Sogdian Acculturation in Medieval China (fifth through ninth centuries): A Study of Sogdian Tombs Found in China

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Abstract

The Middle Ages (defined here as the period from the fifth to ninth centuries) were surprisingly among of the most vibrant eras in Chinese history. This was due to the intense cross-cultural interactions occurring in northern China and its direct involvement in the flourishing land-based silk roads across Eurasia. From the Northern Wei (386-534 CE) to the Northern Zhou (557-581 CE) and the Northern Qi (550-577 CE), nomadic Xianbei rulers created and consolidated a ruling coalition composed of multiple cultural and ethnic groups in northern China. When Han Chinese unified all of China in the Sui (581-618 CE) and the Tang (618-907 CE) Dynasties, China retained much of its cosmopolitan feel. During the centuries-long vibrant era, many non-Han people moved to China and experienced frequent cultural exchanges in Chinese society, among which Sogdians were a remarkable ethnic group.

The recently excavated Sogdian tombs in northern China provide new insight into long-discussed questions concerning Sogdian cultural adaptation in medieval China (fifth to ninth centuries). This thesis collects almost all extant materials related to these Sino-Sogdian tombs, and based on these materials, provides a comprehensive study of the patterns of the Sogdian lifestyles reflected in their tombs and mortuary objects.

Eschewing the overused theory of Sinicisation, this thesis proposes an analytical framework based on the theory of acculturation to examine the empirical evidence (i.e., Sino-Sogdian tomb complexes). The results indicate that Sogdians adopted Chinese funerary customs while maintaining their cultural heritage, which can be described as

integration according to the theory of acculturation. The Sogdian integration was creative, as evident in some new funerary practices that neither originally existed in Chinese nor Sogdian backgrounds but were a new way of mixing two different cultural traits. This was also a dichotomic integration, likely under the pressure of Chinese government-dominated mild cultural assimilation. The Chinese burial traditions of the Sogdians were outwardly visualised, while their own ethnic or religious burial arrangements were hidden inside their tomb structures.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Institutional Authors of the Related Excavation Reports
NWKY	Ningxia wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 宁夏文物考古研究所
NHWKY	Ningxia huizuzizhiqu wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 宁夏回族自治区文物考古研究所
SKY Shanxi	Shanxisheng kaogu yanjiusuo 山西省考古研究所
SKY Shaanxi	Shaanxisheng kaogu yanjiusuo 陕西省考古研究所
TB	Tulufan Bowuguan 吐鲁番博物馆
TW	Tulufanshi wenwuju 吐鲁番市文物局
TY	Tulufanxue yanjiuyuan 吐鲁番学研究院
TDWG	Tulufan diqu wenguansuo 吐鲁番地区文管所
TDWW	Tulufan diqu wenwuju 吐鲁番地区文物局
TJW	Taiyuanshi jinyuanqu wenwulvyouju 太原市晋源区文物旅游局
TWJ	Taiyuanshi wenwukaogu yanjiusuo 太原市文物考古研究所
XBK	Xinjiang bowuguan kaogubu 新疆博物馆考古部
XWB	Xinjiang weiwuerzizhiqu bowuguan 新疆维吾尔自治区博物馆
XWK	Xinjiang Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 新疆文物考古研究所

YLK	Yuanzhou lianhe kaogudui 原州联合考古队

Abbreviations	Languages
Ar.	Arabic
Av.	Avestan
Guj.	Gujarati
MP	Middle Persian
Pers.	Persian
Skt.	Sanskrit
Sogd.	Sogdian

Chronology

Dynasties	Duration
Shang Dynasty 商	ca. 1600-1050 BCE
Zhou Dynasty 周	ca. 1050-256 BCE
Qin Dynasty 秦	221-206 BCE
Han Dynasty 汉	206 BCE-220 CE
Three Kingdoms 三国	220-265 CE
Jin Dynasty 晋	265-420 CE
Southern and Northern Dynasties 南北朝	420-589 CE
Sui Dynasty 隋	581-618 CE
Tang Dynasty 唐	618-907 CE

<table>
<tr><th>Southern Dynasties
南朝 (420-589 CE)</th><th colspan="2">Northern Dynasties
北朝 (386-581 CE)</th></tr>
<tr><td>Song 宋 (420-479 CE)</td><td colspan="2">Northern Wei 北魏 (386-534 CE)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Qi 齐 (479-502 CE)</td><td rowspan="2">Western Wei 西魏
(535-556 CE)</td><td rowspan="2">Eastern Wei 东魏
(534-550 CE)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Liang 梁 (502-557 CE)</td></tr>
</table>

	Northern Zhou 北周	Northern Qi 北齐
Chen 陈 (557-589 CE)	(557-581 CE)	(550-577 CE)

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This thesis explores Sogdian acculturation in medieval China (fifth through ninth centuries) by reference to Sogdian tombs found in China. In this period, Sogdians formed a distinctive hybrid culture in Sogdiana, which resulted from the influence of other civilisations, including Persian, Turkic, Indian, and Hellenistic cultures. China also gradually developed into a multicultural society in which the indigenous culture reconciled the Xianbei conquerors' nomadic culture and Buddhism, which was being promoted by Indian and Central Asian pilgrims. For different reasons, many Sogdians moved from the diverse region of Sogdiana to cosmopolitan China. Scholars have been fascinated by the question of how these Sogdian immigrants dealt with different cultures in Chinese society. This thesis addresses this question by relying on the theory of acculturation and focuses on Sino-Sogdian tombs, emphasising their tomb structures, body treatment, funerary epitaphs, and burial objects.

1.1 Research Aim and Questions

The research aim of this thesis is as follows: Sogdian cultural adaptation in medieval China (fifth through ninth centuries).

Scholars have long been aware of the significant role of Sogdian immigrants in China due to textual materials (Cheng, 1995). In recent decades, several Sogdian tombs have been identified and located in northern China. These newly discovered archaeological materials have triggered academic interest in Sogdian cultural

adaptation in medieval China.

Compared with textual materials, the archaeological findings of Sino-Sogdian tombs might provide more detailed information on their cultural contexts. Chinese chronicles have typically focused on political history; thus, Sogdian activities in cultural spheres were undocumented. However, the Sogdian tombs emphasise and embody Sogdian cultural affiliations and concepts of the spiritual world. Sogdian images in Chinese chronicles were constructed by official historians, while Sogdian tombs and their contents were the results of Sogdians' own wishes, at least indirectly through the arrangements made by their families. Thus, the newly discovered Sogdian tombs might be the most relevant and straightforward material to consider in an examination of their cultural adaptation in China.

Two terms must be clarified here. The first is the periodisation of medieval China/the Chinese Middle Ages. Under the influence of Western historiography, many Chinese and Japanese historians have accepted the use of Western terms to divide the long history of China temporally even though some of these borrowings are dubious, such as the principle of division and the suitability of applying this approach to Chinese history (Xie, 2016). Medieval China/the Chinese Middle Ages vary according to different studies because no well-established chronological divisions of Chinese history have emerged heretofore. For example, according to Rong (2014; 2020), who focused on Sogdian activities in medieval China, the term Chinese Middle Ages broadly refers to the lengthy period between the Eastern Han and the Northern Song (third to tenth centuries). In another study with a similar focus (Bi, 2011), this definition is narrowed

to produce a tighter periodisation extending from the Southern and Northern Dynasties to the end of the Tang Dynasty (420–907 CE).

In this thesis, the term medieval China does not refer to any social or political events but is rather a general designation of the lengthy period between the fifth and ninth centuries CE, including the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the Sui Dynasty, and the Tang Dynasty. Most known Sogdian tombs found in China have been dated to this period.

Second, adaptation is defined as a process in which individuals rearrange their lives in response to a new cultural context. The theory of acculturation is used to establish a theoretical framework for the process of Sino-Sogdian cultural adaptation in medieval China. After the development of the theoretical framework for this research in Chapter 3, the terms cultural adaptation and acculturation are used interchangeably in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

In pursuit of this central research focus of Sogdian cultural adaptation in medieval China (fifth through ninth centuries), three specific research questions are proposed in Chapter 2 based on a careful survey of the existing literature. The research questions pursued in this thesis are as follows:

1) If the Sogdians assimilated into their host culture, in what ways and for what reasons did they do so?
2) Did the Sogdians maintain their cultural heritage? If so, in what ways and for what reasons did they do so?
3) If the Sogdians simultaneously exhibited traits associated with these two

different cultures, what was the relationship between their cultural borrowing and their cultural maintenance?

A literature review in Chapter 2 has indicated that most Sino-Sogdian tombs and in-tomb relics exhibit varying cultural affiliations: the heritage (i.e., Sogdian) and the host (i.e., Chinese). Based on this already established knowledge, an anticipated answer of 'yes' can be proposed for the first two research questions. That is, the Sogdians did assimilate into their host culture while maintaining their heritage culture.

However, previous affirmative answers have largely been vaguely stated and groundless. For example, most Sino-Sogdian tomb structures exhibit no difference from indigenous Chinese tomb structures. Some studies have recognised this similarity and regarded it as a symbol of cultural assimilation. However, they did not explain why the Sogdians emulated Chinese tomb structures. It is also of interest to know how the Sogdians constructed their Chinese-style tombs; that is, did they do so in a wholly Chinese way or a certain creative form. To compensate for these shortcomings in past studies, the causes and methods of the Sogdian cultural borrowing and cultural maintenance will be investigated in this thesis. Thus, the first two research questions should not be considered merely yes-or-no questions but also require an attempt to trace the specific practices of the Sogdians and their underlying conditions.

The final research question is based on a neglected issue in existing studies of the relationship between the two seemingly contradictory cultural correlations. Given the achievements made by prior research, the coexistence of Sogdian and Chinese cultural correlations in some Sino-Sogdian tombs is expected, but it is far from sufficient to

describe this cultural phenomenon as coexistence.

Consider two burial objects: a burial object related to Sogdian traditions (described as object S) and another burial object related to Chinee traditions (described as object C). Object S and object C could be equally present in the same tomb, but object S could be present in vast quantities in contrast to a single instance of object C. Moreover, a Sino-Sogdian elite probably sponsored a new art form combining the styles of objects C and S. Thus, the focus of the final research question is the way in which these two seemingly contradictory sides were related to each other in Sino-Sogdian tombs.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 The Sogdians

a. People and History

The Sogdians were an ancient Eastern Iranian people whose language was also called Sogdian; this language belonged to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family (Ashurov, 2020, 7). Their homeland, Sogdiana[1], was centred on the basins of the Zerafshan and Kashka Darya rivers and the peripheral oasis states where

[1] The geographic scope of Sogdiana varied over time and according to different sources. This region was as large as the entirety of Transoxiana according to Starbo's *Geography*, but it had a much narrower scope in the Islamic period. Ahmad al-Yaqubi's *Book of the Countries* (*Kitab al-Buldan*) states that the capital city of Sogdiana was generally Samarkand and Kash/Kish (today Shahrisabz, Uzbekistan) sometimes, but Bukhara was excluded from Sogdiana (Bosworth, 1997, 772–773).

the Sogdian language was predominant. This area corresponded to parts of modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (Fig. 1).

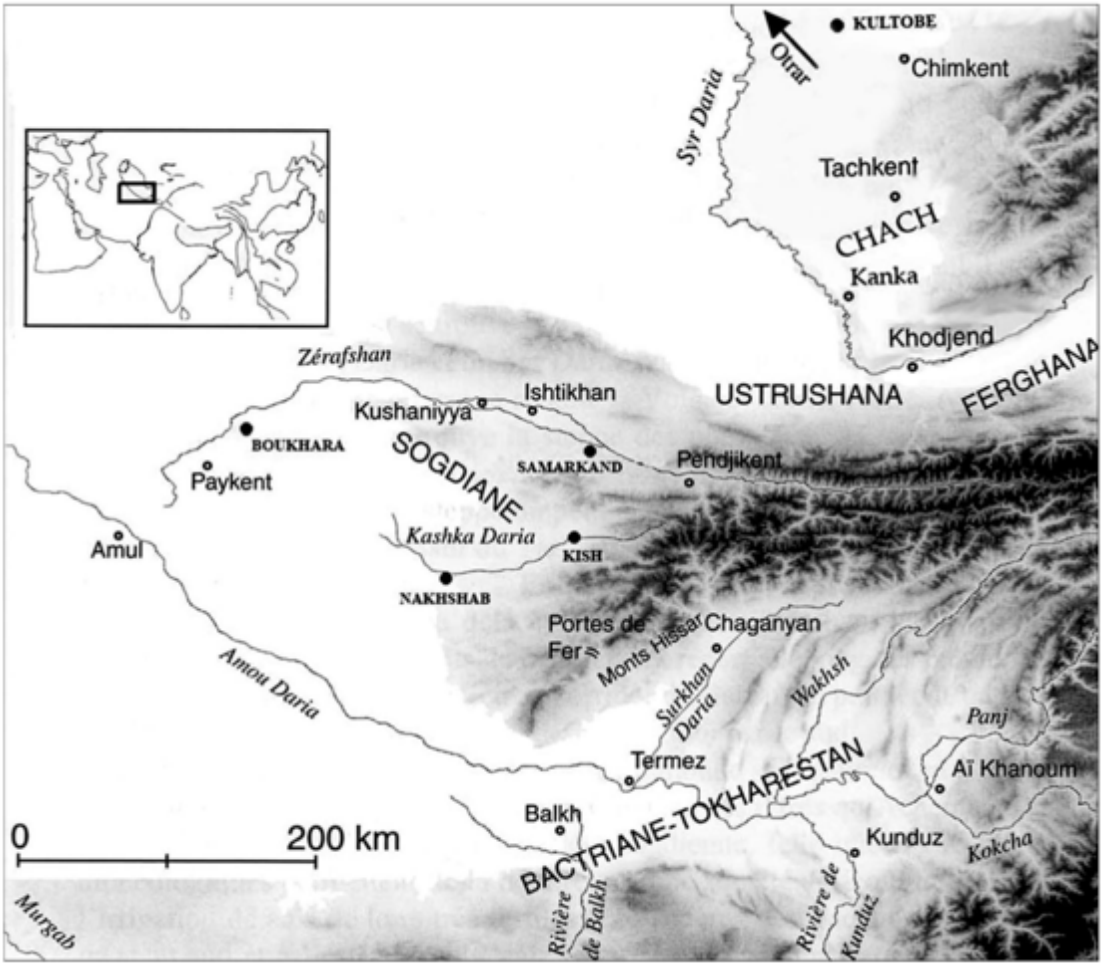


Figure 1. Map of Sogdiana and its major settlements.

After: Grenet and Rapin, 2013, Fig. 11.

Sogdians never established a unitary state or empire in their homeland. Throughout their history they were ruled directly in a series of independent or semi-independent principalities centred around the city-state of Samarkand (Shenkar, 2017, 191). Samarkand was traditionally viewed as the capital of the entire region of Sogdiana, with its ruler being the 'first among equals' (Ashurov, 2020, 7). Sogdians preferred to base

their political identification on their city of origin, as evidenced by the conventional ‘nine surnames’ that the Sogdians were given in Chinese (Shenkar, 2017, 191). For example, if a Sogdian person had roots in Samarkand, his or her Chinese surname would normally be Kang because the regime of Samarkand was usually called the state of Kang in Chinese contexts.

Sogdiana was constantly under the control of external powers, but this control was often rather loose. City-states in this region were largely independent, and their rulers were drawn from the local nobility. The first recorded reference to Sogdiana was the Inscription of Darius in the sixth century BCE. Sogdiana was one of the satrapies of the Achaemenid Empire and provided contingents of soldiers to the Achaemenid kings, as well as the semiprecious stones of lapis lazuli and carnelian, which were used for the construction of the palace at Susa (Walter, 2006, 3).

Alongside other territories of the Achaemenid Empire, Sogdiana was conquered during the military campaigns of Alexander the Great from 329 to 327 BCE. This conquest inaugurated the Hellenistic period of Sogdiana, which lasted until 146 BCE. Over time, Sogdiana was ruled by Alexander the Great, the Seleucid Empire founded by the Macedonian general Seleucus I Nicator, and the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom established by the descendants of local Greek colonists. These two centuries of Hellenistic dominance influenced Sogdians in many respects, including their city construction, architecture, and art (Walter, 2006, 4).

In the 400 years following the collapse of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom, it is not certain whether Sogdiana was a political state in its own right or the territory of another

state. Both Western and Chinese written sources attribute the destruction of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom to the invasion of nomadic people from the north. Western sources identify these nomadic people as the Pasiani, Scythians, Tochari, or Asii, while Chinese sources mention the Sai and Yuezhi (Lyonnet, 2020, 8). Discussions and debates regarding the identities of these different groups of invaders remain ongoing.

Subsequently, Sogdiana came under the rule of the Sasanians, as attested by Shapur I's Ka'ba-ye Zartosht Inscription. The inscription of Shapur I is written in Middle Persian, Parthian, and Greek and dates to approximately 262 CE, after his victory over the Romans. Sogdiana was listed in the inscription as a province of the great Sasanian Empire (Chegini and Nikitin, 1996, 42). The Sasanian influence in Sogdiana was significant, as similarities in the design of metalwork[2] have found in Sogdiana (Walter, 2006, 4).

Sasanian rule in Sogdiana was threatened by the arrival of nomadic invaders in Central Asia in the second half of the fifth century, an event that was independently recorded in both Chinese and Byzantine texts (De la Vaissière, 2005, 97). Two groups of invading nomads have been identified. The first group was the Kidarites, whose rule in Sogdiana at some point during the fifth century is evidenced by certain coins from this period (Rezakhani, 2017, 150). The next group was the Hephthalites, who sent emissaries from Samarkand to China in approximately 509 CE (Marshak and Negmatov,

[2] Sogdian metalwork indeed mirrored that of the Sasanians. However, Sogdian metalwork has its own characteristics, such as unique shapes, techniques, and iconography (Marshak, 1999).

1996, 240).

Between 557 and 561 CE, a Türk-Sasanian alliance crushed the Hephthalite Empire. Consequently, Sogdiana passed into the hands of the Türks (Sinor and Klyashtorny, 1996, 327). A Turco-Sogdian symbiosis was established and lasted from the sixth to the tenth century, by the means of intermarriage, cooperative trading, and shared customs (De la Vaissière, 2005, 199-225). This symbiosis was of benefit not only to the Sogdians but also to the Türks. The Sogdian commercial network expanded across Eurasia under the protection of the powerful Türks, which was provided in return for the Sogdians' diplomatic negotiations and political services (Marshak and Negmatov, 1996, 242). The Turco-Sogdian symbiosis was not broken when China defeated the Western Turkic Khaganate and claimed nominal sovereignty over Sogdiana in the 650s CE. The period of Turkic and Chinese rule represented the economic and cultural zenith of the Sogdians (Marshak and Negmatov, 1996, 242).

Muslims conquered Sogdiana in 715 CE, which was a turning point in Sogdian history. In the early years of this conquest, Sogdians in their homeland were able to retain their cultural practices under the rule of the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 CE), but this situation changed drastically when the more radical Abbasids (750-1258 CE) took power. The Abbasids' religious intolerance eliminated Zoroastrianism and other religions in the region (Wertmann, 2015, 11). Additionally, the Sogdians gradually abandoned their own language and adopted Persian and then Turkic (Yoshida, 2016). Ultimately, due to the death of the Sogdian language and cultural traits, Sogdians ceased to be an independent ethic group prior to the Mongol invasion in the 13th century

(Krippes, 1991).

b. Funerary Practices and Beliefs

In general, Sogdians probably identified themselves as Zoroastrians (Marshak and Negmatov, 1996, 255; Walter, 2006, 57). Their funerals basically followed Zoroastrian practices and included the belief that the corpse of the deceased should be kept from coming into contact with the sacred elements (e.g., earth, water, and fire), and a series of ceremonies were conducted to help the soul of the deceased arrive in the Zoroastrian paradise.

According to Zoroastrian principles, corpses are impure and can contaminate sacred elements, such as earth, water, and fire. To avoid the defilement of the sacred creations, Zoroastrian funerary practices require the corpses to be exposed and eaten by carrion-eating birds (Boyce, 1979, 43-44). Although other methods of disposing of the dead, such as cremation, certainly existed in Sogdian territories, the most influential Zoroastrians rejected these methods as heretical (Litvinsky and Vorobyova-Desyatovskyaya, 1996, 419–434).

For the first three days and nights after a death, a series of funeral rites were performed, the most central one of which might have been ‘the glance of the dog’ (MP. *Sagdid*). The dog is a beneficent and righteous creature in Zoroastrian doctrine, and its glance is considered to be able to drive away any evil polluting the dead (Lerner, 2011). The *Sagdid* should be enacted three times during a Zoroastrian funeral. The first *Sagdid* is performed immediately after death. During the three-day watch over the corpse, the second *Sagdid* is performed. When the funerary procession has reached a place for

excarnation, the dog gives a final glance at the corpse (Lerner, 2011). Illustrations of the *Sagdid* have been identified on some Sogdian stone funerary furniture found in China (Figs. 2 and 3).



Figure 2. The central panel of the Miho Museum funerary bed. Northern Qi Dynasty. The scene shows a Zoroastrian funeral. In the precise centre of the scene, a dog (underlined in red) glances to the fence on the right, in which three stooped people are dealing with the corpse, which is not yet visible. After: Lerner, 2011, p.19, fig.1.

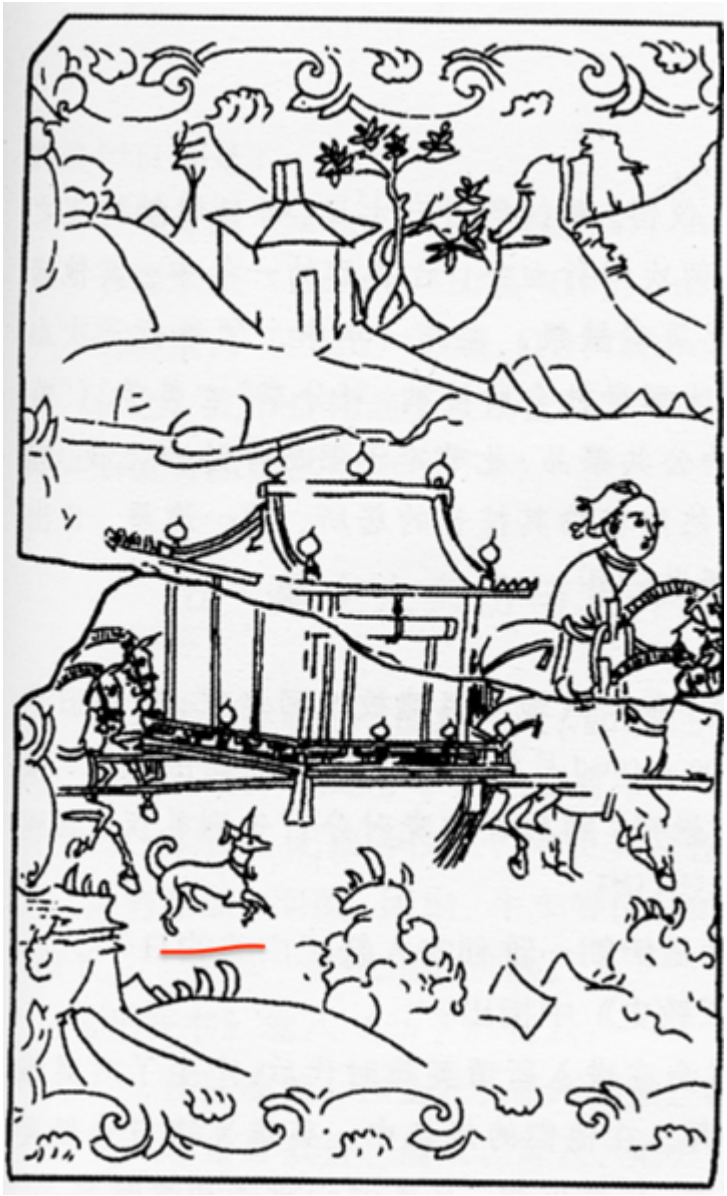


Figure 3. Panel from a supposed Sogdian tomb (d. 573 CE) (line drawing). Qingzhou, Shandong Province.

The scene shows a sarcophagus is being transported. In the bottom of the scene, a dog (underlined in red) is running alongside, most likely for the final glance at the corpse that will take place when the funerary procession has reached the tomb. After: Lerner, 2011, p.20, fig.3.

On the fourth day after death, the body is conveyed to a place for excarnation (Russell, 2000, 561). The location of excarnation is called the *dakhma* in the Avestan, but the *Vendidad*, the Zoroastrian scriptural text, does not precisely describe the construction process of the *dakhma* (Campos, 2008). The *dakhma* is customarily called the tower of silence, a term that was coined by the British translators after they first learned of the tower-like *dakhma* built by Parsees[3] in Mumbai, India (Campos, 2008). The neologism of the tower of silence does not encompass all types of artificially constructed *dakhmas* that were built in Central Asia (for more information and illustrations, see Section 4.2).

Additionally, the place of exposure need not be a *dakhma*, but can rather be an arid tract of land. According to the *Vendidad* (6. 51), if the means for more costly artificially constructed *dakhmas* are lacking, a skeleton may be left to lie on bare ground. The essential requirement is that the ground should be arid because a corpse that is left in a fertile place can contaminate sacred elements such as earth, water, and plants (Boyce and Grenet, 1991, 130).

After the body is cleaned by scavengers, the next step is to deal with the skeletal remains. Unlike Persian Zoroastrians, who were more likely to build Rock-cut tombs to receive skeletons after exposure (Shen, 2009), Sogdians used a moveable casket called an ossuary to accomplish this task. The custom of the ossuary has been

[3] Parsees are an ethnoreligious group in India, whose ancestors migrated from Persia following the conquest by Arab Muslims in the seventh century; they follow Zoroastrianism (Guo, 2005, 21-24).

considered a key difference between Zoroastrian celestial burials in Sogdiana and those in Persia (Cai, 1998, 26). Beginning in the third or fourth century CE, the custom of the ossuary became common in many areas of Central Asia, such as Khwarazm, Tashkent, and Sogdiana (Litvinsky and Vorobyova-Desyatovskyaya, 1996, 421; Grenet, 2015, 143). Likely around the same period, a small, rectangular, aboveground burial chamber known as the *naus* in Arabic began to be used in Sogdiana to preserve ossuaries containing skeletal remains (Hansen, 2012, 134-136).

In a few cases, the individual's possessions were buried after death, either within the ossuary or in the ground next to the skeleton. For example, in the Tepai-shah (in Tajikistan), four necropolises have been discovered in which crania and bones cleaned of the soft tissues were buried alongside various objects, including glass beads, bronze pendants and bronze temporal rings (Litvinskif and Sedov, 1983, 138–149). *Nauses* in Panjikent were used to store ossuaries in which attendant funerary objects have been found (Pavchinskaia, 1994).

1.2.2 The Chinese

a. People and History

The Han people were and are an East Asian ethnic group native to China. This group has consistently been the most influential ethnic group throughout the history of Chinese civilisation. Nevertheless, the fact that many non-Han ethnic groups have coexisted with them and played important roles throughout Chinese history has been

documented, with some such groups even becoming dynastic rulers over parts or even the whole of China, as was the case with Xianbei's Northern Wei Dynasty. The exclusion of non-Han people from the concept of the Chinese people strongly limits explorations of the complex nature of China's cultural history.

For the sake of comparison, this thesis tends to use the notions of Chinese people and their culture as aggregate concepts that can be compared with Sogdians and their culture. Regarding some cultural traits that belong to a certain ethnic group within the umbrella concept of Chinese culture, these exclusive correlations are emphasised.

In contrast to the consistent political division of Sogdiana, the unification of all Chinese lands was an important political goal that could ensure the legitimacy of dynastic rulers regardless of the specific dominative ethnic group in power. Generally, Chinese history can be described as a cycle of separation and unification. China in the Middle Ages (fifth through ninth centuries CE) experienced such a cycle. Considering that all the extant Sogdian tombs that have been excavated are in northern China (for details, see Section 3.3.1), here the attention is given to administrative and cultural shifts in the North in the Middle Ages in the present work.

The first half of the Middle Ages featured an enormous division within China, as the Xianbei people had conquered North China, while the southern part was still controlled by the Han people; this period is known as the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589 CE). Between 400 and 440 CE, the Xianbei-led Northern Wei reunified North China (Fig. 4).



Figure 4. Territories of the Norther Wei (386-535 CE) and the Song (Liu) (420-479 CE) Dynasties.

After: Lewis, 2009b, p.80, map.9.

In 493 CE, Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei advocated deep Sinicisation, such as by moving the capital city from Pingcheng (modern Datong, Shanxi Province) to Luoyang (in modern Henan Province), the heartland of Han culture (Wu, J., 2010, 6). His Sinicisation policy ended in disaster. Although the court became Sinicised, army garrisons at the frontier that preserved Xianbei costume, language, and values progressively declined in status. These angry garrisons started uprisings against the

court in 524 CE. These uprisings eventually caused the collapse of the Northern Wei into two warring states, namely, the Northern Zhou in the west and the Northern Qi in the east (Fig. 5). The Northern Zhou was founded by Yuwen Tai, who was a Xianbei general. The Northern Qi was founded by Gao Huan, who was a Han Chinese raised among the Xianbei. Perhaps learning from the uprisings initiated by the Xianbei army garrisons, the two leaders and their successors retained and promoted Xianbei culture to varying degrees (Lewis, 2009b, 84-85).

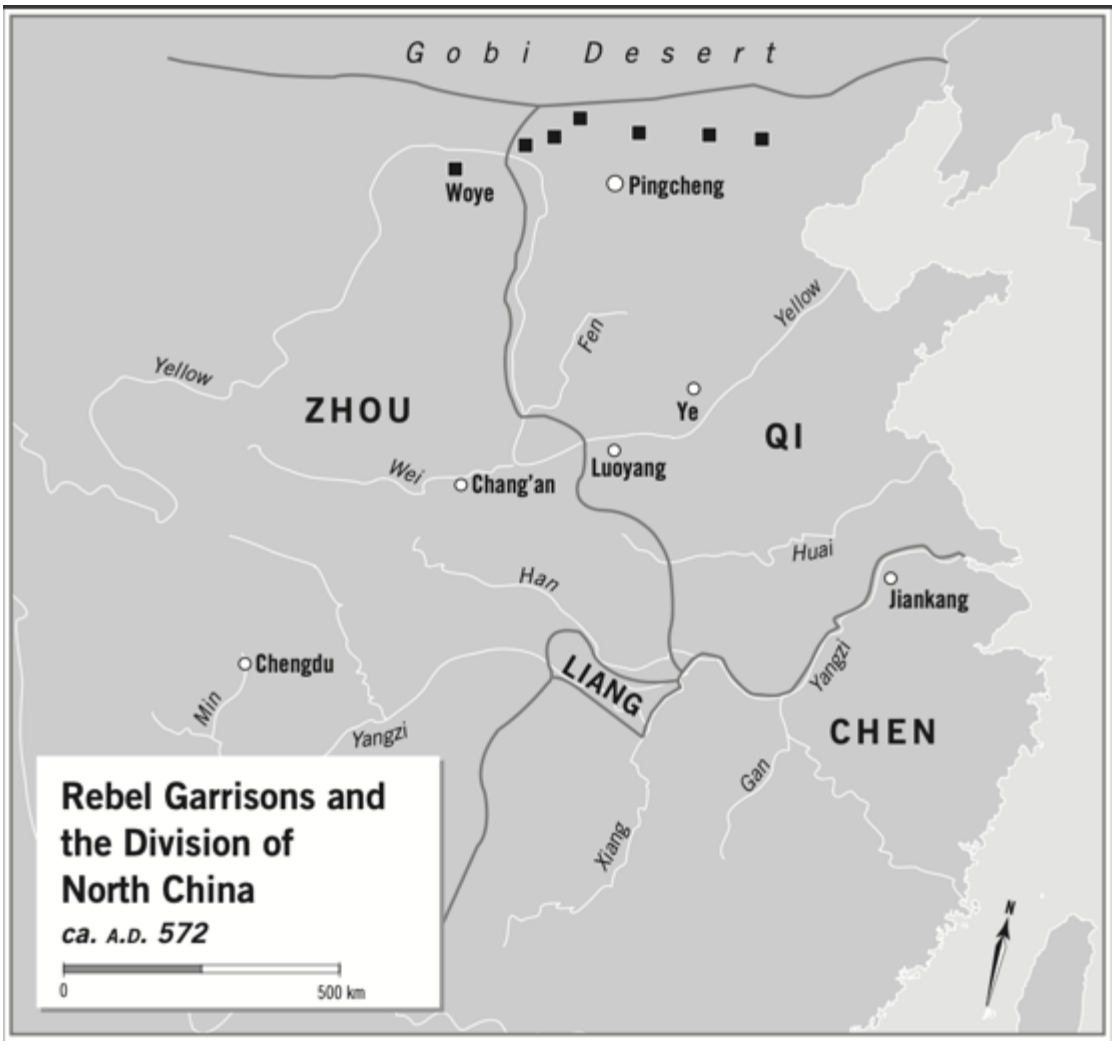


Figure 5.Territories of the Northern Zhou (557-581 CE), the Northern Qi (550-577 CE),

the Chen (557-589 CE) and the dying Liang (502-557 CE) Dynasties.

After: Lewis, 2009b, p.83, map.10.

In 581 CE, a Han general of the Northern Zhou seized the throne of the Northern Zhou and established the Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE) (Lewis, 2009b, 85). Although the Sui Dynasty was also short-lived, it ended the lengthy period of northern-southern division within China and began the second half of the medieval period of China in a monolithic state. The subsequent Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) has customarily been viewed as a cosmopolitan empire by historians because it tolerated the existence and diffusion of various cultures to a greater extent than other dynasties (Lewis, 2009a). Chinese scholars have tended to attribute the success of the Tang Dynasty to frequent intercultural contact in earlier periods, as seen by Chen Yinke's (1933, 297) famous remark that the incorporation of a non-Han valiant spirit into the decadent Han culture ultimately created the unprecedentedly grand Tang China.

Moreover, Tang China linked itself with the external world through trade and military expansion. One of the most noticeable conquests occurred in the Western Regions (lands west of the Yumen Pass and east of Pamir Plateau, approximately encompassing modern Xinjiang) and Central Asia. The Tang empire annexed Turfan in 640 CE and then defeated the Western Turkic Khaganate and claimed nominal sovereignty over Sogdiana in the 650s CE (Marshak and Negmatov 1996, 242). Tang China dealt politically with nomadic confederacies on the steppe and city-states in the oasis. As a result, the ancient silk roads entered their golden age without serious

disruptions during the early Tang Dynasty (618-755 CE) (Fig. 6) (Lewis, 2009a, 170).

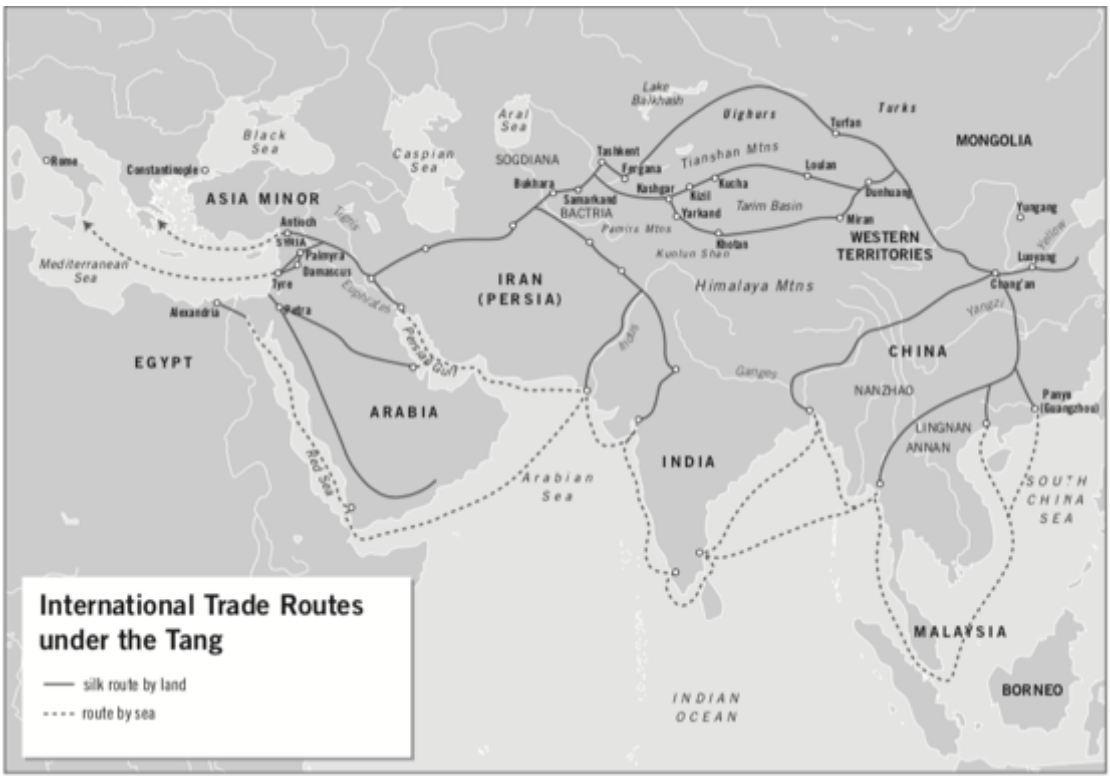


Figure 6. International trade routes under the Tang.

After: Lewis, 2009a, p.160, Map.16.

Rulers of the Tang Dynasty were keen to employ foreign soldiers and generals. This desire was vigorously pursued by Li Linfu, the chancellor for Emperor Xuanzong for 18 years (734-752 CE). He adopted a policy of employing only non-Han Chinese as military governors because he thought martial but illiterate non-Han generals could protect the empire and did not threaten his own status as chancellor (Lewis, 2009a, 43). However, his policy failed, as the An Lushan rebellion in the 750s, was a general of Sogdian and Turkic origin. By the time of Li Linfu's death in 752 CE, An Lushan had gained control of three frontier provinces in the north of the Tang Empire, including

Pinglu, Fanyang, and Hedong (approximately encompassing modern Hebei Province, Beijing, Tianjing, and parts of Shanxi and Liaoning Provinces) (Lewis, 2009a, 43).

An Lushan established his own dynasty, the Yan Dynasty, based in the North China Plain (Figs. 7-10), including the following major cities: Youzhou (modern Beijing), Ye (modern Handan, Heibei Province), and Luoyang (in Henan Province). An Lushan's son, then his deputy named Shi Siming, who was also of Sogdian and Turkic origin, and then Shi Siming's son successively seized the throne. Although the Yan state was eventually defeated in 763 CE, its generals maintained some level of independence in their own lands. The Tang regained only nominal rule in many areas of the North China Plain. More than one century later, the Tang Dynasty fell apart, and a new turbulent age of division followed, known as the Five Dynasties and Ten Countries (907–979 CE) (Lewis, 2009a, 156–163).



Figure 7. An Lushan Rebellion in winter 756 CE.

At the time, An Lushan was the leader of the rebellion and the first emperor of the Yan

regime, whose territories included the Northern China Plain, Shandong Peninsula, Chang'an (Tang's western capital city) and Luoyang (Tang's eastern capital city). After: Yang, 2018.



Figure 8. An Lushan Rebellion in winter 758-spring 759 CE.

At the time, An Qingxu was the leader of the rebellion and the second emperor of the Yan regime, whose territories included the southern part of the Northern China Plain. After: Yang, 2018.



Figure 9. An Lushan Rebellion in Spring 761 CE.

At the time, Shi Siming was the leader of the rebellion and the third emperor of the Yan regime, whose territories included the North China Plain and Luoyang (Tang's eastern capital city). After: Yang, 2018.



Figure 10. An Lushan Rebellion in spring 763 CE.

At the time, Shi Caoyi was the leader of the rebellion and the fourth emperor of the Yan

regime, whose territories included the northern part of the North China Plain. After: Yang, 2018.

b. Funerary Practices and Beliefs

The funerary practices of Chinese people at the time were largely regulated by Confucian rites. That is, bodies were enclosed in coffins and then the coffins were buried in tombs alongside carefully chosen objects. The cremation advocated by Buddhism was mainly practised by monks and nuns until the late Tang Dynasty (Wu, H., 2010, 139).

The essential Chinese burial structure is the tomb. According to ancient ritual texts, a tomb should consist of a substructure beneath the ground and aboveground complexes, which often include a tumulus, one or more ritual buildings, and statues and steles (Wu, H., 2010, 8). Ritual buildings for emperors have been attested to by archaeological findings, although it is unknown whether they were constructed across all social strata because only limited relics have survived (Pu, 2008, 61).

Two basic construction methods were used for Chinese underground tombs, i.e., vertical and horizontal, which differ fundamentally in terms of the way in which the inside of the tomb leads to the outside world and the manner in which the boundary between these two areas is crossed. The vertical method constructs the burial chamber as an open pit in the ground that contains a box-like timber coffin (Fig. 11); tombs built using this method have been described by archaeologists as vertical pit tombs (*shuxue mu* 竖穴墓) (Guo, 2004). A different spatial arrangement from such vertical pit tombs

involved cutting laterally into the native rock of a mountainside to construct multiple sequential chambers (Fig. 12); these constructions have been described as horizontal tombs (*hengxue mu* 横穴墓) (Guo, 2004). Tomb architecture underwent a notable change from vertical pit tombs to horizontal tombs during the Han Dynasty. The horizontal type came to dominate the history of Han Chinese tombs for the next two thousand years (Wu, H., 2010, 29).

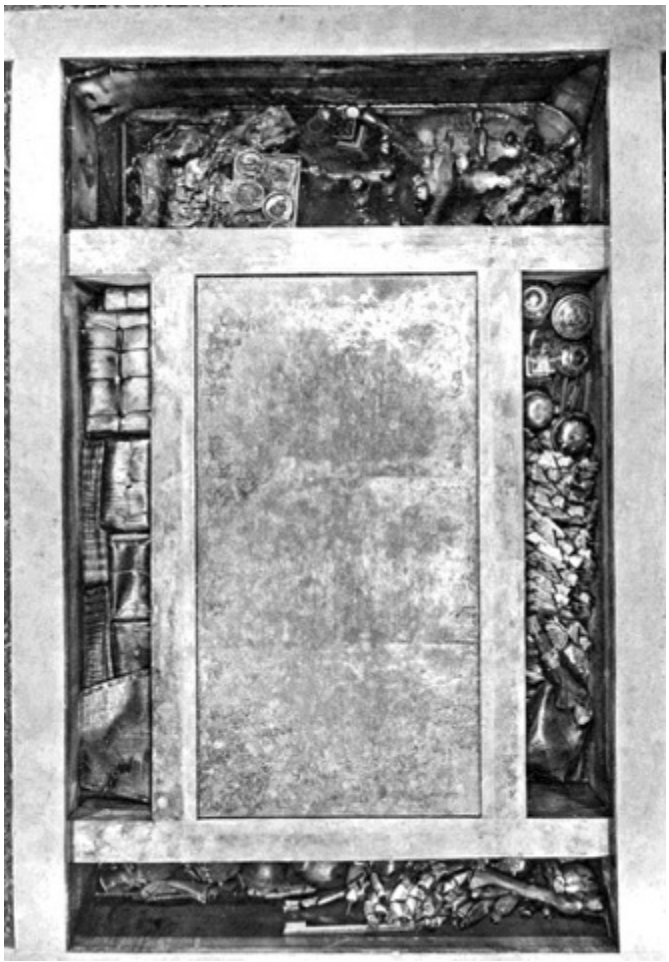


Figure 11. Bird's-eye view of Mawangdui tomb no.1. Early second century BCE. Changsha, Hunan Province.

The centre is a compartment for storing the coffin. The surrounding compartments were used to store burial items. The area of this grave is 6.72 x 4.88 x 2.8 metres. After: Wu,

H., 2010, p.25, fig. 14.

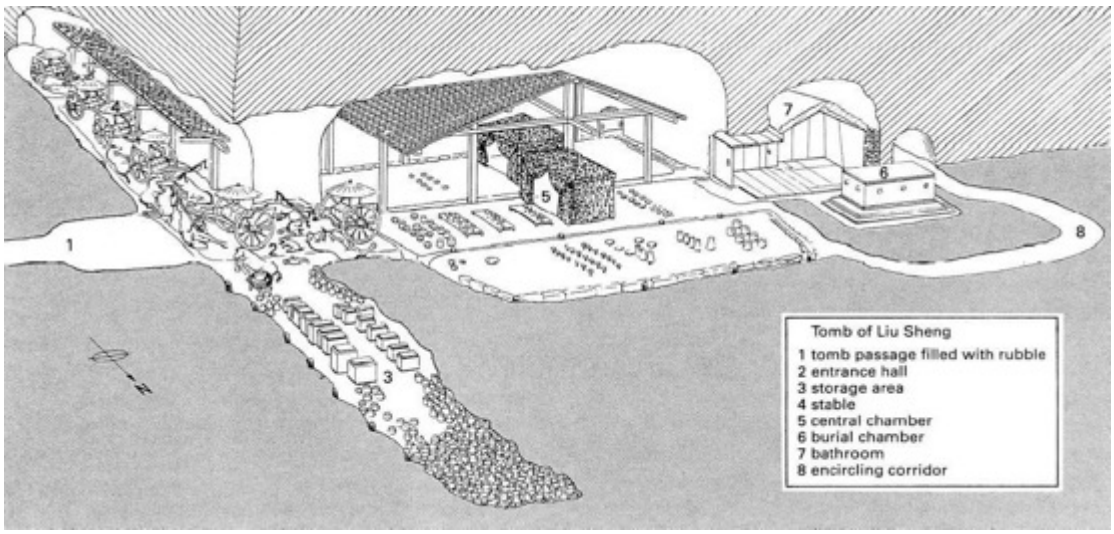


Figure 12. A horizontal tomb belonging to Liu Sheng (d. ca. 113 BCE). Baoding, Hebei Province.

After: Wu, H., 2010, p.29, fig. 18.

Chinese-style underground tombs were basically used to preserve dead bodies. Bodies were hidden from the eyes of the living by being buried in tombs, which was interpreted as 'concealment' (*cang* 藏) in some pre-Qin Chinese classics, such as *The Book of Rites* and *Mr Lyu's Spring and Autumn Annals* (Wu, H., 2010, 9). The act of 'concealment' made explicit the division between the two worlds of the living and the dead. Although the boundary between the two worlds was not solid and could be crossed in some mystical ways, people usually desired that the two worlds remain separate. For example, in the tomb of Li Jingxun (d. 608 CE), who was a member of the Northern Zhou royal house, two curses were found engraved on her stone house and an inner stone coffin indicating that whoever opened the tomb would die (Wei, 2014).

Furthermore, tombs were also viewed as the residence of the departed soul after death. A soul was believed to be composed of two parts: *hun* (lit. 'cloud-soul', it is spiritual and ethereal) and *po* (lit. 'white-soul', it is corporeal and substantive). When these two souls separate and leave the body, death is thought to be the inevitable result. When a person dies, the *hun* soul flies away, while the *po* soul moves to the earth (Yu, 1981).

Nevertheless, a clear division between the *hun* and the *po* souls seems to have been difficult since the Han Dynasty (202 BCE–9 CE, 25–220 CE) (Wu, H., 2010, 32; Zhu, 2015). Seidel and Kalinowski (1982, 107) highlighted a paradox that although some burial objects in Han graves served as talismans of the *hun* soul on the way to paradise, this activity took place inside a tomb, which was theoretically supposed to be the residence of the *po* soul. Yang (2019, 12–14) noticed that many epitaph inscriptions during the Tang Dynasty state merely that the *hun* soul would exist within the tomb, lacking any mention of the *po* soul. Pu (2008, 211) observed that the two terms could sometimes be used interchangeably in Chinese literature. Although specific components of the souls became mixed, the basic afterlife idea, namely, that the soul would dwell inside a tomb in some form, remained consistent.

The simple action of burying the body was ritualised and gradually developed into a complicated death ritual ceremony. Taking the Tang death ritual programme as an example, such a ceremony can be chronologically divided into three steps (Yang, 2019, 15–54). First, the essential components of the burial, such as burial objects, the building of the tomb, and decisions regarding the burial site, were often prepared well before to

individual's death. These preparations would start at an earlier point and be more expensive if the deceased person was more exalted. Arguably, the most luxurious accompanying objects were the 'underground army' of the First Emperor (d. 201 BCE) of imperial China, although his grave chamber has not yet been opened.

The second step of the death ritual mainly focused on the internment of the body and the placement of the accompanying burial objects in the established substructure. The body was supposed to be kept as intact as possible. Any attempts to damage the body were viewed as heterodoxy. This belief probably explains why mainstream culture was antagonistic towards Buddhist cremation and the Zoroastrian tradition of exposure. If the corpse was unavailable due to an abnormal death, the individual's possessions (mostly clothes) would be buried inside a tomb as an alternative to represent the soul of the deceased (Li and Li, 2019).

