have expected originally from his father: §3: "Le roi Xerxès déclare: 'King Darius, my father, by the race of Ahuramazda, made this very beautiful, and he ordered the site to be dug; since he was not able to write an inscription, then, for myself, I ordered this inscription to be written." Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide*, p. 263.


124 David Strochnach, “Une statue de Darius découverte à Suse: Description and Comment,” *Journal Asiatique* (1972), p. 241; see fig. 15.


126 One example of this is an Achaemenid period vase fragment found in Sepophoris by excavators from the University of Michigan. It contains a quadrilingual inscription in Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, and Egyptian Hieroglyphs. All four of the inscriptions read: “Artaxerxes, King.” See Matthew W. Stolper in *Sepophoris in Galilee: Crosscurrents of Culture*, ed. R. M. Nagy, et al. (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Museum of Art, 1996).


128 See fig. 20.


130 Root, *King and Kingship*, p. 128.

131 For the story of the competition between Darius’s two sons, cf. Hdt. 7.7.2-3 and Justin 2.10.1–10. The inscriptions associated with the succession, three in Old Persian and one in Babylonian, were found in the so-called Harem at Persepolis (XPF).


133 Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia*, p. 54.


136 Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Political Concepts,” p. 158. Some have suggested that DE was cut posthumously by Xerxes. Whether or not this was the case is not crucial to the argument, except that it attaches both kings to the force of the trilingual’s message.

137 For these, see Posener, *La première domination perse en Égypte*, pp. 141–45.

138 A potent example of this is an alabaster vessel discovered in the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, which is inscribed quadrilingually, with the Egyptian hieroglyphic text arranged vertically below the typical trilingual cuneiform format. See Posener, *La première domination perse en Égypte*, p. 143.


142 See figs. 16 and 17 for line drawings of DS2 and DS3. SXf and SXg can be found in R. Schmitt, *Altpersische Siegel-Inschriften* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), pp. 32–33.

143 See fig. 18 for a line drawing of DS4. The dates are based on coins discovered in the excavation context combined with the royal names on the seals themselves: Kaptan assigns the archive of bullae between the reign of Xerxes and the first quarter of the 4th century *(The Daskyleion Bullae*, vol. 1, 27). She argues that it is likely that the seals inscribed with Xerxes’s name were applied to bullae that found their way (on documents) to Daskyleion “in the period after he
granted the satrapal post to Artabazos following the defeat at Plataea in 479/8 BCE"; *The Doriskon Balleia*, vol. 2, p. 27.

144 For an impression of PTS 8*, see fig. 19.
145 For an impression of PTS 2*, see fig. 20.
146 For an impression of PTS 6*, see fig. 21.
147 For an impression of PTS 1*, see fig. 22.
148 For an impression of PTS 3*, see fig. 23.
149 For an impression of PTS 4*, see fig. 24.
150 Dusinberre, "Imperial Style and Constructed Identity," p. 106. For instance, the winged disk figure is an incredibly popular motif in the PTS corpus, even though very few of these seals are "official."

152 Diodorus Siculus 11.7.1–2.
155 Plutarch, *Artaxerxes* 2.3–5 and 3.3–6 for the fight between Artaxerxes and Cyrus the Younger regarding the succession of the throne. This argument is the stage for the famous "March of the 10,000," recounted in Xenophon’s *Anabasis*.
156 "By the favor of Ahuramazda, Anaitis, and Mithras, this palace I (re)built." For translation, see Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, p. 676.
157 Notably, Artaxerxes II does not invoke these other gods in his inscriptions at Persepolis, the last remnant of Darius’ ideological program, and in those cases maintains the traditional form and function of the trilingual.
159 Diodorus Siculus 15.93.1.
160 An Old Persian inscription proclaims, "I am Artaxerxes the great King."
161 For the murder of Artaxerxes III and IV by Bagoas, cf. Diodorus Siculus 17.5.3–6 and BHIL (Babylonian Dynastic Prophecy), 34–35.3.2–8.
162 Though the trilingual inscription may have disappeared from the Persian region, we can conjecture that the multilingual inscriptions of the Achaemenids were familiar to European Greeks. Stephanie West, "Herodotus’ Epigraphical Interests," *Classical Quarterly* 35 (1985), pp. 278–305, suggests the possibility that Samian inscriptions at the Bosporus mentioned by Herodotus were multilingual and could have called to mind the trilingual inscriptions in other parts of the empire, such as Bisitun. The possibility for European familiarity with the multilingual inscriptions of the Persians can inform us as to the meanings of trilingual inscriptions that appear in the period after the Achaemenids outside of the immediate reaches of the Persian Empire.
164 "Even without a detailed analysis of the differences between the Aramaic and Greek texts, it seems fairly clear that the Greek text represents the position of the local authorities, with two archontes of Lycia and a governor of =/= established or confirmed by Pixodaros at their head..." André Lemaire, "The Xanthos Trilingual Revisited," in *Assyria and beyond: studies presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, ed. J. G. Dercksen (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2004), p. 430.
173 It has come to my attention that there is an unpublished decree found at Achmim in Egypt, dated to 243 BCE and in the same linguistic ordering as the Rosetta stone, though it has not yet been translated so its content is unknown. The emergence of this document may bring the issue of the trilingual to the forefront of ancient studies in the near future. Other decrees from the Ptolemaic period, such as the Canopus decree (for which, see Christian Tietze, Eva R. Lange, and Klaus Hallof, "Ein neues Exemplar des Kanopus-Dekrets aus Bubasis," *Archiv..."

174 Rubin, (Re)presenting Empire, pp. 116ff, even views the version of the Res Gestae erected in Galatia in accordance with my own view (and indeed his own, along with many others) of the Bisitun monument: the native people would have seen it as an autobiographical statement of a king whose most important qualities were visual rather than “legible” per se. Through its sheer power, Augustus was automatically associated with the power of the great Achaemenid king, Darius I.

175 See ILS 8994, 8995. The languages appear in Greek, Latin, and hieroglyphics.


177 For more on the Gallus stelae, see Friedhelm Hoffmann, Martina Minas-Nerpel und Stefan Pfeiffer, Die dreisprachige stele des C. Cornelius Gallus: Übersetzung und Kommentar (Berlin, New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2009).


180 Herrenschmidt, ”Old Persian Cuneiform,” p. 117.