Third, the death ritual ceremony did not end with the sealing of the tomb but was rather prolonged by the systematic sacrifices made during the post-burial period at burial sites, homes or ancestral halls depending on the rank of the deceased person (Yang, 2019, 15–54).

1.2.3 Sogdians in China

a. The Chinese Designations of Sogdians

In medieval China, the expression *sute ren* 粟特人, the most straightforward translation of Sogdians, was rarely used probably because Sogdian residents in China

bore distinctive surnames and each surname could be linked to a specific Sogdian city-state (De la Vaissière 2005, 119-120). For example, the surname Kang 康 borne by a Sogdian male would indicate that he or his ancestors were from the Kang state (modern Samarkand, Uzbekistan).

Apart from these direct links with certain city-states, medieval Chinese historical accounts also referred to all Sogdians using some collective designations, the most common of which were the 'nine surnames of Hu' (*jiuxinghu* 九姓胡) or the 'nine surnames of Zhaowu' (*zhaowujiuxing* 昭武九姓) (Rong, 2006). It seems that Chinese people thought that Sogdiana was composed of nine city-states because the two collective designations both referred to the number nine. However, as Yoshida (2003) found, no standard or universal list of the nine Sogdian surnames exists in Chinese sources[4], a situation that Yoshida (2003) explained by reference to the fact that nine is sometimes used to mean numerous in the ancient Chinese sources.

Regarding the adjectives used for these two designations, i.e., 'hu' 胡 and 'zhaowu' 昭武, the former term is relatively easy to understand. Hu itself was a broad

[4] *The History of the Sui Dynasty* (*Sui shu* 隋书, juan 83, 5a) records as many as ten states of Sogdiana, including the states of Kang, Mi, Shi, Cao, He, An, lesser An, Nasebo, Wunae, and Mu. *The Old Tang History* (*jiu Tang shu* 旧唐书, juan 210, 57-59) mentions only the states of Kang, Cao, and Mi. *The New Tang History* (*xin Tang shu* 新唐书, juan 238B, 1) which was completed later than the two chronicles mentioned above and seems to combine the two records, refers to nine states, i.e., Kang, An, Cao, Shi, Mi, He, Huoxun, Wu, and Shi.

concept in Chinese historiography that included all non-Chinese people; however, in the Middle Ages, it was normally used to refer to non-Chinese people from the Western Regions and Central Asia (Rong, 2020). Thus, the term 'nine surnames of Hu' refers to a homogeneous population called Hu by contemporary Chinese, who established numerous city-states in Central Asia.

The title 'zhaowu' probably resulted from similarities in sound in the medieval Chinese language between some Sogdian rulers' surnames and an ancient Chinese city. In Chinese historical accounts, the ancestors of the Sogdians were identified with the Yuezhi, who were based in the city of Zhaowu in the Gansu corridor. After being defeated by Xiongnu, the Yuezhi people moved from the city of Zhaowu to Sogdiana. The fact that Sogdian rulers bore the surname Zhaowu indicates that these people respected their roots (Xiong, 1993).

However, current scholars have tended to attribute the surname Zhaowu to etymologies derived from non-Han languages, although no definite conclusion has been made in this respect (Yoshida, 2003). When Chinese people realised that some Sogdian rulers' surnames sounded like the pronunciation of the ancient city Zhaowu, they probably linked these terms together creatively. As Shiratori (1928) noted, ancient Chinese authors seemed to love connecting the ancestors of foreign people with their own lands.

b. Sogdian Roles

The inhabitants of Sogdiana were famous merchants who also conducted business

in China. The British explorer and archaeologist Aurel Stein (1862-1943) discovered the Sogdian Ancient Letters in 1907 at a ruined watchtower located to the west of Dunhuang, Gansu. The letters, dated to the fourth century CE, largely comprise reports to wealthy Sogdian merchants from their representatives abroad (De la Vaissière, 2005, 19-20). This finding firmly proves the existence of a Sogdian commercial network spanning the 1500 miles between Sogdiana and Dunhuang during this period. When the silk roads were flourishing during the early Tang period (618-755 CE), many Sogdian merchants sought their fortunes in China and impressed the Chinese people with their business acumen, as the *Old Tang History* (*jiu tang shu* 旧唐书, juan 210, 57) records, 'Sogdians are everywhere that profit is to be found'.

Sogdian merchants played a significant role along the silk roads and in China, but not all Sogdians were referred to merchant life. Many Sogdians living in China practised a variety of occupations, such as entertainers, monks, translators, soldiers, and military leaders. One important contribution Sogdians made was the promotion of Buddhism in China. Although most Sogdians were Zoroastrians in their homeland, some became familiar with Buddhism during their journeys to China (Walter, 2006, 23-26). They facilitated the spread and development of this religion in China by translating Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Chinese, adding commentaries adapted to the Chinese worldview, and sponsoring Buddhist activities (Walter, 2006, 61).

Another interesting Sogdian cultural product was the whirling dance, also known as the Sogdian whirl (*huxuan wu* 胡旋舞). As its name indicates, the Sogdian whirl was characterised by impressive full body turns. It was likely brought to China during

the Northern Zhou Dynasty and became popular during the Tang Dynasty, as described by the great poet Bai Juyi (772-846 CE): ‘officials and concubines all learned how to circle and turn’ (Luo, 1994). One of the most famous dancers was the Sogdian-Turkic general An Lushan, who was able to dance the Sogdian whirl despite weighing 400 pounds (Luo, 1994).

Although the Sogdians made enormous contributions to China, some Sogdian military leaders and soldiers caused serious destruction. The rebellion of the aforementioned Sogdian-Turkic general, An Lushan, against his emperor in the 750s CE brought the Tang Dynasty to its knees, an event known as the An Lushan Rebellion or the An and Shi Rebellion (An refers to An Lushan, while Shi refers to his deputy Shi Siming who was also a Sogdian-Turkic general). These Sogdian generals controlled many areas in the North China Plain at the apex of their rebellion (see Figs. 7-10). An Lushan’s tomb has not yet been found, but Shi Siming’s tomb was discovered and identified in Beijing in 1981 (Yuan, 1991). Shi Siming’s tomb is one of the examples investigated in this study; thus, it is discussed in the following chapters.

The An and Shi Rebellion sparked strong xenophobia among Chinese people against all Sogdians because the two military leaders of the rebellion were both of Sogdian and Turkic origin, and the rebellion was supported by many Sogdian warriors and wealthy Sogdian merchants. Sogdians throughout the country, fearing persecution, changed their surnames to hide their heritage. For example, An Chongzhang (704-777 CE) made a sincere request to the Tang emperor to change his surname because he felt ashamed to share a surname with An Lushan. His request was granted, and his family

was allowed to bear the surname Li, the name of the royal Tang family Dynasty, due to his enormous contributions to the dynasty (De la Vaissière 2005, 220-222). Although An Chongzhang's tomb has not yet been found, the tomb of his grandfather, An Yuanshou, has been found near Xi'an (Chen, 1988). As it represents a typical example of Sino-Sogdian burials, it is discussed throughout this thesis.

c. The Sabao

The Chinese word *sabao* 萨保/萨宝/萨甫 is a transcription of the Sogdian word *s'rtp'w*[5], meaning caravan leader or merchant chief (Rong, 2014, 3). The caravan leader was also responsible for the establishment of Sogdian communities in foreign lands in the case of immigration caravans (Rong, 2014, 3).

The Chinese administration in the fifth through seventh centuries integrated Sogdian leaders (*s'rtp'w*) into its hierarchy and gave them the title *sabao*, making them responsible for all actions taken by members of their immigrant-merchant communities (De la Vaissière, 2005, 151). The selection criteria for that post are unknown, but unlike other Chinese regular officials, the *sabao* was not rotated to other posts (Dien, 2003). A *sabao* was assigned some subordinates to assist in his work, and two of these subordinates were responsible for Zoroastrian affairs (Rong, 2014, 3). This situation

[5] The Sogdian word *s'rtp'w* itself is derived from the Sanskrit *sarthavaha*, but similar words found in several languages of South and West Asia make it difficult to preciously determine its origin (Luo, 2000, 179).

probably indicates that most Sogdian members of these immigrant-merchant communities were Zoroastrians, corresponding to the situation in their homeland.

Many autonomous communities governed by *sabao* were located throughout the territories of China, including not only trading posts along the silk roads such as Turfan, Jiuquan, and Taiyuan but also capitals such as Chang'an and Ye (Northern Qi's capital city, which is in modern Handan, Heibei Province) (Rong, 2014, 3). However, these autonomous communities seem to have disappeared in the second half of the seventh century because the Tang government attempted to officially transform them into subject townships (De la Vaissière, 2005, 151-152).

1.3 Thesis Structure

The thesis features eight chapters. The first three chapters include an introduction, a literature review, and a theoretical framework and methodology, thus providing the contextual basis for the following empirical study.

Chapters 4 to 7 constitute the main body of the thesis, which successively explores four aspects of the Sogdian tombs, namely, tomb construction, body treatment, burial objects, and epitaphs. Each of these four chapters includes an introduction, a description of the selected Sogdian tomb with regard to the aspect under discussion, analyses of the elements of Sogdian culture reflected in the discussed aspect, analyses of the elements of Chinese culture reflected in the aspect under discussion, and a conclusion.

Chapter 8 focuses on the discussion and conclusion. The first section of this chapter

reviews recurring issues or phenomena addressed within the main body of the text to identify one or more common trends during the process of Sogdian acculturation. The second section presents the major conclusions of the thesis in light of the three research questions.

1.4 Contributions and Limitations

This thesis contributes to the study of Sogdian cultural adaptation in medieval China in three respects. The first contribution is based on my use of the abundant Sogdian tombs found in China as primary sources. This thesis considers nearly all Sogdian tombs that have been excavated in China by incorporating their excavation reports into the database and selecting representative examples for careful analyses. For each representative tomb, this thesis does not merely focus on one or two objects contained in the tomb, also conducts an integrated study of the entire tomb, including the construction, body treatment, epitaphs, and burial objects. This approach is used to avoid the omissions or even misconceptions that could arise due to the exclusive study of isolated tomb contents.

Second, this thesis seems to be the first study of Sogdian adaptation in China to be grounded in a specific framework of acculturation. This approach permits my arguments to move from simply describing Sogdian adaptation to drawing generalised conclusions about various aspects of that cultural process. In this regard, most extant studies have been atheoretical or have depended on the abstract theory of Sinicisation.

In contrast, the well-established theory of acculturation might be more suitable for assessing this theme by being used to compare the two competing theories, namely, Sinicisation and acculturation.

Finally, this thesis proposes a personal perspective on some unanswered questions. For example, Byzantine gold coins and Persian silver coins have been excavated from many Sogdian tombs in China, having originally been placed near the mouth or hand of the deceased person. The debate on this funerary has been ongoing for a century. In Chapter 6, it is proposed that this funerary custom possibly originated in the Hellenistic practice of Charon's obol.

A major limitation of the present research is that our interpretations of burials are usually affected by the 'undertakers' (e.g., the bereaved family and friends of the deceased) who arrange burials by taking a series of actions, such as burying the deceased and placing accompanying objects near them; that is, as the saying goes, 'the dead do not bury themselves' (Parker-Pearson, 1999, 3). This limitation is a virtually inevitable issue in the field of funerary archaeology. However, this limitation should not be overstated. On the one hand, deceased people could have prearranged their funerals when they were alive. For example, a grave is often constructed prior to the individual's death (Brownlee, 2020). As mentioned, ancient Chinese people, especially elites, were more likely to prepare objects for their burial before their death. On the other hand, 'undertakers' often manage the burial of the deceased in accordance with the perceived wishes of the deceased rather than their own personal ideas (Brownlee, 2020).

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The study of Sogdian burials in China has developed in three distinct stages. 1) This field was in its infancy during the first 70 years of the 20th century due to the lack of archaeological materials. 2) Several Sogdian tombs were discovered in China in the last 30 years of the 20th century. Scholars from China and other nations have studied this topic, albeit with distinct areas of focus. 3) During the past two decades, this field has flourished due to the discovery of tombs of high-ranking Sino-Sogdian individuals and the rapid growth of scholarly discussions. Of these three stages, the third is the most important to the present study and is thus reviewed most thoroughly.

2.2 First Stage: 1900-1970

During the first stage, no Sino-Sogdian burials were discovered and identified in a scientific manner. Rare archaeological materials discovered during this period and connected to Sino-Sogdians include medieval manuscripts found in non-burial environments and some mortuary stones used for different purposes, but their archaeological contexts remain uncertain.

Paul Pelliot (1916) confirmed the existence of a Sogdian community in the region of Lop Nor during the early Tang Dynasty based on the local chronicles of Shazhou (centred around modern Dunhuang), which he found in a massive hoard of medieval

manuscripts in Dunhuang. Another famous finding from this period were the Sogdian Ancient Letters, which were discovered by Aurel Stein in 1907 at a ruined watchtower located to the west of Dunhuang. The Sogdian Ancient letters written in the Sogdian language largely record reports sent to wealthy Sogdian merchants by their representatives in China (Stein, 1921). These manuscripts provide unique glimpses into the lives and preoccupations of Sogdians in China.

Osvald Siren (1925) might have been the first scholar to investigate foreign relief styles on a set of panels that were said to have been found in a tomb in Anyang, Henan Province; these panels were dispersed among various foreign museums. He described the relief carvings on the panels and traced their style of these reliefs to Iranian origin. He also dated the monument to the Tang period due to certain ornamental details (Siren, 1925, 120).

After approximately 30 years, Gustina Scaglia (1958) conducted a close study of these panels. He carefully described the surviving parts. The monument is composed of three screen panels, two of which are in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and one of which is in the Musee Guimet, Paris; two gateposts, which are in the Museum fir Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne; and three base panels, which are in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington. Scaglia (1958) contradicted Siren's claims (1925) by positing that these panels were created not during the Tang period but rather during the Northern Qi Dynasty, a claim that Scaglia supported by linking the relief style with sculptural images found in the Northern Qi Buddhist cave temples at Xiangtangshan, Hebei Province. When Siren proposed his own view, the Buddhist cave temples at

Xiangtangshan had not yet been discovered.

More importantly, Scaglia (1958) noted that the figures of foreigners carved into these panels are Sogdians after taking all relevant elements into consideration, such as their costumes and physiognomy as well as motifs of grape, and musical instruments. One fantastic suggestion that has been made is that the monument was likely made for a Sogdian *sabao* residing in Ye (the capital city of the Northern Qi, modern Handan, Hebei Province) (for information on *sabao*, see Section 1.2.3). Although he did not explain the function of the monument in what was assumed to be the tomb of a Sogdian *sabao*, Scaglia's suggestions have elucidated the link between Sogdian leaders in China and mortuary panels featuring reliefs in a non-Chinese style.

Although none of the Sogdian tombs were scientifically excavated in the first 70 years of the 20th century, many Sogdian funerary epitaphs were discovered because tombs were prone to be looted during the war and political chaos that China suffered during this period. Research on these Sogdian epitaphs was not an independent area of investigation but was rather included in the broad category of research on the Hu people (non-Chinese people from the Western Regions and Central Asia). Xiang (1933) contributed one of the best-known writings on this topic. He noted that many owners of the epitaph inscriptions that had been collected were Hu people from Sogdiana and small states located in modern Xinjiang. He described in detail those people's significant influences on daily life in Chang'an based on narratives derived from extensive textual materials, such as inscriptions, poems, and fictions.

2.3 Second Stage: 1970-2000

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, specialised institutes of archaeology engaged in excavations in China, which led to the exposition of several Sogdian burials in the last 30 years of the 20th century. Scholars from China and other countries exhibited distinct research interests and focused on different areas of the Sino-Sogdian burials. Foreign scholars have tended to focus on ossuaries and mortuary panels, while Chinese scholars have been more likely to concentrate on literary inscriptions etched in stone.

Chinese scholars have exhibited a strong interest in reading the epitaph inscriptions found in sites proposed to be Sogdian tombs. The first task on which they focused was confirming the ethnicity of the epitaph owner. The tomb of Shi Daode (d. 678 CE) was found in Guyuan in 1982. In light of his surname, Shi 史, he was considered from the Shi 史 state (modern Shahrisabz, Uzbekistan) in Sogdiana (Han, 1985). Zhao (1986) doubted this identification because Shi Daode's epitaph records that his ancestors were dignitaries of Han ethnicity. Luo (1988) explained that the practice of seeking connections with Han dignitaries was normal across ethnic boundaries during the Tang period; thus, this claim does not contradict Shi Daode's Sogdian origin.

A similar debate took place regarding the identification of An Yuanshou (d. 683 CE), whose tomb was found in Liquan near Xi'an between 1972 and 1973 (Chen, 1988). An Yuanshou was initially considered from Anxi (the ancient Chinese appellation for the Parthian Empire) by Chen (1988) because An Yuanshou's epitaph refers to the Amu Darya River. Anxi was described as being located near the Amu Darya River according

to the *History of Han* (*Hanshu*). Rong (1998), however, reidentified An Yuanshou as Sogdian. He suggested that the surname An 安 was usually used to refer to Anxi before the sixth century, but that the An state (modern Bukhara, Uzbekistan) subsequently stood out and replaced Anxi as the main referent of the surname An.

At present, the Sogdian ethnicity of Shi Daode and An Yuanshou is widely recognised in the academic community because the 'nine surnames of zhaowu' (including Shi, An and others) have been established as the main way of identifying Sino-Sogdians. This method was proposed by Pulleyblank (1952). The aforementioned Chinese scholars, such as Zhao (1986) and Chen (1988), who did not agree that Shi Daode and An Yuanshou were Sogdian, were probably unaware of Pulleyblank's proposition or had doubts regarding its validity; however, their arguments and the accompanying debates developed and promoted this perspective.

The second research area investigated by Chinese scholars focused on reconstructing the life story of the epitaph owner. Niu Zhigong (1999) addressed the significant role of An Yuanshou (607–683 CE) in a series of important political events that took place during the early Tang Dynasty according to the account provided by his epitaph. The epitaph revealed events such as the Xuanwu Gate Incident[6] and the

[6] This incident was a palace coup to seize the throne of the Tang Dynasty on 2 July 626. Li Shiming, the second son of Emperor Gaozu, murdered his elder brother Li Jiancheng and his younger brother Li Yuanji in the Xuanwu gate. As a result, Li Shiming forced Emperor Gaozu to name him crown prince. Less than two months thereafter, Li Shiming took the throne (Bingham, 1950).

armistice established between the Tang and the Eastern Türks at the Wei River[7].

Although Niu's epigraphical study has shed light on An Yuanshou's achievements, Niu did not mention Yuanshou's Sogdian background. Perhaps An Yuanshou was a typical Sogdian warrior, which enabled him to contribute to the Xuanwu Gate Incident, and perhaps he inherited linguistic talent from his Sogdian ancestors, thus enabling him to negotiate with the Türks.

On the other hand, foreign scholars have paid a great deal of attention to ossuaries and mortuary panels. A few ossuaries[8] have been unearthed in Xinjiang, China. Perhaps due to the lack of relevant knowledge, original archaeological reports mistook these findings as small pottery coffins or pots (TDWG, 1986; XWB, 1975, 120). By comparing some receptacles found in Xinjiang to similar findings in Central Asia, Kageyama (1997) persuasively reidentified them as Sogdian ossuaries and dated them to the second half of the seventh century and the first half of the eighth century. Her identification revealed the fact that some Sogdian residents in China still used ossuaries to contain bones after exposure.

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[7] The Eastern Türks exploited the power shift that impacted the Tang following the Xuanwu Gate Incident to attack China and their armies. When they reached the Wei River, which is close to Chang'an, the Eastern Türks withdrew after Li Shiming personally promised to provide further tribute (Niu, 1999).

[8] Ossuaries were unique receptacles Sogdian Zoroastrians used to store human remains after they had been cleansed of flesh (Jiang and Wang 2023, 3). For details, see Chapter 5.

Regarding mortuary slabs, one of the most surprising archaeological findings was from an anonymous tomb in Tianshui discovered in 1982 (Zhang, 1992). Several mortuary slabs were spliced into three large structural components, including a bed base, a bed board on the base, and screens that were fixed to the board; thus, the monument formed a bed with back screens, and it is customarily called the Tianshui stone bed. When discovered, traces of wood and skeletal remains rested on the top of the bed board. This indicates that the deceased had been placed inside a wooden coffin on top of the stone bed (Zhang, 1992).

By analogy with the Tianshui stone bed, Lerner (1995) identified the original bed shape of a similar monument that was composed of several unfixed slabs. This monument is reputed to have been unearthed from a tomb in northern China, and its fragments are now contained in the collection of the Miho Museum, Japan. Lerner's (1995) reconstruction has been accepted by many scholars in this field; thus, the monument has customarily been called the Miho stone bed. Unfortunately, there were no skeletal remains on top of the stone bed, so it is impossible to know the bed's original function in a tomb.

2.4 Third Stage: 2000-Present

Since the turn of the millennium, many Sino-Sogdian relics have been discovered and documented, and the most exciting findings in this context include four large-scale tombs belonging to Sogdian dignitaries, namely, Yu Hong, An Jia, Shi Jun, and Kang

Ye. The discovery of these tombs has triggered widespread international interest and inspired many scholarly discussions of Sogdians in China and their funerary practices (e.g., Juliano and Lerner, 2001; Lerner, 2005; Dien, 2009; Rong, 2014; Wertmann, 2015). Influential studies have emerged in large numbers over the past two decades. Accordingly, the literature review concerning this period is divided into subsections addressing three different aspects: 1) reports on archaeological findings and collections; 2) analytical studies of Sogdian burials focusing on mortuary slabs, epitaphs, burial objects, and tomb structure; and 3) theories used to explain the phenomenon by which Sogdian adaptation in China was reflected in their burial practices.

2.4.1 Reports on Archaeological Findings and Collections

When archaeologists complete their excavations, they often publish a report based on a relatively fixed template, which focuses primarily on the backgrounds of the excavation and the tomb's occupant; the results of the excavation, such as the tomb structure, artefacts and skeleton remains; and a brief scholarly discussion or conclusion. Since the discovery of Sino-Sogdian tombs during the last 30 years of the twentieth century, relevant excavation reports have been made available. Excavation reports of the Sogdian tombs newly discovered in the past two decades exhibited a noticeable shift in terms of their contents, shifting from pure reports to a mixture of reports and analyses. These analyses provide the most straightforward perspectives of scholars who have engaged in such excavations in person. Two typical works are the excavation reports

regarding the tombs of An Jia, which was found in Xi'an in 2000 (SKY Shaanxi, 2003), and Shi Jun, which was found in Xi'an in 2003 (Yang, 2014).

The excavation report of the tomb of An Jia provides an iconographical study of the subjects of images carved on his stone funerary bed, surprisingly representing many Turkic figures, as identified by their long hair. The report explains that these depictions reflect the close relationship between the Sogdians and the Türks (SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 71-72). This finding corresponds to the Turco-Sogdian symbiosis proposed by De la Vaissière (2005, 199-225). The excavation report of the Shi Jun tomb allocates a separate chapter to discuss important items found in the tomb, including a Sogdian-Chinese bilingual epitaph inscription, Byzantine gold coins, and a house-shaped sarcophagus (Yang, 2014, 192-230).

In addition to official archaeological reports provided by specialised institutes, another kind of report has greatly expanded the corpus of known Sogdian burial objects. This kind of report usually introduces artefacts that were unearthed from what are assumed to be Sogdian tombs in China in irregular ways, such as through tomb robbery or construction damage, and are now preserved in collections; in this context, mortuary slabs featuring relief carvings are the most notable because they are considered to represent a sort of burial object that is closely connected to Sogdian leaders in China, as indicated by Lerner's (1995) study of the Miho stone bed and Scaglia's (1958) study of the Anyang mortuary slabs.

Thanks to the efforts of such scholars, several sets of pictorial mortuary slabs have been documented (e. g., Luo and Rong, 2016; Ge, 2009; Zheng, 2001). Most of these

monuments are incomplete, mainly due to tomb robbery. The primary aim of these pioneering reports was to provide basic information on the surviving parts of these monuments, such as their shape, size, and decorative motifs, as well as to reconstruct their original forms. Consequently, most pieces have been identified as stone beds in their original forms, such as the abovementioned Tianshui and Miho stone beds, while others might be more magnificent house-shaped sarcophagi. These basic reports regarding Sogdian mortuary slabs have served as a foundation for subsequent analytical studies in this field.

2.4.2 Deeper and Broader Analytical Studies

One of the most notable features of analytical studies of Sino-Sogdian burials at this stage was their in-depth discussions of certain issues. It is impossible to review all these issues; thus, two long-running debates among scholars are used as examples.

a. Placing Western Coins Close to the Deceased: A Sogdian or Chinese Custom?

During his third expedition to Central Asia between 1913 and 1916, Aurel Stein discovered six western coins in the mouths or over the eyes of corpses in the ancient cemetery in Turfan, China. Three of the coins were Byzantine gold pieces or imitations of such pieces, and the other three were Sasanian silver pieces (Stein, 1928, 643-647). Stein originally suggested that the coins were deliberately placed in the mouths or on the eyes of the corpses as a payment or bribe to Charon, who is the ferryman of the

underworld in Greek mythology; however, his assessment was questioned, as M. Chavannes reminded him that a similar practice also existed in ancient Chinese societies (Stein, 1928, 646). This marked the beginning of a century-long debate on this matter.

As increasing numbers of Sogdian tombs were discovered in China, many Western coins used as burial objects were found, and a considerable number of these coins were originally located close to the deceased person (e.g., in the mouth, over the eye, or in the hand) (e.g., TCBCR, AT and TM, 2019, 7-53; Luo, 1996, 146-163). On the one hand, this custom has been attributed to the long-standing Chinese funeral rituals that involve placing objects in the mouth and/or hand of the deceased, known as the *koushi* and/or *shouwo* 口实手握 (filling the mouth and/or hand) rituals (Xia, 1974; Li, 1995; Wang, 2003). On the other hand, dissenting opinions have been expressed mainly by Odani Nakao (1991; 1993) and Luo Feng (2004), who both agreed with Stein's original finding that the custom probably originated in the Hellenistic practice of Charon's obol.

Those previous studies depended primarily on textual materials and tiny amounts of archaeological evidence. However, more recent discoveries of Western coins that had been placed close to corpses in the Sino-Sogdian tombs were largely omitted. This thesis attempts to compensate for this deficit by collecting and then analysing the rich information on archaeological materials related to this point.

b. The Intended Use of Stone Funerary Furniture by Sino-Sogdians

Many sets of pictorial mortuary slabs have been found in Sino-Sogdian tombs or

preserved in foreign museums outside their archaeological contexts. All relatively complete monuments are in the form of beds or house-shaped sarcophagi, and most incomplete pieces have been reconstructed with the determination that they were in the same forms. In current scholarly discourses, for the sake of discussion, these monuments are collectively known as stone funerary furniture. The close relationship between Sogdian leaders and stone funerary furniture has been emphasised by some previous scholars (Scaglia, 1958; Lerner, 1995). Müller (2019) further noted that Sogdians became nearly exclusive users of stone beds with screens as well as more complicated house-shaped sarcophagi during the second half of the sixth century.

Although most scholars have agreed that Sogdians wanted to achieve a certain purpose by placing corpses on stone beds or in house-shaped sarcophagi, the debate regarding the specific function this practice fulfilled remains ongoing. Some scholars have viewed stone funerary furniture as a variety of Sogdian ossuary because it was used as a repository for the deceased, whereby the polluted human remains were kept away from the good earth. In contrast, the traditional Chinese wooden coffin could not fulfil such a function since it was often placed on the floor of the burial chamber (Yao, 2016, 594-620; Hansen, 2012, 143; Rose, 2011, 159).

Müller (2019) attributed the practice of placing bodies on stone funerary beds to the Buddhist concept of *Parinirvana*. The concept refers to that someone after the enlightenment achieves freedom from physical existence and its sufferings, which occurs upon his or her death. The earliest *Parinirvana* drawings found at Buddhist caves in north China normally shows that Buddha was supine on a bed with both arms

stretched out the sides of his torso. By comparison, the earliest *Parinirvana* drawings in Buddhist caves resemble the stone funerary beds in tombs since both feature a rectangular bed with bed legs and the position of the body is similar in both cases. Stone funerary furniture might be a practical representation of the Buddhist concept in funerary contexts.

However, most existing studies have ignored the fact that some dead people were not placed on the stone bed or in the house-shaped sarcophagus at all; instead, their human remains, either in the form of scattered bones or as a complete skeleton, have been found in other locations within the tomb. In An Jia's tomb, a stone couch with screens was discovered, but An Jia's bones were lying on the north side of the burial passageway and some of the bones exhibited several clear smoke marks (SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 6-14). Accordingly, on the practical level, certain Sogdians did not use the well-prepared stone funerary furniture. The various overlooked functions of stone funerary furniture in Sogdian tombs need more discussion.

Furthermore, another outstanding advancement of relevant research in the past 20 years was the broadening of the scholarly perspective to encompass nearly the entirety of the content of Sogdian tombs; the corresponding literature is reviewed below.

a. Stone Funerary Furniture

Among the contents of Sino-Sogdian tombs, stone funerary furniture has received the most scholarly attention. As a result of the extensive examples of stone funerary

furniture revealed by documented excavations and unofficial reports, scholars have access to sufficient variations to conduct typological studies (Xu, 2017; Müller, 2019), iconographical studies (Jiang, 2004; Juliano, 2006; Sun, 2012), and studies of the intended uses (Wu, 2002; Müller, 2019). Considering literature concerning the intended use of stone funerary furniture by Sino-Sogdians has been reviewed previously, here the focus is relevant typological and iconographical studies.

Xu's research (2017) can be viewed as an encyclopaedia of studies on stone funerary furniture, involving the various types, decorations, possible origins, and intended uses of such an object. He also suggested that funerary stone had developed into a cosmopolitan approach shared by different ethnic groups living in China during the Northern Dynasties, whereby they were able to shape and perpetuate their unique and diverse identities. A specific tendency exhibited by Sogdian immigrants in China lies in the fact that stone mortuary monument functions as an interactive space in which heterogeneous elements are not contradictory but rather harmonious, especially when they refer to different beliefs, such as those associated with Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

Sun (2012) conducted an insightful iconographical study about Sogdian funerary stone. He focused on the known pictures on the surfaces of the stone beds and house-shaped sarcophagi found in Sino-Sogdian tombs. He used a pictorial programme to articulate the permutations of multiple pictures on several Sogdian stone monuments. That is, on a single stone funerary furniture, individual pictures might have different emphases and highly different cultural elements, but they could be originally linked to

provide an overall story that generally reflects the owner's life.

b. Funerary Epitaphs

The strong interest in epitaphs has persisted during this period. On the one hand, scholars have attempted to understand the life of deceased Sogdians depending on their biographical epitaphs (e.g., Yoshida, 2005; Li, 2016).

Shi Hedan's (583-669 CE) biographical epitaph records the fact that he served as a translator for the Tang court. Based on this information, Li (2016) examined the ways in which Tang China employed foreign linguistic talents, especially those from Central Asia, for the purposes of translation and certain diplomatic work. However, Li's research did not explain the kinds of language that Shi Hedan was responsible for translating since his epitaph does not include this information.

Beginning in the last quarter of the sixth century CE, official texts of the Turkic Empire were written in the Sogdian alphabet (Marshak and Negmatov 1996, 242). Thus, Shi Hedan was likely able to translate and interpret Chinese, Sogdian, and Turkic languages.

On the other hand, beyond the literary-centric orientation, some scholars have focused on decorative patterns on epitaph tablets related to Sogdian culture and Zoroastrianism (Shi, 2004; Sha, 2019). Shi (2004) investigated Zoroastrian elements of the decorative patterns of six epitaphs belonging to the Xianbei royal family of the Northern Wei Dynasty. The most insightful finding in this context has been the fact that Shi (2004) traced a monster-like image bearing fire on its shoulders to certain

Zoroastrian deities through image comparison. If this finding is valid, it seems that Zoroastrianism influenced the Xianbei royal family.

c. Tomb Construction and Burial Objects

These two aspects have received less scholarly attention. Perhaps because most known Sino-Sogdian tombs were constructed in a completely Chinese style, only a few scholars have provided monographs on this subject. Two exceptions are Lerner (2005) and Ma (2015, 90-105). Lerner (2005) realised that both Chinese and Sogdians both had various traditional aboveground buildings, but the Chinese underground vault was completely alien to Sogdians. However, she did not explain why Sino-Sogdians ultimately accepted the more alien subterranean structure while abandoning their traditional aboveground buildings. Ma (2015, 90-105) provided a typological study of Sino-Sogdian tomb construction. She suggested that most Sogdian tomb constructions mirrored contemporary native Chinese styles and exhibited considerable consistency with local characterstics; however, some tombs exhibited their particularities that were probably derived from Sogdian traditions. However, the Sogdian correlations in her study were not clear. It seems that she simply identified non-Chinese architectural elements with Sogdian influences.

Some scholars have investigated burial objects from Sino-Sogdian tombs, such as Byzantine gold coins and Sasanian silver coins (Wang, 2001; Odani, 1991, 1993), and jaw holders (Ma, 2021; Song, 2016). These studies have improved our understanding of how Sogdians displayed cultural belongings by selecting different burial objects. For

example, jaw holders were not a traditional burial object in Chinese funerals; rather, they likely originated in Central Asia and were adopted and transformed by Sogdians align with their Sogdian Zoroastrianism faith (Ma, 2021). However, scholars have tended to discuss items with Sogdian cultural affiliations while ignoring items related to Chinese cultural systems. In particular, the usage of Chinese spirit articles (*mingqi* 明器/冥器) by Sogdians, which were imitations of practical articles made exclusively for use by the soul in the afterlife, has been largely overlooked.

d. Comprehensive Studies

Dissatisfied with separate discussions of aspects of individual tombs, some scholars have attempted to conduct comprehensive studies covering almost all tomb contents. Jessica Rawson's article (2001) was a milestone in research on this the topic. She suggested that the resemblance the tomb architectures of non-Han people (e.g., Xianbei and Sogdian) and those of Han people was not simply the result of copying external buildings but rather implied an acceptance of the Chinese concept of the tomb as a residence for the spirit of the deceased since accessories of the imagined residence were also prepared, such as murals and model figures.

More recently, in 2015, Ma Xiaoning and Patrick Wertmann respectively published comprehensive studies on Sino-Sogdian tombs and the associated cultural affiliations. Their studies featured a similar structure: they began with descriptions of Sino-Sogdian tombs, followed by discussions of the development and changes in the Sogdian funerary practices and beliefs reflected in the tombs. Ma (2015) focused on nearly all Sogdian

tombs found in China, especially those whose archaeological reports were not yet published at that time but were available to Ma because she had participated in the excavations in person. Wertmann (2015) did not refer to as many Sogdian tombs as did Ma, but he offered a full discussion of almost all contents related to each Sogdian burial.

These studies systematically considered Sino-Sogdian tombs and the funerary customs they applied, thus avoid ignoring or downplaying the content of any individual tomb. Only by taking all tomb contents into consideration can a relatively complete picture of overall Sogdian cultural adaptation in China be obtained. Thus, this thesis follows this comprehensive structure instead of only focusing solely on one aspect. However, it is impossible to collect all such information in any single work. This thesis must thus omit some 'inessential' Sino-Sogdian tombs, selecting typical examples instead; for the criteria and the process used for such selection, see Section 3.3.2.

2.4.3 Theories of Sogdian Cultural Adaptation in China

Previous analytical studies of Sino-Sogdian burials have indicated that various remains found in tombs are often associated with a certain cultural background. For example, the use of jaw holders likely grew out of a Central Asian custom (Ma, 2021), while the subterranean tomb structure was a typical Chinese tradition (Lerner, 2005; Ma, 2015, 90-105). It seems that the Sogdians experienced a dramatic cultural change that was reflected in their funerary practices. Instead of representing the changes in or maintenance of Sogdian culture in a straightforward way, some scholars have tried

employing analytical theories to address this issue, primarily those of Sinicisation and acculturation, to address this issue.

The longstanding theory of Sinicisation has guided research on the cultural adaption of all non-Han peoples in China, including the Jurchen (Song, 1939), Khitan (Mao, 1935), and Manchurian peoples (Ho, 1998), regardless of their specific ethnicity. When certain Sogdian archaeological and textual sources first came to light, several scholars used the theory of Sinicisation to interpret the cultural changes experienced by the Sogdians in China (Chen, 2001; Lerner, 2005).

The most significant achievement of such research lies in the exploration of Sogdian adaptation to Chinese funerary culture in different respects. Chen's (2001) study lists a series of Chinese funerary customs that were adopted by Sino-Sogdians, such as Chinese inhumation, biographical inscriptions, family cemeteries and shared burials between husbands and wives. These changes are viewed as signs of Sinicisation. Lerner (2005) also noted that Sogdian Sinicisation was represented by the following funeral practices in the Chinese style: the adoption of the Chinese tomb form, the use of funerary beds and sarcophagi, the treatment of the corpse, the style and imagery of the beds and sarcophagi, and the use of autobiography and narrative.

However, most of these studies did not consider the reasons for such Sinicisation. These authors tacitly endorsed the claim that it was inevitable that the Sogdians would become Chinese once they settled in China. Moreover, the notion of Sinicisation is groundless in these studies since they do not detail the conditions underlying this process, such as the cultural comparison between participating groups and policies

pertaining to social immigration.

Some scholars have attempted to depart from the model of Sinicisation and sought a more appropriate theory to interpret the complicated process underlying the cultural changes experienced by Sogdians in China (Dien, 1977; Zheng, 2001; Wu, J., 2010; Xu, 2017). One of the earliest academic works on this topic might be the study conducted by Dien (1977), although his focus was on the Xianbei rather than the Sogdians. He suggested that during the periods of the Western Wei and Northern Zhou, Xianbei rulers attempted to incorporate Han officials into Xianbei culture by bestowing Xinabei surnames upon them. The Xianbei rulers' policies and the accompanying outcomes were described as a case of counter-acculturation in Dien's article. It seems, then, that Dien did not truly endorse the theory of acculturation. He simply referred to Sinicisation using another term, namely, acculturation.

Subsequently, some scholarship has focused on the coexistence of Sinicisation and anti-Sinicisation in the context of intercultural contact between Chinese and Sogdians (Zheng, 2001, 99; Xu, 2017, 25). These scholars both disagreed with the binary approach of Sinicisation and indicated that diverse cultural elements, such as the illustrations on their stone funerary furniture, were adopted by Sogdian immigrants in China and subsequently visually represented. This idea closely resembles the core of the theory of acculturation, which considers both changes in and the maintenance of the original cultural patterns of either or both groups after the two groups make contacts (Redfield et al, 1936).

Nevertheless, Zheng (2001) and Xu (2017) did not rely on any real theory but rather

used soaring rhetoric to describe their findings. For example, Xu (2017, 25) referenced ‘cultural synthesis’ and Zheng (2001, 99) referenced ‘cultural combination’. These words are clear in terms of their literal meaning, but it is difficult to understand their connotations and their connections with Sogdian cultural adaptation in China because the authors did not explain these issues, merely used them as a label for this cultural phenomenon.

Thus far, the only known work that clearly used the theory of acculturation to examine Sogdian cultural adaptation in China was produced by Wu, J. (2010), whose basic source was three sets of Sogdian funerary furniture owned by An Jia, Kang Ye, and Shi Jun. One of her findings was that various cultural elements were represented on those mortuary stones. Accordingly, Wu, J. (2010, 160-163) challenged the theory of Sinicisation as it explains only one segmented aspect of Sogdian cultural adaptation in China.

More interestingly, Wu, J. (2010, 156–158) emphasised the fact that the various cultural orientations of the Sogdian owners of this furniture were affected by structural conditions and their individual experiences. For example, the three Sogdian elites (i.e., An Jia, Kang Ye, and Shi Jun) held similar official positions, died in the same decade (571–581 CE), and were buried in the proximate cemetery in Chang’an. Kang Ye’s (512–571 CE) burial setting was much more Sinicised than those of the other two figures. This situation might have been due to the promotion of Confucianism in the court of the Northern Zhou Dynasty from 568 CE to 574 CE. As an official, Kang Ye’s adoption of Chinese-style burial settings probably catered to the tastes at court. The

other two Sogdian elites both died in 579 CE, so their funerals were probably not affected by earlier revivals of Confucianism.

Wu's study adopted a multidimensional perspective on Sogdian cultural adaptation in China, addressing the influences of environmental and personal factors on this process and thereby countering the reductive Sinicisation paradigm. Unfortunately, one point that confuse readers lies in the unclear correlations between the acculturation theory and the multidimensional perspective that Wu's study adopts. If this view is a proposition of acculturation theory, a careful description is needed, and a methodology is likely needed as well.

2.5 Conclusion

The study of Sogdian burials in China gradually developed from being obscure to being commonplace, progressing through three distinct stages. In the first 70 years of the 20th century, researchers lacked sources because none of the Sogdian tombs in China had been scientifically identified. In the last 30 years of the 20th century, the discovery of some Sino-Sogdian tombs provoked scholarly discussions, but these discussions were confined to funerary epitaphs and mortuary slabs. Over the past two decades, many more Sogdian tombs have been excavated in China, especially some grand tombs containing rich relics; this situation has led to an international research focus on Sogdian adaptation in China, as reflected in their burials.

Both the achievements and gaps of extant research on this topic contribute to this thesis. First, one of the most important benefits of such research lies in the formation

of specific research questions. The research aim of this thesis was proposed in Chapter 1 and indicates that this study's focus on Sogdian cultural adaptation in China as reflected in their burials. After a literature review of this field, it is clear that Sino-Sogdians incorporated Chinese funerary customs in some domains of their funerary practices, such as by adopting the Chinese underground tomb, while they practised in their own ways in other domains, such as with regard to jaw holders, a burial object associated with Central Asian traditions. Two basic questions are thus proposed and can be immediately answered in the affirmative. 1) Did the Sogdians assimilate into their host culture? 2) Did they maintain their heritage culture?

Since these reductive questions are unsatisfactory, more details about Sogdian cultural adaptation in China should be explored. Existing research has seldom investigated the conditions underlying the cultural changes experienced by the Sogdians. For example, most prior research has agreed that Sino-Sogdians adopted the Chinese subterranean burial structure, but it remains unclear how they did so, e.g., whether as direct copies or imitations with certain modifications. It is also unclear why they accepted this alien custom because only a few studies have focused on the underlying motivation. To understand the entire process of Sogdian adaptation, the two basic questions are proposed: 1) Did Sogdians assimilate into their host culture, and if so, in what ways and for what reasons did they do so? 2) Did they maintain their heritage culture, and if so, in what ways and for what reasons did they do so?

The relationship between Sogdian cultural maintenance and cultural adoption has been frequently discussed in prior research but remains underexplored. As mentioned,

most existing studies have recognised the coexistence of the Sogdians' cultural maintenance and cultural adoption; therefore, they have used grandiose phrases such as 'cultural combination' and 'cultural syntheses' to describe this phenomenon. Did the Sogdians view these two likely opposing domains equally, or did they have certain preferences? Did these two likely opposing domains develop into a new, fused art form? A third research question is thus proposed to address these previously ignored details: 3) What was the relationship between Sogdian cultural maintenance and cultural adoption?

Second, this thesis establishes a theoretical framework since most extant research has been atheoretical or merely borrowed a broad theory-like concept. Without a solid theory, some important aspects of Sogdian cultural adaptation, such as the condition mentioned above, can easily be ignored since those aspects cannot be directly represented by burial objects and structures. This gap promoted me to seek a reasonable theory and develop that theory into an appropriate theoretical framework.

Finally, previous studies have catalogued useful materials, which formed the basis for my study. These studies have not only described basic information regarding Sino-Sogdian tombs but also traced their funerary practices to a certain cultural background such as Sogdian, Chinese, or even more distant Persian or Indian backgrounds. These useful studies have thus paved the way for this thesis.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research focuses on the intercultural contacts of Sogdians in medieval China by analysing their burials. With regard to the intercultural contact that occurred during a given period in Chinese history, two theories have commonly been employed, namely, the theories of Sinicisation and acculturation. After an interpretation and comparison of these theories, the theory of acculturation was considered more appropriate for the present study. Moreover, this theory was used to develop a theoretical framework as a foundation for this research. Next, the methodological section introduces how diverse sources, especially Sogdian burials found in China, which represent the primary sources for this thesis, were gathered, organised, and analysed in line with the research questions pursued in this study.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

3.2.1 Sinicisation Theory

Sinicisation is usually interpreted as the process by which non-Chinese people who have entered the Chinese realm are eventually assimilated and become Chinese (Cheng, 2021). In academia, the term Sinicisation was first used to describe the influences of Han Chinese people on territories external to China, such as Japan and Europe. One of earliest examples of this issue is a short essay titled ‘Feudal and Modern Japan’ by

Arthur May (1898) from *The Athenaeum*, a British literary magazine that was published from 1828 to 1921. One pertinent line from the essay reads as follows: 'Shinto might have become a religious and ethical system, but its development was arrested by Sinicisation and Buddhism'. Slightly later, the term Sinicisation was used to describe Chinese influences on the arts in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries (Yetts, 1926).

Since the 1920s, the focus of this term has shifted towards the influences of Han people on domestic non-Han groups who had settled in the Chinese realm, whether as conquerors or as conquered (Cheng, 2021). One of the earliest cases of this can be found in the research of anthropologist Berthold Laufer, who led an expedition to China in 1901–1904 with the goal of producing a comprehensive ethnographic collection. Subsequently, he mentioned in his article the phenomenon of Lolo[9] Sinicisation based on the adoption of Chinese surnames by Lolo people (Laufer, 1917). After the early appearance of the notion of Sinicisation, scholars then repeatedly used this term to discuss cross-cultural interactions between Han people and other subjects of the Chinese realm, such as the Xianbei (Dien, 2007), Manchus (Ho, 1998), and Sogdians (Chen, 2001; Lu, 1996; Lerner, 2005).

[9] Lolo was an old appellation for the Yi people. In the Chinese language, Lolo is written in various ways, including characters containing the dog radical. Thus, it was a derogatory term for those now known as the Yi and was officially replaced by the current term Yi following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. These people mainly inhabit mountainous regions of southwest China and neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia (Harrell, 2001, 200–202).

Although Sinicisation has dominated the discourse regarding early intercultural contact in historical China, few sinologists have attempted to develop a complete model or framework for this notion. This research thus aims to outline the main perspectives and assumptions underlying the theory of Sinicisation by reviewing some excellent works in this field.

First, the theory of Sinicisation is unilateral. It focuses solely on the influences of Han culture on non-Han people. As for cultural changes in the opposite direction, scholars have often proposed other, separate theories to describe and explain this process. Dien (2007) argued that Xianbei culture was consciously promoted among Xianbei elites and was occasionally adopted by Han people. He described the counter-process to Sinicisation as 'Xianbei-isation'. A similar neologism is 'Sogdianisation' (Bi, 2011), which describes the significant influences of the Sogdians on Chinese culture and society, especially in the north-eastern part of China during two historical periods: the Northern Qi (550–577 CE) and the An Lushan Rebellion (755–763 CE).

Second, the theory of Sinicisation interprets the outcomes of such one-way communication as a kind of determinism. Non-Chinese groups had no choice but to assimilate when they were surrounded by the Chinese context. In some studies, Sinicisation has been employed in precisely the same sense as assimilation (Chen, 1934; Tao, 1977). Scholars have admitted that the process of Sinicisation could be boosted or reduced by some events, such as the Chinese xenophobia stoked by the An Lushan Rebellion, but these events did not prevent the overall result being the ultimate assimilation of non-Chinese peoples by Chinese culture. According to the theory of

Sinicisation, with or without the An Lushan Rebellion and other influential events, Sogdians residents in China would ultimately have become Chinese.

Scholars have identified two reasons for this determinism. The first reason is the theory of cultural superiority, which suggests that people with 'low' culture will be assimilated by others with 'high' culture (Cheng, 2021). Chinese culture was conceived of as sophisticated, whereas non-Chinese culture was less sophisticated. This idea most likely results from a certain prejudice in ancient China, namely, that Chinese people viewed themselves as civilised and considered all alien peoples to be uncivilised. Ancient Chinese sources often compared non-Chinese people to animals to belittle them. Inner Asian nomadic peoples were regularly referred to as wolves and jackals (Abramson, 2008, 28). A similar connection between the Yi people and dogs can also be seen in the use of 'Lolo' as the old appellation for these people, as mentioned above. Hence, after several generations, people who were thought to be less sophisticated or uncivilised, even if they were conquerors such as the Xianbei and Manchus, were inevitably absorbed into Chinese civilisation (Cheng, 2021).

Economic superiority was another reason for the apparently inevitable outcomes of Sinicisation. This explanation primarily results from the following statement by Frederick Engels (1894, 208–209):

> Every conquest by a more barbarian people disturb of course the economic development and destroys numerous productive forces. But in the immense majority of cases where the conquest is permanent, the more barbarian conqueror

(assumed to have a lower economic status) has to adapt himself to the higher 'economic situation' as it emerges from the conquest; he is assimilated by the vanquished, and in most cases, he even has to adopt their language.

In standard Chinese Marxist historiography, the economic situation of Chinese societies has been higher than that of their non-Chinese conquerors since China entered the stage of feudalism[10] much earlier. When those non-Chinese peoples in allegedly lower economic situations ruled part or the entirety of China, they acquired advanced economic elements from Chinese societies, the most noticeable characteristics of which might be the adoption of an agricultural economy. Accompanying changes in cultural practices were thus considered inevitable. From this perspective, Sinicisation is equivalent to feudalisation (Zhang, 1996; Tian and Li, 1990).

Although sinologists have paid a great deal of attention to the roots of the alleged determinism of Sinicisation, the nature of the overall result (i.e., the assimilation of

[10] Marxist historiography identifies human history as encompassing five progressive stages of development in relation to production, including a primitive society, a slave society, feudalism, capitalism, and communism (Muhammad and Fakhar, 2013). Chinese Marxist historiographers have different opinions regarding the periodisation of Chinese feudalism. Three main versions have been proposed: a) the early Zhou dynasty (the first half of the first millennium BCE), b) the imperial period (the late third century BCE–the early 20th century CE), and c) the whole period covered by both a and b, lasting for approximately three thousand years (Arif, 1996).

non-Chinese people into Chinese culture) is poorly defined. First, the standard for being assimilated into Chinese culture is vague. It is arbitrary whether an individual person has been Sinicised. An individual who only changed his surname and others who have accepted all aspects of Chinese culture are categorised under the same group according to this underdeveloped conception of Sinicisation.

In addition, the specific culture involved in Sinicisation is vague. Some scholars have used the term Sinicisation to highlight Chinese civilisation in an inclusive manner (e.g., Ho, 1998; Chen, 2001; Wang, 2016). However, in other works, the term Sinicisation has been limited to pure Han culture (e.g., Lu, 1996; Chen, 2001; Wu, 2010, 9). The specific meanings of Chinese culture and Han culture also vary among scholars. Mao (1935) and Song (1936) took building cities and wearing Han-style clothes into consideration when they evaluated the Sinicisation of non-Chinese peoples. Tao (1976) instead emphasised the adoption of the Chinese political system and changes in surnames as essential elements of becoming part of Chinese culture. It may be impossible to precisely pinpoint all components of Chinese culture because it is one of the world's oldest cultures, having lasted for thousands of years and spread to vast territories. Scholars have different focuses in this respect due to the varying scopes of their research.

In general, Sinicisation is a well-established concept but still an abstract theory. It highlights only the unilateral cultural influence of Chinese people on non-Chinese peoples who have entered the Chinese realm. Its result is considered inevitable, meaning that non-Chinese peoples had no choice but to be assimilated and become

Chinese based on the Sinocentric assumptions of this theory. However, no common understanding of this inevitably apparent outcome has been reached, as reflected in the vague scope, and meaning of the term Sinicisation.

3.2.2 Acculturation Theory

Powell (1883) coined the term acculturation, referring to the psychological changes resulting from interactions with different cultures. Subsequently, various scholars have offered different definitions of acculturation based on the perspectives of their disciplines[11]. The earliest classic formulation of acculturation was a result of the work of a committee appointed by the Social Science Research Council of the United States in the 1930s:

[11] McGee (1898) provided a definition of acculturation with colonial connotations, which refers to a process of transfer by which societies advanced from savagery and barbarism to civilisation and enlightenment. Simons (1901) equated acculturation to the term assimilation, which refers to a process of adjustment or accommodation between the members of two different races due to prolonged contact. Although the widely accepted definition of acculturation was proposed in 1936, the debate on this topic continues to this day. Sam and Berry (2010) provided a relatively simple definition that identified as parameters for acculturation a series of a progressive of cultural and psychological changes resulting from contact between cultures.

> Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups (Redfield et al, 1936).

Although such phenomena can occur in as part of any intercultural contact, most research on acculturation has focused on individuals living in societies other than those in which they were born, usually by moving from developing countries to industrial countries, particularly the United States (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, and Szapocznik, 2010). Special attention has been given to psychological changes in these individuals during the process of acculturation. For example, acculturation has been studied from a social-psychological perspective in terms of its cognitive, affective, and behaviour components (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2004).

Compared with the abstract theory of Sinicisation, many theoretical discussions have focused on acculturation and various frameworks have been proposed (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2004). It is relatively easy to understand the theory of acculturation based on Berry's theoretical frameworks (2002) (Fig. 13), which are often viewed as the standard in this context, and other theoretical discussions have focused on these frameworks.

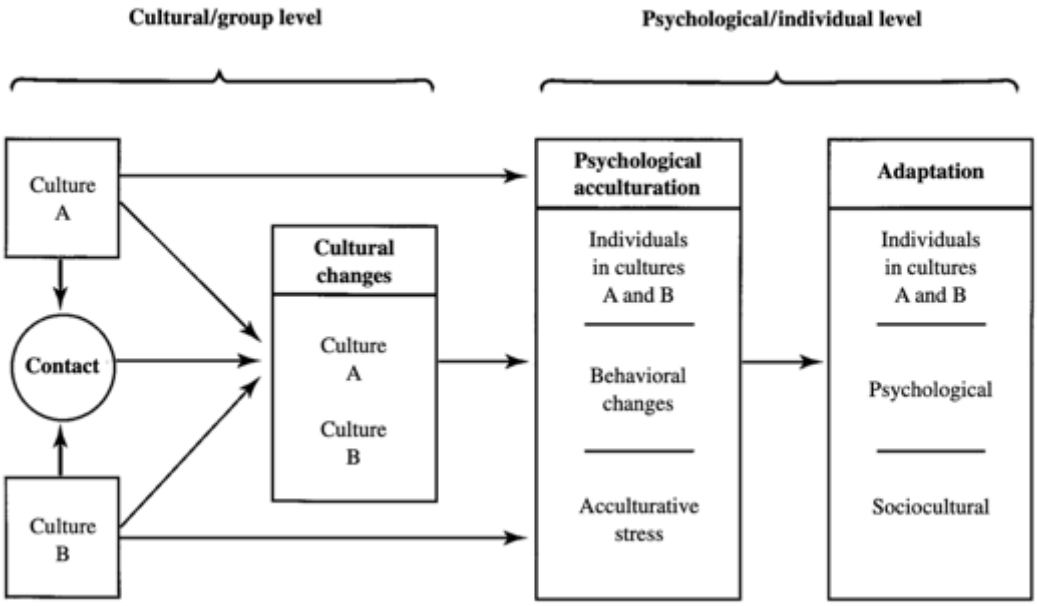


Figure 13. A general framework for understanding acculturation.

After: Berry et al., 2002, p.351, fig. 13.1.

At the group level (on the left side of Fig. 13), key features of the two original cultures (depicted as Culture A and Culture B in Fig. 13) should be considered prior to their subsequent contact and changes (Berry et al., 2002, 351). These features largely determine the compatibility or incompatibility of two cultures, which establishes a foundation for understanding the acculturation process. When the two cultures encounter each other, this contact can take various forms, such as mutual respect or hostility (Sam and Berry, 2010). It is also necessary to understand the cultural changes in both cultures that emerge during acculturation. Acculturation is an interactive process rather than merely a one-sided process of cultural input or output (Sam, 2015).

At the individual level (shown on the right side of Fig. 13), changes appear to be more complex and diverse, including simple behavioural changes (e.g., changes in ways

of speaking, dressing, eating, and one's cultural identity) and more problematic developments (e.g., uncertainty, anxiety, and depression) (Berry et al., 2002, 352). Adaptation is not synonymous with acculturation but rather with the long-term outcome of acculturation (Sam and Berry, 2010). After experiencing the process, individuals who acculturate eventually locate themselves within their new situations, which is often noted by these individuals themselves or observed by others in terms of sociocultural adaptation (e.g., the skills and knowledge associated with daily intercultural living) and psychological adaptation (e.g., mental health and self-esteem) (Berry et al., 2002, 352).

The relationships between group-level acculturation and individual-level acculturation must be clarified. On the one hand, changes in these two different levels are different. At the group level, such impacts mainly involve changes in social structures, economic foundations, and political organisations. At the individual level, they mainly involve changes in personal attributes and practices (Berry et al., 2002, 350). On the other hand, group-level changes set the stage for individual-level changes (Berry et al., 2002, 352). Although individual-level acculturation can occur separately when a person encounters other cultures, it is also common for a person to participate in the acculturation that one's group is also undergoing (Sam and Berry, 2010). In this situation, acculturation involves both individual-level and group-level processes. A cross-level approach was proposed by Kunst et al. (2021) to examine this complicated phenomenon.

Against this backdrop, Berry et al., (2002, 353) further added the concept of acculturation strategies to connect all components of this general framework (Fig. 14).

Acculturation strategies consist of attitudes and behaviours. Although such attitudes and behaviours are not totally aligned, they have been shown to be positively correlated in empirical studies, thus permitting the use of an overall conception of acculturation strategies (Berry et al., 2002, 353). In the past, the term ‘acculturation strategies’ could be replaced by other terms that varied due to changes in the relevant research contexts, such as ‘acculturation attitudes’ (Berry et al., 1989), which emphasises the way in which an individual thinks and feels about the cultures in question; ‘acculturation modes’ (Berry et al., 1989), which emphasises the way in which an individual behaves across these cultures; and ‘acculturation varieties’ (Berry, 1980) or ‘acculturation categories’ (Vijaygopal, 2010, 34), notions which refer to several different sorts of acculturation.

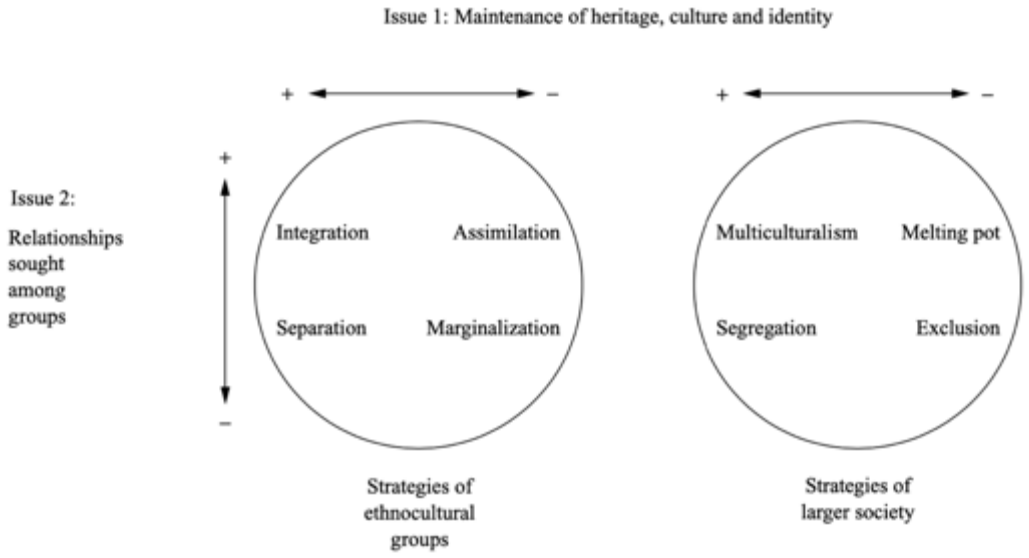


Figure 14. Acculturation strategies in ethnocultural groups and the large society.

After: Berry et al., 2002, p.354, fig. 13.2

Alternatives of acculturation strategies are classified based on the individual’s

orientation towards his or her own group, also known as cultural maintenance, and his or her orientation towards other groups, also known as cultural adaptation. Sommerland and Berry's (1970) core proposition is that cultural maintenance and cultural adaptation might intersect to create four different acculturation strategies. From the perspective of ethnocultural groups (presented on the left side of Fig. 14), the four alternatives are termed: integration (adopting the host culture and maintaining the heritage culture), assimilation (adopting the host culture and discarding the heritage culture), separation (rejecting the host culture and maintaining the heritage culture) and marginalisation (rejecting the host culture and discarding the heritage culture). From the perspective of the broader society (presented on the right side of Fig. 14), the parallel concepts are termed: multiculturalism (which occurs when cultural diversity is an objective of the broader society), the melting pot (which occurs when assimilation is demanded by the broader society), segregation (which occurs when separation is demanded by the broader society), and exclusion (which occurs when margination is demanded by the broader society and which becomes ethnocide in its extreme form).

In contrast to Berry's bidimensional proposition, Gordon (1964) proposed a unidimensional perspective to explain the relationship between cultural maintenance and cultural adaptation. From this perspective, the two dimensions are polar opposites. According to the unidimensional perspective, acculturation is synonymous with assimilation, in which context cultural change occurs in a single direction ranging from the maintenance of the heritage culture to full adaptation to the host culture.

Based on theoretical debate in the literature and some empirical studies, the use of

Berry's bidimensional model in studies of acculturation appears to have received greater support. Theoretically, the unidimensional model describes acculturation as ranging from the unacculturated extreme to the acculturated extreme. During the process, individuals associate with both their own ethnic culture and the host culture. However, this model does not consider situations in which individuals associate with neither culture (Vijaygopal, 2010, 28). Empirically, a comparison of the unidimensional and bidimensional models reported by Ryder et al. (2000) indicated that the bidimensional model exhibits more explanatory power in the context of self-identity and adjustment.

In general, the theory of acculturation has developed into a relatively complete theoretical system through extensive theoretical discussions. Acculturation might occur at the individual and/or the group level, and three essential variables are involved throughout the process: acculturation conditions, acculturation strategies, and acculturation outcomes.

3.2.3 Theoretical Framework for the Study

Based on a comparison between these two competing theories, I propose that the theory of acculturation might be more suitable to the task of examining Sogdian cultural adaptation in medieval China since the theory of acculturation highlights aspects that are not covered by the theory of Sinicisation.

First, acculturation allows for the possibility of the less powerful group influencing

the receiving society, while Sinicisation does not consider this perspective at all. Previous literature has suggested that Sogdians played a certain role in shaping Chinese civilisation in an inclusive manner, a process that has been called as 'Sogdianisation', as noted above. Thus, acculturation might be a more appropriate construct for describing the bidirectional communication between Sogdian immigrants and native Chinese people.

The most meaningful aspect of acculturation might be the multidimensional varieties of acculturation. These varieties can be described as assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation depending on the relationship between cultural maintenance and cultural adaptation (Berry et al., 2002, 353). Conversely, the theory of Sinicisation stipulates only one outcome for non-Chinese immigrants. That is, these immigrants had no choice but to be assimilated and become Chinese. Accordingly, Sinicisation is synonymous with assimilation, which is only one variety of acculturation.

Previous research on Sino-Sogdian tombs has revealed that some Sogdian burial customs exhibited considerable differences from Chinese funerary culture. In those cases, the Sogdians did not completely follow Chinese ways in their burials (see Chapter 2). It is supposed that the multidimensional varieties of acculturation are more in line with the true cultural patterns exhibited by the Sogdians than the one-dimensional concept of Sinicisation.

Moreover, the outcomes associated with the construct of acculturation are variable depending on certain influential factors (e.g., individuals' attitudes towards the cultures in question and tolerant policies on the part of the receiving society). Individuals

experience the process of acculturation in contexts in which such influential factors largely determine their acculturation outcomes. When the receiving society tolerates foreign cultures, individuals are more likely to retain their traditions; thus, their acculturation outcomes are more likely to take the form of integration or separation. Conversely, the theory of Sinicisation undervalues these conditions and intentions since they cannot ultimately alter the net result of non-Chinese people eventually being assimilated and becoming Chinese.

As reviewed in Chapter 2, Wu, J. (2010, 156–158) provided a valid reference indicating that structural and personal factors were relevant during the process of Sogdian acculturation. Three Sogdian elites, Kang Ye, Shi Jun and An Jia, held similar official positions, died in the same decade (571–581 CE), and were buried in the proximate cemetery in Chang'an. Kang Ye's (512–571 CE) burial environment was closer to the indigenous Chinese context, while the burial arrangements of the other two figures showed many representative elements of Sogdian traditions.

Kang Ye died in 571 CE. At that time, the Northern Zhou Dynasty strongly promoted Confucianism. Confucianism indicates that people's funerals should be prepared and conducted according to complicated rituals in a manner that is consistent with the social status of the deceased. As an official, Kang Ye likely adopted Chinese-style burial settings due to this prevailing political atmosphere. When Shi Jun and An Jia died in 579 CE, the revival of Confucianism had faded. Thus, it is necessary to take such potential influential factors into consideration when investigating Sogdian acculturation.

In addition to these fresh perspectives, the theory of acculturation is visual in nature, as illustrated by the theoretical frameworks presented above (see Figs. 13 and 14). Only by using such visualised frameworks can researchers clearly understand the direct and indirect relationships among various components and variables. Otherwise, a vague theory would be presented without the aid of vivid pictures, as has been the case for the theory of Sinicisation.

After I determined that the theory of acculturation is more suitable for the present research, the next step was to generate a specific theoretical framework based on a combination of the abovementioned theoretical discussions and the ease of application. This decision represents an innovative approach in this field, as it has not been attempted by previous scholars. Suitable trade-offs regarding the general frameworks proposed by Berry and his colleagues should be made regarding the direction, level, and variables of acculturation.

Acculturation direction refers to the general way in which acculturation develops. Although acculturation can take place within either or both groups involved, this research only focuses on changes in the original cultural patterns of the Sogdians due to limitations in terms of primary sources (i.e., Sogdian tombs found in China). Regarding the opposite direction, it would be necessary to examine relics belonging to Chinese people, especially those who engaged in intimate contact with Sogdians.

The second decision pertains to the level on which the research focuses. Sogdian acculturation occurred at various levels (i.e., at both the group and individual levels). Regarding personal acculturation, many works have investigated this issue; these works

have been based almost entirely on Sogdian tombs found in China and scattered references in Chinese historical texts, as reviewed in Chapter 2.

However, fewer works have considered the idea of structural acculturation due to the limited number of relevant sources[12]. Sino-Sogdian tombs focused on the tomb owner, with only occasional references to his or her tribe or community. Medieval Chinese historians seem to have been uninterested in Sogdian communal life. They sometimes recorded Sogdian dignitaries' lives. These materials contribute to the research on Sogdian acculturation at the personal level rather than the group level. This study is confined to individual-level acculturation due to the relatively rich sources available in this regard.

Furthermore, acculturation involves many variables throughout the process, which

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[12] One of the few successful examples is Rong (2001, 111-168), who reconstructed the sociocultural life of the Sogdian autonomous communities in China, including the widespread phenomenon of grape-growing, largely by reference to related images on Sogdian stone funerary furniture. Mary Boyce's 1977 book, '*A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*', might be the most influential ethnographic study of Zoroastrians. She completed this book based on her a year-long field work in the village of Sharifabad in Iran, where the villagers had maintained their ancient Zoroastrian beliefs despite some changes in religious rituals in response to their Muslim conquerors and overlords. Although the book is usually associated with the field of religious studies, it can also be regarded as an ethnographic study of the acculturation of Persian Zoroastrians at the group level under pressure from Muslims.

can be generally divided into acculturation conditions, acculturation strategies, and acculturation outcomes. These variables usually take two forms: psychological and physical. For example, characteristics of the receiving society, such as cultural openness, can involve objective immigration policies or the different feelings of individuals in response to these policies. Similarly, acculturation strategies include subjective attitudes towards both groups and objective actions, and acculturation outcomes include behavioural changes (e.g., changes in ways of speaking, dressing, eating, and one's cultural identity) and more problematic developments (e.g., uncertainty, anxiety, and depression). All psychological variables related to the Sogdians must be omitted because they did not express their thoughts personally, nor are they recorded in any extant evidence. Thus, this research focuses on only one form of these variables, i.e., objective rather than perceived.

This theoretical framework thus established plays at least two important roles in this study. First, it provides a way to identify and define the research questions. Second, it provides a way to evaluate potential answers to the research questions. As mentioned, our research questions are as follows: 1) Did the Sogdians assimilate into the host culture, and if so, in what ways and for what reasons did they do so? 2) Did they maintain their heritage culture, and if so, in what ways and for what reasons did they do so? 3) What was the relationship between their cultural maintenance and cultural adaptation? Based on the framework, the first and second questions focus on the approaches Sogdians adopted towards the two cultures, including behavioural outcomes, objective actions, and influential factors. The final question considers the

acculturation strategies employed by the Sogdians, which could be assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalisation. The literature review in Chapter 2 predisposes me to considering that the Sogdian acculturation strategy was integration; thus, it is also necessary to investigate characterises of the potential integration.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Sources

a. Archaeological Sources

Given the empirical focus of this thesis, excavated Sogdian burials in northern China are particularly important. A Sogdian tomb itself and the remains inside provide a great deal of information regarding how an individual Sogdian adjusted to Chinese funerary culture, thus facilitating the reconstruction of Sogdian acculturation at the individual level. The tomb contents, including the tomb construction, body treatment, epitaphs, and burial objects, are analysed in separate chapters and then used as to conduct a comprehensive discussion. Due to the importance of the Sogdian tombs as the primary data source used in this study, discussing them in somewhat more detail than other information is warranted.

Pulleyblank (1952) proposed the method of using surnames to identify Sino-Sogdians, which has developed into a conventional practice in the academic community. Ancient China featured a prevalent naming system according to which foreigners were usually given surnames in Chinese based on their homelands. Several Chinese

characters were usually or even exclusively adopted by the Sogdians as surnames, and these characters were collectively referred to as the 'nine surnames of zhaowu' (*zhaowu jiuxing*) or the 'nine surnames of hu' (*jiuxing hu*) in Chinese chronicles (for details, see Chapter 1). For instance, when a male bore the surname Kang, this implied that he was a Sogdian and that he or his ancestors came from the Kang state (modern Samarkand, Uzbekistan). Thanks to the biographical nature of Chinese-style funerary epitaphs, most epitaphs found in Sino-Sogdian tombs record the surname of the deceased person. The surname is the most common straightforward evidence regarding whether a burial was a Sogdian burial.

When the surname of the deceased person is not available, scholars have also relied on other types of evidence, such as artefacts featuring strong Sogdian affiliations. However, these references must be used with caution since they are not as straightforward as surnames. For example, Byzantine gold coins and Persian silver coins have often been found beside bodies in Sino-Sogdian tombs, which is likely a trace of a Sogdian custom based on the Hellenistic practice of Charon's obol or a highly similar Chinese funerary custom (for details, see Chapter 6).

Additionally, Chinese anthropologists have recently used skull analysis and mitochondrial DNA (mt DNA) [13] as supplemental ways to help identify Sino-Sogdians.

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[13] Mitochondria are structures within cells that covert the energy from food into a form that cells can use. Although most DNA is packaged in chromosomes within the nucleus, mitochondria contain a small amount of their own DNA, which is known as mitochondrial DNA (mt DNA). A human

Personally, I think the two techniques might not be helpful in this field because they are used to determine individuals' race rather than their ethnicity. For clarity, the results of the two techniques are briefly introduced here.

Skeletal analysis has been conducted with respect to four suspected Sogdian funerary complexes, including the tombs of Shi Daoluo, An Jia, M1401, and one cemetery (known as the Jiulongshan-Nanyuan cemetery). The three male skulls each found in the tombs of Shi Daoluo, An Jia and M1401 and the five male skulls and four female skulls found in the Jiulongshan–Nanyuan cemetery all had characteristic Caucasian features (YLK, 2014, 158-168; SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 92; NWKY, 2009, 135-150). However, racial reckonings by skeletons are not grounded in good science[14].

Chinese archaeologists have also used mitochondrial DNA (mt DNA) to identify Yu Hong and his wife depending on their bones found in the tomb of Yu Hong, and the

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mitochondrial DNA haplogroup is characterised by mutations in human mitochondrial DNA, which tends to be geographically restricted and can be used to distinguish populations in genetic terms (Nesheva, 2014).

[14] Ancestry estimation particularly relies on features of the face and skull bones, known as cranial traits. It has long been assumed that these traits indicate one's ancestry. However, research has never determined the extent to which these traits are inherited or indicated why these traits exist or what causes them. Based on the lack of scientific support that these traits reflect evolutionary history, Digangi and Bethard (2021) called for 'all forensic anthropologists to abolish the practice of ancestry estimation.'

results indicated that Yu Hong was part of haplogroup U5, the West Eurasian-specific haplogroup, while his wife belonged to haplogroup G, which is representative of East Asian populations (SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, 204-208). Although this technique is far more reliable than skeletal analysis, its result is about Yu Hong's race and his family's origin rather than his ethnicity, as mentioned above.

Primarily based on the surname clue of the deceased, 129 tombs[15] excavated in China were identified as belonging to Sogdians or non-Han people who had been highly influenced by Sogdians (Fig. 15, Appendix 1). The 129 Sogdian tombs include six group-burials (accounting for 115 tombs in total) and 14 single tombs. The tombs were all found in northern China, especially in strategic locations along the land-based silk roads such as Turfan and Guyuan, and in cosmopolises of China such as Xi'an. A considerable number of tombs date to the Northern Dynasties or the Sui period, while many more tombs were built in the Chinese golden age, i.e., the early Tang period. The demonstrable Sino-Sogdian tombs seem to disappear during the early to mid eighth

[15] The actual number of Sogdian tombs should be much higher than 129. First, exploration and excavation remain ongoing in China. Second, many surviving artefacts in China and overseas collections were very likely unearthed from certain Sogdian tombs in irregular ways, such as through tomb robbery or construction damage. These artefacts have great academic value, but the tombs from which they were drawn cannot be located. Two noticeable categories of such artefacts are epitaphs and sarcophagi. For a detailed discussion of epitaphs, see (Pei, 2013); for sarcophagi, see (Xu, 2017).

century.

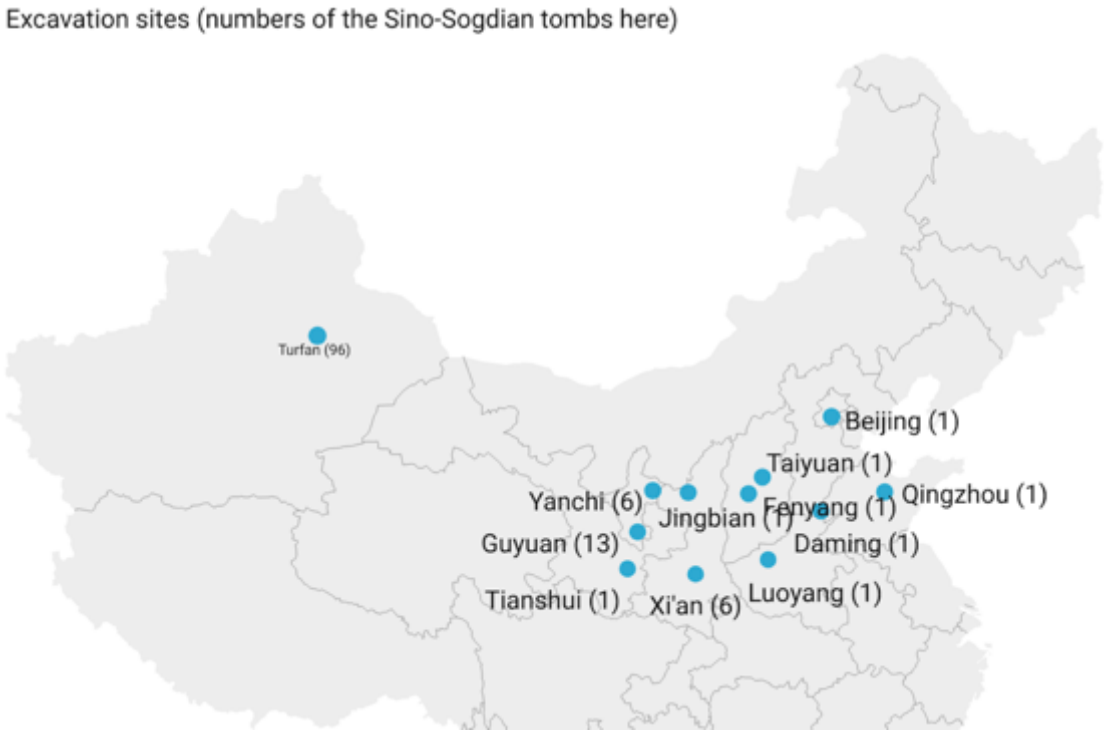


Figure 15. Distribution of Sino-Sogdian tombs.

Archaeological findings from the Sogdian tombs were usually recorded in excavation reports, which can be acquired from the China Academic Journals Full-Text Database in China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) (*Zhongguo zhiwang* 中国知网)[16], a leading provider of academic resources.

With the obtained information regarding these 129 Sogdian-associated tombs, it is

[16] CNKI has been closed to foreign VPNs since 2023. The relevant excavation reports were accessed and downloaded while the research project was being conducted in China between 2020 and 2022.

necessary to sample tombs since it is rarely possible to conduct in-depth research on every tomb in that group in a limited amount of time. Purposive sampling, which relies on my judgement when identifying and selecting examples that can provide the best information to achieve research objectives, was used. The richer mortuary remains (e.g., images and objects) a tomb contained, the better the cultural characteristics of the tomb owner can be understood. A preliminary study based on the excavation reports of these 129 Sogdian-associated tombs indicated that almost every one of 14 single tombs contained rich mortuary remains, while the six group-burials were composed of many 'simple' tombs that contained only a few remains or were empty and a few 'deluxe' tombs. These 14 single tombs and 'deluxe' tombs from the six group-burials meet the eligibility criteria for sampling. For convenience, of the six group-burials, only the most 'deluxe' tomb was selected from each cemetery as a representative example.

In this way, 20 Sogdian examples (14 single tombs plus six representative tombs from six group burials) were selected from the total group of 129 Sogdian tombs. All information regarding the principal constituents of the 20 selected examples is presented in a contingency table (Appendix 2). For the sake of clarity, each tomb of the 20 selected examples has a consistent reference number throughout this thesis and in Appendixes 2-6.

To defend the viability of the purposive sampling used in this thesis, the issue of representativeness needs to be clarified. First, some cemeteries contained only one 'deluxe' tomb such as the He family cemetery in Yanchi, while others indeed contained more than one 'deluxe' tomb such as the two Kang family cemeteries in Turfan. It is

certain that one example is representative enough for the first type of cemetery because it is the only unit meeting the eligibility criteria for sampling. However, as noted previously, only one example was selected from the second type of cemetery that contained more than one 'deluxe' tomb. This strategy may not produce perfectly representative results, as the selection of the most 'deluxe' tomb from several targeted samples depends on my subjective judgement. To overcome the lack of representativeness, I familiarized myself with the variations in tomb structures and in-tomb relics in the total group of 129 Sogdian tombs through a review of existing literature; thus, the selected most 'deluxe' tomb can provide the most information.

Second, it should be admitted that the selected 20 tombs failed to reflect the characteristics of Sino-Sogdians who were unwilling or unable to display their cultural orientations[17] because the selected 20 tombs are not related to many 'simple' tombs included in the six group-burials that contained only a few remains or were even empty. It is necessary to select examples from those 'simple' tombs if one wants to investigate

[17] The Sino-Sogdians who were unwilling or unable to display their cultural orientations in funerary contexts are theorized to be mostly non-elites. Additionally, most of their cultural practices are undocumented as well. Thus, without solid evidence referring to their cultural activities, especially the lower strata of the population, scholarship in this filed still focus on cultural adaptation of elite Sino-Sogdians. However, in terms of trade, many sources in a variety of languages, such as the Sogdian Ancient Letters, make it clear that non-elite Sino-Sogdians were active along the eastern part of the land-based Silk Roads between Central Asia and China (see Chapter 2).

the acculturation of these tomb owners. But ironically, it is rarely possible to reconstruct tomb owners' lives based on the limited mortuary remains. It has been a persistent problem in this field of funerary archaeology how to explore deceased people's cultural practices when they did not leave relevant evidence. Consequently, this thesis can explore only the acculturation of a segment of Sogdians who were willing and able to display their cultural orientations based on extant archaeological findings. Although this thesis does not aim to examine Sogdian acculturation in all strata and all cities of China, to appropriately compensate for the inevitable research bias, the unselected Sogdian tombs as well as some written sources about Sino-Sogdian cultural activities will be incidentally discussed in the text to provide a wider comparative analysis.

b. Textual Sources

This thesis is based on a wide range of texts, primarily including funerary epitaphs, Chinese imperial annals, Zoroastrian classics, and other relevant literature. Most funerary epitaphs contain biographies of the deceased person, which facilitate the straightforward identification of the deceased person and his or her individual history. The funerary epitaphs excavated from Sino-Sogdian tombs provide the data used in Chapter 7 to examine Sogdian cultural affiliations in their own statements or those of their families.

Chinese imperial annals, which were mostly written by Chinese official scholars provide records of historical events as well as the official Chinese view of the Sogdians. The history of medieval northern China was largely recorded in the following five

Chinese imperial annals: the *Book of Zhou* (*zhoushu*), the *Book of Northern Dynasties* (*beishi*), the *Book of Sui (suishu*), the *Old Tang History* (*jiutangshu*) and the *New Tang History* (*xintangshu*). The *Avesta* is the primary collection of religious texts in Zoroastrianism, of which the *Vendidad* (Law Repudiating the Demons) is the most relevant to this study since it is an enumeration of various manifestations of evil spirits and ways to confound them. Unlike funerary epitaphs, these textual sources do not contribute to any specific chapter of this thesis but are rather used as references if when needed throughout this thesis.

3.3.2 Methods

The main basis for this thesis is Sino-Sogdian tombs and the relics inside, which include three types of archaeological evidence: material culture (e.g., burial buildings and funerary objects), images (e.g., stone reliefs), and inscriptions. In macro terms, the theory of acculturation structures my approach. As noted previously, acculturation involves many variables throughout the process, the most important ones of which are conditions, behaviours, and outcomes. Accordingly, all this archaeological evidence is examined from the three different perspectives. For example, Chinese-style underground tombs Sogdians established was an acculturation outcome known by us through tomb exploration and excavation. Through comparing them to contemporary Chinese tomb structures, it can be known how the Sogdians constructed their Chinese-style tombs; that is, did they do so in a wholly Chinese way or a certain creative form.

Moreover, the mortuary practice of the Sogdians is situated in a broad historical context to understand the underlying influential factors.

In micro terms, each type of the archaeological evidence relies primarily on different specific methods. Typology contributes to the study of material culture. It is used to categorise different kinds of Sogdian burial objects based on their external features, such as size, material, and shape, following which they can be compared with analogous objects. The images appearing in Sino-Sogdian tombs are analysed using the iconography approach, which can be roughly divided into the three steps proposed by Panofsky (1982): pre-iconographic description, iconographical analysis, and iconographical interpretation. Regarding the epitaphs excavated from the Sogdian burials, their analysis involves an epigraphical study[18]. An epitaph is both a funerary text and a burial object, and it includes various aspects that are of great academic value, such as literature, calligraphy, the style of cutting, the content, and motifs. This study focuses on the last two aspects since they are either directly or indirectly connected to certain characteristics of different cultural groups.

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[18] China has a long tradition of epigraphical studies, which are literately referred to in the literature as studies of inscriptions on bronze and stone (*jinshi xue* 金石学); such studies are usually considered to be the precursor to archaeology in China. Broadly, epigraphical materials in China fall into two categories: moveable ritual or memorial objects, such as tomb epitaphs and upright steles, and inscriptions that are intimately tied to the surrounding topography, such as Buddhist stone sutras on cliffs and in caves (Ma, 2009).

Chapter 4. Tomb Constructions

4.1 Introduction

The Sogdian adoption of Chinese-style tombs has generally been viewed as a sign of Sinicisation since underground burial is antithetical to Zoroastrian practice. However, Sino-Sogdian tombs differed from traditional Chinese tombs in terms of their layout and material, and some designs were markedly different from traditional Chinese tomb constructions. This section analyses the similarities and differences between Sino-Sogdian tomb constructions and traditional Chinese constructions from the perspective of acculturation. In the first section, this chapter compares traditional Sogdian and Chinese burial facilities and then provides descriptions of Sino-Sogdian tomb constructions. Finally, this chapter discusses different cultural considerations involved in the architecture of these tombs.

4.2 Chinese and Sogdian Burial Facilities

In ancient China, a tomb typically consisted of two spatial complexes, one above the ground and the other beneath. The aboveground complexes were a combination of tumuli, house-shaped ritual buildings, and statues and steles (Wu, H., 2010, 8). A tumulus was primarily used to mark the tomb's location, a custom that was widely adopted by people at every social stratum. However, house-shaped ritual buildings, statues, and steles usually existed only in mausoleums of high-ranking individuals,

where they served as status symbols (Pu, 2008, 61; Wei, 2019).

The substructure provided a space to hide the deceased person from human eyes, which was the fundamental purpose of Chinese inhumation (Wu, H., 2010, 8). Many subtypes of the substructure have been found, but the chamber grave, also known as the horizonal-pit grave, has been dominant for more than two thousand years since the Han Dynasty. This structure featured a square chamber with a domed roof that was reached by a long and sloping narrow shaft or corridor (Wu, H., 2010, 29).

Although the aboveground and underground complexes are both part of a single Chinese tomb, they are independent. They do not represent a continuous architectural programme but are rather constructed in separate physical environments (Fig. 16). The aboveground buildings are where the living come to worship the deceased person. The grave beneath the earth's surface serves as a physical storage place for the deceased person and the imagined home of his or her spirit. In Chinese archaeology, these buildings have often been separately researched, and the substructure is customarily referred to as a tomb since it was used in China for the principal purpose of inhumation (i.e., concealing the deceased from the living).

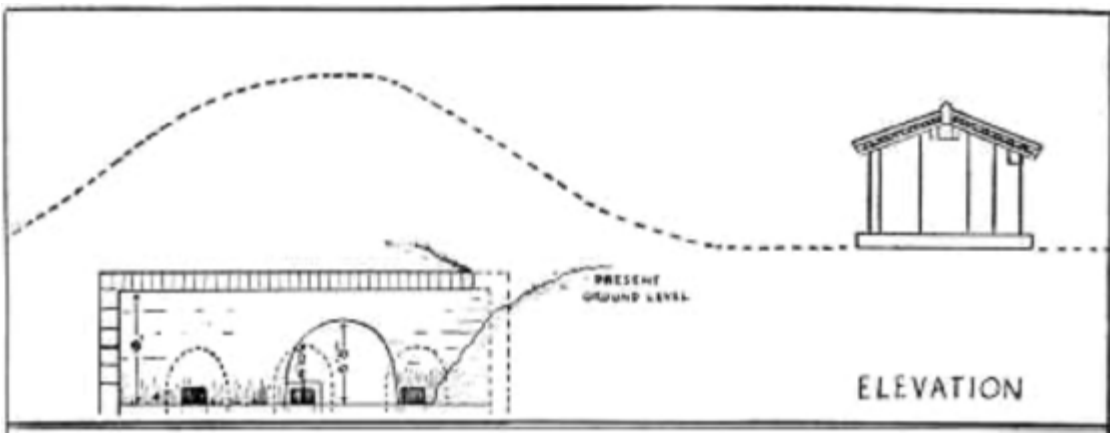


Figure 16. Elevation of the tomb and shrine of Chu Wei. Second century CE. Shandong Province.

After: Wu, H., 2010, p.8, fig. 1.

For Sogdians, Chinese aboveground burial facilities were not completely alien because they also built burial architecture above ground. The *Vendidad* (5.14; 6.44-46; 8.1-2) requires a corpse to be moved to a place known as the *dakhma*[19] for exposure (Minardi and Amirov, 2017). Nevertheless, the sacred book does not precisely describe the construction process of the *dakhma* (Campos, 2008). Archaeological findings have confirmed the existence of two types of *dakhmas* in medieval times. One type was constructed in a low mountain spur encircled by mud brick walls, as seen at Chil'pyk in Uzbekistan (Fig. 17). The whole region presumably used this type of *dakhma* from the fourth century until Islamic interference in gravesites. Boyce (1979, 158) initially suggested that *dakhma* constructions were used to avoid Islamic intervention. However, based on the new archaeological discovery of the *dakhma* at Chil'pyk, which dates from the period before the Islamic conquest, Minardi and Amirov (2017) attributed the creation of such structures to the desire to isolate a polluted place from the external environment.

[19] The Avestan term *dakhma* was originally used to refer to a grave or tomb, but its meaning shifted between the sixth and third century BCE to refer to a place for the exposure of corpses (Minardi and Amirov, 2017).

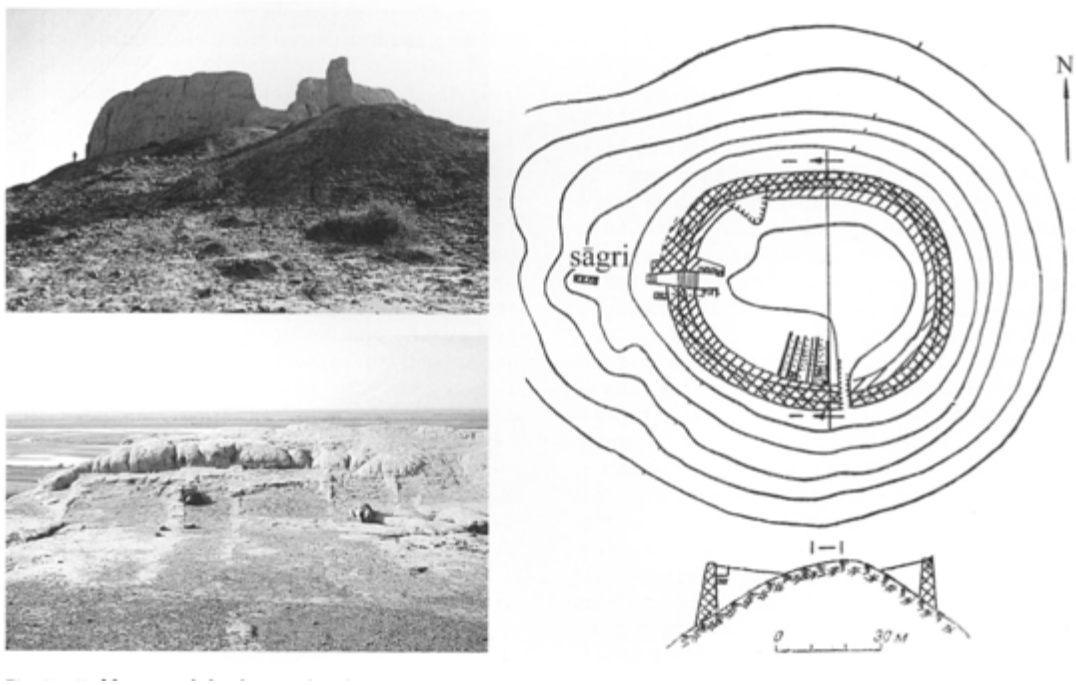


Figure 17. *Dakhma* at Chil'pyk, Uzbekistan, ca. fourth century CE.

Top left: general view. Bottom left: the *pavis*[20]. Right: plan. After: Grenet, 2008, p.38, fig. 11.

The other type of *dakhma* was a tower-like structure. For example, the *dakhma* at Durmen-tepe near Samarkand was used by a single family in the seventh and eighth centuries CE (Fig. 18) (Grenet, 2015, 143). The structure of the Durmen-tepe *dakhma* was highly similar to the modern examples in Mumbai, India, albeit with a slight architectural difference[21] that is customarily called the tower of silence (Grenet, 2008,

[20] The *pavis* was a kind of trench several inches deep that was intended to separate different dead bodies during excarnation.

[21] The two *dakhmas* exhibit two main differences. First, the staircase of the Durmen-tepe *dakhma*

37).

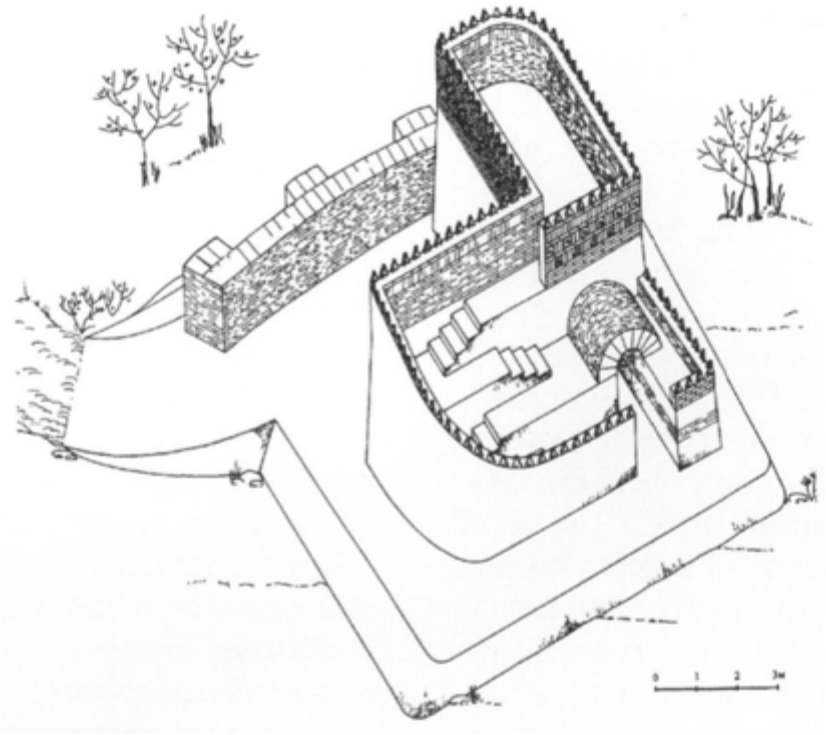


Figure 18. *Dakhma* at Durmen-tepe, Uzbekistan, seventh and eighth centuries CE. After: Grenet, 2008, p.38, fig. 10.

In English, the term *dakhma* is usually translated as 'tower of silence' since British translators first learned of the tower-like *dakhma* built by Parsees in Mumbai, India

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has been replaced by a moveable ladder in modern *dakhmas*. The absence of this staircase increased the inaccessibility of the latter to non-Zoroastrians. When the Durmen-tepe *dakhma* was used in the seventh and eight centuries CE, Sogdian Zoroastrians did not fear heresy. Second, a central well for the bones has been included in modern *dakhmas*. This design was unnecessary for Sogdian Zoroastrians since they normally collected and kept bones in portable ossuaries (Grenet, 2008, 37).

(Campos, 2008). However, *dakhma* could be constructed in various forms. In addition to the mountain type and the tower type attested by archaeological findings, Wei Jie, a Chinese envoy visiting Central Asia at the beginning of the seventh century CE, noted a courtyard near Samarkand where a community of untouchables fed specially trained dogs with corpses and then gathered the bones (Grenet, 2015, 143).

In addition to *dakhma*, another aboveground burial facility was a family mausoleum containing ossuaries for the bones of the deceased, which was known as a *naus* among Arabs (Rose, 2014, 63). The *Vendidad* does not mention the existence of such a burial facility. Instead, the *naus* was a Zoroastrian development in Sogdiana, perhaps initially appearing around Samarkand in the fourth or fifth centuries CE (Hansen, 2012, 134-136). Examples of *nauses* can still be seen at Panjikent in Tajikistan, where the *nauses* feature small, vaulted chambers with mud-brick walls (Fig. 19) (Rose, 2014, 63). Interestingly, several structures simultaneously served as *nauses* and *dakhmas.* In the 1960s, archaeologists discovered that the upper part of a *naus* at Dalvarzintepa in Uzbekistan was also used as a *dakhma* (Fig. 20).



Figure 19. Ossuaries placed in family vaults, Panjikent, Tajikistan.

After: Rose, 2014, p.63, fig.4.



Figure 20. Structure used for a *naus* and *dakhma*, Dalvarzintepa, Uzbekistan.

Left: schematic diagram. Right: inner view. After: Kakhramon, 2020, p.362, fig. 2.

In Sogdian vocabulary, the family mausoleum is called *frawart-kate*, referring to the house of the spirit of the deceased person (*frawart*). To appease the spirits, regular cleaning, care, offerings, and ritual sacrifices occurred at the family mausoleum (Rose,

2014, 64). At this point, the *naus* (Ar.)/*frawart-kate* (Sogd.) was a holy burial complex connected to a certain supernatural existence.

4.3 Sino-Sogdian Tomb Construction

The following descriptions of Sino-Sogdian tomb construction emphasise the 20 selected examples and are arranged geographically, beginning in the west and moving towards the east. Critical information is tabulated for reference and the following analysis (Appendix 3).

1) Turfan (two Kang family cemeteries): two enclosed cemeteries are located in different areas of Turfan. One such cemetery is at Jiaohe, and is composed of 36 tombs, 33 of which are located within an enclosure, while the other three are outside. The other cemetery is at Badamu and is composed of 60 tombs, among which 13 are located within an enclosure, while the rest are outside (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 335).

Most of these tombs have deep underground catacombs with long ramps, and several are equipped with shaft columns along the ramps (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 335). The two selected examples (tomb M11 from the Jiaohe cemetery and tomb M212 from the Badamu cemetery) both follow the common pattern of such tombs and thus possess a tumulus, a sloping passageway, a small corridor, and an earthen chamber. A significant difference is that tomb M11 from the Jiaohe cemetery is oriented on a west-east axis, while tomb M212 from the Badamu cemetery is oriented on a north-south axis (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 21 and 229).

2) Tianshui (an anonymous tomb): the Tianshui tomb consists of a vaulted passageway, a brick sealing wall, and a burial chamber. Inside the burial chamber is a stone funerary couch where wood fragments and skeletal remains were found (Zhang, 1992). The floor of the burial chamber was paved with tiles. Below these titles is an upper layer of sandy soil and a lower layer of charcoal (Zhang, 1992).

3) Yanchi (the He family cemetery): this Sogdian family cemetery consists of six tombs arranged in chronological order from the west to the east. The tombs were cut into low gypsum outcroppings resembling tumuli. Airshafts were cut into the tombs from the surface, and the tombs can be entered by a ramp built on levelled ground that extends until just before the burial chamber. The tomb structures were then dug out from beneath the outcrops. A stone door was placed between the ramp and the tomb chamber, which was sealed off by a stack of stones. Behind the stone door lies a central chamber, which is square or rectangular and features a two-metre-high ceiling. All tombs contain two to five subsidiary, niche-like rooms cut into the walls of the tomb chamber (Wu, 1988).

The selected example (tomb M3) exhibits no significant differences in construction from the other tombs located in the same cemetery. It features a passageway, a surviving stone door engraved with two Central Asian dancers performing the Sogdian whirl, a rectangular burial chamber, and four niche-like side chambers. A notable unique feature is that a pair of octangular stone pillars stands in the centre of the burial chamber (height 1.25 m, diameter 0.5 m) (Wu, 1988).

4) Guyuan (the Shi family cemetery and two public cemeteries): according to

surviving epitaph inscriptions, the Shi family cemetery is composed of six tombs and is occupied by two different Shi family lines. The six tomb constructions are consistent, including the remains of tumulus, a sloping passageway, tunnels and shafts, a corridor, and a final tomb chamber. The doomed corridors of the tombs were sealed off with blocks. A patterned stone door existed in the tombs of Shi Suoyan and Shi Hedan (Luo, 1996, 31 and 55).

As in the case of all the other tombs located in the Shi family cemetery, the selected example (Shi Daode's tomb) features a tumulus, a slanting passageway, tunnels and shafts, a corridor, and a final tomb chamber (Luo, 1996, 87). This tomb features a surprising number of tunnels and shafts, including as many as seven each, while the number of tunnels and shafts in other tombs in this cemetery range from two to five. The seventh shaft was previously separated from the corridor by bricks. The corridor leads to the square burial chamber, in which a coffin platform made of adobe was placed adjacent to the west wall to support the body of the deceased person (Luo, 1996, 87).

In addition to Shi family cemetery, two public cemeteries related to Sino-Sogdians were discovered at Nanyuan and Jiulongshan in Guyuan. Deceased people of different ethnicities shared the Nanyuan and the Jiulonsghan cemeteries, and the kinship of seven Sogdian tomb owners across the two cemeteries cannot be confirmed (YLK, 2014, 135–149).

Most of these tombs of the two public cemeteries are underground catacombs featuring a long ramp, including the two selected examples (tomb YKJM33 from the Jiulongshan cemetery and tomb M1401 from the Nanyuan cemetery). Tomb M1401 is

more complicated and luxurious than tomb YKJM33. Tomb M1401features as many as five tunnels, each with shafts, and two additional niches that were cut into the walls near the fourth shaft, while tomb YKJM33 contains only one tunnel and one shaft (NWKY, 2012, 125). An apparent difference between these two tombs pertains to their orientation. Specifically, tomb M1401 faces south, while tomb YKJM33 faces northeast (NHWKY, 2022).

5) Jingbian (Di Caoming's tomb): this tomb is oriented along a north-south axis, and consists of a sloping passageway, a corridor, and an earthen chamber (Luo and Rong, 2016, 290). Although Di Caoming was a Zoroastrian community leader, unlike the tombs of other people with a similar social status, his tomb does not contain any shafts or tunnels. This difference might be a practical consideration because this tomb was built on a dune that made it impossible to cut shafts from the surface (Ma, 2015, 97). Moreover, a stone door bearing several Zoroastrian religious motifs was found at the corridor's entrance (Luo and Rong, 2016, 292).

6) Xi'an (the tombs of Kang Ye, An Jia, Shi Jun, An Yuanshou, Kang Wentong, and Kang Lingyun): the tombs of Kang Ye, An Jia, and Shi Jun were excavated from the same area in Xi'an, which may have been a cemetery for high-ranking Sogdians who lived in Chang'an during the Northern Zhou Dynasty (Dien, 2009). The six tombs unearthed from Xi'an are all large or medium in scale and share a similar layout. Namely, these tombs consist of a long-sloped passageway, numerous tunnels and shafts, and a brick wall and/or stone door sealing off a corridor leading to a burial chamber. The tombs are divided into two categories depending on the materials used for the burial

chamber: earth-chambered tombs and brick-chambered tombs.

The tombs of Kang Ye, Shi Jun, and Kang Lingyun are earth-chambered tombs. The tombs of Shi Jun and Kang Lingyun each contain five tunnels and shafts (Yang, 2014, 37; Wang, 2000). Unfortunately, since the long-sloped passageway of the tomb of Kang Ye was severely damaged, the composition of its burial chamber is unconfirmed. However, judging from nearby tombs constructed at similar scales, the tomb of Kang Ye likely originally featured four or five tunnels and shafts (Ma, 2015, 96). Stone doors were found in the tombs of Kang Ye and Shi Jun, but such doors were absent in the tomb of Kang Lingyun (Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009; Yang, 2014, 37; Wang, 2000).

On the other hand, the tombs of An Jia, An Yuanshou, and Kang Wentong fall into the second category; that is, their burial chambers were constructed of brick. Notably, a significant difference is that the tomb of An Jia contains only a single brick-built burial chamber, while the tombs of An Yuanshou and Kang Wentong contain a pair of brick chambers (SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 12; Chen, 1988; Yang, 2004). Such a difference in the number of burial chambers usually indicated a difference in social status in ancient Chinese society. Additionally, stone doors were found in the tombs of An Jia and An Yuanshou, but such a door was absent in the tomb of Kang Wentong (SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 12; Chen, 1988; Yang, 2004).

7) Taiyuan (the tomb of Yu Hong): this tomb is located to the northeast and faces the southwest. The remains of the tomb include several components, including a sloping passageway, a corridor, and a brick burial chamber. Inside the burial chamber, male and

female bones were scattered in and around a sarcophagus (SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, 47–49).

8) Fenyang (the tomb of Cao Yi): the tomb construction in this case is unclear since the passageway has not yet been excavated. However, it has been reported that the burial chamber is made of brick and square with filleted corners (Li, 2007).

9) Luoyang (the tomb of An Pu): this tomb is located to the north and faces the south. At the time of its discovery, the tomb's sloping passageway had deteriorated and been destroyed. A stone door found at the end of the tomb seals off the earthen corridor from the burial chamber. The earthen burial chamber features a vaulted ceiling and a square ground plan (Zhao, 1982).

10) Daming (the tomb of He Hongjing): this tomb had already been destroyed by the time it was discovered. Based on what remains, the tomb featured a sloping passageway and a brick burial chamber, which is a round flat surface with a diameter of six metres. As reported, four octangular stone pillars were found inside the walls of the tomb (Chen, 1984). Similar constructions are found in the case of tomb M3 from the He family cemetery in Yanchi. Moreover, the floor of the He Hongjing's burial chamber was paved with slabs above two layers of charcoal that featured a strong turpentine smell (Chen, 1984). This situation is similar to that of the Tianshui tomb.

11) Beijing (the tomb of Shi Siming): this tomb consists of a slopping passageway, a corridor, a white marble tomb door, a stone burial chamber, and two side rooms. As many as six niches were found, four of which were in the passageway and two in the corridor. The tomb initially featured a tumulus, a ritual door, and statues above ground;

but they had disappeared by the time of the discovery (Yuan, 1991).

12) Qingzhou (an anonymous tomb): this tomb had been damaged prior to its excavation. The tomb has been reported to contain a stone corridor, and a stone burial chamber (Xia, 2001).

4.4 Adoption of Chinese Customs

Although the Chinese and Sogdian cultures both employed aboveground burial facilities, underground burials were antithetical to Zoroastrian practice. According to the *Vendidad* (3. 36-37), the action of burying a corpse, whether a dog or a human, in the earth should be punished because corpses are the greatest source of pollution. Hence, Sino-Sogdian tombs have been generally regarded as a sign of Sogdian Sinicisation (e.g., Lerner, 2005; Chen, 2001). This section provides a more concrete analysis of how Sogdians mirrored Chinese tomb constructions.

4.4.1 The Chinese Tomb Form

Ancient tombs in China can be divided into three categories according to the materials used in the construction of their burial chambers: earth-chambered tombs, brick-chambered tombs, and stone-chambered tombs. Due to the cost of manufacturing and transport, stone was the most expensive material, followed by brick, and earth was the least expensive.

Half of the 20 selected examples are earth-chambered tombs, including the tombs of Kang Yexiang (no.1), Kang Fumian (no. 2), Shi Daode (no.5), YKJM33 (no. 6),

M1401 (no. 7), Di Caoming (no. 8), Kang Ye (no. 9), Shi Jun (no. 10), Kang Lingyun (no. 14), and An Pu (no. 17). Most of the other Sino-Sogdian tombs also fall into this category but were excluded from the list of examples because the earth-chambered tomb was the most popular form of Chinese tombs across various regions and dynasties (Ma, 2015, 91-96).

The second major tomb form used by the Sino-Sogdians was the brick-chambered tomb, which was observed in seven examples, i.e., the tombs of Tianshui (no. 3), An Jia (no. 10), An Yuanshou (no. 12), Kang Wentong (no. 13), Yu Hong (no. 15), Cao Yi (no. 16), and He Hongjing (no. 18). Three of the tombs date to the end of the sixth century: the tomb in Tianshui was probably constructed at the end of the sixth century, An Jia was buried in Xi'an in 579 CE, and Yu Hong was buried in Taiyuan in 592 CE (Zhang, 1992; SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 59; SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, 157).

Between the 550s and the 580s CE, northern China was divided into two warring states: the western part was under the control of the Northern Zhou Dynasty, while the eastern part was ruled by the Northern Qi Dynasty. Yu Hong's adoption of the brick-chambered tomb adhered to the local conventions of northeast China during the sixth century (i.e., the culture of the Northern Qi) (SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, 157), in which context brick-chambered tombs were widely employed by nobles and officials as a status symbol (Ni, 2015). Yu Hong served as *jianjiao sabao fu* (lit. acting director of the office of Zoroastrian affairs) (SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, 86); thus, he was able to build a tomb of brick.

During the same period, brick-chambered tombs were rare in northwest China (i.e.,

the territories of the Northern Zhou); only three examples have been observed. In addition to the abovementioned anonymous Sogdian tomb in Tianshui and the tomb of An Jia in Xi'an, the third reported brick-chambered tomb dates to 564 CE and belonged to Li Dan, who was a Brahmin and had migrated from Jibin (in the area of Gandhara in northwest India) to China between 520 and 525 CE (Cheng, 2006). Based on extremely limited non-Chinese occupants (i.e., two Sogdians and one Indian) of the brick-chambered tomb in northwest China during the sixth century, it seems that this tomb form was used exclusively by foreigners rather than by the Han or Xianbei people.

According to extant archaeological findings, the Northern Zhou court banned expensive materials used to build tombs, such as brick and stone, probably to save money and resources in order to better compete with the Northern Qi Dynasty (Xu, 2020). Apparently, these three non-Chinese (i.e., An Jia, Li Dan, and the anonymous Sogdian in Tianshui) did not follow the rules by the Northern Zhou court.

When China entered its golden age during the Tang Dynasty, brick-chambered tombs became more popular, especially among high- and middle-ranking officials (Lu, 2018). Four Sino-Sogdian brick tombs from this period have been excavated, including the tombs of An Yuanshou, who was buried in Xi'an in 684 CE; Kang Wentong, who was buried in Xi'an in 697 CE; Cao Yi, who was buried in Fenyang in 655 CE, and He Hongjing, who was buried in Daming in 865 CE. These four tomb-owners or their fathers were governmental officials; hence, their adoption of brick-chambered tombs followed the government protocols.

Except for the tomb of He Hongjing, the construction of the three other tombs

certainly overstepped the boundaries of the owners' authority. Yuanshou's tomb consists of a front and a rear brick chamber, a kind of tomb construction that was normally used by very high-ranking nobles such as members of the clans of royal consorts (Lu, 2018). Regarding Cao Yi (no. 16), his tomb includes only a single chamber of brick in line with his moderate rank; however, an ewer with a chicken-headed spout and a long snake-like handle was unearthed from his tomb. Such ewers were usually buried with high-ranking nobles (Wang, 2014). The case of Kang Wentong is unique since he did not occupy any official positions but was nevertheless buried in a double brick chambered tomb, like An Yuanshou's tomb and his tomb contained a tricolour guardian figure decorated with golden paint, a burial object that normally indicate a high-ranking individual (Lu, 2018). The epitaphs from these three tombs provide explanations for these irregularities. They or their fathers made significant contributions to the establishment of the Tang Dynasty. Therefore, these contributors were rewarded by being permitted to arrange their funerary matters according to the standards used for nobles (Lu, 2018).

The least popular tomb category among Sino-Sogdians was the stone-chambered tomb, which was observed only in three examples: the tombs of He Fujun (no. 4), who was buried in Yanchi in 700 CE; Shi Siming (no. 19), who was buried in Beijing in 762 CE; and a tomb that was unearthed in Qingzhou (no. 20) and dates to 573 CE. The stone-chambered tomb found in Qingzhou (modern Qingzhou, Shandong Province) reflected the longstanding local tradition of building elite tombs in the Northern Dynasties using stone strips or slabs (Ma, 2015, 102).

In ancient China, stone was the prerogative of the wealthy and the powerful, and by the Tang Dynasty, it had been adopted almost exclusively by emperors' tombs (Wang, 2018). As indicated previously, the tombs of He Fujun and Shi Siming both date to the Tang Dynasty. Shi Siming was a leader in the An Lushan Rebellion against the Tang Dynasty and then an emperor who headed his own dynasty based in the North China Plain (Yang, 2018). The stone tomb of Shi Siming mirrored a royal mausoleum. Additionally, the tomb initially featured a tumulus, a ritual door, and statues as part of aboveground buildings. These supporting facilities typically marked the mausoleums as belonging to high-ranking individuals or even royalty (Yuan, 1991). Thus, Shi Siming's stone tomb highlighted his legitimacy as an emperor in China. However, the stone-chambered tomb of He Fujun was more likely a result of the Zoroastrian traditions, as discussed below.

4.4.2 Joint Tombs for Couples

The Chinese custom of burying a husband and wife together was often recorded in many ancient texts and has been confirmed by many archaeological findings (Chen, 1995). Eight of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs were shared by a couple, including the tombs of Kang Yexiang (no.1), Kang Fumian (no.2), YKJM33 (no. 6), M1401 (no. 7), Shi Jun (no. 11), An Yuanshou (no. 12), Yu Hong (no. 15), and An Pu (no. 17). Evidently, a considerable number of Sogdian residents in China followed the custom of burying a husband and wife together.

Nevertheless, the case of An Pu was peculiar. If a wife lived longer than her husband, the wife would be buried inside her husband's grave due to the predominant patriarchal value system (Ma, 2015, 95). In 665 CE, An Pu was buried in Chang'an. In 704 CE, An Pu's wife passed away in Luoyang. In contrast to Chinese tradition, in 709 CE, An Pu's body was moved from Chang'an to Luoyang to be reburied alongside his wife (Zhao, 1982).

According to Ma's discussion (2015, 95), the unusual case of An Pu can be explained by the Sogdian origins of An Pu and his descendants, which is why they did not necessarily bury An Pu and his wife together in the Chinese manner. However, it was more likely that this unusual funerary practice was decided by practical factors. An Pu's son served as a musician in the Tang court (Shen, 2009). During the reign of Wu Zetian[22](r. 684-705 CE), the court was in Luoyang. Until October 706 CE, the successor of Wu Zetian relocated the court to Chang'an. When An Pu's wife passed away in Luoyang in 704 CE, the son was required to build a joint tomb in Luoyang, where he worked. In fact, similar cases in which the body of a husband was relocated and then reburied with his wife were permitted in the Tang Dynasty, although they were not common (Xing, 2008).

[22] Wu Zetian was the first and only female emperor in Chinese history. She was the ruler of China from 684 to 705 CE, ruling first through her sons and then from 690 CE in her own right. For details, see Rothschild (2015).

4.4.3 Family/Ethnic Cemeteries

Like joint tombs for couples, family cemeteries were another longstanding Chinese funerary custom (Yang, 2019, 97). Four Sogdian family cemeteries have been identified, including the Kang family cemetery at Jiaohe in Turfan, the Kang family cemetery at Badamu in Turfan, the Shi family cemetery in Guyuan, and the He family cemetery in Yanchi. Within each of these family cemeteries, most tombs were constructed similarly and regularly organised. The two Kang family cemeteries in Turfan marked an enclosure with paving stones or by digging a trench dug around the periphery. These methods were commonly used in Turfan to designate a family cemetery (Ma, 2015, 92). The most straightforward evidence for the identification of such cemeteries is that many tomb owners within a single cemetery shared the same surname. For example, the cemetery in Guyuan was composed of six tombs, whose owners all bore the surname Shi 史.

It is most appropriate to say that those so-called Sogdian family cemeteries were ethnic group cemeteries used by individuals with the same ethnicity and homeland. Among Sino-Sogdians, bearing the same surname indicated that individuals originated from the same city-state in Sogdiana, but their blood relationships were uncertain. For example, the shared surname Shi 史 in the cemetery in Guyuan merely indicates that these tomb owners were from the Shi 史 state (modern Shahrisabz in Uzbekistan) (Luo, 1996, 1). Notably, this kind of Sogdian cemetery, where many tomb owners shared a surname, has been conventionally described as a Sogdian family cemetery in existing literature. For the sake of convenience, this thesis uses this phrase when citing those

sources as references while also noting that such cemeteries might not have been used solely by a single family.

Using a cemetery for individuals from the same ethnicity rather than a single family might have been a choice of convenience for Sogdian immigrants. Some Sogdians who were buried in such cemeteries were second- or third- generation immigrants. They probably did not have many children to form a large family across a period of several decades. Instead, they had strong links with their ethnic brethren since they often formed large caravans along the silk roads and clustered in groups across China.

4.5 Maintenance of Sogdian Customs

The previous section indicated that Sogdian residents in China widely constructed Chinese-style underground tombs with different forms. However, the question of how Sogdians maintained their cultural traits even while adopting such heterogeneous burial facilities has not been discussed in the literature.

4.5.1 The Orientation of the Tomb and the Body

Chinese tombs traditionally faced south. The head of the deceased person normally faced north to avoid being positioned in the same direction as the tomb passageway (Shen, 2019, 277). However, *Druj nasush* (MP), the Zoroastrian corpse demon, is reputed to reside in the north. Ancient Persians also considered the north to be the direction of danger, robbers, diseases, inclement weather, and other evils (Shen, 2019,

272).

Considering these vast differences in the traditional orientation of the body, it is unsurprising that only two of the 20 selected examples followed the traditional Chinese layout, namely, Shi Daode (no. 5) and the anonymous deceased person in tomb M1401 (no. 7). Their tombs both face southwards. Inside the burial chamber, an earthen coffin platform was located adjacent to the west wall. Although the bodies had been moved by tomb robbers, the heads likely originally faced northwards (Luo, 1996, 87; NHWKY, 2022).

Most of the 20 selected examples used two specific methods to avoid having the head of the deceased person face northwards. First, body containers such as coffins were changed from the common north-south orientation in Chinese society to an east-west orientation. In such cases, the head of the deceased on/inside these body containers naturally faced eastwards or westwards. This method was used in the tombs of Kang Fumian (no. 2), Kang Ye (no. 9), An Jia (no. 10), and Shi Jun (no. 11) (see the illustration in Fig. 21).

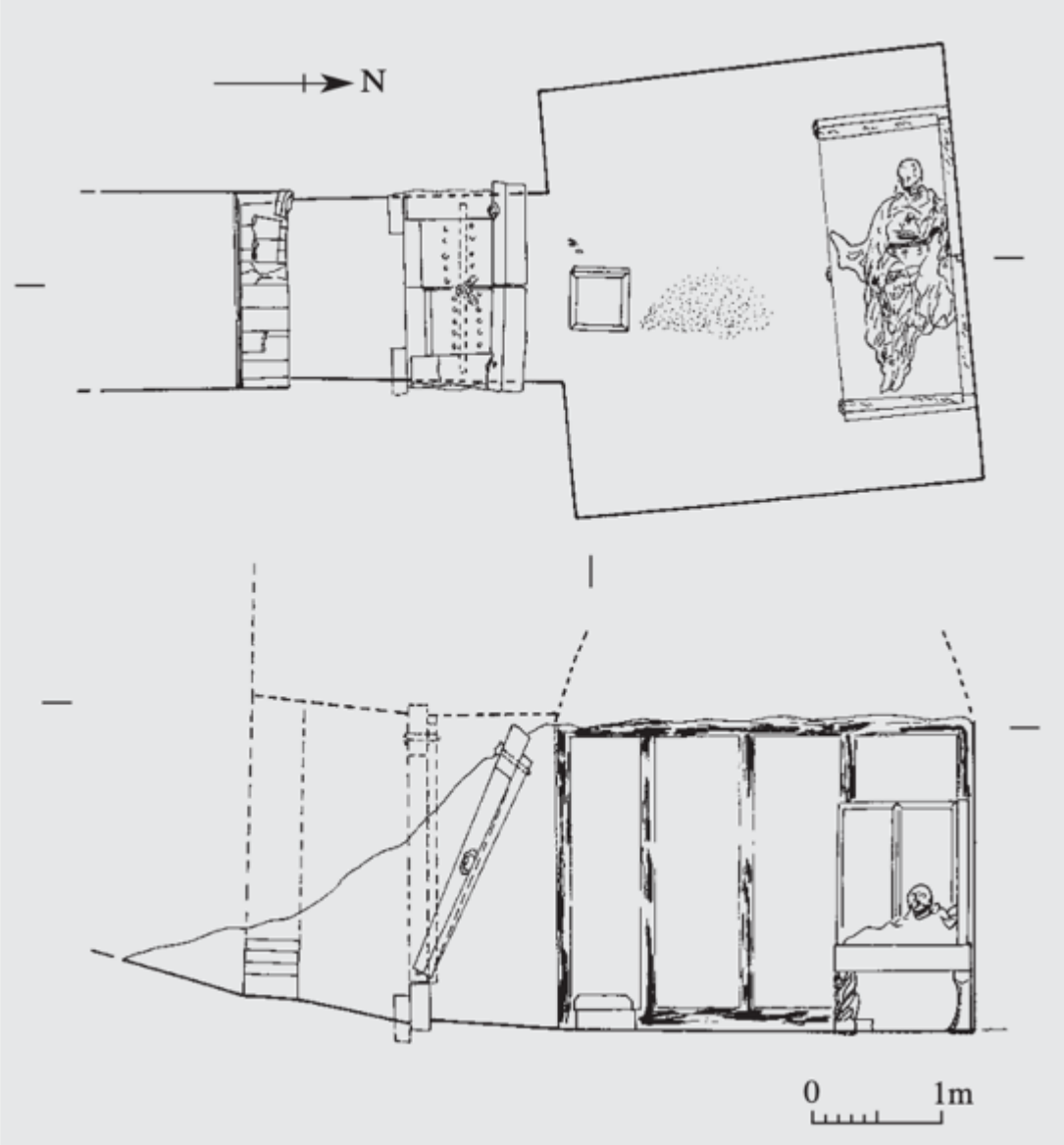


Figure 21. Plan of the tomb of Kang Ye.

The stone coffin bed against the wall exhibited an east-west orientation. Kang Ye's body was placed on the bed; therefore, his head faced westwards. After: Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009, p.23, fig.1.

The other methods were applied in the burial chamber, in which two or more body containers were placed, as seen in the tombs of YKJM33 (no. 6) and An Pu (no. 17) (see the illustration in Fig. 22). Body containers customarily exhibited a north-south

orientation as most Chinese did so, but the tomb itself was turned towards the north so that the head of the deceased lying on the body containers (e.g., wooden coffins) faced south.

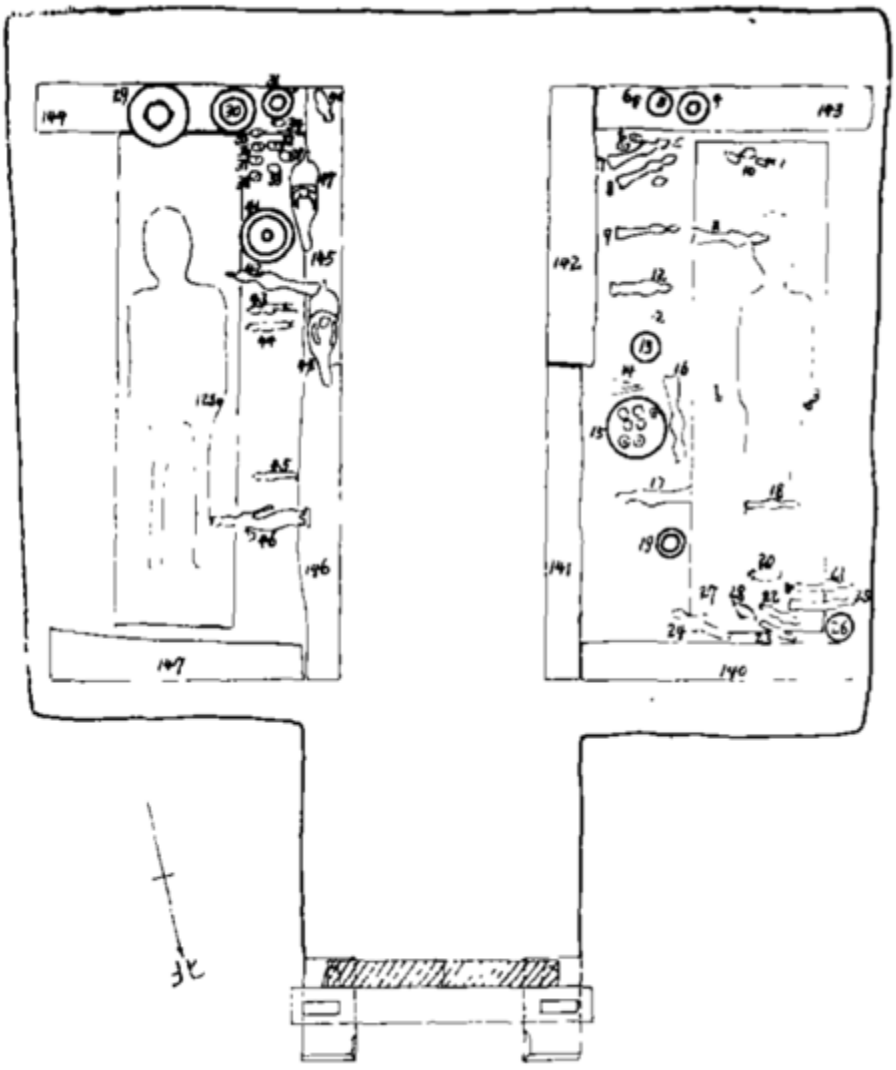


Figure 22. Plan of the tomb of An Pu.

Two coffin platforms supporting two wooden coffins separately enclosed the bodies of An Pu and his wife. The two platforms were placed side by side, and each exhibited a north-south orientation. Their heads of the bodies faced southwards. After: Zhao, 1982, p.22, fig.2.

4.5.2 Floor Treatment

In the tomb found in Tianshui (no. 3) and the tomb of He Hongjing (no. 18), the floor of the burial chamber received special treatment. In the former case, the floor was paved with tiles. Below the titles were two layers of different substances. The upper layer consisted of sandy soil, and the lower layer consisted of charcoal (Zhang, 1992). In the latter case, the floor of the burial chamber was paved with slabs above two layers of turpentine-smelling charcoal (Chen, 1984). Various materials were repeatedly used to embellish the floor of the Sino-Sogdian burial chambers, including sand, stone, wood, brick, and charcoal.

According to Mary Boyce's field work, which took place in the village of Sharifabad in Iran between 1963 and 1964, local Zoroastrians practised a funerary custom that relied on these materials. When a person died, his or her relatives lifted the body and placed it on a stone slab somewhere within the house, where sand was strewn around it to protect the good earth (Boyce, 1977, 148). Parsees in Mumbai, India, also use these materials as filters in their tower-like *dakhmas*. Pieces of charcoal and sandstone are placed at the end of each underground drain of the tower to purify the remaining materials from the corpse after its unarticulated bones have been collected in the pit at the centre of the tower (Modi, 1922, 58). These religious practices explain the unusual floor constructions found in some Sino-Sogdian tombs. That is, the floor or the whole chamber was purified using such materials.

4.5.3 Rock-Cut Tomb

In medieval China, only a few high-ranking people could afford to build the whole burial chamber out of stone because of its expensive cost due to exploitation, assemblage, and transport. By the Tang Dynasty, stone-chambered tombs were almost exclusively used by the royal house (Wang, 2018). To date, only three stone tombs have been identified as Sino-Sogdian, including the tomb of He Fujun (no. 4), the tomb of Shi Siming (no. 19) and the tomb in Qingzhou (no. 20). The last two examples are typical Chinese stone-chambered tombs.

On the other hand, the tomb of He Fujun, who was buried in the He family cemetery in Yanchi, might have been derived from Zoroastrian Rock-cut tombs. Many Rock-cut tombs have survived in the territories of ancient Persia (Shen, 2019, 294-295). A fitting example is the Rock-cut tomb of Qizqapan in the Kurdistan region in Iraq, which dates to the Median-Achaemenid Period, 600-330 BCE. This section compares to compare the He family cemetery and this Iraqi Rock-cut tomb in terms of tomb characteristics.

The tombs in the He family cemetery were carved into a low gypsum outcropping resembling a mound (Juliano and Lerner, 2001, 241). The tomb structure was then dug out beneath the outcropping, and each tomb featured two to five niche-like side rooms or niches that were cut into the burial chamber walls (Fig. 23). The dimensions of these niches are 160-220 cm long, 50-120 cm wide, and 30-120 cm deep. The edge of most niches features a groove for what appears to be a stone cover (Wu, 1988). Some niches

were empty when discovered or preserved the complete body of the deceased, but others were instead used to contain unarticulated bones of dead people after exposure. The corpse left in the eastern niche of tomb M4 exhibits traces of exposure; that is, two arm-bones were tied together with two woollen strings. The diameter of the loop made by each thread as it was tied to the bones was only two centimetres, suggesting that the bones had been tied in this way after the removal of the flesh (Wertmann, 2015, 47).

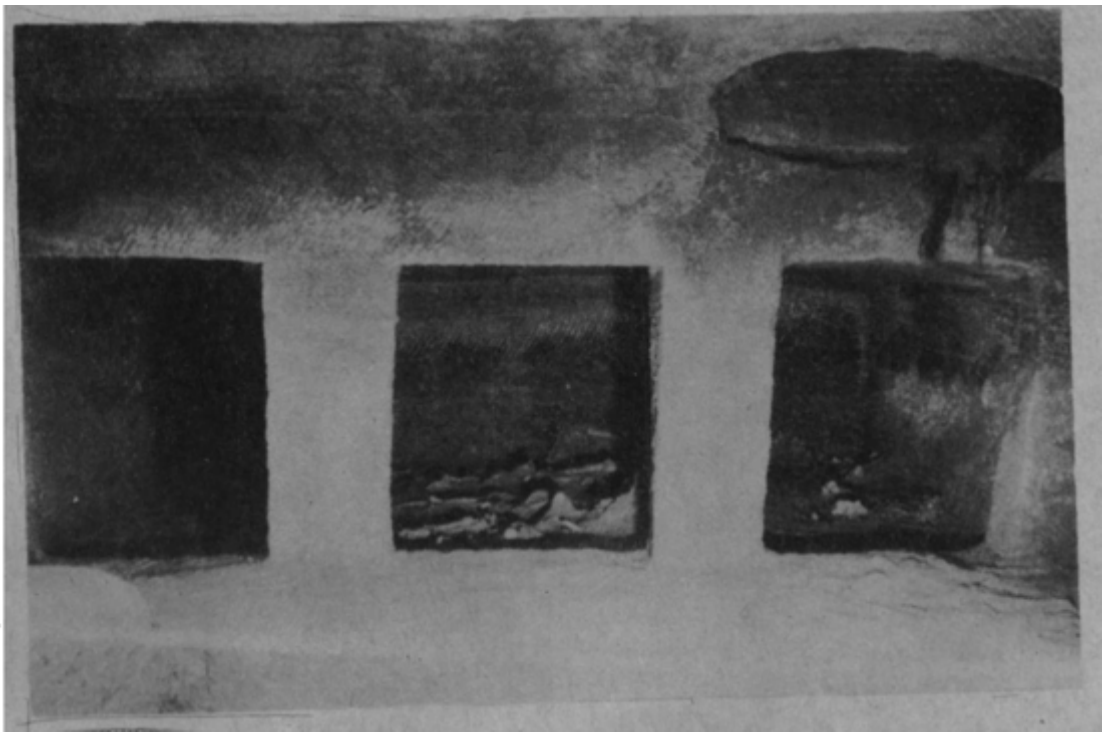


Figure 23. Niches on the eastern wall in tomb M5 of the He family cemetery.
The remaining bones inside the niches were fragmented and probably belonged to at least four different individuals. After: Wu, 1988, p.49, fig.11.

The Rock-cut tomb of Qizqapan in the Kurdistan region in Iraq, it was carved into a rock face and is located approximately eight metres above ground level. The area

below the high level of the tomb is flat (Fig. 24). It is assumed that this area was artificially smoothed out to make access to the tomb become difficult (Amin, 2018). The tomb is composed of a portico and three internal chambers. The roof of the portico is supported by two Ionian style half-columns, one on each side of the chamber entrance. The area above the entrance is decorated with a typical Achaemenid ritual scene featuring two people praying in the direction of a fire altar (Fig. 25) (Rezaei, 2021). The inside of the tomb features three chambers, each of which contains a pit, that are too small to accommodate adult bodies (Rezaei, 2021). The upper part of each pit includes a rim for what appears to be a stone cover (Fig. 26) (Amin, 2018).



Figure 24. The entrance of the Rock-cut tomb of Qizqaqan, Iraq.

After: Amin, 2018, fig.4.



Figure 25. Portico and its reliefs of the Rock-cut tomb of Qizqaqan, Iraq.

After: Rezaei, 2021, p.169, fig.2.



Figure 26. The right hand burial chamber of the Rock-cut tomb of Qizqaqan, Iraq. A rectangular pit was carved into the floor and its upper part features a rim. After: Amin, 2018, fig. 18.

Many similarities can be observed between the He family cemetery in Yanchi and the Rock-cut tomb of Qizqapan in the Kurdistan region in Iraq. First, these two burial structures were both made of stone. Second, after the flesh was removed, the bones were preserved in a small space inside the burial chamber, either in a niche cut into the wall or in a pit below the floor, both of which could both be covered, probably to the protection of the bones. More interestingly, despite the absence of a façade in the He family cemetery in Yanchi, a portico-like structure was built inside tomb M3 (Fig. 27). This portico-like structure contains a pair of octangular stone pillars, one on each side of the stone coffin bed, as well as a niche. This layout probably mirrors the true portico in front of the Rock-cut tomb of Qizqapan in the Kurdistan region in Iraq. Therefore, it is suggested that the He family tombs were more like Zoroastrian Rock-cut tombs than to Chinese underground stone-chambered tombs.



Figure 27. The burial chamber of tomb M3 of the He family cemetery.

Two octangular stone pillars stand on either side in front of a stone platform and a niche was carved into the wall behind the stone platform. After: Wu, 1988, p.47, fig.8.

The question of why the He family employed the Persian Zoroastrian funerary construction rather than Sogdian traditions is worth considering. Ancient Persians built Rock-tombs with pits to receive unarticulated bones after exposure, while Sogdians used transportable boxes called ossuaries to contain such bones. Judging from the surname He, this family were descendants of people from the state of He (Kushaniya, west of Samarkand) (Wertmann, 2015, 46). It seems peculiar that the He people from the state of He would practise a Persian tradition. There may be two explanations for this. First, Zoroastrian Rock-cut tombs may have been built in Sogdiana. However, given that most Rock-cut tombs in the territories of ancient Persia have survived,

potential Rock-cut tombs in Central Asia should be known to people if they did exist. Second, a more likely possibility is that the He people knew of and liked the Persian tradition due to a certain degree of common experience.

Medieval China established close diplomatic relations with Sasanian Persia, as evidenced in official historical accounts, while evidence of Persians in China is rare, probably because they did not bear symbolic surnames such as the 'nine surnames of zhaowu'. Most Persians bore the surname Li, which was the Tang royal surname and one of the most common surnames in China (Rong, 2001, 238-258). Some indirect evidence has highlighted the possibility of common experiences between Sogdians and Persians. For example, an Arabic text speaks of a merchant from eastern Persia who travelled to China even though the merchant did not leave a record in Chinese texts. This evidence indicates that Persians probably joined Sogdian caravans to China via land-based silk roads (De la Vaissière 2005, 183). The autonomous Sogdian communities located across China included not only Sogdian residents but also other non-Chinese residents, probably including Persians (Rong, 2001, 111-169). Another important point of commonality between Sogdians and Persians is that many in these populations believed in Zoroastrianism.

4.5.4 Stone Tomb Doors

In an underground Chinese tomb, a corridor was often sealed off by a brick wall and/or stone door leading to a burial chamber. Stone doors only existed in tombs of

middle- or high-ranking individuals due to their relative expensive cost.

Regarding Sino-Sogdian tombs, nine stone doors have been discovered, namely, in the tombs of Di Caoming (no. 8), Kang Ye (no. 9), An Jia (no. 10), Shi Jun (no. 11), An Yuanshou (no. 12), An Pu (no. 17), Shi Siming (no. 19), Shi Suoyan and Shi Hedan in the Shi family cemetery (referring to no. 5) and tomb M6 in the He family cemetery (referring to no. 6). In terms of shape, Sogdian stone tomb doors mostly exhibit the same form, including a lintel, two frames, two leaves, a threshold, and two spacers, with an additional lunulate part above the lintel in some cases (see the illustration in Fig. 28).

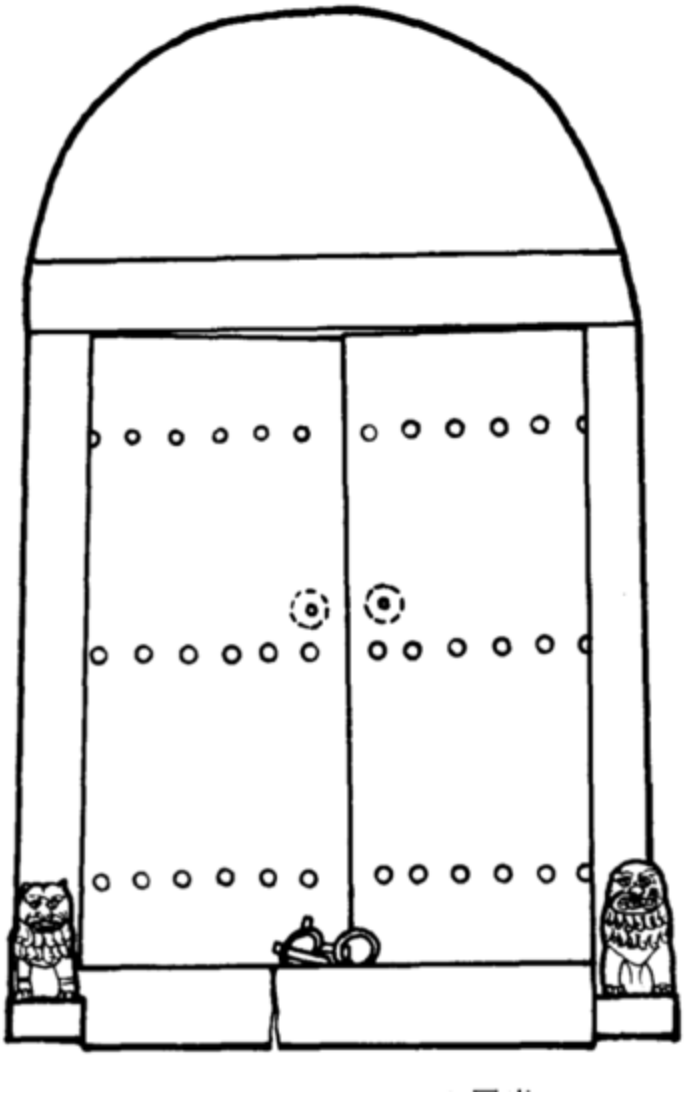


Figure 28. The stone door of the tomb of An Jia (line drawing).

After: SKY Shaanxi, 2003, p.11, fig.11.

Four of these nine stone doors date to the Northern Zhou Dynasty and were found in the tombs of Di Caoming, Kang Ye, An Jia, and Shi Jun. In addition, only one tomb containing a stone door dates to the Northern Zhou Period, i.e., the tomb belonging to Li Dan, a Brahmin. Li Dan was also one of the three non-Chinese (i.e., two Sogdians and one Indian) whose burial chambers were made of brick in the Northern Zhou Dynasty, as noted previously. Once again, these non-Chinese, primarily Sogdians,

became the exclusive customers of stone tomb doors at the same period (Yin, 2006, 53).

As mentioned previously, the Northern Zhou Dynasty prohibited extravagant tomb structures. Thus, neither the Xianbei nor the Han built brick-chamber tombs or assembled stone doors in tombs. However, these non-Chinese, primarily Sogdians, apparently did not follow the rules. Perhaps the Northern Zhou Dynasty sought to entice them to settle in the northwest China (i.e., the territories of the Northern Zhou) by allowing such burial structures. Many foreigners along the silk roads were wealthy traders who were ideal taxpayers for the Northern Zhou government. Their financial support enabled the Northern Zhou to compete with the Northern Qi for control of northern China. Such competition between these two warring states was widespread during the sixth century. For instance, they each tributed the Türks 100,000 pieces of silk per year to assure their neutrality or potential support (De la Vaissière, 2005, 209-210).

Another question is why the Northern Zhou Dynasty implemented such a policy of allowing these Sogdians to use stone tomb doors and brick-chambered tombs. To some degree, brick was a logical alternative to stone as a building material. Only a few regions in China had enough rocky mountains to use as stone quarries for chamber tomb construction and only a few high-ranking people could afford the expense. Thus, Chinese people had often used brick as an alternative to stone since the Han Dynasty (Chen, 2014, 6). From this point on, the Northern Zhou Dynasty indeed granted Sogdians the privilege of using stone in their tomb construction. This might have resulted from Sogdian preference for stone. Cultural considerations underlying this

preference are discussed systematically in Chapter 8 because this cultural pattern is referred to several times throughout this thesis.

The Sino-Sogdian adoption of the stone tomb door persisted from the Northern Zhou Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty, as shown by the six examples: the tombs of An Yuanshou, An Pu, Shi Siming, M6 of the He family cemetery, and Shi Suoyan and Shi Hedan of the Shi family cemetery. During the Tang period, many high-ranking officials constructed tomb doors of stone to indicate their prominent social statuses (Yin, 2006, 120). Non-Chinese, primarily Sogdians, were no longer the exclusive users of stone in tomb structures.

For Sogdians in the Tang period, the use of stone probably had two functions. Stone was associated with Sogdian traditions, as indicated by their predecessors in the Northern Zhou period; furthermore, it was a sign of prominent social status in China at the time. A fitting example is the Shi family cemetery in Guyuan, which consisted of six single tombs. Of these tombs, only two, i.e., those of Shi Suoyan and Shi Daoluo, contain stone doors since these two owners occupied the highest positions within the family when they were alive (Luo, 1996, 185-247).

Structurally, the tomb door forms the actual entrance to the burial chamber. This door was often painted or engraved with holy imageries to help the spirit of the deceased person ascend to immortality and protect their imagined home (Sha, 2019). All nine stone doors found in the Sogdian tombs were decorated with mythical images that featured two primary cultural backgrounds, i.e., Chinese and Sogdian, with the latter playing the dominant in four spieces discussed below. In other words, the Sogdian

owners of these four stone tomb doors wished to achieve supernatural objectives according to their own traditional images.

a. Shi Jun

The apsara is an important theme in the imagery on the stone door of the tomb of Shi Jun (Fig. 29). The imagery on the two leaves is in the relatively poor condition, but some wingless apsaras are still visible, probably six in total (Yang, 2014, 213). The wingless apsaras are depicted with a long skirt fluttering in the wind, resembling the flying figures in the mural paintings and sculptures found in Buddhist cave sites in China such as in the Mogao Grottoes (Yang, 2014, 213). Ten winged apsaras appear on the two frames. The image of a winged apsara was a feature of Gandharan arts that combined Buddhist worship with Hellenic artistic expression (Yang, 2014, 214). The ten apsaras with wings are playing instruments and dancing, evoking the concept of the Zoroastrian paradise (Av. *Garonmana*), which is known as the ‘House of Song’, where music includes perpetual joy (Lawergren, 2016).

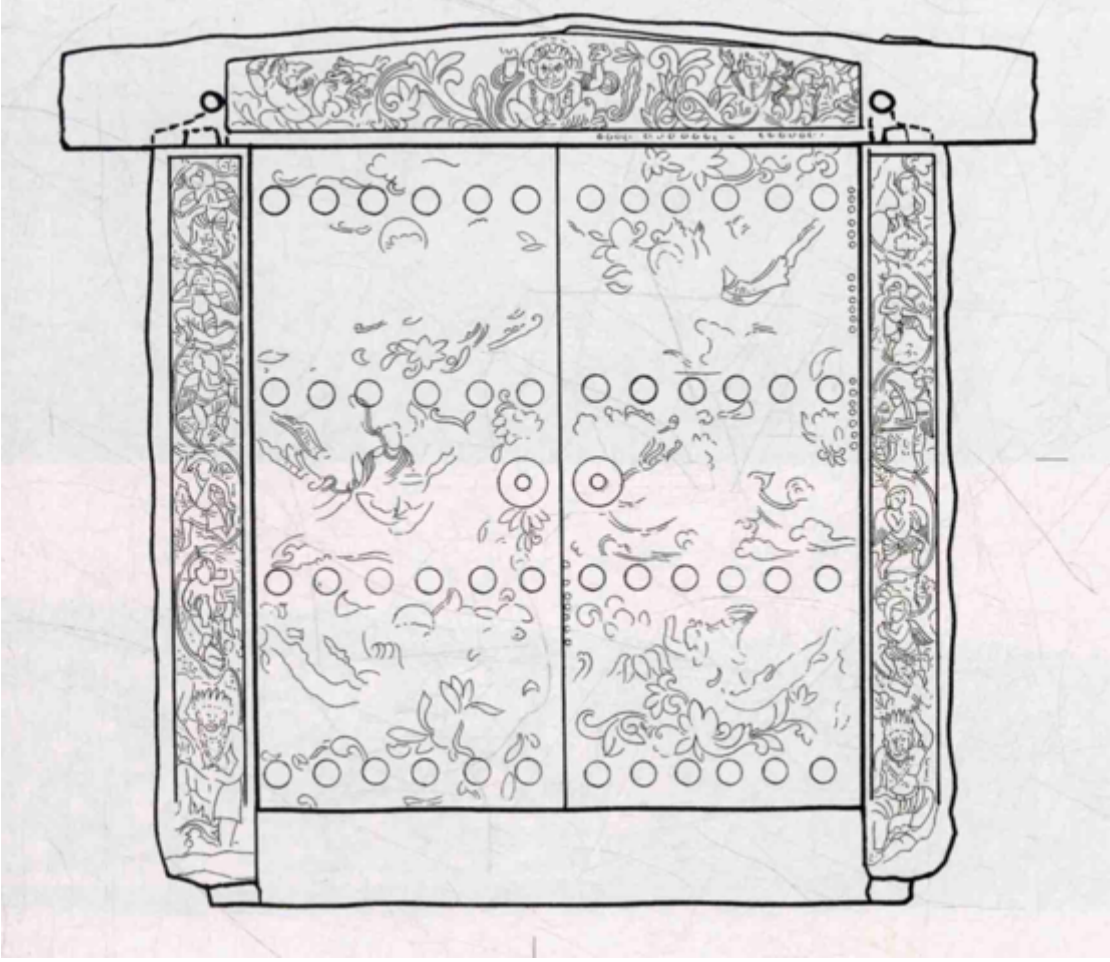


Figure 29. The stone door of the tomb of Shi Jun (line drawing).

Larger wingless apsaras on the two leaves, smaller winged apsaras on the two frames, and a haloed creature with four arms flanked by patterns of vines on the lintel. After: Yang, 2013, p.69, fig.63.

b. Di Caoming

Regarding the stone door of the tomb of Di Caoming, a pair of cocks are depicted on the lintel, thereby occupying a prominent position in this construction (Fig. 30). According to Zoroastrian tradition, the cock has two main functions in the netherworld. Namely, the cock acts as an assistant to *Sraosha* (Av.), the god who guides souls, and

assists him in smiting demons (Riboud, 2007). The pair of cocks on the lintel were meant to protect and guide the deceased person's soul to arrive smoothly in the Zoroastrian paradise (Luo and Rong, 2016, 261).



Figure 30. The stone door of the tomb of Di Caoming (line drawing).

Two warriors on the two leaves; two collections of the same graphics on the two frames including a dragon, bird, warrior, and lion; a beast head flanked by two cocks on the

lintel; two lion-shaped spacers; and a plain threshold. After: Luo and Rong, 2016, p.270, fig.1.

c. An Jia

The relief that shows the greatest focus on Zoroastrianism appears on the uppermost crescent-shaped section of An Jia's tomb door (Figs. 31 and 32). In the scene, three back-to-back camels stand in a central position on a lotus before a large fire altar. The altar is flanked on both sides by two bird-priests, both of which wear a *padam* (MP) mask to prevent the sacred fire from being polluted by Zoroastrian priests' breath and spit and hold a ladle that is pointed at the offering tables (Riboud, 2007). The ladle might be the *barsom* (MP), which refers to a bunch of blessed branches held by laity and priests during prayer (Wertmann, 2015, 57). Above their heads, two wingless apsaras play instruments. At each side of the door arch is a man bent in a kneeing position who is worshiping in front of a small fire altar.



Figure 31. The stone door leading to An Jia's funerary chamber.

A Zoroastrian ritual scene shows on the uppermost crescent part and other parts of the door are basically plain merely with wave patterns. After: SKY Shaanxi, 2003, fig.8.

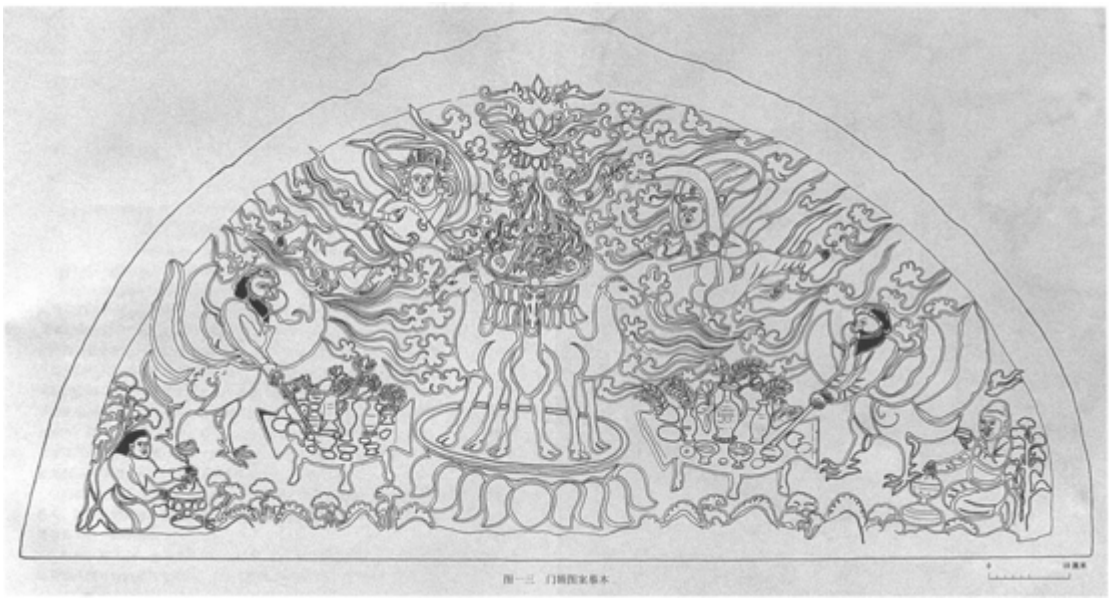


Figure 32. The ritual scene on the tympanum of the door of the tomb of An Jia (line drawing).

After: SKY Shaanxi, 2003, fig.13.

The large fire altar in the centre of the scene is a typical Zoroastrian symbol. In Zoroastrian funerals, it is necessary to set a scared fire on altar to communicate with gods and goddesses through worship (Sun, 2012, 148). The fire altar is loaded by three camels. This type of furniture is dedicated to *Verethragna* (Av.), the god of victory, because camel is the characteristic attribute of this god (Wertmann, 2015, 57). Additionally, the three camels stand on a lotus base, a typical Buddhist symbol.

On both sides of the fire altar are the two bird-priests, who use long *barsom* sticks to set vessels on the two tables. The plants at the bottom of the scene indicate that the ritual activity is taking place outdoors. Grenet and his colleagues (2004) identified that the outdoor Zoroastrian religious liturgy might be *caharom* (Guj.), which is held on the fourth morning following death when the soul supposedly crosses the Judgement of

Bridge (Av. *Chinvat*) to determine its fate. According to Zoroastrianism, the *Chinvat* bridge separates the world of the living from the world of the dead. All souls must cross the bridge upon death. Only if the deceased person's good thoughts, words, and deeds in life are judged to be sufficient can the soul cross the bridge to the Zoroastrian paradise (Lerner, 2011).

However, if this imagery referred only to the *caharom* liturgy, human priests would seem to suffice. A similar composition featuring a pair of humans rather than half-human and half-bird priests attending a fire altar was frequently depicted on Zoroastrian relics, including ossuaries from Central Asia (Zhang, 2018), and the Rock-cut tomb of Qizqapan in Iraq mentioned above (see Figs. 24-26). Thus, the additional half-bird images might contribute a certain mythological significance, although the specific meaning of this imagery remains controversial among scholars.

If the bird is meant to be a cock, it is linked with *Sraosha*, the god who guides souls, since the cock is a servant of this god (Riboud, 2007). Two other viewpoints have been expressed by Chinese scholars. First, Zhang (2018) suggested that the design was likely influenced by the 'glory given by god' associated with ancient Persia. This Persian concept was often expressed using avian imagery. Second, Jiang (2004, 95-120) identified the bird with an eagle, positing that it is a manifestation of *Verethragna*, the god of victory in Zoroastrianism, as the eagle is the characteristic animal of *Verethragna*. Riboud's explanation might be more reasonable since the cock image is also present on the stone door of Di Caoming, as mentioned above. Additionally, the allusion to *Sraosha* corresponds to the context in which the *caharom* liturgy is conducted for a soul

that requires guidance.

Towards the upper part of the scene are two apsaras with instruments (Yang, 2014, 109). As in the case of Shi Jun, the two apsaras are preparing for the deceased person's arrival into the Zoroastrian paradise, which is known as the 'House of Song'. Overall, the scene depicted on the lunar part of An Jia's stone door generally focuses on the deceased person's passage to the Zoroastrian paradise.

d. M6 Tomb in the He Family Cemetery

This stone door features two leaves that are engraved with two dancers performing the Sogdian whirl (Fig. 33) (Luo, 1994). The pervasive clouds are a visual representation of the mythological nature of the scene. Notably, clouds are present below the foot of the dancers, implying that they are dancing in a holy place rather than an earthly place. The imagery on An Jia's stone door provides an illustration for comparison (see Fig. 32). On that door, there are a pair of wingless apsaras surrounded by clouds, while the two priests and two praying people are located beneath clouds.

The other two less straightforward pieces of evidence in this respect are the long streamers that the pair of dancers wear and the small carpets on which they stand. Streamers and carpets were both common but not essential parts of the Sogdian whirl. These motifs were customarily used in Chinese artwork to convey a mythological environment, as seen in the murals of the Mogao Grottoes, where numerous holy figures are wrapped around streamers and stand on carpets (Sha, 2019; Luo, 1996, 52). Once again, the idea of the Zoroastrian paradise, which is known as the 'House of Song', was

visualised on Sogdian stone doors.



Figure 33. The door leaves of tomb M6 in the He family cemetery.

After: Wu, 1988, p.54, figs. 24-25.

4.6 Conclusion

The Chinese-style underground tomb was wholly alien to Sogdians because burying a corpse in the earth is severely prohibited in Zoroastrianism, which was the

primary religion of Sogdians. However, all the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs were basically Chinese forms, and many of them also adopted accompanying Chinese burial practices, such as joint tombs for couples, and family cemeteries. Their acceptance of the Chinese-style underground tomb might be a result of numerous factors, of which being 'institutionalised' played an important role. That is, the governments in Northern China had specific regulations regarding the tomb forms used by subjects of different political strata. Different types of the selected Sino-Sogdian tombs (e.g., earthen-chambered, brick-chambered, and stone-chambered) either conformed with the provisions or were allowed by the governmental as a reward for the deceased individuals' contributions. The Sogdians had become subjects in Chinese society because the structure of their tombs was similar to the tombs of other members of Chinese society according to the relevant regulations.

Meanwhile, most of the selected Sino-Sogdians retained their own cultural traits in different ways, such as the body's orientation, the embellishment of the chamber floor using unique elements, the Rock-cut tomb, and reliefs on stone doors. These attributes were unseen by people outside the bereaved family because they were implemented inside the burial structure, probably to avoid offending other members of Chinese society, especially powerful Xianbei and Han groups, who had distinct burial practices. Another interesting point is that these ways were not inherent Sogdian traditions but were created when the Sogdians settled in China. A fitting example is the stone doors found in Sino-Sogdian tombs, which were a native Chinese funeral element that was decorated with numerous reliefs related to Sogdian traditions or Zoroastrian rituals.

Chapter 5. Treatment of the Body

5.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates how Sino-Sogdians treated the deceased, addressing how bodies were handled (e.g., buried or burned) and where human remains were preserved. It also examines cultural reasons for the Sino-Sogdian treatment of the deceased. Traditional methods and ideas related to the treatment of the body in Chinese and Sogdian cultural backgrounds are presented first, followed by descriptions of Sino-Sogdian specific practices regarding the deceased based on archaeological evidence. Finally, this chapter discusses different cultural considerations involved in the numerous ways people deal with the deceased, as reflected in Sino-Sogdian tombs.

5.2 Chinese and Sogdian Ways of Dealing with the Body

Most ancient Chinese people obeyed the fundamental idea of treating their loved ones carefully: a corpse was kept as intact as possible until it was buried deep underground. Two widespread methods to maintain the integrity of a corpse included dressing dead people and putting them in coffins. In fact, the bodies of some nobles from ancient China are still preserved completely. A remarkable example of a such Chinese mummy is Lady Dai (dated to the early second century BCE), the occupant of the well-known Mawangdui Tomb 1, found in Chang'sha, Hunan Province. The deceased Lady Dai's whole body was wrapped in many layers of cloth and shrouds, and

her burial chamber included four successive ‘layers’ of coffins (Wu, H., 2010, 129).

Under the basic principles for the treatment of the body (i.e., maintaining the integrity of a corpse), any acts to damage a corpse were repugnant even though some heterodoxic practices certainly existed in China, such as cremation, which was favoured by Buddhists. Li Hao, the mayor of Taiyuan (modern Taiyuan, Shanxi Province) during the early years of the Kaiyuan period (713-741 CE), abolished a local burial custom that had been around for several years because it violated the orthodox Chinese treatment of the body. That is, the corpses of a group of monks and their disciples were not interred in the ground but were used to feed birds and animals in a suburb (Cui, 2003, 22). We will return to the heterodox burial customs in Taiyuan again in this chapter. For the moment, importantly, practices that would damage a corpse were accepted among common people, even though they were not allowed by court officials.

Why were ancient Chinese people keen to maintain the integrity of a corpse? This might result from an imaged intimate interaction between the body and the soul. The integrity of the deceased’s body was considered highly correlated with the condition of the deceased’s soul. The more complete the body of the deceased was, the happier and more comfortable their soul was.

At the foundation of Chinese funerals was a conceptual dualism about a person’s soul. The *hun* soul flies away when death occurs, while the *po* soul stays with the body in the tomb. Although the boundaries between the two souls became muddied after the Han Dynasty, the preservation of the deceased’s body was generally done in the hope of helping the souls achieve their respective purposes. First, the flesh and bones of a

corpse were kept as intact as possible, which was a precondition of the mystical rebirth of a deceased person (Ge, 2016). Second, the integrity of the corpse was also beneficial to the imaginary afterlife of the soul in its subterranean home. In *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping Guangji*), a Chinese compilation of legends, gossip, and stories, completed in 978 CE, records many short stories about souls in bad condition (e.g., cold and exposed) because their bodies or tombs were damaged (Zhang, 2018, 25).

Being radically different from the orthodox treatment of the body in China, Sogdians normally exposed the deceased people to excoriation by vultures because of their beliefs about Zoroastrianism, as discussed many times in previous chapters. Since the third or fourth century, a casket known as an ossuary had been used to preserve postexposure human remains in many parts of Central Asia (Grenet, 2015, 143). As Cai (1998, 26) noted, the ossuary custom is a key difference useful in distinguishing Sogdian Zoroastrians from Persian Zoroastrians because the latter usually constructed Rock-cut tombs to preserve postexposure human remains (for the Zoroastrian Rock-cut tombs, see Section 4.5.3).

The standard length of an ossuary is approximately 50-60 cm, which is just long enough to fit the femur, the longest human bone (Grenet, 2015, 143). Ossuaries can be made of fired clay, stone, and plaster, but all Sogdian ossuaries are ceramics (Pugachenkova, 1994). The production of an ossuary involved flexible standardisation. On the one hand, it was commonly shaped like a box or oval vessel with a removable lid and was decorated with motifs associated with Zoroastrianism. For example, a

serrated pattern was often applied to the mouth of ossuaries (e.g., Figs. 34 and 35). This geometric pattern prevailed across wide areas of West and Central Asia since very ancient times and was adopted by different religions (Gong, 2020). Regarding Zoroastrianism, the colonnaded pattern represented the worship of Ahurmazda, the highest god in Zoroastrianism (Chen, 2018).



Figure 34. Ossuary from the Ishtikhan burial ground, Uzbekistan.

After: Pugachenkova, 1994(8), p.235, fig.6.

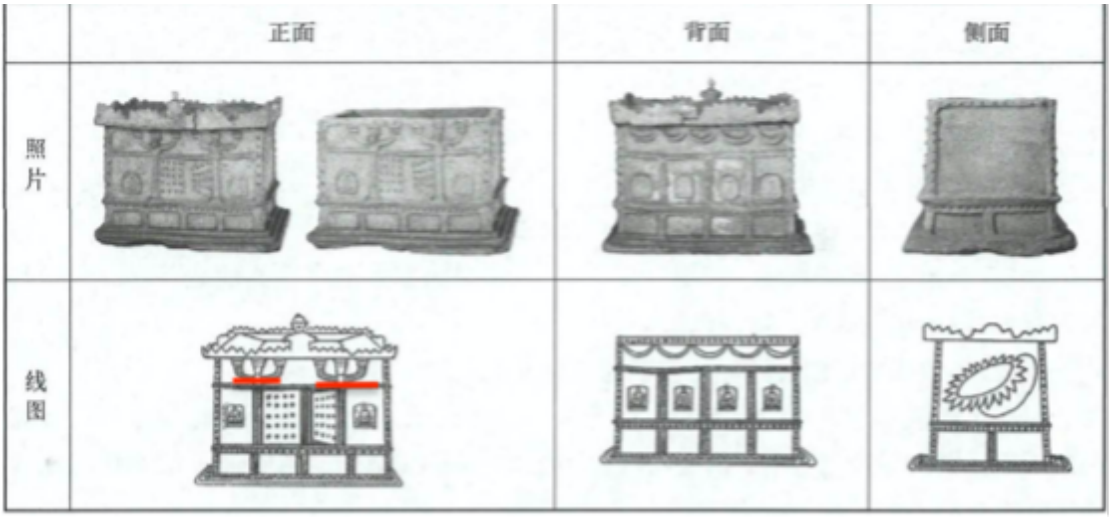


Figure 35. Ossuary from the Palace Museum, Beijing.

It was found in a storehouse of the Palace Museum, but the archaeological site is unknown. Two structural networks (*dougong*) are underlined in red. After: Chen, 2018(12), P.333, Fig.8.

On the other hand, ossuaries existed regional characteristics because they often mirrored local architectural styles (Pugachenkova, 1994). As seen in Figure 35, the depicted ossuary is house-shaped, imitating a traditional Chinese house, and there are some typical Chinese patterns decorating its body (Chen, 2018). For instance, there are two *dougong* brackets above the open door on the front side. A *dougong* is a structural network of interlocking wooden brackets and is one of the most prominent features in ancient Chinese architecture. Figure 36 shows a yurt-shaped ossuary. Moreover, the front wall displays a herringbone pattern, which is probably an imitation of the trellis-like frame of a yurt. Thus, the yurt-shaped ossuary likely belonged to the nomadic Zoroastrian (Pugachenkova, 1994).

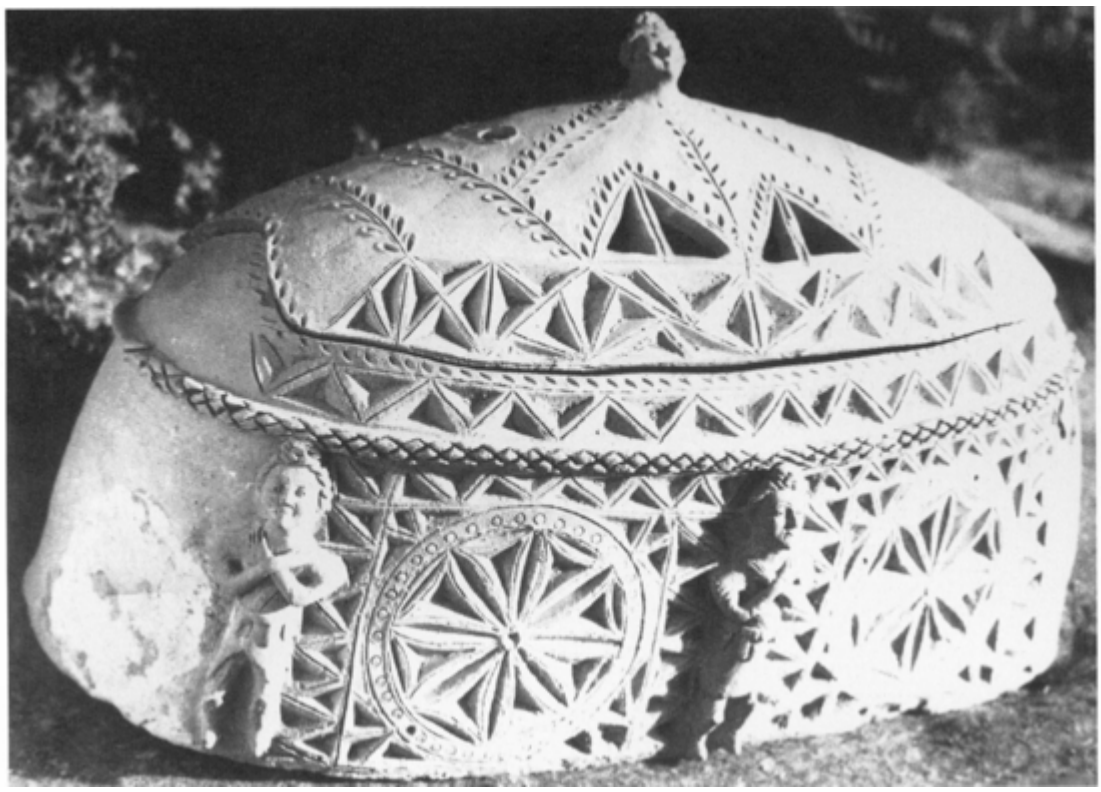


Figure 36. Ossuary from the Krasnorechensk necropolis, Kyrgyzstan.

After: Pugachenkova, 1994(8), p.231, fig.3.

5.3 Sino-Sogdian Treatment of the Body

The following descriptions of the Sino-Sogdian treatment of the bodies of the deceased emphasise 20 selected examples, which are arranged geographically, beginning in the west and moving towards the east. Critical information is tabulated for reference (Appendix 4). This is merely a descriptive section, and these complicated methods of body treatment are analysed from the perspective of acculturation in the following sections.

1) Turfan (two Kang family cemeteries): two enclosed cemeteries are located at different sites in Turfan. One of the cemeteries is composed of 36 tombs at Jiaohe, and

the other, comprising 60 tombs, is at Badamu. The 96 tombs generally show similar methods of handing the bodies of the deceased. That is, most of the dead were laid on a reed mat with or without an earthen platform, and a few were enclosed in a wooden coffin with or without an earthen platform (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 335).

The two selected examples (the tomb of Kang Yexiang from the Jiaohe cemetery and the tomb of Kang Fumian from the Badamu cemetery) followed mainstream practices for the handling of corpses. In each of these tombs, two skeletons, a male and a female, were laid on a piece of reed mat elevated on an earthen platform (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 21 and 230).

2) Tianshui (an anonymous tomb): inside the burial chamber, a stone funerary bed with screens was placed adjacent to the southern wall and oriented to the north. Wood fragments and skeletal remains reportedly overlay the top of the stone bed (Fig. 37) (Zhang, 1992, 46). Apparently, the tomb owner was placed inside a wooden coffin on the top of the stone bed.

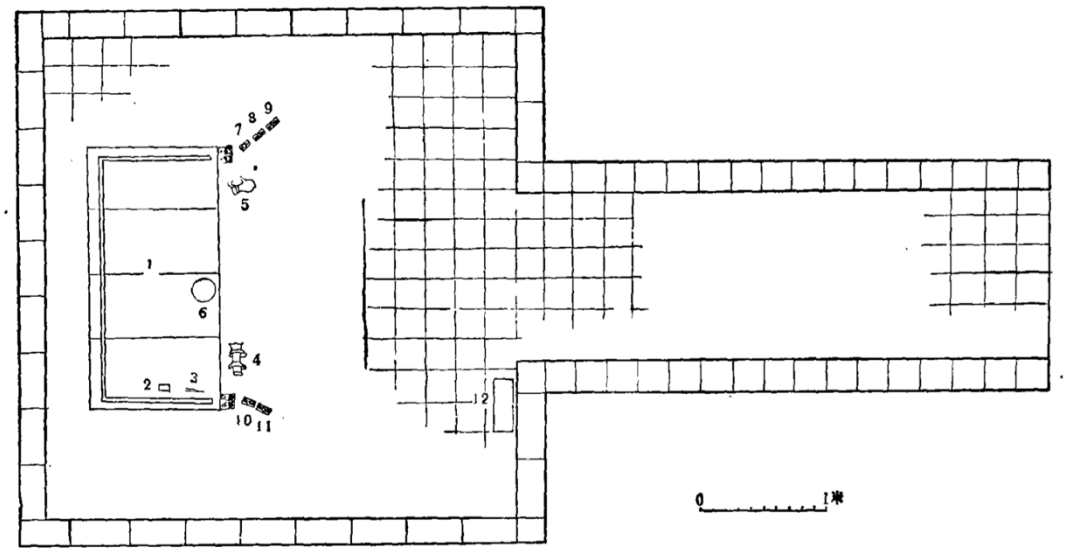


Figure 37. Plan of the anonymous Sogdian tomb found in Tianshui.

Number 1: the stone bed with screens, and numbers 2-12: burial objects. After: Zhang, 1992, p.46, fig.1.

The stone bed was composed of three main components: a screen, a platform, and the lower base (Fig. 38). The screen consisted of 11 rectangular stone tablets with pictures, five of which were in the centre, and three of which were on the sides. The platform on which the body lay was composed of four plain tablets. Below the platform, was a base composed of two rectangular stone tablets whose surfaces were carved with two rows of six niches each. Two stone animal statuettes, probably lions or dogs, were placed flanking each side of the platform to function as supports. Li (2013) suggested that both creatures resemble dogs more than lions, in particular because of the shape of their ears (their ears are erect and comparatively large) and their squatting posture. If this was the case, the two stone dog statuettes probably alluded to the Zoroastrian funerary ritual called ‘the glance of the dog’ (*Sagdid*) (for its explanations, see Section 1.2.1).

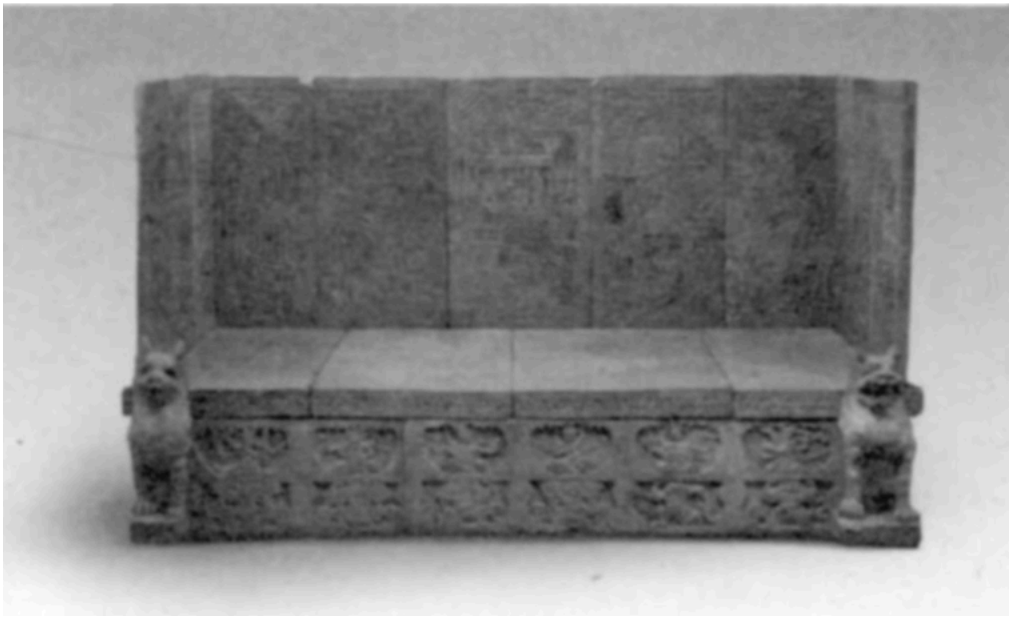


Figure 38. Reconstruction of the stone bed with screens from the anonymous Sogdian tomb in Tianshui.

After: Li, 2013, p.86, fig.1.

3) Yanchi (the He family cemetery): as presented in Chapter 4, this Sogdian cemetery, composed of six tombs, entirely resembled the Persian Rock-cut tombs, and many skeletal remains were found in niches on the walls. Moreover, the presence of a stone platform with different functions was confirmed in every tomb of this Sogdian cemetery. Regading the selected tomb M3, the stone platform supported nothing, and no human remains were found inside the tomb at all (Wu, 1988).

4) Guyuan (the Shi family cemetery and two public cemeteries): a platform made of adobe or stone existed in the six tombs of the Shi family cemetery in Guyuan. The selected example (Shi Daode's tomb) contained a rectangular earthen platform adjacent to the west wall of the burial chamber. Above the earthen platform, some clods of mud with silk marks were found. The skull of the tomb owner (i.e., Shi Daode) was found

at a location 0.8 metres from the tomb door, and other skeletal remains with coffin nails were found in a mound on the floor (Luo, 1996, 89). Apparently, the body of Shi Daode had been placed inside a wooden coffin; however, it seems that the coffin was not elevated by the platform but rather placed directly on the ground. The platform held silk products, probably clothes that Shi Daode had worn.

In addition to the Shi family cemetery, two public cemeteries related to Sino-Sogdians were discovered at Nanyuan and Jiulongshan in Guyuan. Five Sogdian tombs from the Nanyuan cemetery exhibited different ways of handling of the body. Wooden coffins were used to preserve bodies in two of the tombs (NWKY, 2012, 114-125). In the other three tombs of the Nanyuan cemetery, including the selected example (tomb M1401), all skeletal remains were found on the ground (NWKY, 2012, 114-125; NHWKY, 2022, 18). With respect to tomb M1401, a brick platform was placed adjacent to the west wall of the burial chamber, but two skeletons were scattered across the northeastern area of the burial chamber (NHWKY, 2022, 18).

Two Sogdian tombs from the Jiulongshan cemetery also showed different ways of handling of the body. In one tomb, a brick coffin platform was built inside the burial chamber and two skeletons were found on top of the platform (NWKY, 2012, 124). In another tomb (the selected tomb YKJM 33), two skeletons, identified as a male and a female, were placed side by side on the floor (NWKY, 2012, 127).

5) Jingbian (Di Caoming's tomb): in 1993, the tomb of Di Caoming was robbed. It was reported that human bones, probably belonging to the tomb owner, were placed in the burial passageway. It was also recalled by a famer who participated in tomb robbery

that a stone monument existed in the tomb, but only seven stone statuettes are now found in the collections containing material from this tomb (Luo and Rong, 2016, 270).

Four of the seven stone statuettes are lion-shaped and the other three are shaped like other unidentified beasts. Luo and Rong (2016, 290-292) inferred that compared with similar stone statuettes found in Sino-Sogdian tombs, these seven stone statuettes were likely used to support a stone bed with screens (Fig. 39)

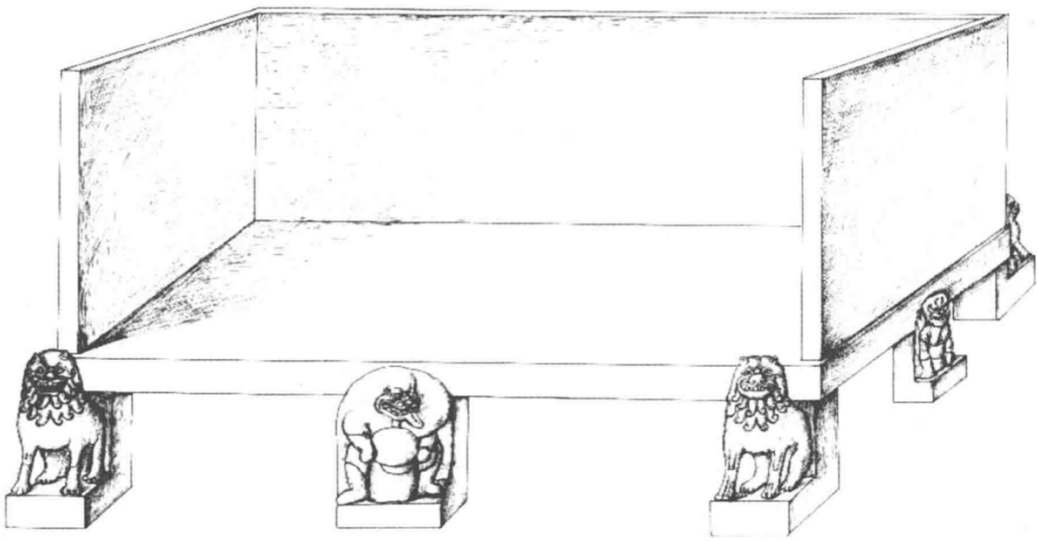


Figure 39. Concept of the stone couch in the tomb of Di Caomin.

After: Luo and Rong, 2016, p.292, fig.16.

6) Xi'an (the tombs of Kang Ye, An Jia, Shi Jun, An Yuanshou, Kang Wentong, and Kang Lingyun): a stone bed with screens was found in the tombs of Kang Ye and An Jia. The stone bed found in the tomb of Kang Ye comprised three components: an enclosing screen, a platform, and animal-shaped bed legs (Fig. 40). The enclosing screen, which ran along the back and two sides of the platform, was fashioned out of

four rectangular stone panels: two back panels and the left and right panels. The lying platform was a long, rectangular tablet whose front and sides were carved with relief. Below the platform were five animal-shaped bed legs, probably lions (Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009, 24).



Figure 40. The stone bed in the tomb of Kang Ye.

After: Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009, fig. 3, pig. 24.

The stone bed found in the tomb of An Jia featured a similar shape to the Kang Ye stone bed, composed of a screen, a lying platform, and bed legs (Fig. 41). The only obvious difference between these two stone beds was the shape of the bed legs. The An

Jia stone bed was supported by seven rectangular legs, four at the front and three at the back. The legs of the Kang Ye stone bed were probably lion-shaped, as illustrated above.



Figure 41. Reconstruction of the stone bed with screens in the tomb of An Jia.

After: SKY Shaanxi, 2003, fig.1.

Notably, Kang Ye's complete skeleton, with silk garments still intact, was lying supine on the stone bed (see Fig. 40) (Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009, 24). An Jia's bones were not found on the top of the stone bed but were lying on the north side of the burial passageway, and some of the bones contained several clear smoke marks (Fig. 42) (SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 12).

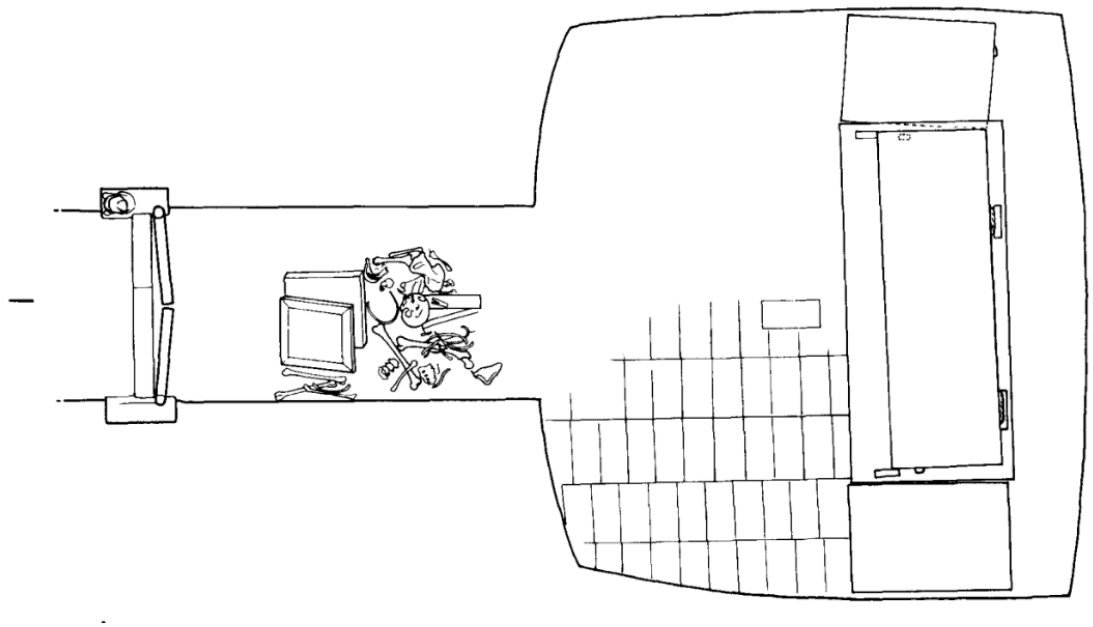


Figure 42. Plan of the tomb of An Jia.

Bones were lying on the north side with of the burial passageway with two epitaph tablets. After: SKY Shaanxi, 2003, p.13, fig.1.

In the tomb of Shi Jun, a house-shaped sarcophagus was found in the north-central location of the burial chamber. It was composed of a hipped roof, a stone base, and four walls completely covered with bas-reliefs. A stone divan was placed inside the sarcophagus (Yang, 2014, 53). At the time of excavation, most of the human bones were scattered, mainly on the stone divan inside the sarcophagus and some outside the sarcophagus. These bones were identified as belonging to a male and a female, likely Shi Jun and his wife (Fig. 43) (Yang, 2014, 62).



Figure 43. Top: the stone house in the tomb of Shi Jun. Bottom: the skeletal remains on the stone divan.

After: Yang, 2013, p.53 and 64, figs. 43 and 59.

In the tomb of An Yuanshou, a brick platform was placed adjacent to the west wall. Coffin ashes and a few human bones were discovered in the burial chamber, but the exact location where the ashes and human bones were found was unclear (Chen, 1988, 37). The tomb of Kang Wentong, inside the burial chamber, comprised a brick platform placed adjacent to the west wall. The body of Kang Wentong was originally placed on the platform because human remains were found on top of the platform (Yang, 2004, 21). Unfortunately, the body treatment used for the tomb of Kang Lingyun was not documented (Fukushima, 2016, 116).

7) Taiyuan (the tomb of Yu Hong): a house-shaped sarcophagus was placed slightly north of the centre of the chamber. It was composed of a hipped roof, a stone base, walls with pictures, and four columns in the front (Fig. 44) (SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, 15–46). The bones of Yu Hong and his wife were found at three locations: on the ground in the burial chamber, on the stone base, and below the stone base (Fig. 45) (SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, 47).

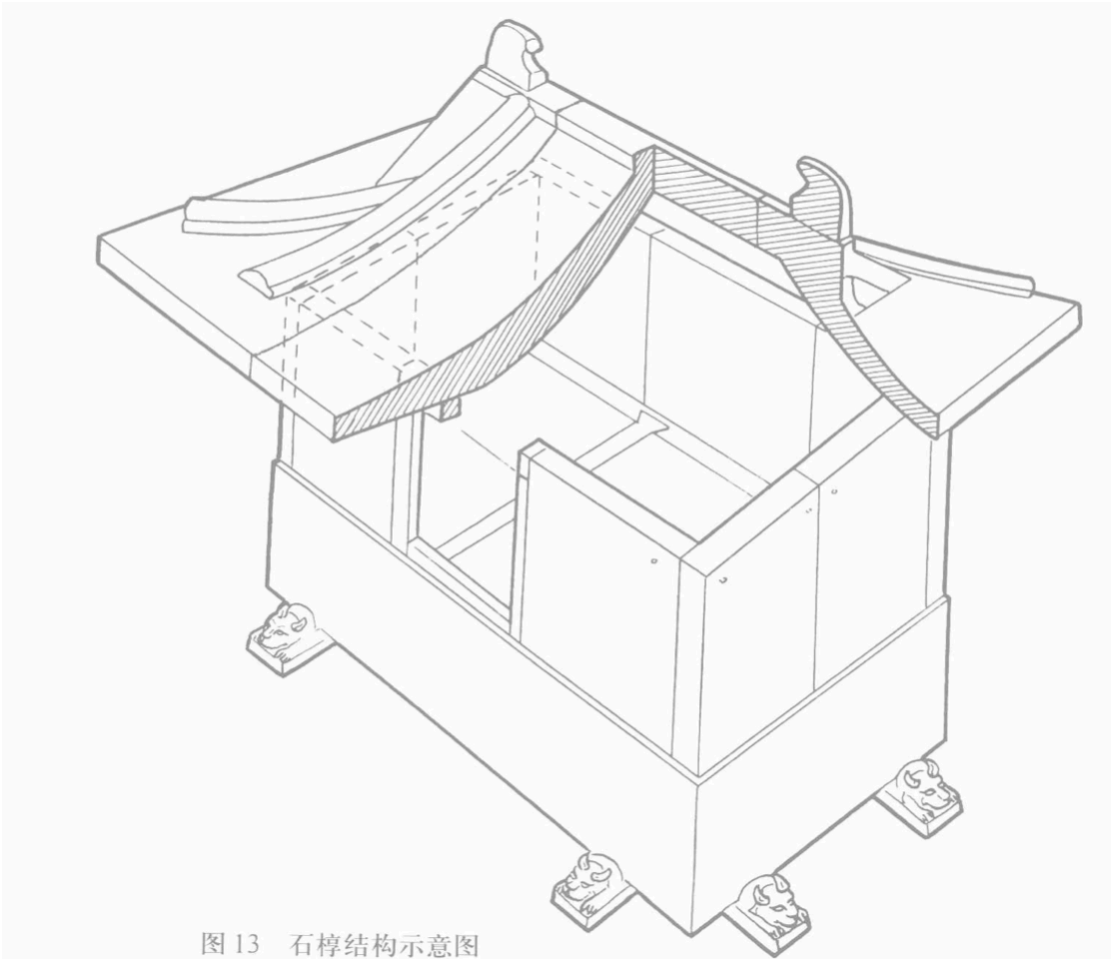


Figure 44. Structure of the house-shaped sarcophagus from the tomb of Yu Hong.

After: SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, p.21, fig. 13.

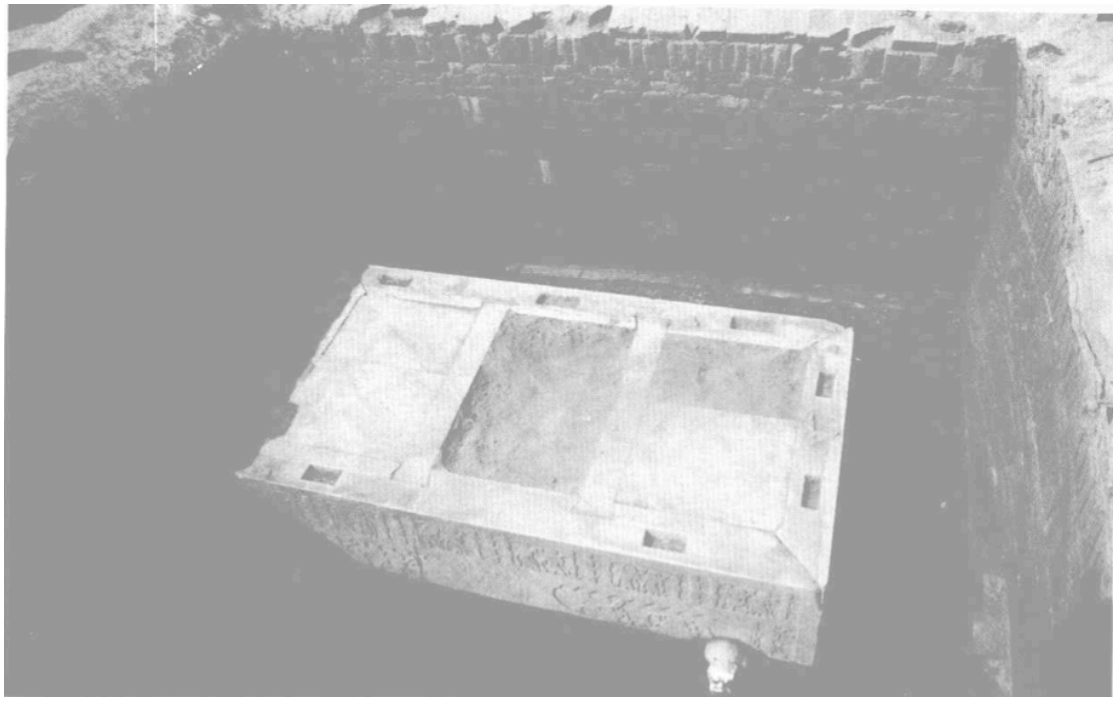


Figure 45. Stone base of the house-shaped sarcophagus in the tomb of Yu Hong.
At the time of discovery, the right covers had been smashed and only the left cover survived. Some human bones were in the space below the covers of the stone base. After: SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, p.30, fig. 30.

8) Fenyang (the tomb of Cao Yi): this tomb did not contain any burial receptacles or human remains (Li, 2007).

9) Luoyang (the tomb of An Pu): inside the burial chamber, two earthen platforms with stone sealing sides were placed to the west and east. On the top of these two platforms, rotten wood, coffin nails, and two skeletons were found (see Fig. 22) (Zhao, 1982, 22). Apparently, the bodies of An Pu and his wife were enclosed by two wooden coffins elevated on the platforms.

10) Daming (the tomb of He Hongjing): unfortunately, the body treatment used was unknown because this tomb had been destroyed (Chen, 1984, 721).

11) Beijing (the tomb of Shi Siming): although a few pieces of a destroyed stone monument and the cranium of the tomb owner (i.e., Shi Siming) survived, the body treatment used was unknown because no details were provided by the excavation report (Yuan, 1991).

12) Qingzhou (an anonymous tomb): this tomb had previously been damaged. Only 11 stone slabs survived. Xia (1995) inferred that these slabs originally stood adjacent to the walls of the burial chamber. Considering the shape and decorative style of these stone slabs, Zheng (2002, 236-246) suggested that they formed the walls of a house-shaped sarcophagus.

5.4. Adoption of Chinese Customs

5.4.1 Chinese Burial Receptacles

a. Reed Mats with or without Platforms

The reed mats were handmade mats made of plaited reed. Putting a reed mat below a corpse was a local custom in Turfan. The custom was practised as early as the timing of burials in the Yanghai cemetery (c. 2000–1000 BCE) (XWK and TDWW, 2004, 3). Even after Turfan became an official administrative region of Tang China in 640 CE, reed mats were still used in most tombs there (Yu and Li, 2011, 9–10).

Among the 20 selected Sogdian tombs, reed mats appeared in two tombs, both from Turfan, namely, the tomb of Kang Yexiang (no.1) and the tomb of Kang Fumian (no. 2). In each tomb, a reed mat was placed on the surface of an earthen platform for the

deceased to lie on (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 21 and 230). This was common in the usage of reed mats in funerary contexts in Turfan, but they could also be directly placed on the floor of the burial chamber to support the deceased (TW, TY, and TB, 2019).

For the Sogdians, the use of reed mats was strongly contrary to the doctrine of Zoroastrianism. Plants are considered a holy creation and are thus be defiled by the polluting body (Foltz, 2010, 373). When a corpse is exposed to scavengers, the *Vendidad* (8. 14–22) requires the corpse to be fastened to the feet and to the hair with iron to avoid scavengers transporting the bones to the water or to plants. Therefore, the adoption of reed mats by Sino-Sogdians revealed their eschewal of this belief and their acceptance of Chinese funerary rites.

b. Wooden Coffins with or without Platforms

Wooden coffins were the most common burial receptacle in China[23]. Starting in the Eastern Zhou period (770-256 BCE), wooden coffins were elevated by a low platform of pounded earth, bricks, or a flat stone (Wang, 2021). A basic function of these platforms was to hold coffins above ground thus to keep them dry. This form is

[23] The shape of wooden coffins in Han and Xianbei was different. The Han-style wooden coffin was rectangular, while the Xianbei-style one was trapezoid. The Xianbei coffin had a much broader and higher headboard relative to its footboard. The Xianbei-style was gradually accepted by Han people and became the major shape of wooden coffins in northern China with the establishment of the Xianbei-leaders' Northern Wei Dynasty there (He, 2010, 26).

customarily called the coffin platform by archaeologists. In the Tang Dynasty, the setting of coffin platforms was widespread, and only a small number of wooden coffins were directly placed on the ground (Cheng, 2007, 87).

Evidence of wooden coffins was found in four of the 20 Sino-Sogdian tombs, including the anonymous tomb in Tianshui (no. 3), the tomb of Shi Daode (no. 5), the tomb of An Yuanshou (no. 12), and the tomb of An Pu (no. 17). In the tomb of An Pu, two wooden coffins were placed on two earthen platforms (Zhao, 1982, 22). Due to the lack of detailed descriptions of the tombs of Shi Daode and An Yuanshou, it is not certain whether their wooden coffins were supported by lower platforms. The use of the wooden coffin in the tomb in Tianshui was very peculiar because this is the only example of a wooden coffin supported by a luxurious stone funerary bed with screens (Zhang, 1992, 46).

As discussed above, plants are considered holy creations and are thus defiled by polluting corpses (Foltz, 2010, 373). Thus, the adoption of wooden coffins to support the body was also went against the Zoroastrianism doctrine. Although enclosure of the corpse in a stone coffin was practised by many Persian kings from the Achaemenid period to the Sassanian period, the coffins were made of stone rather than wood (Ma, 2022, 66–96).

c. Stone Funerary Furniture

Stone funerary furniture is an academic term that collectively refers to stone funerary beds and house-shaped sarcophagi. These two forms had contemporaneous

appellations in ancient China. Stone funerary beds were called *shichuang* 石床 ('stone beds')[24], and house-shaped sarcophagi were called *shishi* 石室 ('stone chambers') or *shitang* 石堂 ('stone halls')[25].

Stone funerary beds refer to couch-like stone platforms with pictorial screens. This form was probably derived from Chinese domestic beds (Zhang, 2010, 443). A fitting example is the bed with screens depicted on the *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies* (*Nushi zhen tu*) by Gu Kaizhi (345-406 CE) (Fig. 46). The use of such beds in Chinese tombs emerged during the fifth century, and their first users seem to be vastly different in ethnicity (Müller, 2019, 424). In the second half of the sixth century, Sogdian elites, especially those with title *sabaos*, nearly became the nearly exclusive

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[24] *Diverse Notes on the Western Capital* (*Xijing zaji* 西京杂记), a collection of ancient Chinese short stories that mostly took place in Chang'an during the Han Dynasty, includes two grave-robbing stories. In these two stories, graverobbers found stone monuments termed *shichuang* 石床 ('stone beds'). Another similar appellation appears on a stone slab in Di Mensheng's (d. 543 CE) stone monument, reading *shichuang* 石床 ('stone beds') (Müller, 2019, 384-387).

[25] The house-shaped sarcophagus for Xie Xing's wife (buried in 458 CE) was named a *shishi* 石室 ('stone chamber') according to the inscription carved on the wall. The house-shaped sarcophagus for Shi Jun (d. 579, buried in 580 CE) and his wife was named a *shitang* 石堂 ('stone hall') in Chinese and *snkynʾk βγktʾk* ('a stone house of gods') in Sogdian, according to his epitaph of the two languages (Müller, 2019, 384-387).

users of stone funerary beds (Müller, 2019, 383). This kind of burial receptacle was not popular during the Tang period (Müller, 2019, 390).

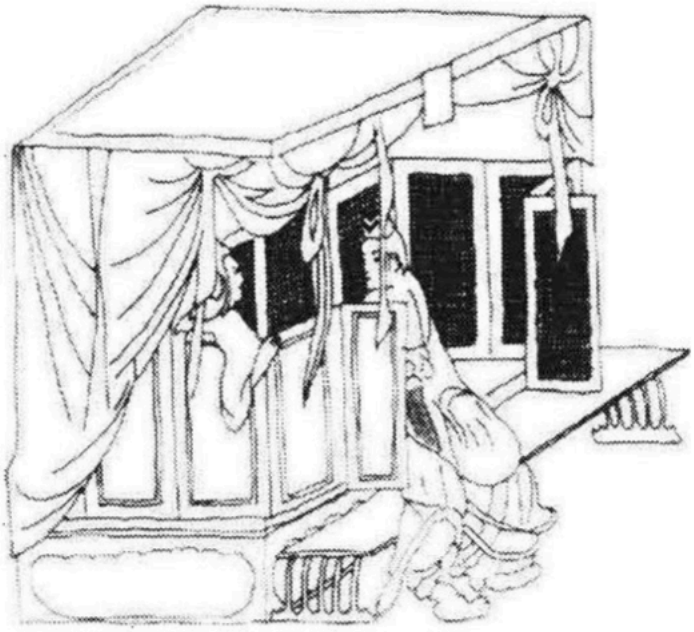


Figure 46. Depiction of a bed with screens.

After: Zhang, 2010, p.434, fig. 1.

Three relatively complete sets of stone funerary beds were discovered in the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs, including in the anonymous tomb in Tianshui (no. 3), the tomb of Kang Ye (no. 9), and the tomb of An Jia (no. 10). In the tomb of Di Caoming (no. 8), there was probably one stone funerary bed, but only seven stone statuettes, which were probably the legs of the bed, survived.

The four pieces were used in vastly different ways. The anonymous tomb of Tianshui, as described previously, is the only case with both a stone funerary bed and a wooden coffin. In the tomb of Kang Ye, his complete skeleton, with his silk garments

still intact, was discovered lying supine on the stone bed (see Fig. 40). The third site with stone funerary beds was the tombs of An Jia and Di Caoming, in which stone funerary beds were prepared but unused because the bones were placed in their burial passageways (see Fig. 42) (SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 12; Luo and Rong, 2016, 270).

House-shaped sarcophagi are large stone boxes mirroring traditional Chinese wooden architecture. A possible prototype was house-shaped stone coffins (Fig. 47), which were popular in Sichuan Province in the second and third centuries and then spread to northern China due to Daoist movements and activities (Wu, 2002). Like stone funerary beds, house-shaped sarcophagi emerged in northern China in the fifth century, but they continued to be used occasionally in Tang times (Wu, 2002). Sogdian elites were also interested in this form of funerary furniture, as evidenced by the fact that they became the nearly exclusive customers of house-shaped sarcophagi in the second half of the sixth century (Müller, 2019, 390).

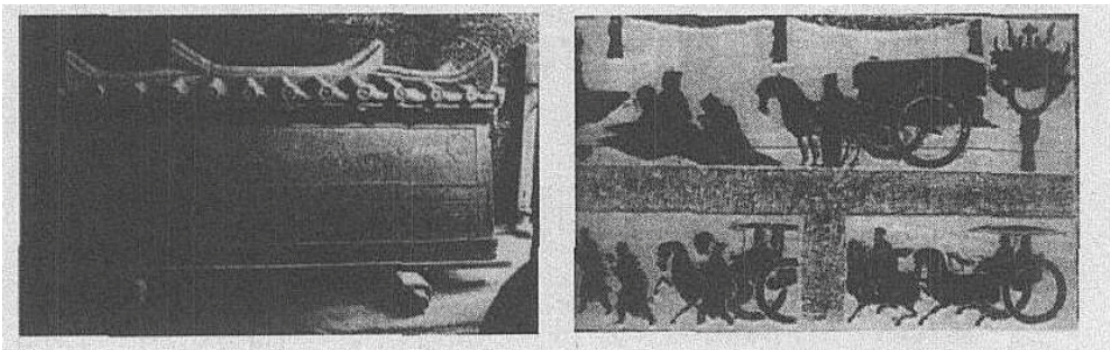


Figure 47. A house-shaped stone coffin with pictures. Second and third centuries CE. Leshan, Sichuan Province.

Left: the stone coffin. Right: a local image of the coffin showing three processions. After: Wu, 2002, p.3, fig.8.

Two relatively complete sets of house-shaped sarcophagi were found in the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs, including in the tomb of Shi Jun (no. 11) and the tomb of Yu Hong (no. 15). In the anonymous tomb in Qingzhou (no. 20), only nine stone slabs with pictures and two plain slabs survived, and these probably formed the walls of a house-shaped sarcophagus. The use of a house-shaped sarcophagus in the tomb of Qingzhou is unconfirmed because the tomb had been destroyed before excavation began.

In the tomb of Shi Jun, most human bones were found on a stone divan inside the sarcophagus (see Fig. 43). The tomb of Yu Hong presented a more complicated situation, in which human bones were found in three locations: on the ground of the burial chamber, on the surface of a stone base inside the house-shaped sarcophagus, and below the stone base (see Figs. 44 and 45). If the human bones' three locations suggest a purposive practice of a funeral 'undertaker' (e.g., the deceased's living family members and friends). A necessary precondition was that Yu Hong's body be exposed. Once the flesh was stripped off the bones, the cleaned bones could be collected and placed in such a manner.

In total, the selected 20 Sino-Sogdian examples likely included seven sets of stone funerary furniture (five confirmed and two suspected). These pieces could basically serve the same function as corpse platforms. That is, stone funerary furniture was an appropriate burial receptacle for Sogdians, who sought a delicate balance between two contradictory traditions.

On the one hand, the Sogdian use of stone funerary furniture was probably acceptable for Chinese people since such forms had emerged from Chinese society. On the other hand, stone funerary furniture left enough space for Sogdians to maintain their ethnic and religious characteristics because it did not defile sacred elements in Zoroastrianism (i.e., plants and the earth). Additionally, as the name indicates, stone was the only material used to construct stone funerary furniture. Sogdian preference for stone, stressed in Chapter 4, again emerges here.

d. Platforms for Corpses

The fourth type of funerary furniture used by Sino-Sogdians was a simple platform made of earth, brick, or stone to directly support the remains of the deceased. This form does not have a universal term used by academic communities. Wertmann (2015, 134) regarded it as being the same as the coffin platform. Although coffin platforms and corpse platforms are basically the same in terms of their rectangular shapes, they have completely contrasting functions. As their names imply, coffin platforms elevate coffins enclosing bodies of deceased people (see the illustration in Fig. 22), while corpse platforms directly support bodies of deceased people (see the illustration in Fig. 40). Müller (2019) considered corpse platforms to be a type of stone funerary furniture (i.e., stone funerary beds and house-shaped sarcophagus). It is true that most pieces of stone funerary furniture discussed above directly supported the remains of the deceased, as did corpse platforms. However, stone funerary furniture does not have much in common with corpse platforms from the perspective of shape. Corpse platforms do not stand on

feet, nor do they have a surrounding screen compared with stone funerary beds (see the illustration in Fig. 48).



Figure 48. Stone corpse platform with an earthen core in Dianhanchang M112, Shanxi Province.

After: Müller, 2019, p.391, fig. 1-2.

Based on the analysis above, Wertmann's and Müller's classifications seem less reasonable. This thesis treats simple platforms, called corpse platforms, to directly support the remains of the deceased as a separate category.

In the second half of the fifth century, corpse platforms suddenly appeared in Pingcheng (the former capital city of the Northern Wei in modern Datong, Shanxi Province) and then spread to other areas of northern China (Müller, 2019, 385). In the early years when corpse platforms were used by residents in Pingcheng, typical stone

funerary beds (i.e., couch-like stone platforms with pictorial screens and bed legs) had not yet been created (Müller, 2019, 392). On the other hand, the presence of corpse platforms apparently occurred later than that of coffin platforms, which can be traced to the Eastern Zhou period (770-256 BCE). Thus, corpse platforms were burial receptacles between coffin platforms and stone funerary beds.

It is relatively easier to understand the transformation from corpse platforms to stone funerary beds because additional components such as pictorial screens and bed legs can be found as prototypes from contemporary Chinese domestic beds (see the illustration in Fig. 46). However, the transformation from coffin platforms to corpse platforms is difficult to explain because coffins stood in the centre of the Han Chinese and Xianbei traditions. The exclusion of wooden coffins from corpse platforms was a bold change. Wertmann (2015, 134) did not realise this point; thus, corpse platforms are unconvincingly regarded as being the same as coffin platforms. Perhaps the bold change resulted from non-Han cultural influences, but the true purpose has yet to be explored.

Among the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian burials, only one example certainly used a corpse platform, namely, the tomb of Kang Wentong (no. 13), in which all skeletal remains were found on the surface of a lower platform made of brick (Yang, 2004).

In the tombs of He Fujun (no. 4) and M1401 (no. 7), a platform was set in the burial chamber, and no wooden remains were identified inside the chamber. It seems that the two platforms held corpses, as was the case for Kang Wentong. However, these two platforms may not have been used at all.

In tomb M1401, an earthen platform with brick sealing sides supported nothing and two skeletons were found on the ground of the burial chamber. The excavation report inferred that the two skeletons on the ground resulted from tomb robbers (NHWKY, 2022, 18). It would seem somewhat strange for the tomb robbers to move the two skeletons to the ground if they were originally located on the platform.

In the tomb of He Fujun, there was a stone platform with nothing on it. Indeed, no human remains were found inside the tomb at all. The tomb of He Fujun is part of the He family cemetery in Yanchi. All other tombs from the He family cemetery contained human remains in varying conditions and numbers (Wu, 1988). It is unlikely that tomb robbers moved only Hu Funjun's human remains outside the tomb.

In terms of the cultural meanings of corpse platforms for Sogdians, the corpse platform was likely an appropriate way to represent their dual cultural identities. On the one hand, the corpse platform was developed in Chinese society even though it was not as traditional as wooden coffins. Thus, Sogdian usage of the corpse platform might have been a way to integrate into Chinese society.

On the other hand, the corpse platform was acceptable for Sogdians from the perspective of the doctrines of Zoroastrianism. First, it did not involve polluting plants, as it contained no receptacles composed of plants. Second, it prevented the polluting body from defiling the good earth. It elevated the body from the ground. Thus, Sogdian use of the corpse platform might have helped Sogdians maintain their beliefs even as they integrated into Chinese society.

e. Summary

The burial receptacles found in the Sogdian tombs, including reed mats with or without platforms, wooden coffins with or without platforms, platforms for corpses, and stone funerary furniture, all originated in Chinese society. Although all these burial receptacles were originally completely alien to the Sogdians, their acceptance of each form may have differed. Reed mats and wooden coffins were difficult for the Sogdians to accept because the sacred plants (i.e., reeds and wood) would be polluted by the deceased. Platforms for corpses and stone funerary furniture were unoffensive because they could isolate the deceased from the sacred elements of plants and earth.

When reed mats and wooden coffins were used by the Sogdians, the established Chinese methods for such use were generally followed. That is, a corpse was placed on a reed mat or enclosed in a wooden coffin regardless of the existence of a lower platform as the base. However, the use of other burial receptacles was extremely complicated.

The common usage of the corpse platform in medieval China was confirmed in the tomb of Kang Wentong. His skeletal remains were laid on a lower platform. In tomb M1401 and the tomb of He Fujun, a lower platform was included, but the skeletal remains were laid on the ground in the former case or not placed in the tomb at all in the latter case.

Three different usages were found for the stone funerary bed. In the anonymous tomb of Tianshui, a stone funerary bed supported a wooden coffin. In the tomb of Kang Ye, the complete skeleton, with silk garments still intact, was lying supine on a stone funerary bed. In the tombs of An Jia and Di Caoming, stone funerary beds were

prepared but unused because the bones were deposited in their burial passageways.

For the house-shaped sarcophagus, only two relatively complete sets were found in the Sogdian tombs, but their modes of use appeared to differ. Most of the skeletal remains of Shi Jun and his wife were found inside the sarcophagus, while most of the skeletal remains of Yu Hong and his wife were placed in three locations: on the ground of the burial chamber, on the top of a stone base inside the house-shaped sarcophagus, and below the stone base.

Perhaps no strict conventions on the use of corpse platforms or stone funerary furniture existed because the two forms were newly emerged in northern China in the fifth century. Sogdian users developed their own methods to employ these two forms. Some of their methods can be attributed to the traditions they brought with them; see Section 5 in this chapter for details on this subject.

5.4.2 Images on Stone Funerary Furniture

Sogdians tended to decorate their ossuaries, but paintings or carvings on such a broad space (i.e., the surface of stone funerary furniture) were conventional in Chinese art. Following the models of Chinese decoration of stone funerary furniture decoration was a sign of Sogdian Sinicisation. However, the images chosen to decorate the stone funerary furniture were personal choices, which provides further evidence of how a Sogdian elite could express his or her ethnic identity. Three typical examples are illustrated and analysed: Kang Ye's stone funerary bed (no. 9), An Jia's stone funerary

bed (no. 10), and Shi Jun's house-shaped sarcophagus (no. 11).

Stone funerary furniture often exhibits many pictures, either on the screens of stone funerary beds (e.g., Kang Ye's and An Jia's stone funerary beds) or the walls of house-shaped sarcophagi (e.g., Shi Jun's house-shaped sarcophagus). None of stone funerary furniture defined the reading-direction of pictorial scenes on its surface. Scholars have proposed different orders to read the scenes (e.g., Sun, 2012, 20-78; Ma, 2015, 17-78). Here my description and analysis are merely based on the common reading-direction among scholars.

Three kinds of figures of different origins (e.g., Sogdian, Han Chinese, and Türks) were often carved on stone funerary furniture. The distinctions between them are hairstyles and dress. Han Chinese people usually wear long robes and occasionally outer cloaks. Sogdians and Türks both wear knee-length, round-collared caftans, and tight-fitting trousers, but their hairstyles are different: Sogdians have short hair, while Türks have long and plaited hair. In the following discussion, the identification is not repeated if unnecessary.

a. Kang Ye's Stone Bed

The screens of this stone bed exhibit ten pictures, with six on the back panels and two on each side panel (see Fig. 40). The pictorial layout is shown from left to right. Notably, the compositions of all the ten pictures are basically identical. Their pictorial fields include three registers from top to bottom: background scenery composed of a large tree, a mountain, and a few clouds; the master or mistress engaging in a social

activity; and rocky landscapes. The obvious difference between the ten pictures appears in the central register (i.e., the master or mistress engaging in a social activity). This part is described in the following paragraphs.

Pictures 1 and 2 (Fig. 49): the central parts of the two pictures both depict a group of guests offering gifts to a host or hostess. The host or hostess is seated on a rectangular couch; most of the attendants stand behind him or her, and one of the attendants stands behind the trunk of a willow tree. In the first picture, all the figures are male, while in the second picture, all the figures are female.



Figure 49. Scenes (pictures 1 and 2) on the west side panel of the screen (line drawing). After: Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009, p.28, fig.7.

Picture 3 (Fig. 50): the composition and content of the former picture continue into this one. The only obvious difference is the swapped positions of the figures. In the previous scene, the hostess appears on the left side. However, in this picture, the hostess appears on the right side.

Pictures 4 and 5 (Fig. 50): these two pictures each depict a procession. In the fourth picture, the procession is composed of a few male figures and only the master rides on a horse. In the fifth picture, the procession is composed of a few female figures, and all of them are on foot. The mistress appears in the central part of the procession carrying a round fan.

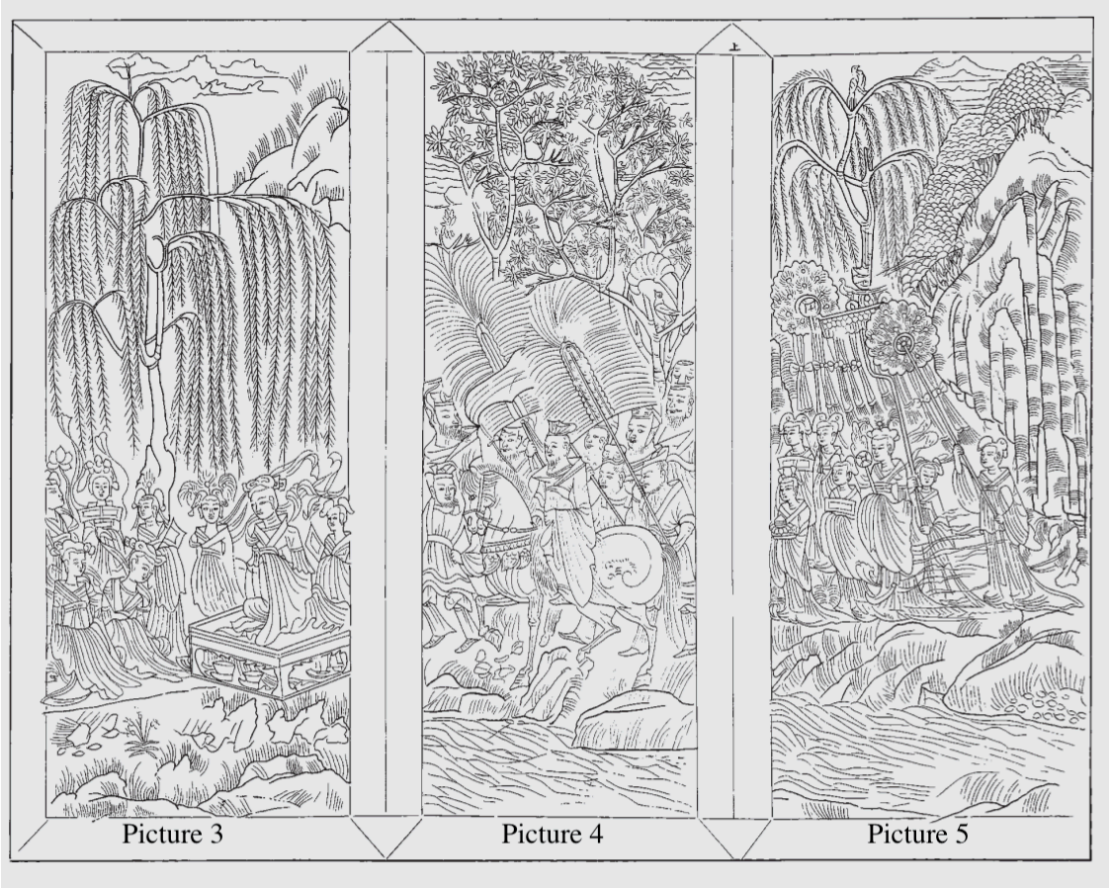


Figure 50. Scenes (pictures 3-5) on the back panel of the screen (line drawing).

After: Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009, p.30, fig.10.

Picture 6 (Fig. 51): the subject of this image concerns a brief rest in the middle of a procession. In the middle of the picture is a large wooden ox cart with two axles and two spoked wheels. To the right of the cart are two Central Asians kneeling on the ground. One of them holds an ewer with a narrow neck in his right hand and raises a wine cup in his left hand as if making a toast.

Picture 7 (Fig. 51): the subject of this image is a banquet. Most of this scene is taken up by a Chinese-style pavilion in front of a willow tree. A master is kneeling on

a couch inside the pavilion, who is dressed in a typical Chinese fashion, including a conical hat, a long robe, and a cloak. His left hand holds a bowl, and his right hand seems to be grasping something. Except for the master, all the remaining figures in this scene are Central Asians, identified by their short dress and specific dress, as mentioned above. Four Central Asian attendants flank the pavilion, and one on the right holds an ewer with a narrow neck. An unintelligible object, probably an incense burner or fire altar, is placed in the middle of the threshold in front of the pavilion. Another four Central Asians kneel on the ground at the bottom of the picture. They hold from the left an ewer, two plates, and a wineskin.

Picture 8 (Fig. 51): the subject of this image is a moment during a procession. Two Central Asian grooms stand at the centre point of the picture. One Central Asian groom with cropped hair is holding the reigns of a saddled horse. Another bald Central Asian groom is raising his left hand and pointing to his back, obviously guiding the remaining group, who are not yet visible.

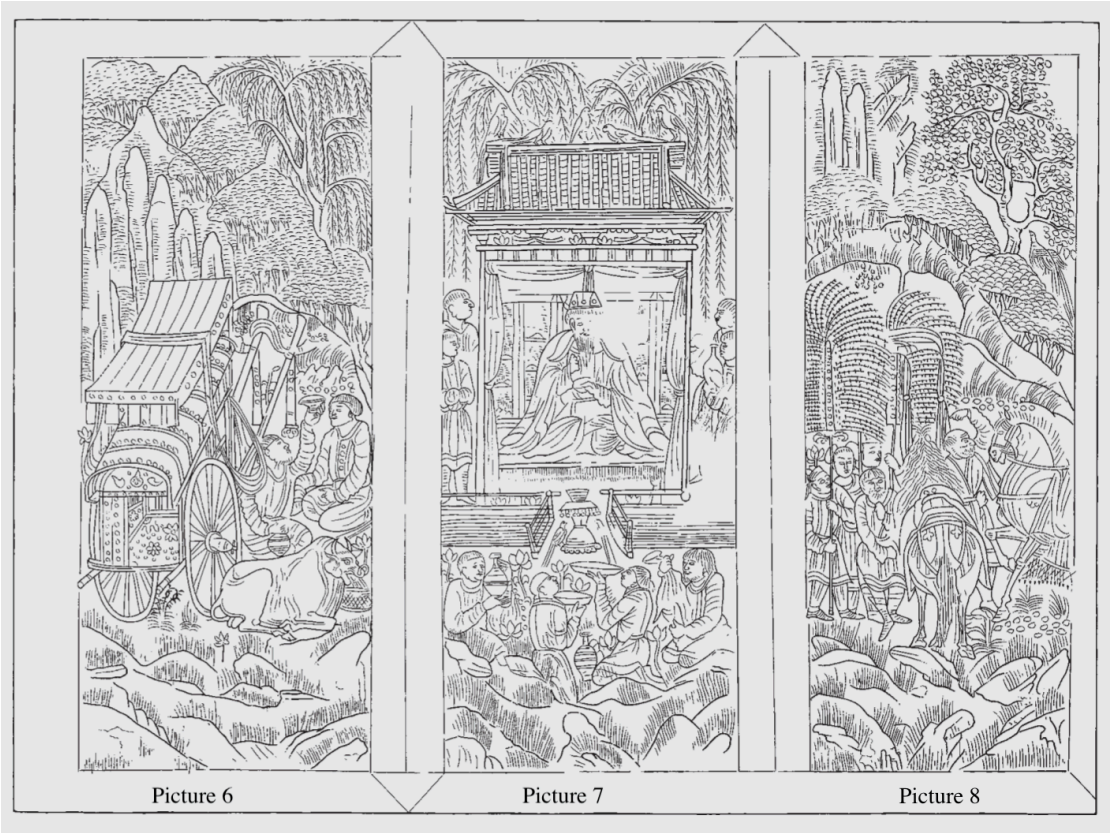


Figure 51. Scenes (picture 6-8) on the back panel of the screen (line drawing).

After: Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009, p.32, fig.14.

Pictures 9 and 10 (Fig. 52): the two scenes depict a mistress receiving her guests, similar to pictures 2 and 3. In both scenes, the mistress is seated on a couch, while her guests are kneeling on a carpet.



Figure 52. Screens (picture 9 and 10) on the east side panel of the screen (line drawing). After: Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009, p.35, fig.19.

These depictions, represented on the panels of Kang Ye's stone bed, are all derived from Chinese content (Zheng, 2013, 224-242). For example, pictures 1-3 and 9-10 depict similar scenes. That is, the figures are gathered in a forest. A few prominent figures seated on couches or carpets are engaged in social activities, such as receiving tribute or talking, and attendants stand behind them. Such images had appeared in China at least a half century before Kang Ye's (buried in 571 CE) stone bed was carved, as

seen in the image of a stone coffin dated to 524 CE (Fig. 53).



Figure 53. Image of a stone coffin from the tomb of Yuan Mi, 524 CE.

It depicts that Guo Ju is listening to his parents, who was a well-known dutiful son. After: Zheng, 2013, p.233, fig. 15.

These depictions on the panels of Kang Ye's stone bed have strong Chinese meanings. If the central figure in these ten pictures is Kang Ye himself, his image is consistently native Chinese, judging by the long, pointed beard, the typical Chinese headdress, and long robe with overlong sleeves. His wife is also consistently depicted as a typical Chinese woman. These representations are not accurate, however, because

Kang Ye and his wife were both Sogdian. Regardless of the specific activity Kang Ye is depicted as engaging in, his surroundings are always traditional Chinese landscapes.

In contrast, Central Asian figures appear in only three scenes (pictures 6-8). A noticeable point of comparison appears in picture 7, in which Kang Ye is represented as a typical Chinese man but the servants around him and the people presenting tribute to him are all Central Asians. Obviously, these Central Asians are placed in subordinate positions in this scene. Zoroastrian elements are sparse, with only one object clearly associated with Zoroastrianism: the fire altar placed in the middle of the threshold in front of the pavilion (picture 7). Some scholars have noted that the supposed fire altar might instead have been an incense burner because the fire altar does not contain fire nor because of the presence of any Zoroastrian priests (Wertmann, 2015, 80; Zheng, 2013, 231). If this is the case, the Kang Ye stone bed can be considered a purely Chinese artefact from the perspective of its decorations.

b. An Jia's Stone Bed

The screens of this stone bed contain 12 pictures, with six on the back panels and three on each side panel (see Fig. 41). The pictorial layout is introduced from left to right. The composition of all 12 pictures is the same. Each picture can be horizontally divided into two roughly equal registers, which feature related content.

Pictures 1-3 (Fig. 54): all three pictures depict activities occurring in a mountainous region, which can be identified by stylised mountains and lush vegetation. The subject of the first picture concerns a procession. In the upper part, an ox cart is approaching.

Three servants accompany the cart, and two of them are turned towards the cart as if they are talking to a person of higher status seated inside the cart. In the lower part, four females approach, and two of those with greater status are mounted on horses. In the second picture, there are four Central Asians hunters, two in each register. The third picture establishes an artistic conflict. The people in the upper register are resting, while in the lower register, wild animals flee the scene as if the hunters in the second picture are approaching.



Figure 54. Scenes (pictures 1-3) on the west side panel of the screen (line drawing). After: SKY Shaanxi, 2003, p.23-24, figs. 21-23.

Pictures 4-5 (Fig. 55): these two pictures mainly depict music and dancing in two

different environments. In the fourth picture, figures perform a dance, probably the *hutengwu* (‘leaping dance’) or the *huxuanwu* (‘whirling dance’), in front of a tent (Zhang, 2010, 369-399; Chen, 2003). The tent is topped by a roof with moon and sun ornaments, a typical Zoroastrian symbol. Inside the tent, the main figure is a Turkic leader with long, and plaited hair. The Turkic leader is seated on a rectangular carpet with a Turkic musician and a Sogdian musician. Behind them are six standing people, three Türks and three Sogdians who are clapping their hands.

In the fifth picture, a dance is being performed in front of a grape arbour identified by the vine. Inside the grape arbour, the main audience is a Sogdian leader who is seated in a relaxed position on a fringed carpet surrounded by some Central Asian servants, musicians, and dancers. A hunt scene composes the lower part of the fifth picture.

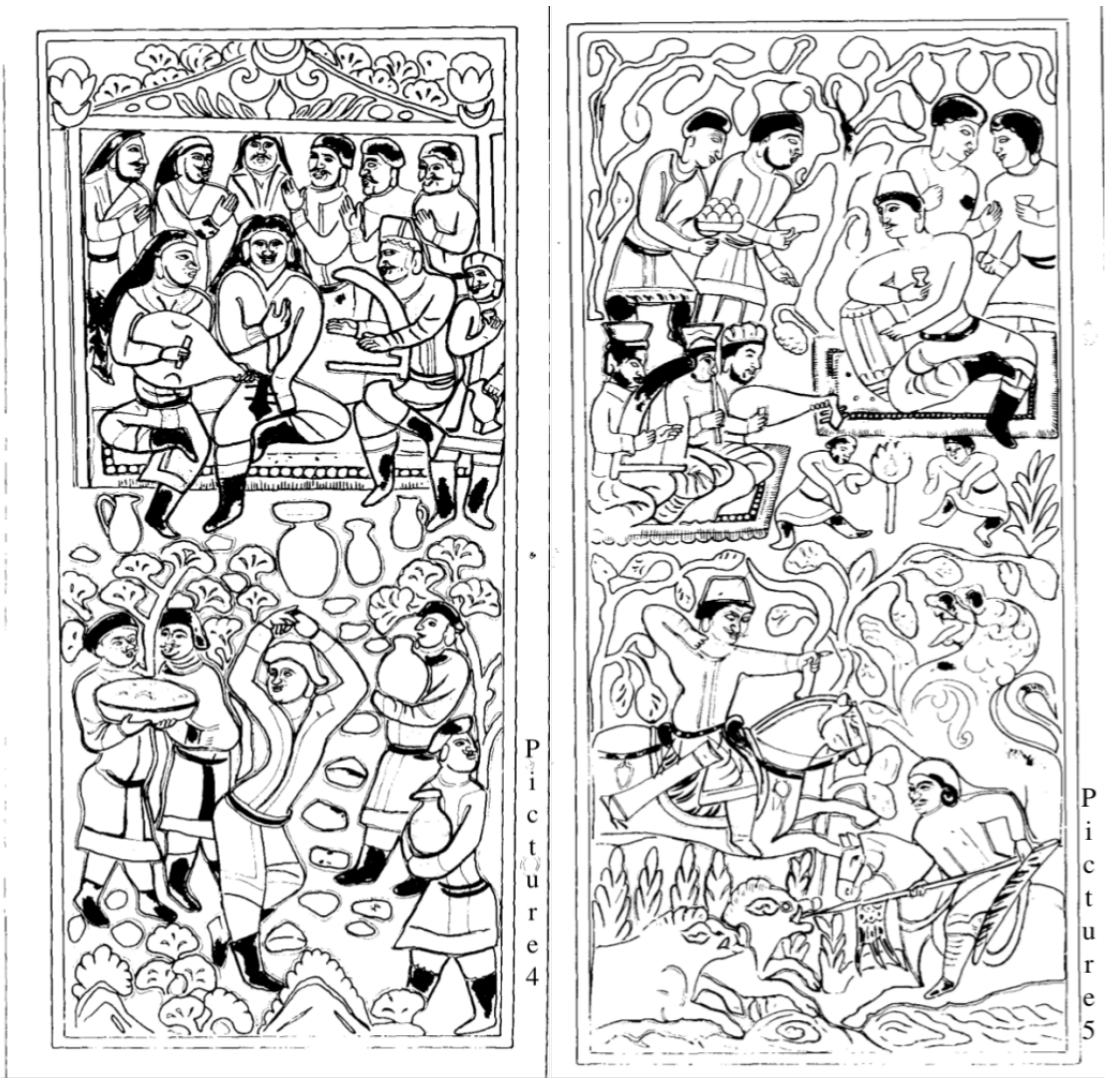


Figure 55. Scenes (pictures 4 and 5) on the back panel of the screen (line drawing). After: SKY Shaanxi, 2003, p.26-28, figs. 25-26.

Picture 6 (Fig. 56): a wooden Chinese pavilion is shown in the sixth picture. Seated inside the pavilion are a fat Sogdian leader and his wife. The Sogdian leader has a relatively thin body on most images of the stone funerary bed, but in the Chinese setting, he has a large belly. This representation vividly indicates the happy life of the Sogdian leader, who was probably the tomb owner (i.e., An Jia) after he achieved success in China.

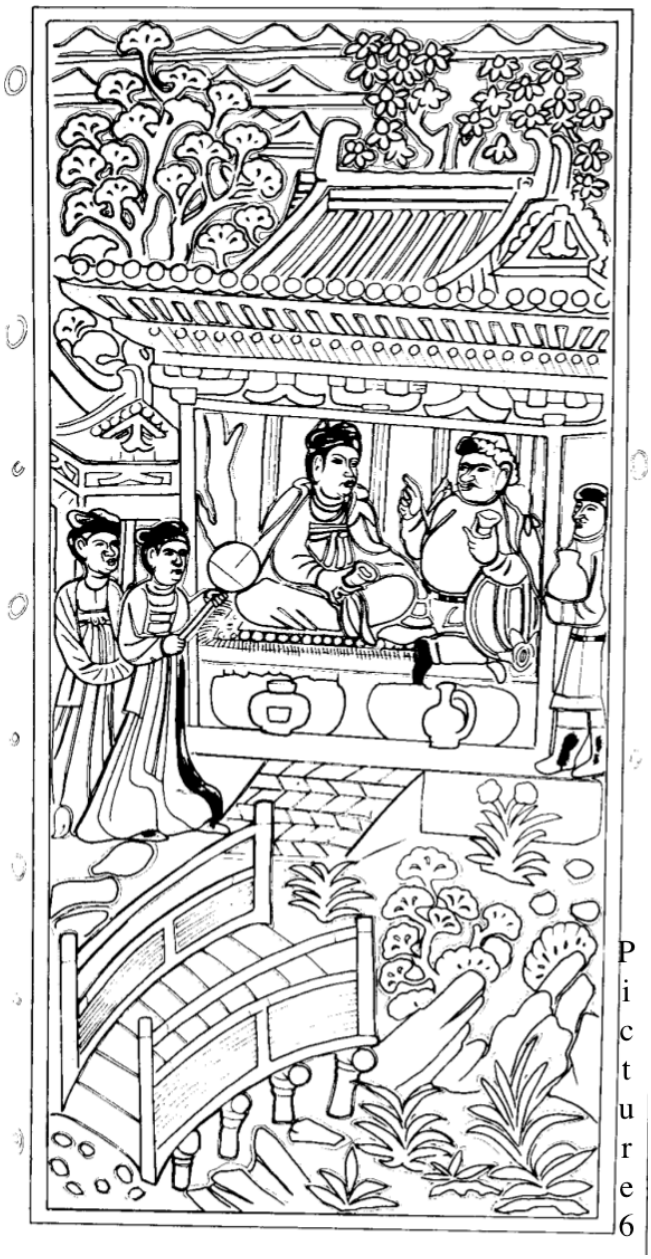


Figure 56. Scene (picture 6) on the back panel of the screen (line drawing).

After: SKY Shaanxi, 2003, p.30, figs. 27.

Pictures 7-11 (Fig. 57): these five pictures generally repeat common themes represented in the other pictures described, such as hunting, drinking, and dancing. The only obvious additional theme is negotiations between Sogdians and Türks. In the

seventh picture, two negotiations are taking place. In the upper register, a mounted Sogdian leader and a mounted Turkic leader both open their arms in a gesture of respect. In the lower register, a seated Sogdian leader and a seated Turkic leader engage in friendly conversation inside a tent, which is topped by a roof with moon and sun ornamentations.

Numerous negotiations are depicted in the subsequent eighth and ninth pictures. In the eighth picture, a Sogdian leader and a Turkic leader are seated inside a tent, shaking hands, and talking. In the ninth picture, a Sogdian leader and a Turkic leader negotiate inside a pavilion. The status of the Turkic leader in this scene is obviously lower than that of the Sogdian because of the former's orientation towards deference and smaller size.



Figure 57. Screens (pictures 7-9) on the back panel and screens (pictures 10 and 11) on the east side panel of the screen (line drawing).

After: SKY Shaanxi, 2003, p.31-37, figs. 28-33.

Picture 12 (Fig. 58): the subject of this image is a farewell to a Sogdian leader. The upper part depicts a mounted Sogdian leader looking back towards his two attendants. The two attendants might be followers of the procession or may just be seeing the leader off. The lower part depicts seven characters standing in front of a bent bridge spanning a stream. The Sogdian leader is accompanied by two attendants and his wife, and a small child, probably their son, stands in the centre. It seems that the Sogdian leader is saying goodbye to his family before a voyage.



Figure 58. Screen (picture 12) on the east side panel of the screen (line drawing).

After: SKY Shaanxi, 2003, p.37, fig. 34.

Compared with the Chinese-style figure of Kang Ye, An Jia is consistently depicted as a typical Central Asian, as indicated by his protruding noise, conical-shaped hat, and

traditional dress (a knee-length, round-collared caftans, and tight-fitting trousers). Additionally, very few characters in these images appear to be Chinese.

The dominant presence of Turkic people in the pictures, as indicated by their long and plaited hairstyles, is noteworthy. Interestingly, the Turkic people do not appear alone but always accompany Sogdians. This faithfully reflects the close relationships between Sogdians and Turkic people in the Middle Ages, called the Turco-Sogdian symbiosis by De la Vaissière (2005, 199-225). In fact, it is common to see Turkic figures on Sogdian funeral reliefs even though they are not as commonly depicted elsewhere as on An Jia's sculpted slabs (Rong, 2014, 311-332). An Jia was a *sabao* who actively engaged in foreign relationships with Turkic people for his Sogdian community.

Interestingly, the decorations of An Jia's stone bed employ different architectural structures to mark different cultural environments. This was a quite common artistic expression, as observed in Sogdian ossuaries and noted above (see Figs. 35 and 36). Picture 6 appears to depict the lives of An Jia and his wife in Chinese lands, given the Chinese-style pavilion with a tiled roof. Picture 7 changes the scene to a Sogdian community, marked by the tent decorated by sun and moon ornamentations, which were symbols worshipped in Zoroastrianism. The environment changes again in picture 8, where two leaders from the Sogdian and Turkic people are seated and talk inside a yurt, thus indicating that the scene takes place in Turkic lands.

c. Shi Jun's House-Shaped Sarcophagus

This house-shaped sarcophagus has four walls wholly covered with reliefs (see Fig.

43).

South wall of the sarcophagus (Fig. 59): this wall is decorated like the entrance of a Chinese-style house, indicated by a winged door, two latticed windows, stairs, and a stone lintel. The pictorial wall can be divided into two symmetrical registers. In each register, a four-armed guardian steps on an imp flanking the central sarcophagus door. On the left and right sides of the guardian, a latticed window sits, which are both flanked by two servants. Above the window is a group of musicians. Below the window is a bird-priest performing fire ceremony, a typical Zoroastrian symbol.

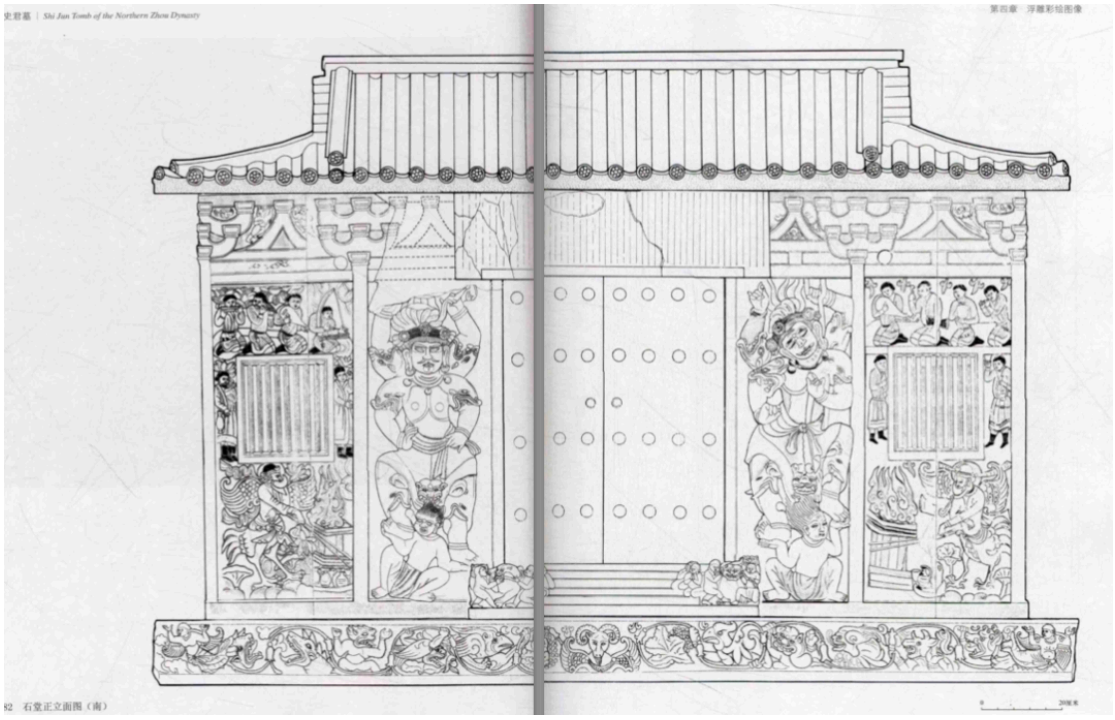


Figure 59. South wall (line drawing).

After: Yang, 2014, p.84, fig.82.

West wall of the sarcophagus (Fig. 60): this wall consists of three slabs, each with

a different scene. The right-hand scene shows devout people and animals praying to a sage surrounded by a large halo whose identity remains unknown but who is probably Mani (Grenet, 2007, 475) or Ahurmazda (Shen, 2019, 177-190). Approximately two-thirds of the middle scene is occupied by a one-story pavilion in which a crowned couple is seated. A riderless horse and two men are shown in the lower margin of the middle scene. Although the riderless horse was a prevalent image in the tombs of high-ranking Chinese individuals, as a symbolical mount of the deceased, it may also refer to the god Mithras, who serves as the judge of the deceased, or to Tishtrya, who is the god of rain and of the Oxus River (Lerner, 2011, 18). The left-hand scene depicts a hunt in the upper part and a procession in the lower part.

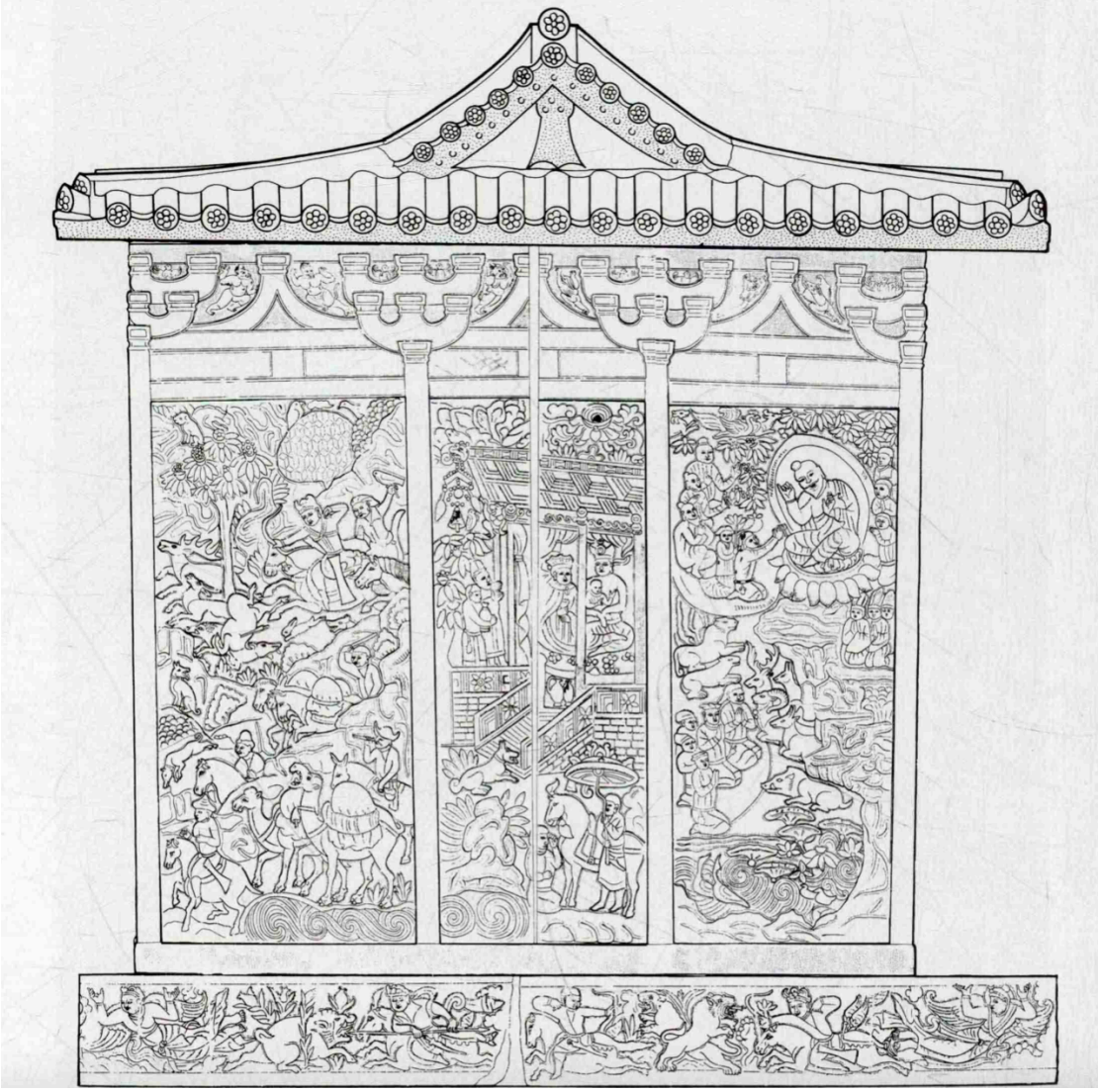


Figure 60. West wall (line drawing).

After: Yang, 2014, p.100, fig.101.

North wall of the sarcophagus (Fig. 61): this wall consists of the five slabs, each with a different scene. The three slabs on the right side include common themes depicted on Sogdian stone funerary furniture, including a rest in a pavilion, procession, dancing, and drinking figures. The fourth slab from the right is a lavish banquet. As identified by the vine and large clusters of grapes, the banquet is taking place inside a grape arbour. The upper register of the leftmost slab depicts an emaciated ascetic seated

inside a cave. Under the cave are three apsaras with wings, two of which are saving two people who have fallen into a river.

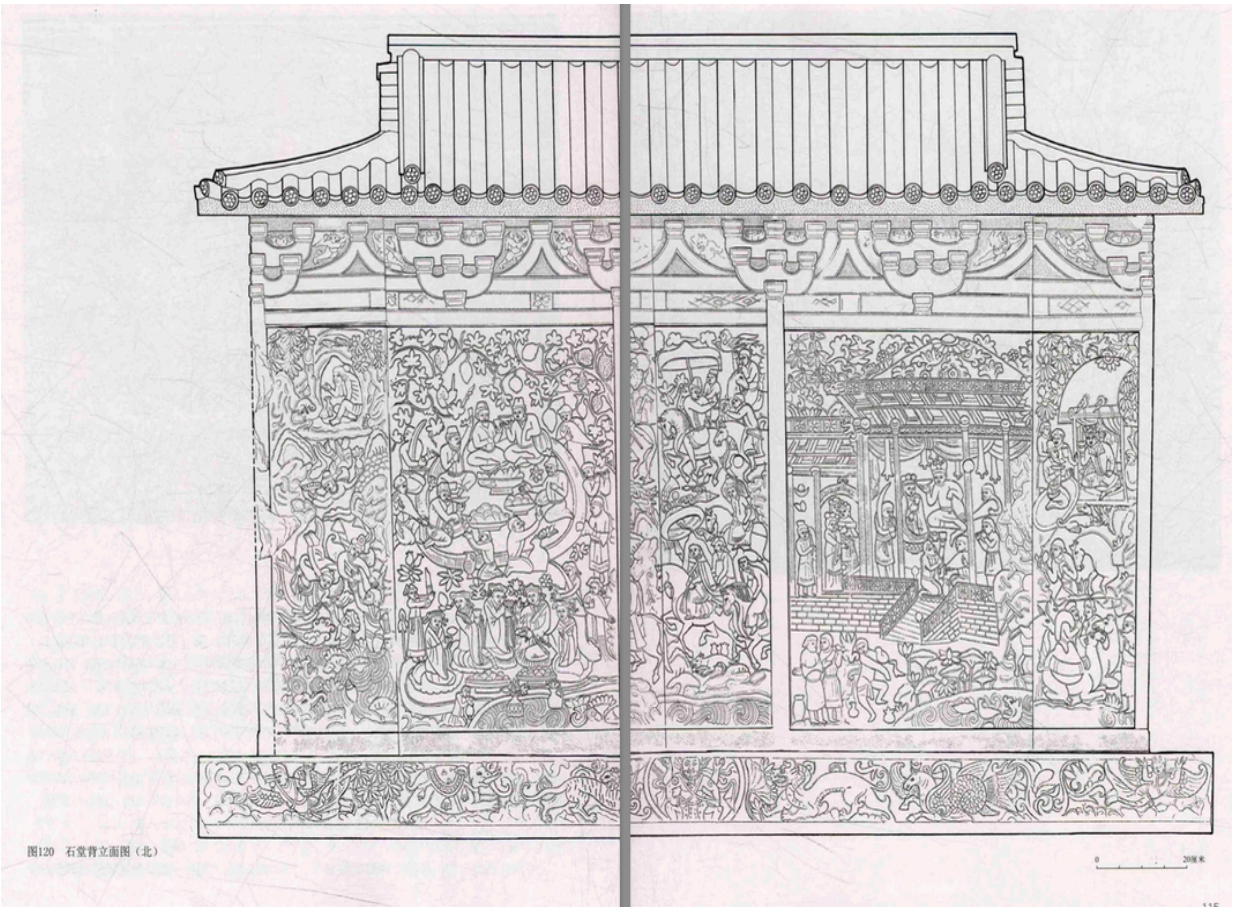


Figure 61. North wall (line drawing).

After: Yang, 2014, p.114, fig.120.

East wall of the sarcophagus (Fig. 62): this whole wall depicts a sacred scene, as indicated by the many winged creatures and pervasive clouds. The right two slabs forming a unit depict the Bridge of Judgement (*Chinvat*). According to Zoroastrianism, the Bridge of Judgement separates the world of the living from the world of the dead. All souls must cross the bridge upon death. Only if the deceased person's good thoughts,

words, and deeds in life are judged to be sufficient can the soul cross the bridge to the Zoroastrian paradise (Lerner, 2011). This is the only detailed image of the Bridge of Judgement found thus far. The left-hand scene shows that a crowned couple mounted on winged horses approaches to one direction surrounded by winged creatures, and they are obviously the same couple depicted in the previous scenes, quite possibly the tomb owners (i.e., Shi Jun and his wife).

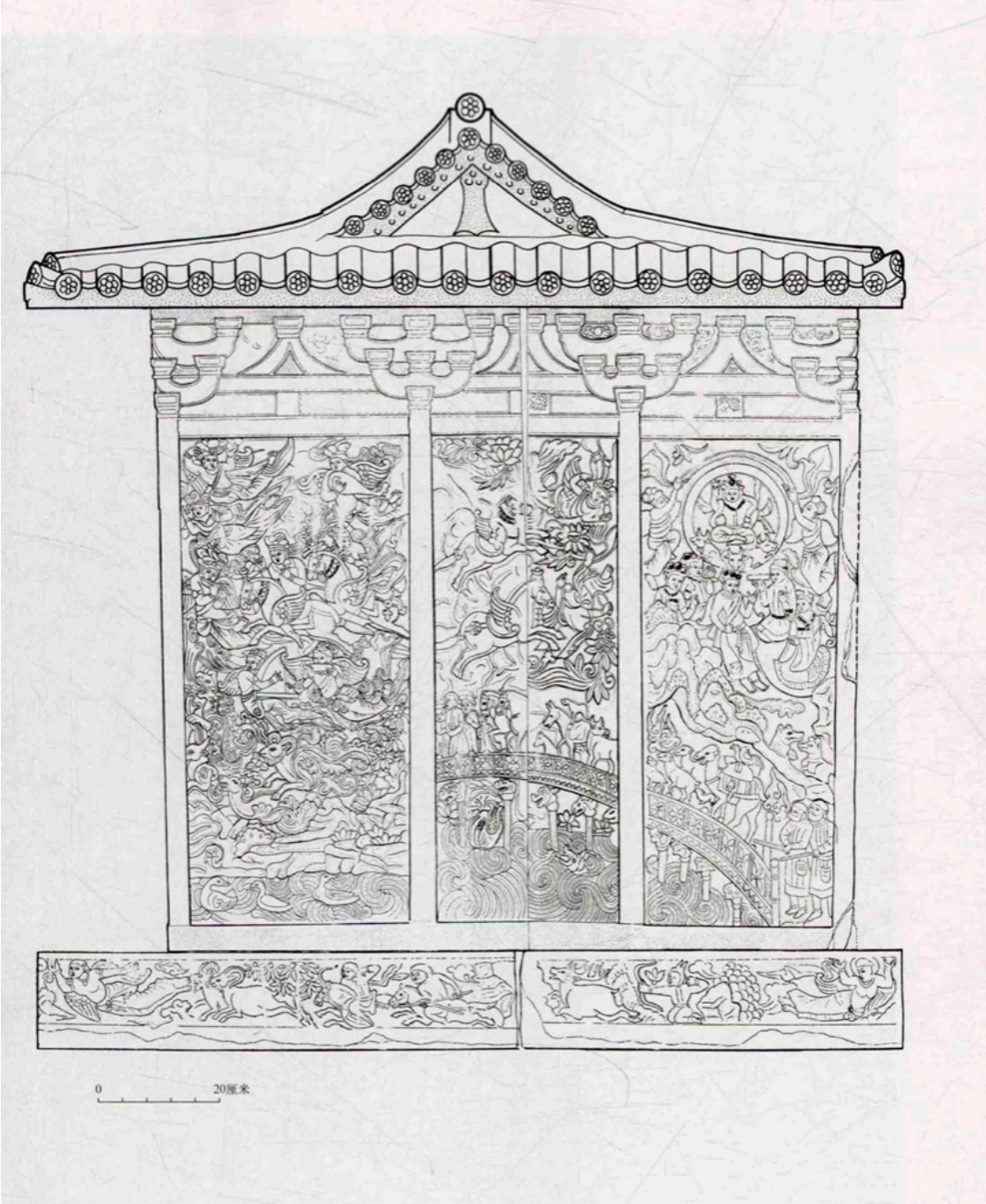


Figure 62. East wall (line drawing).

After: Yang, 2014, p.137, fig.145.

The images of Shi Jun's house-shaped sarcophagus have a strong religious tint, alluding to Zoroastrianism and possibly also to Manichaeism and Buddhism. The eastern wall (see Fig. 62) represents the souls of Shi Jun and his wife crossing the

Bridge of Judgement (*Chinvat*) and being transported to the Zoroastrian paradise. The right-hand scene of the Western wall (see Fig. 60) is an overall Zoroastrian picture with an additional Manichaean preaching figure who wears a pointed beard. In the scene on the southern wall (see Fig. 59), two Buddhist Heavenly Kings with four arms step on the demon-like figures on each side of the door, and two half-man, half-bird Zoroastrian priests are conducting a fire ceremony on the bottom left and right.

In contrast to the close contact revealed between An Jia and Turkic people, the Hephthalites play a significant role in the sculpted panels in Shi Jun's tomb. One allusion to Hephthalites on these panels is the winged crown worn by the couple (probably Shi Jun and his wife). This crown type derives from the later crown of the Sasanian king Peroz (457-484 CE), as illustrated by the massive number of coins from that era (Grenet, 2007; Kageyama, 2007). The winged crown was widely known in Central Asia from coins such as those of Peroz, especially after Persians began paying tribute to the Hephthalites in 467-477 CE (Grenet, 2007; Dien, 2009). Another allusion is the prominent male figures receiving their guests alongside their wives, as shown in Figs 50 and 51, which was a Hephthalite custom (Grenet, 2007, 468).

5.5 Maintenance of Sogdian Customs

5.5.1 Exposure of Corpses

Some Sogdian residents in China certainly persisted with the tradition of Zoroastrian celestial burials, in which the body is exposed to scavengers. The most

straightforward evidence is from the ossuaries found in China. An ossuary is a casket used to preserve postexposure human remains and was commonly used in many parts of Central Asia beginning in the third or fourth century on (Grenet, 2015, 143). Seven relatively complete ossuaries have been discovered in China, dating roughly to the period between the fifth and eighth centuries; six ossuaries were unearthed in Xinjiang, the westernmost province in China and only one, without an archaeological context, is preserved in the Palace Museum, Beijing (Fig. 63) (Shi, 2004, 88; Chen, 2018; Kageyama, 1997).

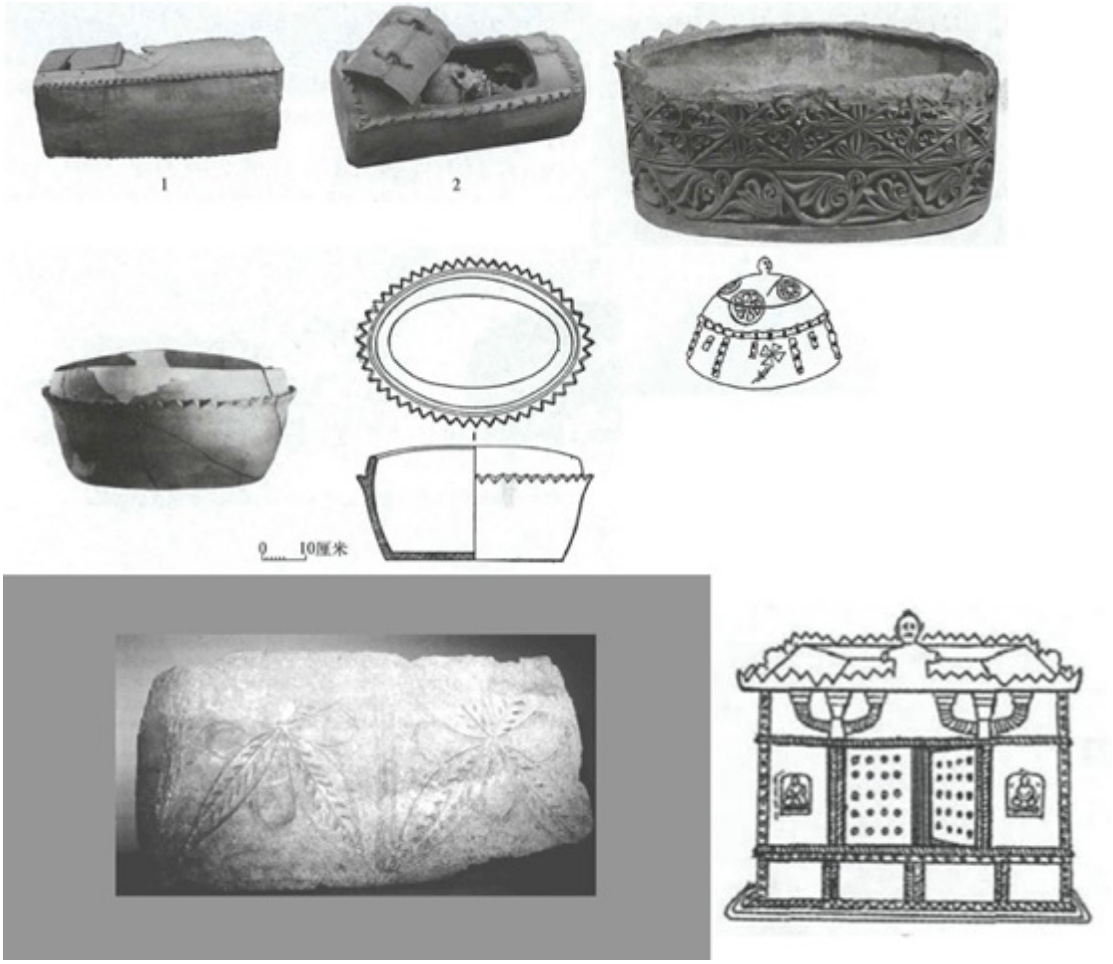


Figure 63. Ossuaries found in China.

Top left: two ossuaries from Turfan. Top right: an ossuary without a lid from Kucha. Middle left: an ossuary without a lid from Kucha. Middle right: an ossuary from Jimasar. Bottom left: the largest fragment of one ossuary from Yanqi. Bottom right: preserved ossuary in the Palace Museum, Beijing. After: Chen, 2018, 327-337, figs. 2, 5, 6, 10(8), 10(12). Bi, 2016, 47, fig.1.

Ossuaries found in Central Asia are generally shaped as rectangular boxes or oval vessels with removable lids and are being decorated with motifs associated with Zoroastrianism. The six ossuaries found in Xinjiang basically display these characteristics (Chen, 2018). However, the ossuary from Beijing appears to be a Chinese product, as indicated by the *dougong* brackets, which are typical Chinese architectural elements (Chen, 2018). It is supposed that the Chinese-style ossuary was made for a Sinicised Sogdian or a Chinese Zoroastrian.

Circumstantial evidence comes from a documented funerary custom in Taiyuan during the early years of the Kaiyuan period (713-741 CE), as described at the beginning of this chapter. According to one account, the corpses of a group of monks and their disciples were not interred in the ground but were used to feed birds and animals in a suburb (Cui, 2003, 22). As Cai (1998, 27) noted, this account most likely refers to the Buddhist burial practice of burying the dead in the forest because the main participants were monks. However, Zoroastrians were probably confused with these monks and their disciples due to the similarity between this kind of Buddhist burial

practice and the Zoroastrian celestial burial. Further evidence may come from the tomb of Yu Hong, found in Taiyuan. As discussed previously, the body of Yu Hong was likely exposed so that his bones could be collected and placed in three different locations inside the tomb. These archaeological and textual sources elucidated the fact that the Zoroastrian custom of excarnation was probably introduced into Taiyuan by the city's Sogdian residents.

Specifically, in the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian examples, no ossuaries were found in their underground tombs, nor was a place of excarnation (*dakhama*) identified near the burial sites. However, some traces of the practice of exposure are discernible. No human remains were found in the tombs of He Fujun (no. 4) or Cao Yi (no.16). The tomb of Cao Yi did not show any evidence of any tomb robbery (Li, 2007), and while the tomb of He Fujun is part of the He family cemetery in Yanchi, which was looted, all other tombs in the cemetery still contained human remains at the time of discovery (Wu, 1988). It is highly unlikely that tomb robbers took human remains only out of the tomb of He Fujun. Thus, the two tombs of He Fujun and Cao Yi were likely not originally used to hold the bodies or bones of the deceased people. The corpses of the deceased (i.e., He Fujun and Cao Yi) were probably exposed in a private way.

5.5.2 The Burial Customs Observed in the Tomb of An Jia (no. 10)

An Jia's (no. 10) tomb might be the most interesting of the Sino-Sogdian burials in terms of the treatment of the body. Inside the tomb, a pictorial stone funerary bed was

constructed, but this bed held nothing. An Jia's skeleton lay in the burial passageway, and some of the bones contained several clear smoke marks. The frame of the skeleton was in a good condition overall, but some small pieces, such as the metacarpal and metatarsal bones, were missing. Traces of burning were documented on the surface of the brick sealing door, on the stone gate, inside the aisles, and inside the burial chamber (SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 112).

The first issue to consider is whether the corpse of An Jia was exposed to scavengers. As mentioned above, most of the bones were found in a good condition, but some small bones were missing. It is assumed that these small bones were missing during the process of exposure during the Zoroastrian celestial burial.

The second issue to explain is the smoke marks on An Jia's bones and in some areas of the burial structure, such as the brick sealing door and the stone gate. Cremation is prohibited by orthodox Zoroastrianism because the corpse is feculent, so it should not be allowed to pollute the sacred element of fire. However, cremation was a longstanding and consistent practice in Central Asia and was even incorporated into local Zoroastrian funerary rituals (Ma, 2022, 66-96). Lin (2005, 66) mentioned that some ossuaries found in Central Asia contain ashes. Ma (2022, 66–96) listed some references to the practice of cremation in Central Asia. For example, a Zoroastrian temple was discovered in Bukhara. Under the north wall of the temple, human remains were found in the ashes of a bonfire. These archaeological finds recall a custom from the state of Shi 石 (Chach, modern Tashkent) recorded by the Book of Sui (*Suishu* 隋书, juan 83, 7) in which the bones of the king's parents remaining after cremation would

be placed in golden ossuaries.

Although the smoke marks on the bones of An Jia can be explained by the Sogdian cremation tradition, traces of burning in other areas inside the underground tomb would not have been related to this tradition. Shen (2019, 220) attributed the An Jia burial to the traditional funerary custom of the Türks. Türks burned their dead together with some of their personal belongings. Most likely, An Jia's family carried out the Turkic funerary custom in the corridor of the tomb; thus, some components of the tomb especially the brick sealing door and the stone gate, contain obvious traces of burning. Again, the close relationship between Sogdians and Türks is emphasised by this composite burial custom.

Furthermore, the stone funerary bed inside the burial chamber did not support the skeletal remains of An Jia. Lin (2005) noted this novel burial practice when he investigated the tomb of An Jia and suggested that this was be an exception and that An Jia's body was originally put on the stone bed and then transferred on the ground for some reason. However, many examples demonstrate that the case of An Jia might not be an exception. Even among the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian burials, similar burial practices can be observed in five tombs: He Fujun (no. 4), YKJM33 (no. 6), M1401 (no. 7), Di Caoming (no. 8), and Yu Hong (no. 15) (for details, see Appendix 4). In the first four tombs, different burial receptacles such as a platform of stone or brick and a stone funerary bed, were prepared but supported nothing. In the tomb of Yu Hong, a house-shaped sarcophagus contained some human bones, and additional human bones were found on the ground. Apparently, the use of burial receptacles was popular among some

Sino-Sogdians. That is, burial receptacles were built inside the chamber but were wholly or partly unused.

The excavation report of the tomb of An Jia explained that his stone bed was dedicated to gods rather than to support skeletal remains (SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 112). However, the tomb of Shi Jun suggests otherwise. Most of the skeletal remains of Shi Jun and his wife were found inside a house-shaped sarcophagus named a *shitang* 石堂 ('stone hall') in Chinese and a *snkynʾk βγktʾk* ('a stone house of gods') in Sogdian, according to his epitaph (Yang, 2014, 294; Sims-Williams, 2021). The skeletal remains of Shi Jun and his wife were thus able to occupy the so-called stone house of gods, whereas An Jia could not use the stone bed, even though it had no holy appellation.

Although these unused burial receptacles probably contained some divine meanings, it is difficult to provide a precise explanation based on extant archaeological and textual sources. The only clear point is that building but not using burial receptacles was a new development that arose after Sogdians settled in China. The origins of such burial practices cannot be found either in Sogdiana or China.

5.6. Conclusion

The first focus of this chapter is how the Sogdian bodies were handled, revealing the coexistence of cultural borrowing and cultural maintenance. The majority of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian burials adopted the Chinese approach to maintaining the integrity of a corpse, as evidenced by the relatively complete skeletons found in the

tombs. In contrast, some of them decontaminated the polluted corpses according to the Zoroastrian doctrine through exposure burial and cremation, as seen in one certain example (i.e., the tomb of An Jia) and two possible examples (i.e., the tombs of He Fujun and Cao Yi). Unfortunately, neither ossuaries nor the *dakhama* (a burial facility for corpse exposure) were found in/around these three underground tombs. The corpses of these three examples were probably exposed in a private way because the Zoroastrian celestial burial was strongly antithetical to the preservation of the body in Chinese culture.

In the Western Regions of the central dynastic regions of China (modern Xinjiang), where a more liberal cultural environment likely existed, six ossuaries with archaeological contexts were all found there. This proves that the Zoroastrian body treatment of exposing the corpse for excarnation and later collecting the bones for entombment was practised in Xinjiang between the fifth and eighth centuries CE.

The second focus of this chapter is where to preserve the Sogdian human remains. All the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian burials contained Chinese-style burial receptacles of different types, such as reed mats with or without platforms, wooden coffins with or without platforms, corpse platforms, and stone funerary furniture. At the first glance, the Sogdians wholly accepted the Chinese burial receptacles. Closer considerations, however, indicate that their use can be brought in line with traditional conventions of Sogdian Zoroastrians. Corpse platforms and stone funerary furniture were much less offensive for Zoroastrian Sogdians than reed mats and wooden coffins because the former two types of burial receptacles isolate dead substances from sacred elements

such as earth and plants. Moreover, stone funerary furniture was often decorated with pictures to portray stories and images associated with Sogdian traditions.

Chapter 6. Burial Objects

6.1 Introduction

Sino-Sogdian tombs were often furnished with various burial objects, which were selected for various reasons, among which the cultural orientations of the tomb owners might play a significant role. This chapter examines the ways in which Sogdian residents in China furnished their graves and the reasons why they did so. First, a survey is conducted to identify common ways in which traditional Chinese and Sogdian tombs were furnished. Second, burial objects excavated from Sino-Sogdian tombs are described. Finally, this chapter focuses on burial objects from Sino-Sogdian tombs with strong cultural characteristics, which may have been important markers of the cultural identity of the tomb owners. Notably, every item deliberately buried along with the deceased can be considered a burial object. However, as some artefacts of great significance, such as epitaphs and house-shaped sarcophagi have been carefully discussed in separate chapters of this thesis, such items are omitted in this chapter.

6.2 Traditional Chinese and Sogdian Burial Objects

Traditional Chinese burial objects can generally be divided into two categories. The first category included objects chosen from among the possessions of the deceased when he or she was alive. When a person dies, personal belonging remains imbued with sentimental value. The practice of burying the dead with objects they use is a way to

express remembrance and grief. As an emotional response, however, it is pointless to send too many items to the deceased (Wu, H., 2010, 164-165). Rare treasures are expected in the tombs of high-ranking people. A remarkable example concerns the fate of the *Orchid Pavilion Preface* (*Lanting Xu*) by Wang Xizhi (321-379 CE), which is revered as the best example of running calligraphy. Purportedly, Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty (r.627-649 CE) tried fiercely to obtain the masterpiece that he commanded that it be buried with him it in his mausoleum (Wu, H., 2010, 166).

Another important category within a large assemblage of Chinese tomb furnishings was 'spirit articles' (*mingqi* 明器/冥器), which are portable tomb furnishings specially designed and produced for the spirit of the deceased. Their distinguishing characteristics were described by Xunzi, who was a Confucian philosopher living in the third century BCE, in a simple sentence: 'spirit articles should resemble [real objects and creatures] but [should] not be usable' (Wu, H., 2010, 89).

As referred to several times in this thesis, according to ancient Chinese eschatology, the soul of a dead person has two parts, the *hun* (the spiritual and ethereal soul) and the *po* (the corporeal and substantive soul). It was generally believed that the latter of these souls would live on in the grave after one's death. Spirit articles were essential provisions for this soul in the afterlife (Wu, H., 2010, 88-91). A magnificent example of these spirit articles is the renowned Qin Terracotta Army (Fig. 64). Lifelike soldiers were used to protect Qin Shi Huang (d.201 BCE), the first emperor of China.



Figure 64. A section of Pit 3 of the Qin Terracotta Army at Lintong, Shaanxi Province. Five soldier figurines stand behind four horse figurines. After: Wu, H., 2010, p.111, fig.109.

These lifelike soldiers and horses of the Qin Terracotta Army constitute an important category of Chinese spirit articles known as tomb figurines (*yong* 俑). Both textual and archaeological evidence points to the invention of tomb figurines to the mid-

Eastern Zhou, when they were developed as substitutes for human sacrifices (Wu, H., 2010, 100). As part of their basic functions, tomb figurines were believed to act and behave like real creatures (Rawson, 2001, 128). Thus, it was imagined that the soldiers accompanying Qin Shi Huang would be able to fight for their sovereign, and those horses would be able to run and be mounted. Unlike the abovementioned leftover objects functioning as merely emotional symbols, spirit articles were of practical use for the *po* soul of the deceased, the specific target consumer. Thus, high-ranking tomb-owners would employ many spirit articles, mostly tomb figurines to serve them in the afterlife. For example, approximately 805 ceramic figurines were found inside a tomb that probably belonged to Gao Yang (529-559 CE), Emperor Wenxuan of the Northern Qi (Wu, J., 2010, 177).

The practice of burying one's possessions after death was also practised in Sogdian territories. For example, in the Tepai-shah (in Tajikistan), four necropolises were discovered where crania and bones cleaned of the soft tissues were buried with various objects, such as glass beads, bronze pendants and bronze temporal rings (Litvinskif and Sedov, 1983, 138–149). Attendant funerary objects have been found in ossuaries inside *nauses* (family mausoleums) in Panjikent (in Tajikistan) (Pavchinskaia, 1994). Notably, this practice seems not to have been compulsory because many ossuaries found in Central Asia do not contain personal belongings at all. Moreover, unlike the Chinese, Sogdians did not have a custom of burying symbolic provisions (i.e., spirit articles) for a soul in the afterlife.

6.3 Burial Objects in Sino-Sogdian Tombs

This section provides information about burial objects found in Sino-Sogdian tombs (Appendix 5). Particular attention is given to items with strong cultural characteristics, such as Chinese-style tomb figurines and Western jewellery. Of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs, information about burial objects in four tombs is lacking because of several grave robberies or incidents of damage, and 16 tombs contained burial objects of different quantities. This is merely a descriptive section, and the analysis of these items with strong cultural characteristics is provided in the following sections.

1) Turfan (two Kang family cemeteries): two enclosed cemeteries ascribed to two separate Kang families are located at two different sites in Turfan: one, composed of 36 tombs, at Jiaohe; and the other, composed of 60 tombs, at Badamu. More than 850 objects were recovered from the two Kang family cemeteries, which comprised 96 tombs in total (Wertmann, 2015, 30). Most burial objects were ceramic and wood vessels, and many of them were spirit articles that were likely included because they were of too poor a quality to be used in daily life (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 335). Additionally, the excavation of nine Sassanid silver coins (three genuine and six counterfeit) and ten Byzantine gold coins (eight genuine and eight counterfeit) suggests that the members of the two Kang families maintained a certain level of contact with the West (Wertmann, 2015, 30).

Regarding the two selected examples, tomb M11 in the Jiaohe cemetery contained five pieces of pottery, and tomb M212 in the Badamu cemetery contained 20 pieces of

pottery (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 22 and 230). Like the materials found in other burials in the two enclosed cemeteries, these pieces of pottery ware were spirit articles. Moreover, an imitation Byzantine gold coin was found near the shoulder of the male skeleton in tomb M11 in the Jiaohe cemetery (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 23).

2) Tianshui (an anonymous tomb): this tomb contains relatively few burial objects, including a pitcher with a chicken-shaped spout, a ceramic lamp, a bronze mirror, and a gold hairpin (Zhang, 1992). There were also five *hu*-appearing stone figurines of seated musicians flanking a stone funerary bed (Zhang, 1992).

3) Yanchi (the He family cemetery): this cemetery contains six tombs, in which limited burial objects of low value were discovered, including a stone pillow, a ceramic pot, two glass balls, and three Chinese copper coins. Wooden figurines existed only in the selected tomb M3, and the figurines included a warrior, seven female servants, two guard beasts, two civilians, one camel, and at least three horses (Wu, 1988).

4) Guyuan (the Shi family cemetery and two public cemeteries): the six tombs constituting the Shi family cemetery each contained a considerable number of burial objects, including spirit articles and valuable items that were probably used by the deceased people when they were alive. Some of these valuable articles, such as a gold gem-set ring from the tomb of Shi Shewu and a gem from the tomb of Shi Hedan, were probably imported from the West (Luo, 1996, 14 and 58).

The selected burial (the tomb of Shi Daode) also contained some valuable articles, particularly noteworthy among them being a gold mask and an imitation of Byzantine gold coin. The gold mask had been moved slightly, but it was still near the skull of the

deceased when it was discovered, indicating that it was originally placed on the face of the deceased. The bracteate was found in Shi Daode's mouth (Luo, 1996, 89). In addition, three ceramic figurines were found in the tomb of Shi Daode, two female Han figurines and one male *hu* figurine (Luo, 1996, 90-92).

Jiulongshan and Nanyuan were two public cemeteries in Guyuan, and both of them contained some Sogdian burials (two in Jiulongshan and five in Nanyuan). Most tombs in the two public cemeteries were small in scale, and their owners were intermediate or lesser officials or commoners (NWKY, 2012, 129; NWKY, 2009, 152). However, several notable discoveries were made in the two selected examples (tomb YKJM33 from the Jiulongshan cemetery and tomb M1401 from the Nanyuan cemetery).

The tomb YKJM33 contained merely two pieces of pottery but many gold products, including a gold mask, a Byzantine gold coin, a gold hairpin, and a gold belt buckle. At the time of discovery, the gold mask was on the head of a male skeleton, and the gold coin was in his mouth (NWKY, 2012, 127). Approximately 223 burial objects were found in tomb M1401. Most of them were glass balls, and there were numerous Chinese copper coins and clay figurines (NWWKY, 2022). 33 clay figurines were discovered in tomb M1401, 30 of which were warriors, most likely hinting at the military background of the tomb owner.

5) Jingbian (Di Caoming's tomb): except for the pictorial stone door discussed in Chapter 4 and some stone statuettes probably forming the base of the stone funerary bed discussed in Chapter 5, no other possible burial objects were found in this tomb because there were apparently several instances of grave robbery (Luo and Rong, 2016,

270).

6) Xi'an (the tombs of Kang Ye, An Jia, Shi Jun, An Yuanshou, Kang Wentong, and Kang Lingyun): the tombs of Kang Ye, An Jia, and Shi Jun were excavated in the same area of Xi'an, which may have been a cemetery for high-ranking Sogdians who lived in Chang'an during the Northern Zhou Dynasty (Dien, 2009). In these three tombs, some of the valuable articles found were probably imported from the West, including a gem-set gold ring from the tomb of Kang Ye (Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009) and two Byzantine gold coins from the tombs of Kang Ye and Shi Jun (Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009; Yang, 2014, 43). However, the total number of burial objects found in these three tombs was exceedingly small. The most astonishing aspect is the absence of spirit articles in these three tombs.

Regarding the remaining three tombs found in Xi'an, the burial objects in Kang Lingyun's tomb were largely looted earlier (Fukushima, 2016, 116), but the tombs of An Yuanshou and Kang Wentong contained many burial objects, such as ceramic figurines, Chinese copper coins, and porcelainware (Chen, 1988; Yang, 2004). Notably, most burial objects found in the tomb of An Yuanshou were ceramic figurines, totalling approximately 133 pieces.

7) Taiyuan (the tomb of Yu Hong): most burial objects in this tomb were broken and scattered because of repeated grave robberies. 16 stone figurines were excavated, including three different types: entertainers and officials made of marble and servants made of sandstone (SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005,50-85).

8) Fenyang (the tomb of Cao Yi): this tomb contained 15 burial objects, including three pieces of pottery ware, two pieces of porcelain, and nine ceramic figurines (Li, 2007). The most valuable objects were an ewer with a chicken-headed spout and a long snake-like handle, which was a common item found in high-ranking tombs.

9) Luoyang (the tomb of An Pu): a total of 129 burial objects were discovered in the tomb of An Pu, most of which were ceramic figurines, accounting for 97 (Zhao, 1982). These many tomb figurines differed from most Sino-Sogdian tombs, in which tomb figurines were normally limited. The only similar case is the tomb of An Yuanshou, as mentioned above, which contained approximately 133 ceramic figurines. Additionally, an imitation of a Byzantine gold coin was held in the right hand of the body of An Pu (Zhao, 1982).

10) Daming (the tomb of He Hongjing): any burial objects that were included in this tomb are now unknown because of several cases of destruction (Chen, 1985).

11) Beijing (the tomb of Shi Siming): this tomb contained approximately 100 burial objects made of various materials, such as pottery, porcelain, stone, and jade. However, as an emperor-level tomb, it is surprising that there were very few tomb figurines: only five ceramic figurines, two bronze figurines, and one stone figurine were found (Yuan, 1991).

12) Qingzhou (an anonymous tomb): this tomb was damaged prior to its modern discovery. Only some stone slabs survived, and these slabs probably formed the walls of a house-shaped sarcophagus, as discussed in Chapter 5 (Xia, 1995; Zheng, 2002, 236-246).

6.4 Adoption of Chinese Tomb Figurines

Most of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdians burials adopted the custom of including figurines in their tombs. Aside from four tombs whose furnishings we lack information on due to several incidents of grave robbery or damage (no. 8, no. 14, no. 18, and no. 20), 10 of the remaining 16 Sino-Sogdians burials contained tomb figurines of varying quantities (no. 3-5, no. 7, no. 12-13, no. 15-17, and no. 19). The varying quantities probably reflected the different degrees of acceptance of the practice of using Chinese-style tomb figurines. The tombs of An Yuanshou (no. 12) and An Pu (no. 17) contained many tomb figurines (133 and 97, respectively). However, most of the other tombs contained approximately one dozen tomb figurines.

Six of the selected 20 Sogdian tombs did not contain any tomb figurines, as was the case for the tombs of Kang Yexiang (no. 1), Kang Fumian (no. 2), YKJM33 (no. 6), Kang Ye (no. 9), An Jia (no. 10), and Shi Jun (no. 11). It is unlikely that the absence of tomb figurines stemmed from economic factors because several valuable items, such as gold masks and Byzantine gold coins, were found in these six tombs. Thus, the absence of figurines was probably a result of these Sogdians' rejection of the Chinese funerary custom of laying figurines in tombs.

Furthermore, some figurines revealed elements of Sogdian culture[26]. A fitting

[26] The Xianbei people also created figurines with their own characteristics. For example, the armoured horse figurines in the tomb of Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou (543-578 CE) probably

example is the camel figurine recovered from the tomb of An Pu (no. 17) (Figs. 65 and 66). The camel figurine is naturalistically striding, with crossed feet and a back laden from the left of a bottle, a monster mask, and a foreign ewer (*huping*).

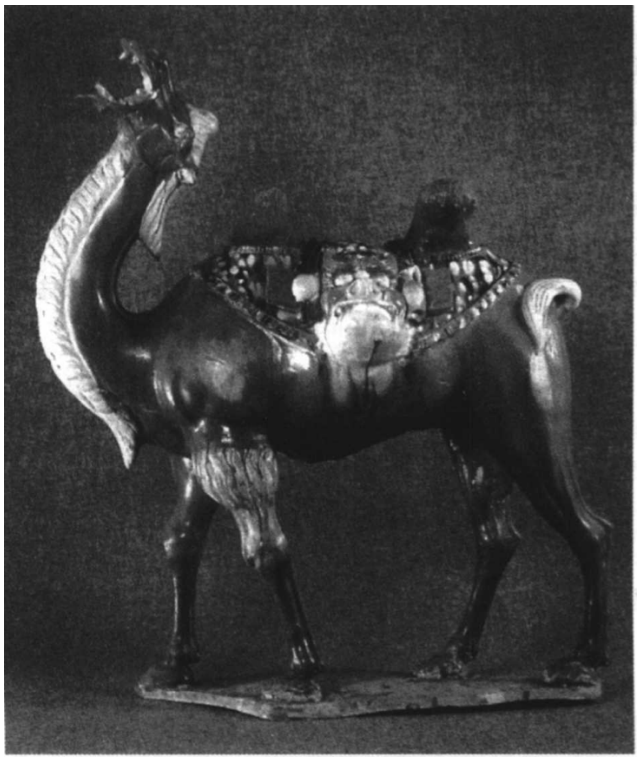


Figure 65. A *sancai* camel figurine from the tomb of An Pu.

After: Jiang, 2004, p. 225, fig 15-1.

represented Xianbei cavalrymen (Wu, J. 2010, 44).

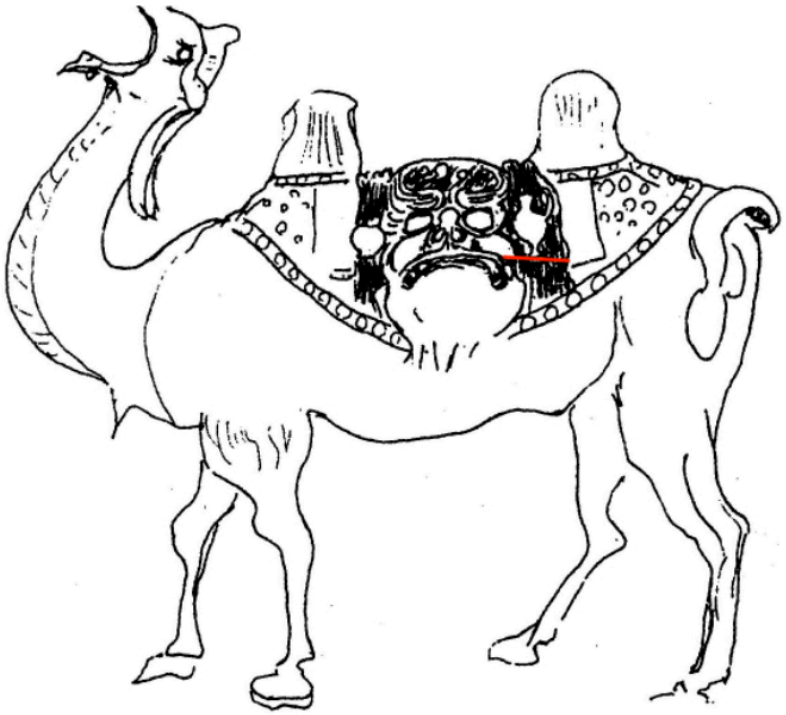


Figure 66. The *sancai* camel figurine from the tomb of An Pu (line drawing). The camel's back is laden, from left to right, a bottle, a monster mask, and a 'foreign ewer' (underlined by red). After: Shen, 2014, fig 1.

The monster mask on the camel's back was not a common motif in medieval China. The archaeological report of the tomb of An Pu originally suggested that the monster mask portrays a tiger (Zhao, 1982). Jiang (2004, 228-31), however, identified the monster as a camel's face. In Zoroastrianism, camels are one of the incarnations of the Zoroastrian war god (*Verethraghna*). An Pu's biographical epitaph records that he was a general and participated in a great deal of combat during his life (Zhao, 1982). Perhaps An Pu believed in the Zoroastrian war god because of his occupation and wished that the god would continue to bless him during the afterlife.

If the monster mask truly alludes to the Zoroastrian war god, why does this icon

appear on the saddle of the camel? Jiang (2004, 228-31) cited an account of *Youyang Zazu* (*Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*) by Duan Chengshi in the nineth century to explain the specific location of the icon: 'Turkic Zoroastrians worshipped Zoroastrian deities; they did not have Zoroastrian temples but engraved divine patterns on furs and placed them in leather pockets [on saddles].' As a nomadic people, Türks developed a particular way to worship Zoroastrian deities. Thus, the icon of the Zoroastrian war god on the saddle of the camel was a Turkic Zoroastrian tradition. According to An Pu's epitaph inscription, his family had settled in the East Turkic Khanate from the time of his great-grandfather until he and his father moved to China (Zhao, 1982). Thus, the specific design might be a sign of An Pu' religious beliefs.

In addition to the camel mask on the saddle, the ewer on its right side (from the readers' view) also demonstrates An Pu's multicultural lifestyle. The ewer has a lotus leaf-shaped mouth, a narrow neck, an oval belly, and a long, snake-like long handle. This kind of ewer was known as a *huping*[27] (the foreign ewer) (Zhao, 2008, 4).

The lotus leaf-shaped mouth of the *huping* was created in accordance with a Chinese design. *Huping* found in Central Asia did not have such a mouth, which emerged after the Chinese people began to use *huping* (Zhao, 2008, 22). The lotus signifies purity and fruitfulness, and this design was frequently used in Buddhist

[27] In addition to being specific term for ethnic others (largely people from Xinjiang and Central Asia), *hu* was also often used as an adjective highlighting the alien origin of something, such as *huping* (the foreign ewer), *hu xuanwu* (the Sogdian whirling dance) and *hujiao* (pepper).

artworks (Ma, 2015, 117-20). An Pu's Buddhist beliefs are also evidenced by his names. The combination of his given name, Pu 菩, and his courtesy name Sa 萨 to form Pusa 菩萨 is a transcription of Bodhisattva (Shen, 2019, 280).

Huping that appears alongside a small statue of a person or an animal is a common Chinese archaeological finding, and examples include *huping* held by maidservants, carried by Central Asian figures, and borne by camels (Zhao, 2008, 9-15). The first combination was a representation of an aristocratic life at home while the last two may have been inspired by Sogdian traders' real experiences along the land-based silk roads. From this point of view, the *huping* borne by the camel figurine probably suggests An Pu's nomadic life when he was living in the East Turkic Khanate.

Admittedly, it is not appropriate to try to extrapolate what type of afterlife An Pu expected based merely on a single sancai-glazed pottery camel figurine. However, the above analysis identifies two fundamental visions An Pu had for his afterlife. First, An Pu adopted the Chinese custom of burying figurines in tombs. This means that he expected that his soul would be served by such figurines. Moreover, he expected his afterlife to be a multicultural context, as An Pu's life had been. He likely imagined that the camel would carry his soul and his belongings, such as the Turkic-style Zoroastrian war god icon and the Chinese-style *huping*, to ensure that the respective familiar cultural spheres would be present in the afterlife.

6.5 Burial Objects Associated with Sogdian Traditions

6.5.1 Burial Masks

Two similar burial masks were found in the tombs of Shi Daode (no. 5) and YKJM33 (no. 6). The mask from the tomb of Shi Daode is composed of 11 gold foil pieces, including a chin strap, a miniature frontlet, and nine facial elements: two temples, two eyebrows, two eyes, a nose, and two lips (Fig. 67). The miniature frontlet consists of a crescent topped by a globe, a typical Zoroastrian symbol. These 11 individual elements were originally sewn onto a cloth to cover the face of the deceased Shi Daode. Upon discovery, although the gold mask was still near the face of the deceased, it had been moved slightly by tomb robbers (Luo, 1996, 90-91).

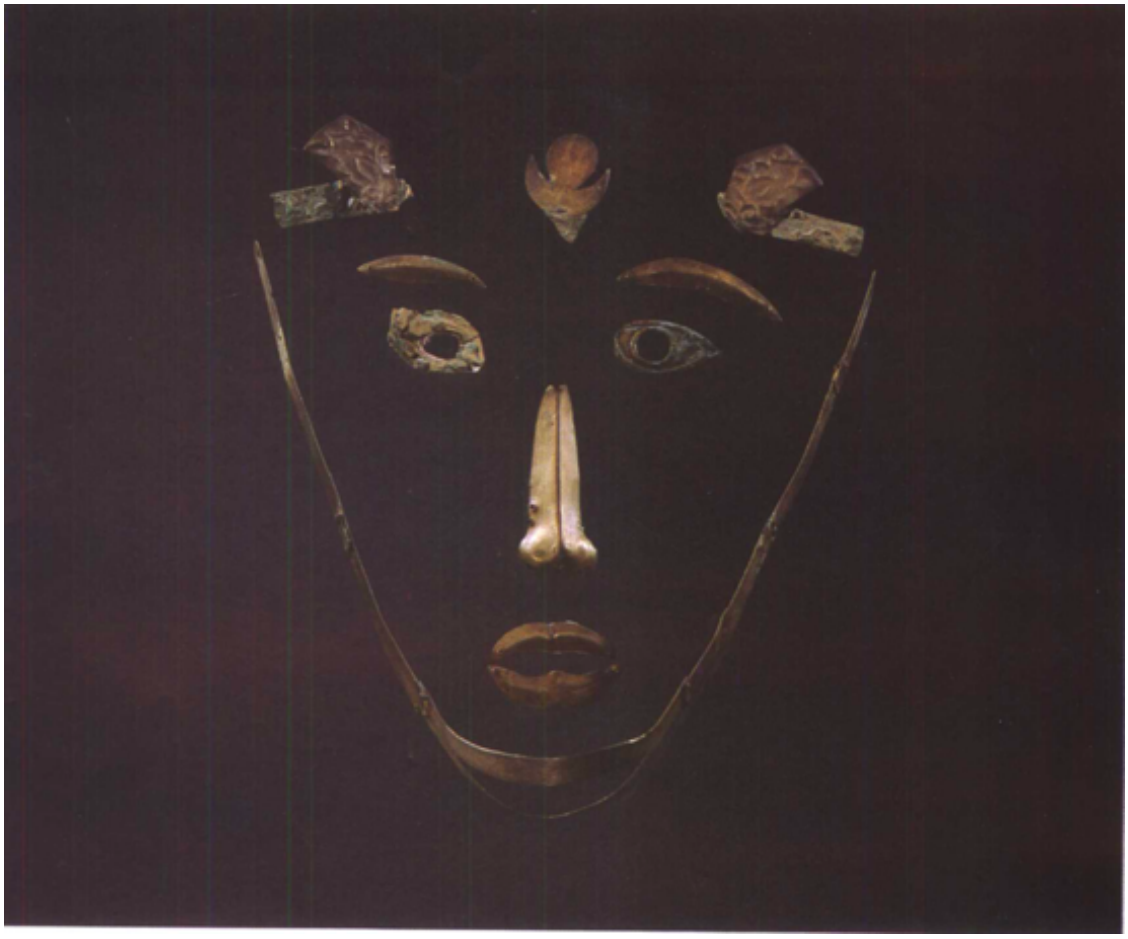


Figure 67. Burial mask from the tomb of Shi Daode, Guyuan, Ningxia Province.

After: Luo, 1996, Fig.20.

The mask from tomb YKJM33 has a relatively simpler shape and is composed of a chin strap and a long, curved headdress (Fig. 68). The centre of the headdress carries a large image of a sun and moon and two large birds; two smaller sun and moon images, and two smaller birds are found on both sides. The edges of the two gold foil pieces were pierced. Upon discovery, the gold mask was still on the head of a male skeleton, and some silk remnants were identified nearby (NWKY, 2012, 127). Thus, it can be concluded from the small holes on their edges that the two gold foil pieces were sewn onto the cloth face cover.

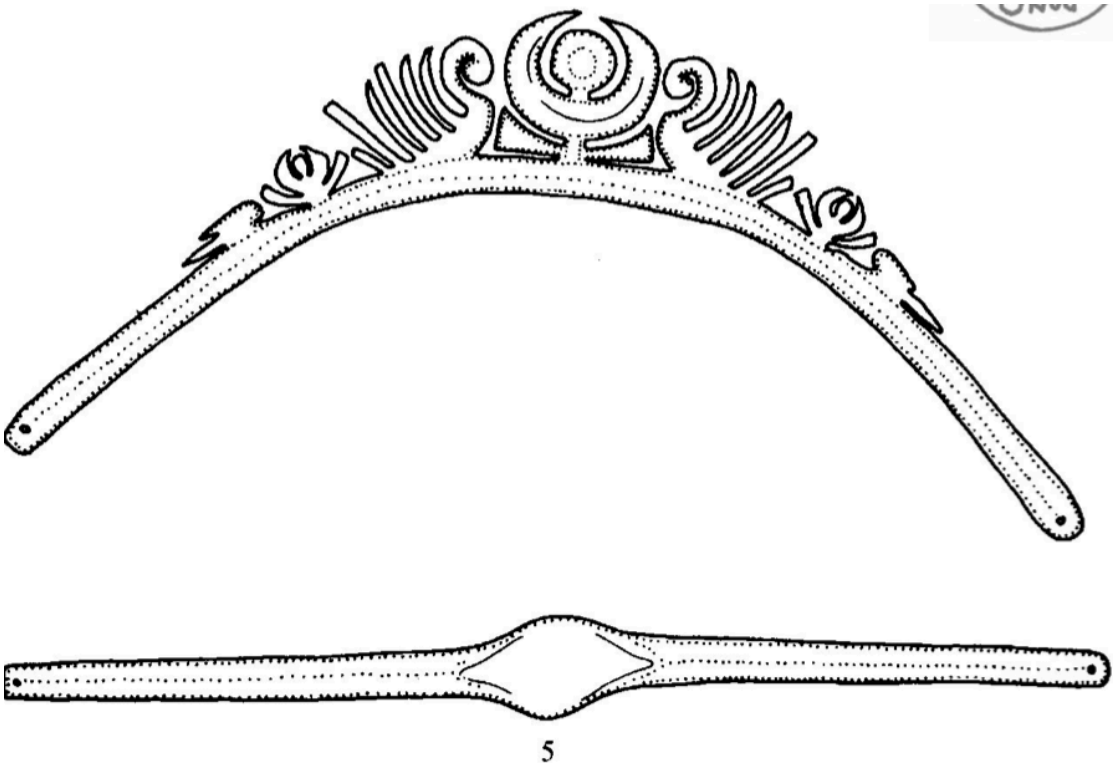


Figure 68. Burial mask from tomb YKJM33, Guyuan, Ningxia Province.

After: NWKY, 2012, p.128, fig.52.

Apart from the two burial masks excavated from these two Sino-Sogdian tombs, there is another similar object that lacks a confirmed archaeological context and is now preserved in the Guyuan Museum, Ningxia Province. This object is composed of a chin strap and a short (most likely fragmented) headdress (Fig. 69). The edges of the chin strap were pierced, and these small holes suggest that the chin strap was originally attached to a piece of textile to form a mask for the deceased (Ma, 2015, 122), similar to the abovementioned two burial masks. The headdress includes a motif of three strips with two semi-globes, probably a simplified version of the motif on the headdress from the tomb YKJM33 (Ma, 2015, 122).

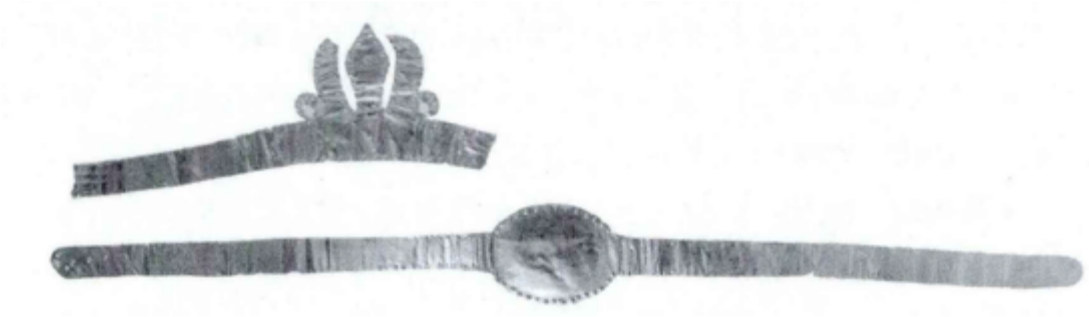


Figure 69. Burial mask in the collection of Guyuan Musuem, Ningxia Province.

After: Ma, 2015, P.122, Fig.2.

These three burial masks are all composed of a headdress and a chin strap that were originally sewn onto a cloth to form a mask for the deceased, although the burial mask from the tomb of Shi Daode contains additional facial elements. The tomb of Shi Daode dates to 678 CE, and tomb YKJM33 dates to the Sui period (581-619 CE). Approximately two centuries prior to their appearance, funerary objects with simpler shapes were used by the deceased represented, as indicated by the object found in tomb M107 (Fig. 70), which dates to 470s CE. This object has three major components: a bowl-like jaw guard with elongated ends (Fig. 70c), two cheek-straps (Fig. 70b), and a headdress with a buckle on the end (Fig. 70a). The elongated ends of the jaw guard are attached to the two cheek-straps by means of 'hinges' (*heye* 合頁; Fig. 60e). The cheek-straps are inserted into the headband through two horizontal slots on each side (Fig. 70f). Apparently, this unique funerary object was not a mask but just a chin strap.

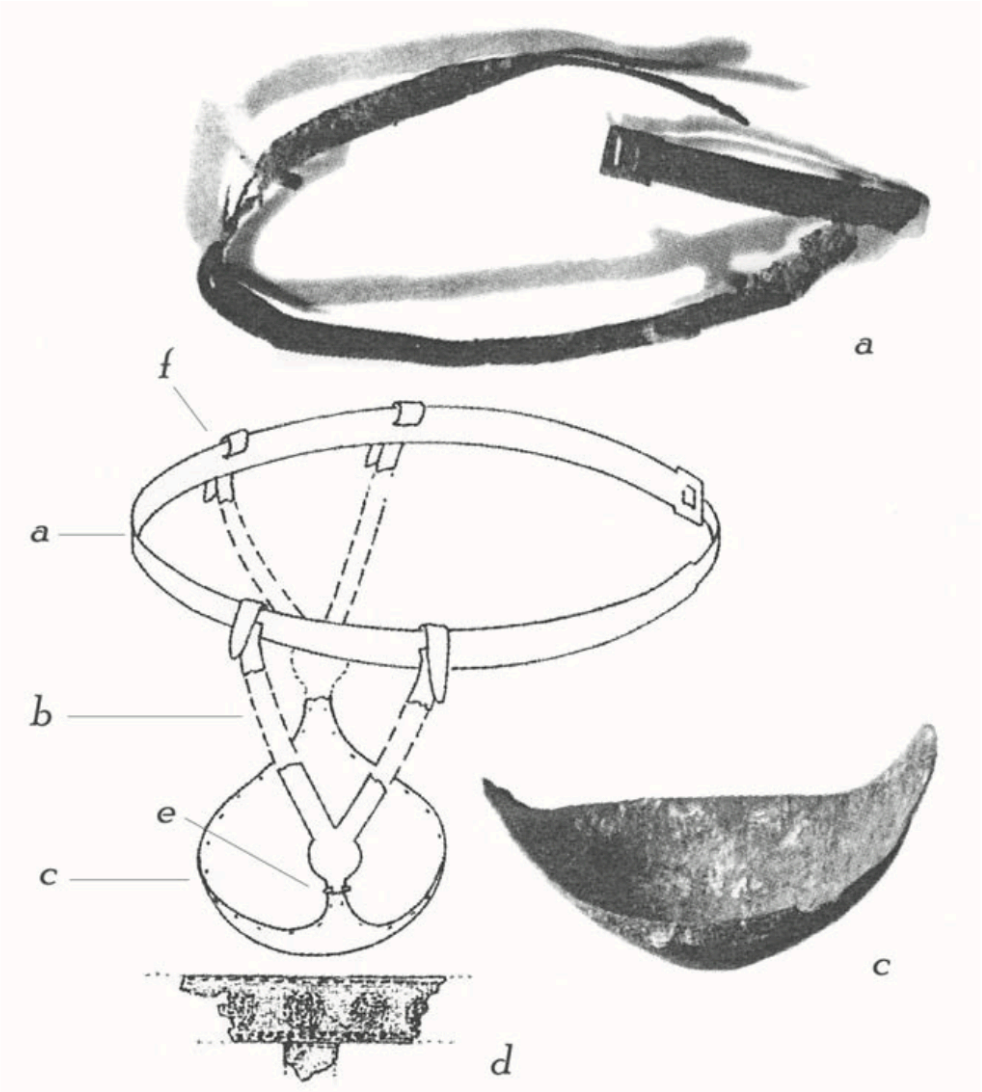


Figure 70. Chin strap found in tomb M107 (d. 470s), Datong, Shanxi Province.

a: a headdress with a buckle to the end, b: two cheek-straps, c: a bowl-like jaw guard, d: embroidery fragment inside and outside of the jaw-guard, e: hinge, f: headband slots for cheek-straps. After: Song, 2016, p.502, fig.1.

The dating of the three burial masks to the second half of the seventh century might reveal an evolution of the chin strap dating to 470s CE, from a single chin strap to a complicated burial mask. Before examining the process of evolution, I focus first on the foreign origin of the funerary custom of using a metal chin strap to hold the jaw of

the deceased. There is no archaeological or written evidence that the Chinese used such devices prior to the Tang period (Song, 2016, 511-513). Two possible provenances of this custom were Xinjiang and Central Asia.

In Xinjiang, the use of fabric chin straps for the deceased has been supported by archaeological discoveries dating to as early as 1000 BCE (Song, 2016, 514). Further west in Central Asia, chin straps of gold have been used in burials since approximately the first century CE. This is often attributed to the Hellenistic influences there due to the military campaigns of Alexander the Great from 329 to 327 BCE, as ancient Greeks customarily used a chin strap to hold the jaw of the deceased. Chin straps were used in burials from the Mycenaean and Geometric periods in Greece (c. 1200-800 BCE) (Song, 2016, 513-514; Ma, 2021).

The specific foreign origin of Chinese chin straps remains a topic of debate among scholars. If this custom was introduced to China by Sogdians, one possible propagation path was that the Sogdians learned of the custom when Greeks arrived in Central Asia and spread it themselves as they moved along the silk roads. However, this conjecture is uncertain because the first known users of chin straps in China during the fifth century appeared to belong to various ethnic backgrounds (Song, 2016, 518).

A more visible reference to Sogdian affiliations, or more precisely, Zoroastrian beliefs, can be perceived in the motifs on the headdresses of the three burial masks (i.e., the burial mask from the tomb of Shi Daode, the burial mask from tomb M33, and the burial mask in the Guyuan museum). All three feature the motif of a crescent topped by a globe. This is a common artistic expression of the Zoroastrian worship of sun and

moon, as seen in many pieces of Sogdian material culture, such as pictorial stone funerary furniture (see Figs. 55 and 57). Although the emergence of chin straps in China cannot be precisely attributed to Sogdian immigrants, some Sino-Sogdians in the seventh century purposively employed chin straps to highlight their heritages.

Returning to the process of evolution from a single chin strap to a complicated burial mask, the three burial masks feature complicated designs. While the chin straps and headdresses are both important components, they do not appear to have been directly connected. Instead, the two components possess small holes on the edges, indicating that they were originally sewn onto a cloth covering the face of the deceased. The burial mask from the tomb of Shi Daode contains additional facial elements, which were evidently also originally sewn onto a cloth because they were pierced as well. Thus, the chin straps of these three burial masks did not have the practical function of holding the jaw of the deceased. Instead, they had developed into decorative accessories sewn on cloth to form burial masks.

The motivations behind the emergence of such burial masks are not definitively known because similar burial masks have been discovered in Xinjiang (Fig. 71), Central Asia (Fig. 72) and inner China (Fig. 73). Lu (2016) noted that metal burial masks were largely found in non-Han burials, such as those of Khitans and Jurchens. The Chinese preferred jade to be used as a mask or suit for the deceased. Perhaps the creation of gold accessories sewn onto a cloth to form a burial mask was influenced by a non-Han culture, most likely one from Xinjiang or Central Asia.



Figure 71. Burial mask found in tomb M15. Second to third centuries BCE. Yingpan, Xinjiang.

The burial mask consists of a linen mask, a gold headband, and a silk chin strap. The gold headband was pasted on the linen mask, and the silk chin strap was tied onto to the mask. After: Ma, 2021, p.285, fig.3

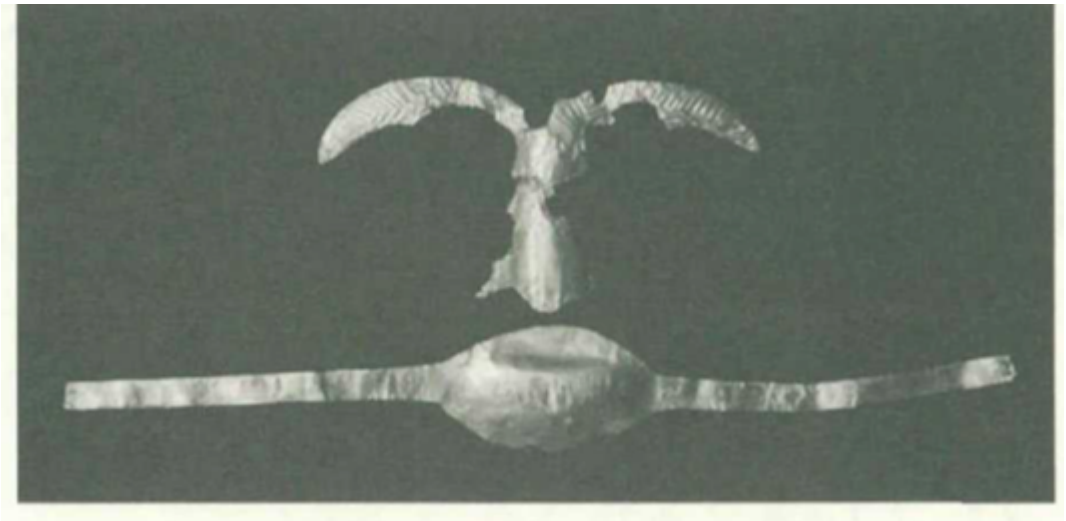


Figure 72. Burial mask found in Ketmen-Tyobyo, Kyrgyzstan. Third to six centuries CE.

The mask consists of a gold chin strap and gold facial elements (probably meant to two eyebrows and a nose). The edges of the gold facial elements were pierced; thus, they were likely originally sewn on a cloth to form a mask for the deceased. After: Ma, 2021, p.287, fig.6.



Figure 73. Two burial masks from the cemetery of Tianma-Qucun, Shanxi Province. Seventh to second centuries BCE.

Left: a burial mask found in tomb M92, composed of 23 jade pieces. These jade pieces were sewn together on a cloth. Right: a burial mask found in tomb M31, composed of 79 jade pieces. These jade pieces were also sewn together on a cloth. After: Lu, 2016, p.219, figs 12 and 13.

6.5.2 Western Jewellery

This section focuses on three pieces of Western jewellery found in Sino-Sogdian tombs, including two similar rings from the tombs of Shi Jun (no. 11) and Shi Shewu (a member of the Shi family buried in Guyuan, referring to no. 5), and a gem from the tomb of Shi Hedan (another member of the Shi family buried in Guyuan, referring to no. 5).

A gold ring, 1.9 centimetres in inner diameter, 2.9 centimetres in outer diameter and 30.2 grams in weight, was found in the tomb of Shi Shewu (Fig. 74). The ring has an intaglio carved surface, in which a now-disappeared gem may have been set (Luo, 1996, 14). The back of the bezel was marked by two raised circular elements. From the side, these elements appear like a V in relief carved from under the bezel to the centre of the hoop (Juliano and Lerner, 2001, 259).



Figure 74. Gold ring from the tomb of Shi Shewu (d. 609 CE).

After: Luo, 1996, p. 15, fig 10-3.

A gem-set gold ring was unearthed from the tomb of Shi Jun; it is 1.9 centimetres in inner diameter, 2.45 centimetres in outer diameter, and weighs 13.37 grams (Fig. 75). A rectangular turquoise is set in the gold ring. The connection between the hoop and

the bezel is carved with a V-shaped motif (Yang, 2014, 43).



Figure 75. Gold ring from the tomb of Shi Jun (d. 580 CE).

After: Yang, 2014, p. 44, fig 3.

Coincidentally, the two rings both have a V-shaped motif on the piece connected between the hoop and the bezel. No scholars have examined this similarity, but additional research can determine whether the motif has a certain meaning in Zoroastrianism.

Gem-set gold rings were not a typical type of Chinese jewellery. Zhang (2010, 420) compared several gold gem-set rings unearthed from the Northern Dynasties China and suggested that this kind of jewellery was of Western origin for a few reasons. First, some gems set in the rings were carved with figures. All the figures are non-Chinese, most likely *hu* people. Second, all the rings were found alongside other foreign items, such as Byzantine gold coins, Sasanian silver coins, and glasses. Thus, the two gold rings found in the tombs of Shi Shewu and Shi Jun were not indigenous Chinese products but were imported from aboard. Juliano and Lerner (2001, 259) suggested that these two gold rings and other similar rings dating to approximately the early sixth century or earlier were imported from the West, either Sassanian Persian or Roman, very likely by way of Gandhara.

Our attention now turns to a gem from the tomb of Shi Hedan, 1.6 centimetres in diameter and 0.5 centimetres thick (Fig. 76). The gem is nicolo, a type of banded agate with a blue top layer and brown bottom layer (Juliano and Lerner, 2001, 260). The surface of one side is smooth, but the other side has intaglio carved impressions of a plant on the back of a lion and several inscriptions in Pahlavi, the language of Sasanian Persia.



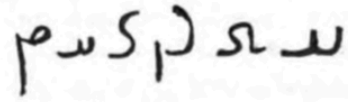
Figure 76. Gem seal from the tomb of Shi Hedan (d. 669 CE).

After: Luo, 1996, fig 18.

Guo (2015) invited three professors from Tehran University to examine the ring, which they identified as referencing a particular legend based on three repeated words, each composed of four glyphs. For example, one of these three words begins with the glyph above the lion's mouth (Fig. 77-1), ends in the glyph above the right branch of the tree (Fig. 77-4), and can be transcribed as *ahlawdad* (pious) (Fig. 77). Together, these three words generally mean devoted, godly, awardable, and responsible (Guo, 2015). The legend appears to have strong religious implications, which are further emphasised by the lion and plant motifs.



4	3	2	1
TA	DA	LAW	AH
t‘	d‘	l‘w	‘h
ت- د	دا	لو	آ ه
اَهلَوداد = Ahlawdād(Pious)			



‘hl‘wd‘d

AHLAWDĀD(pious)

اَهلَوداد= پرهیزگار

Figure 77. Interpretation of the legend on Shi Hedan’s gem by three professors from Tehran University (Rezaaibaghbidi, M. B. Vosooghi, and Amuzegar).

After: Guo, 2015, p.97, fig.2.

In the Near East, a lion image was usually used to represent female divinities. This tradition was also found in Zoroastrianism, in which three goddesses, namely, Ashi, Anahita, and Nana, are often connected with lions. According to extant religious images, the goodness Nana usually directly sits on the back of a lion (Guo, 2015). Thus, the lion image on Shi Hedan's gem probably does not refer to Nana because this lion is riderless.

Anahita represents the worship of water. Ashi has the magical ability to breed horses at a surprising speed, which aligns more with Shi Hedan's career experience, who grazed horses for the court. Based on this evidence, Guo (2015) attributed the lion motif to the worship of Ashi. The plant with three branches on the back of the lion might be a pomegranate or poppy, both of which represent the tree of life in Zoroastrianism. The tree of life, the lion, and the inscriptions might together constitute a unifying theme: breeding.

The excavation report of the tomb of Shi Hedan has identified the gem as a seal (Luo, 1996, 61). However, the author of this thesis questions its supposed function as a seal. Official seals had a long history in China, and they were not allowed to be made privately (Zhang, 2010, 419). Thus, Shi Hedan was unlikely to have used the so-called gem seal for administrative purposes. Although Shi Hedan probably engaged in commerce as a part-time job, the possibility of the gem being used as his private seal still seems low. The gem shows no cord marks or holes, which are commonly observed in seal yields from Samarkand (Fig. 78) (Cazzoli and Cereti, 2005). Even if Shi Hedan needed a seal to secure packages, it is difficult to believe that he would select such an expensive nicolo gem. Thus, it is suggested that the gem was probably a symbol of

prestige and an amulet, offering blessings through the engraved motifs and inscription. As indicated above, both the inscription and the motifs on the gem carry strong religious meanings, which adds weight to the evidence that it functioned as a Zoroastrian amulet. Perhaps it also functioned as a family memento since members of the Shi family in Guyuan mostly believed in Zoroastrianism according to their burial objects and mortuary practices.

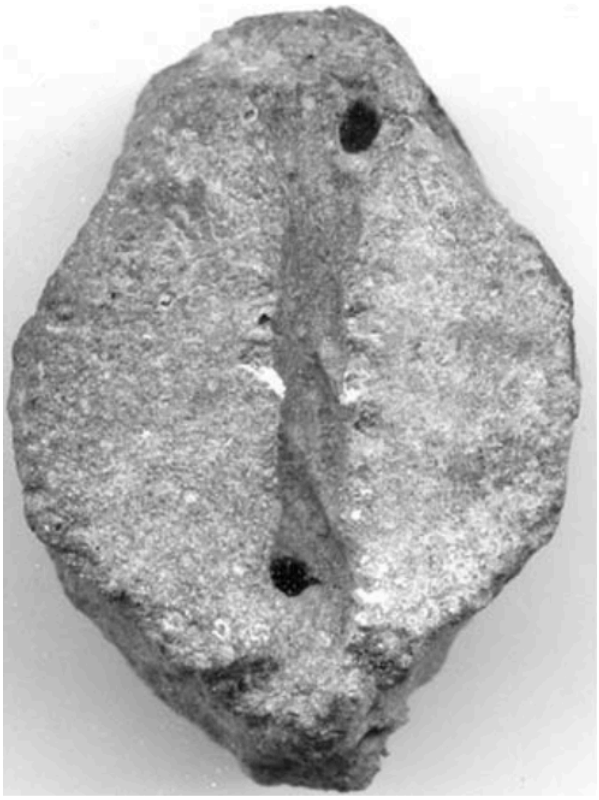


Figure 78. Stone seal from the site of Kafir Kala (ca. seventh to eighth centuries), 11.7 km south of Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

It has clearly visible cord marks on the unimpressed reverse surface. Both ends of the stone are each pierced by one thin hole. After: Cazzoli and Cereti, 2005, p.141, fig.5.

6.5.3 Western Coins Placed near the Deceased: A Sogdian Custom

Six of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian burials each contained one genuine or imitation Byzantine gold coin, including Kang Yexiang (no. 1), Shi Daode (no. 5), YKJM33 (no. 6), Kang Ye (no. 9), Shi Jun (no. 11), and An Pu (no. 17). Interestingly, all these Western coins were placed near the deceased, such as in the mouth or the hand, most likely implying that the placement was part of a burial custom.

Generally, there have been two opposing viewpoints on the origin of the custom of placing Western coins near bodies in ancient China. On the one hand, the custom has been attributed to the long-standing Chinese funeral ritual of placing objects in the mouth and/or the hand of the deceased, known as the *koushi* and/or *shouwo* 口实手握 (filling the mouth and/or hand) rituals (Xia, 1974; Li, 1995; Wang, 2003). Throughout the practice of rituals, different objects[28], such as rice, cowry shells, jade, and coins, were used as amulets placed near the deceased. Hence, because the silk roads brought prosperity and Western coins to medieval China, the adoption of these foreign coins as part of the Chinese funeral rituals was probably a natural development.

On the other hand, dissenting opinions come mainly from Odani Nakao (1991; 1993) and Luo Feng (2004), who both suggested that the custom probably originated in the Hellenistic practice of 'Charon's obol'. 'Charon's obol' refers to coins being

[28]The objects designated to fulfil the rituals mainly depended on social rankings. Low-ranking people could afford less expensive objects such as cowries and Chinese copper coins, while jade products were emblematic of burials of emperors and nobles (Marinova, 2020).

placed in burials (usually in the mouth of the deceased) as payment for the ferryman for transporting the deceased across the river Styx to the afterlife (Brown, 2013, 41).

Unsatisfied with simply describing these two possibilities, this section attempts to make a more precise judgement of the origin of the practice of laying Western coins close to the deceased in ancient China. In fact, in addition to the abovementioned six Byzantine gold coins and bracteates from the selected Sino-Sogdian tombs, Western coins appeared in many burials in China. To obtain in-depth insight into the practice, this section is based on case studies in which archaeological material about the custom is gathered, organised, and analysed. The Western coins comprise Byzantine gold coins, Sasanian silver coins and their imitations.

Moreover, coins placed close to the deceased specifically refer to those that were deliberately placed in direct contact with the deceased. Other coin placements in graves (e.g., on the floor or within a vessel) have been attested by the archaeological record in many areas of the Eurasian continent, such as China, Central Asia, and the Roman Empire (Wang, 2003). These 'unorthodox' locations of grave coins probably signify rich cultural meanings[29]. To avoid expanding beyond the scope of the present work, this section strictly considers coins that were placed in direct contact with the deceased, such as on top of or in the body.

A wide range of information on both the coins and the deceased is considered. The data were collected and sorted according to the following features: coin identification

[29]For further discussion, see Brown (2013, 311–314).

(ID) reference, coin status (genuine or counterfeit), degree of coinage debasement, sovereign featured on the coin, date of burial, burial site, position of the coin relative to the deceased, and ethnicity of the coin's owner. The collected coins are presented in contingency tables (Appendixes 7 and 8). In total, 44 genuine and imitation Byzantine gold coins (from 41 burials) are considered, and 40 genuine and imitation Sasanian silver coins (from 35 burials) are also considered.

To understand better patterns in the custom of burying the dead with Western coins in proximity, this section analyses the collected data, including the location of the Western coin, the spatial distribution of the custom, the temporal distribution of the custom, and the people who practised the custom, from four different perspectives.

a. Position of the Coin

The position of a coin refers to where it was in the burial site. Admittedly, the original position of a coin may not be the same as the position in which it was discovered because of events that may have occurred after it was placed, such as earthquakes, animal activity, and grave robberies. Thus, it is rarely possible to reconstruct the original position of a disturbed coin. Thus, the analysis in this section must depend on only documented find-spots. Fortunately, all 84 collected Western coins have confirmed or estimated excavation locations.

Although this investigation is restricted to those coins that were deliberately placed in direct contact with the deceased, as mentioned above, great variations in the location of the coins still appear, including where they were located in the mouth, near the torso,

near the head, on the shoulder, on the collarbone, near the spine, under the arm, at the waist, in the hand, on the eye, and on the neck.

To minimise issues with interpreting these locations of Western coins, they are grouped based on the principle of proximity. As such, coins located in the mouth, on the eye, and around the head are grouped in the same category of 'close to the head'. Likewise, coins found on the shoulder, collarbone, and neck grouped under the same location. Consequently, the above categories are summarised into the following groups: close to the head, in the hand, at the waist, on the neck, close to the spine, under the arm, and close to the torso (Table 1).

Table 1. The 84 coins' positions relative to the deceased (reference: apps. 7 and 8)

Position	Head	Han	Waist	Neck	Spine	Arm	Torso
Number of coins	68	1	1	6	3	1	4

68 coins were placed close to the head, accounting for approximately 81 percent of the total. However, placement in the hand occurs only once. This imbalance suggests more alignment with the characteristics of 'Charon's obol' than that of the *koushi* and/or *shouwo* 口含手握 (filling the mouth and/or hand) rituals. Wang (2003) indicated that the practice of placing coins in the hand rather than in the mouth of the deceased gradually became mainstream in China after the East Han Dynasty. In contrast, the head of the deceased was the most common location in the practice of Charon's obol (Brown,

2013, 69). This comparison indicates that the placement of Western coins close to the deceased was more akin to the custom of ‘Charon’s obol’.

b. Geographical Distribution of the Custom

The geographical distribution of burials containing Western coins placed near the deceased is the second consideration. Because the excavation sites of the tombs are all indicated in the excavation reports, all 84 Western coins, including 44 Byzantine gold coins and 40 Sasanian silver coins, are considered. For comparison purposes, the excavation sites were defined according to their urban administrative region. All items were sorted according to their excavation sites and in sequence from west to east (Table 2).

Table 2. The 84 coins by excavation site (reference: apps. 7 and 8)

Excavation site	Turfan	Guyuan	Xi’an	Shangzhou	Hohhot	Luoyang	Chaoyang
Number of coins	62	11	5	1	1	2	2

In total, 62 coins were unearthed from Turfan, accounting for approximately three quarters of the full set. I call this phenomenon ‘Turfan distinctiveness’. The ‘Turfan distinctiveness’ affects not only the geographical distribution of the custom but also its chronology and users, as will be addressed below.

This ‘Turfan distinctiveness’ might result from a combination of factors. I name two principal factors to understand the unique settings of Turfan. Turfan was located at the intersection of several silk roads; therefore, Byzantine gold coins and Sasanian silver coins were relatively common to obtain there. From approximately 580 to 700 CE, Sassanian silver coins were used as the main form of currency there (Hansen, 2012, 83-112). Turfan was a heterogenous society comprised of people with different cultural backgrounds lived. Ancient literature written in diverse languages such as Chinese, Sogdian, Turkic, Persian, Syriac, and Tibetan, has been found there (Wang, 2012, 1-7).

Returning to the geographical distribution of the discussed custom, Guo (2014) argued that this custom probably emerged from China rather than the West because she noticed an area between Turfan and Central Asia where no evidence of the practice has been found. However, this assertion seems questionable.

According to available archaeological material in Central Asia, the nearest relevant burial site to Turfan is the cemetery of Tup-Khona in Dushanbe, Tajikistan[30]. The straight-line distance between Dushanbe and Turfan is 1780 kilometres. Thus, there is indeed an area between Turfan and Central Asia where no incidents of the practice have

[30] M.M.Dyakonov and B.A.Litvinskij (1984, 227-231) successively conducted archaeological excavations in the cemetery of Tup-Khona. 19 coins placed near the deceased were found, including 13 coins that had been placed in the mouth of the corpse, three on the chest, two on the heart, and one coin in the hand. All of the coins were imitations of silver coins minted under Eucratides I, who was one of the most important Greco-Bactrian kings.

been found. However, the same situation also appears when one looks east. Table 2 shows that in inner China, the nearest relevant burial site to Turfan is Guyuan. The straight-line distance between Turfan and Guyuan is approximately 1500 kilometres. Thus, it seems that the distribution of the custom cannot explain its origin without further evidence.

c. Chronological Distribution of the Custom

The third analysis compares the burial dates in order to identify when the custom appeared and disappeared in ancient China and whether it peaked at a certain period.

Normally, biographic epitaphs and objects found in graves that have distinct temporal characteristics are two key elements used for dating; biographic epitaphs generally refer to a particular day, while dates determined for objects found in graves are less precise. Dating yields three types of temporalities: it can provide a clear date; a vague period with a small range of error, such as a certain century; and an even vaguer period with a wide range of error, such as several centuries or a whole dynasty.

The third type of dating periods is considered less useful than the other two because the error range is too great. This section thus analyses only the first two kinds of results, involving 46 coins composed of 29 Byzantine gold coins and 17 Sasanian silver coins. The burials are divided into 100-year date ranges since a considerable number of cases can be identified within at least one particular century (Table 3).

Table 3. The 46 coins divided by date into 100-year periods (reference: apps. 7 and 8).

Burial date	500-600 CE	600-700 CE	700-800 CE
Number of coins	13	29	4

The cluster from between 500 and 600 CE, which includes 13 coins that were unearthed from nine tombs, five in Turfan and four in inner China (app.7, no.1, 2, 6, 31-34, 38, 40, 41; app.8, no.11-13), appeared at a time when Western coins were just beginning to be placed near the deceased within tombs. Setting five tombs found in Turfan aside, the remaining four tombs all belonged to non-Han people who were themselves Sogdians or had some degree of Sogdian backgrounds (for their identities, see below in the subsection titled 'Ethnicity of those Engaging in the Custom'). It could be argued that Sogdians were the earliest group to practice the custom of placing Western coins near the deceased in tombs, at least in inner China.

Furthermore, the cluster that appears between 700 and 800 CE shows a sharp drop in the incidence of the custom of placing Western coins near the body until the extinction of the custom at the end of the eighth century. In fact, not only the custom itself but also its materials (i.e., Byzantine gold coins and Sasanian silver coins) disappeared in China during this period. According to Luo's (2004) and Sun's (2017) statistics, neither the Byzantine gold coins nor Sasanian silver coins were found in China later than the eighth century[31].

[31] The waning and disappearance of Western coins in China was resulted from a combination of

d. Ethnicity of those Engaging in the Custom

This section considers the ethnicity of those practising this custom. Specialists have developed a series of methods to identity individual's ethnicity in medieval China of the Middle Ages (for these methods, see Chapter 3). After processing the selected samples through these methods, I identify and present the ethnic backgrounds of the owners of 58 coins (Table 4). Notably, these 58 coins were not owned by 58 corresponding 58 people. Instead, some people employed more than one Western coin in their burials, probably as a sign of wealth and prestige. For example, Tian Hong (d. 575 CE), a Xianbei elite, was buried in proximity with four genuine Byzantine gold coins (YLK, 2009, 86-87) (app.7, no.31-34).

Table 4. The ethnic distribution of the owners of 58 coins (reference: apps. 7 and 8).

Ethnicity of their owners	Han	Sogdian	Kucha	Xianbei	Indian
Number of coins	28	22	2	5	1

factors, among which, one important reason was probably that the link between China and the West through the land-based silk roads was severely weakened after the second half of the eighth century due to a series of great geological changes took place in Eurasia, such as An Lushan's rebellion and the Arab conquests. See Lewis (2009a, 156-163).

An overwhelming majority of the coins were owned by Han people and Sogdians. The Sogdians, who owned 22 coins, lived in various locations throughout north China (app. 7, no. 16-17, 22-25, 27-30, 36, 40-44, app. 8, no. 1-2, 7-9, 37). In contrast, all the Chinese who owned 28 coins, lived in Turfan (app. 7, no. 1-4, 7-13, 18-20; app. 8, no. 3, 11-12, 14-20, 25, 27-29). Again, the 'Turfan distinctiveness' is in effect here. Han people's adoption of the custom was confined to Turfan, reflecting a regional tradition. If the custom was of Sogdian origin suggested by this thesis, this is a clear example of Sogdian practices and traditions being adopted by Han Chinese.

None of examples of Han owners of Western coins in inner China significantly weakens the connection between the custom of placing Western coins near the deceased and the Chinese *koushi* and/or *shouwo* 口实手握 (filling the mouth and/or hand) rituals. If the custom was a variation of the Chinese burial rituals, Han residents in other parts of China would not have totally rejected it. Compared with the Han Chinese, the Sogdians practised the custom across a much wider geographical area. Thus, the custom apparently had a stronger link to Sogdians than to Han Chinese.

Furthermore, the Xianbei and Indian people who practised the custom had some Sogdian affiliations. Two Xianbei individuals, named Tian Hong (owner of four coins) and He Ruoque (owner of one coin), had similar experiences, as they both lived in the Hexi region (west of the Yellow River, mainly in modern Gansu Province), in which many Sogdians settled and were based for trading, because of their work or family (Luo, 2005; Rong, 2001, 17-37). The only Indian burial showing evidence of the practice was

Li Dan's wife, who was more visibly connected to Sogdian people than the other examples. A funeral stone bed in her grave was engraved with a fire altar, a typical token of Zoroastrianism. Moreover, her son was named 槃陀 (medieval Chinese pronunciation: bwan da), a transliteration of the Sogdian word *βntk*, and her daughter in-law was a Sogdian from the state of An (modern Bukhara, Uzbekistan) (Ma, 2015, 141). These links strengthen the argument that the custom was probably a convention among ethnic Sogdians. Sogdians probably brought the custom to China and spread it to other ethnic groups.

e. Summary

All the investigations based on the four dimensions point to a similar general conclusion: the custom of placing Western coins near the deceased in ancient China probably derived directly from the Central Asian version of 'Charon's obol' rather than being a variation of the Chinese *kouhan* and/or *shouwo* 口含手握 (filling the mouth and/or hand) rituals. The custom itself was more akin to the practice of 'Charon's obol' than to Chinese rituals, as indicated by the placement near the head rather than the hand of the dead and the irreplaceable character of coins of Western origin. Moreover, Sogdians played a much more significant role in the spread of the custom than did the Chinese. Sogdians were the forerunners, the main users, and the propagators of the custom. To a certain degree, the custom can be considered a Sogdian ethnic norm.

Two additional points should be noted. First, Sogdian significant role in spreading the custom of placing Western coins near the deceased were masked by the

phenomenon of ‘Turfan distinctiveness’, in which Han people engaged in the custom both early on and extensively. Perhaps the custom even matured into a regional convention in Turfan.

Second, it is uncertain whether such coins were a direct payment for Charon. It has been established in academic communities that the Hellenistic practice of ‘Charon’s obol’ was brought into Central Asia through Alexander the Great’s conquests. If the arguments provided by this section are accurate, Central Asians, particularly Sogdians, then brought the practice into China through their movements. Although the propagation path has become clear, it is questionable whether Charon, a Hellenistic deity, would be remembered and worshiped by so many populations across the Eurasia continent.

6.6.6 Conclusion

The Sogdians adopted two distinct kinds of items to furnish their tombs. On the one hand, an assemblage of Chinese tomb figurines was recovered. Perhaps due to the level of Sinicisation, the use of Chinese tomb figurines by the Sogdians appeared to be somewhat varied. Only two Sogdian tombs (i.e., An Yuanshou and An Pu) contained numerous tomb figurines as the same as other members of Chinese society. Most of the Sogdian tombs only contained the small number of tomb figurines. Some figurines with Sogdian characteristics were used, such as the sancai-glazed pottery camel figurine found in the tomb of An Pu.

On the other hand, the Sogdians furnished their tombs by items with Western characteristics, such as burial masks, Western jewellery, and Western coins. Most of these items were not native to China but were imported from the West via the silk roads, thus indicating that the Sogdian owners of these items had a certain contact with the West. More interestingly, these items were emblematic of a certain custom. The practice of using a metal chin strap to hold the jaw of the deceased can be traced to Central Asia or Xinjiang. If Central Asia was the source, the custom was most likely introduced there during the military campaigns of Alexander the Great from 329 to 327 BCE. Additionally, placing Western coins near the deceased might be a Sogdian convention derived from the Hellenistic practice of ‘Charon’s obol’, which was another influence of ancient Greek culture in Central Asia.

Chapter 7. Epitaphs

7.1 Introduction

As both burial objects and funerary texts, epitaphs warrant study in their own chapter because they often contain a wealth of information about owners' cultural affiliations. This chapter begins with an overview of epitaphs in Chinese contexts, which provides a refined understanding of their significance. Unlike in the previous empirical chapters, the description in this chapter omits the discovery and excavation of epitaphs from Sino-Sogdian tombs because tombs often contained one epitaph in similar locations (i.e., between the main burial chamber and the tomb entrance). Instead, the description section focuses on the original content and translations of the selected epitaphs related to the deceased's cultural identity. Next, this chapter investigates how Sino-Sogdians used Chinese-style epitaphs for their own purposes, paying particular attention to the content and decorative patterns.

7.2 Epitaphs in Chinese Tradition

The use of the epitaph was a traditional Chinese burial custom that grew out of late Han practices and became, by the late fifth and sixth centuries, an essential element in Chinese tombs (Rawson, 2001, 135). An epitaph is called *muzhiming*, literally 'entombed account with inscription', in Chinese. The most feature that most distinguishes Chinese epitaphs from analogues in other cultures is their placement.

Chinese epitaphs were usually placed inside a grave rather than over it.

Early on, the manufacturing of epitaphs varied widely. As long as it was placed inside the tomb, an epitaph could refer to any words written in memory of the deceased regardless of the length and the solid materials (e.g., brick, tile, and stone) on which it was inscribed.

From the late fifth century onwards, epitaphs acquired a standardised form. Stone became the nearly exclusive material for epitaphs. Eventually, a standard Chinese epitaph usually consisted of two overlapping rectangular tablets of varied sizes (see the illustration in Fig. 79). The bigger tablet served as a base inscribed with a lengthy account, while the smaller tablet was a cover upon which a shorter inscription indicated ownership and sought to protect the inscription from damage. Sometimes the vertical edges of two-piece epitaph tablets were adorned with patterns of various themes (Ebrey et al., 2019, 6-10).

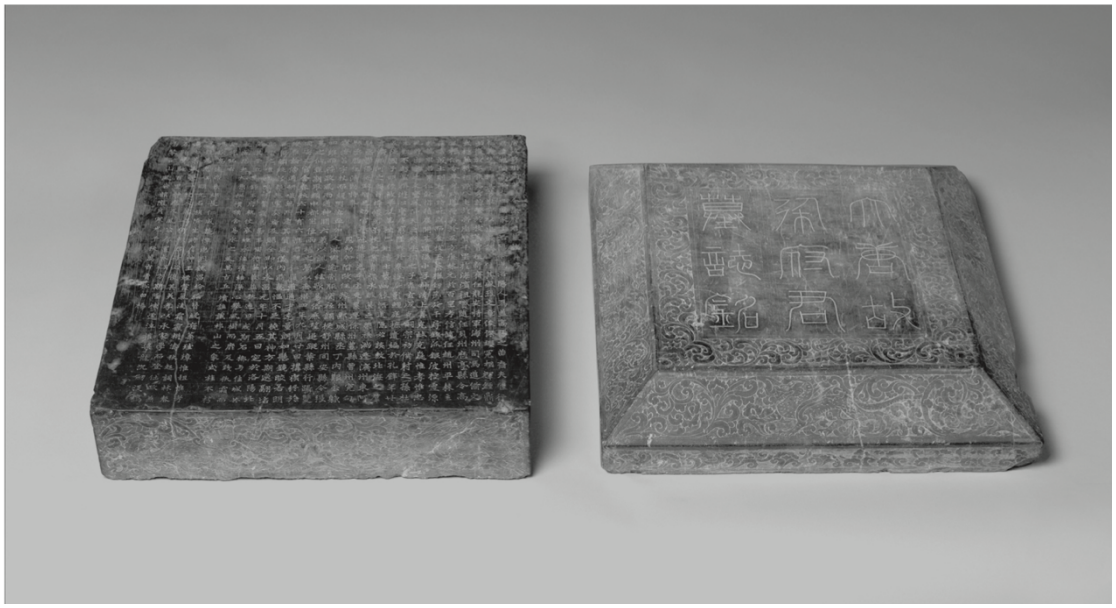


Figure 79. Epitaph of Xu Derun (d. 689 CE).

Left: epitaph base, 58 cm long, 59 cm wide, and 12.5 cm high. Right: epitaph cover, 56 cm long, 56 cm wide, and 13 cm high. In the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. After: Ebrey et al, 2019, p. 7, fig.1.

The lengthy account inscribed on the base tablet had a relatively fixed three-part structure (title, prose preface, eulogy). The title was usually a brief sentence that indicated ownership of the epitaph, which was omitted in many epitaphs because its function was accomplished by the inscription on the cover base. The prose preface contained the main content. More specifically, a prose preface in the late fifth century CE often touched on 13 subjects: the person's names (e.g., the surname, the personal name, the courtesy name); 'a person of someplace'; and their ancestry, personality, profession, death date, age, burial date, burial place, and marriage alliances (e.g., wife and children) (Ebrey et al, 2019, 6). The eulogy primarily contained poetic allusions that mourned the loss of the deceased and expressed the longing of the living (Ebrey et al, 2019, 6).

In Chinese tradition, an epitaph had various functions. There was probably no more a proper burial object than an epitaph for identifying the tomb owner. Epitaphs were usually placed between the main burial chamber and the tomb entrance (Shi, 2012). This prominent location means that the epitaph would be among the first burial objects encountered by anyone entering the tomb.

This identification function was helpful when later generations prepared to relocate

a tomb. Although tomb relocation was not common, it was allowed in some circumstances. First, familism requires individuals to be buried near their patrilineal family. For example, An Pu (d. 664 CE) (no. 17) was reburied alongside his wife in Luoyang, as discussed in Chapter 4. Second, Chinese people believed that auspicious grave sites brought glory and fortune to the deceased's family. Sometimes the deceased was reburied at a more auspicious grave site (Yang, 2019, 96-102).

Moreover, uncontrollable objective risks (e.g., ravaging warfare, tomb robbery and destruction) sometimes made the relocation of tombs necessary (Shi, 2012). Following the collapse of the Eastern Han Dynasty in the early third century, Chinese people suffered civil wars for centuries until the Sui Dynasty reunified China in 581 CE. During these years of war, tombs were prone to damage and robbery. As a result, some sixth-century Chinese people predicted that their tombs would come to ruin one day in the future. They indicated this concern and made an accompanying request about relocating their tombs in their epitaph inscriptions. For example, the epitaph of Shedi Huiluo (505-562 CE) states:

> 天度八百年后开吾墓，改封更葬起丘坟，宜官享禄多福祚。
>
> My tomb will be opened in eight hundred years as heaven orbits. The grave will be rebuilt, the remains will be re-entombed, and a mound will be erected. [The person who will do such things] will receive official titles, payments, and good luck (Shi, 2012).

Moreover, an epitaph was an appropriate medium for conveying the virtues of the deceased (Wang, 2017, 15). Although not everyone was virtuous when alive, a person's image was often embellished in his or her epitaph text because Confucianism regards being a virtuous person as the most important thing in life. Ancestors' good words and deeds were important for elite households. The embellished image of the deceased was handed down in the family (Alexei, 2014). For wealthy families who could afford a commissioned epitaph text composed by a literary talent, embellished images of the past elites might be widely known because the literati often preserved a copy of the text and integrated it into their own collections (Hu, 2019). This means that epitaph text itself could independently circulate throughout society even though the epitaph tablets had been hidden in the tomb.

Another easily overlooked audience for epitaphs was the officials[32] of the afterlife (Rawson, 2001, 135). Posthumous immortality or preferential treatment could be achieved if the deceased's virtues and accomplishments were known to and persuaded the underworld officials (Ebrey et al, 2019, 8). Likewise, decorative patterns carved into the edges of epitaph tablets, particularly supernatural creatures, played an efficacious role in communicating with the underworld's sprits (Rong, 2001, 48).

[32] The Chinese believed that a hierarchy existed in the world of the deceased. Such a hierarchical posthumous society needed officials to manage it. These officials were adapted from different sources, such as folk legends, Daoism, and Buddhism (Yu, 1981).

7.3 Sino-Sogdian Epitaphs

From the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs, 18 epitaphs were discovered. Complex information on these 18 epitaphs is organised and presented in Appendix 6. This section provides translations of some sentences from these 18 epitaphs, primarily involving details on the names, origins, ancestry, marriages, and professions of the deceased because this information is the most indicative of the cultural identity of the deceased.

Some translation rules need to be clarified. First, after each new place name, the name of the modern province is given in brackets. Second, it is common in epitaphs to use an honorific term, such as 'duke' (*gong*) or 'gentleman' (*jun*), after the surname of the deceased. Here, all honorific terms for men are translated as 'gentleman', and those for women are translated as 'lady'. Third, official titles are rendered here merely according to their job category, such as military, civilian, or religious. Their rhetorical titles are omitted.

No. 1. Kang Yexiang's epitaph (d. 640 CE):

…交河县民高将康业相，春秋八十有二… (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 22).

Kang Yexiang was a resident and a general in Jiaohe County [in modern Turfan, Xinjiang], and his age was 82 [when he passed away].

No. 2. Kang Fumian's epitaph (d. 630 CE):

…左亲侍左右康浮面之辅墓 (TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 230).

[This is] Kang Fumian's 'subsidiary tomb' [a less common appellation for epitaph], who was a guard.

No. 4. He Fujun's epitaph (d. 700 CE):

… 都尉何府君墓志铭并序…大夏月氏人也… (Wu, 1988).

[This epitaph] is for gentleman He, who was a general. [Gentleman He] was a Yuezhi from Bactria.

No. 5. Shi Daode's epitaph (d. 678 CE):

唐给事郎兰池正监史府君墓志并序。公讳道德, 字万安, 其先建康飞桥人事…史鱼赛諤于卫朝…史丹翼亮于汉代 (Luo, 1996, 94).

This epitaph is for gentleman Shi, who was a civil servant [and then] director of Lanchi of Tang [Lanchi was a breeding farm, in modern Yanchi, Ningxia Province]. His name was Daode, and courtesy name was Wanan. His ancestors were based in Feiqiao of Jiankang [equal to Zhaowu city, probably in modern Gansu Province]. Shi Yu served the Wei state [a vassal state of the Zhou Dynasty]. Shi Dan served the Han Dynasty [in this context, Shi Yu and Shi Dan were proud ancestors of the deceased Shi Daode].

No. 8. Di Caoming's epitaph (d. 579 CE):

…夏州天主仪同翟君墓志。君讳曹明，西国人也... (Luo and Rong, 2016, 280).

This epitaph is for gentleman Di, who was *tianzhu* 天主 [a title for a Zoroastrian priest, see discussions in Section 5 of this chapter] and a general in Xiazhou [modern Jingbian, Shanxi Province]. His name was Caoming, and he was a person of a Western country.

No. 9. Kang Ye's epitaph (d. 571 CE):

君讳业，字元基。其先康居国王之苗裔也…授世掌大天主…长子汳休延…次子盘陁，次子货主 (XML, 2009).

His name was Ye, and courtesy name was Yuanji. His ancestors were descendants of the royal family of Kangju [modern Samarkand, Uzbekistan]. He was appointed as grand *tianzhu* and this title could be hereditary in his family. His eldest son was named Banxiuyan, and younger sons were named Pantuo and Huozhu.

No. 10. An Jia's epitaph (d. 579 CE):

大周大都督同州萨保安君墓志。君讳伽，字大伽，姑臧昌松人。其先黄帝之苗裔…(SKY Shaanxi, 2003, 61).

This epitaph is for gentleman An, who was a general and *sabao* [a title for Sogdian

leaders, see discussions in Section 1.2.3] in Tongzhou [modern Dali, Shannxi Province] of the Great Zhou. His name was Jia, and courtesy name Dajia, a person of Changsong in Guzang [modern Wuwei, Gansu Province]. His ancestors were descendants of Huangdi.

No. 11. Shi Jun's epitaph (d. 579 CE):

The Chinese version: …史国人也，本居西域…诏授凉州萨保…长子毗沙，次维摩，次富卤多… (Yang, 2014, 294).

[The deceased's ancestors] were based in the Shi state [modern Shahrisabz, Uzbekistan], who originally lived in the Western Regions. [The deceased] was appointed *sabao* in Liangzhou [modern Gansu Province]. [The deceased's] eldest son was Pisa, and younger sons were Weimo and Fuluduo.

The Sogdian version (the translation for the Sogdian epitaph quotes Sims-Williams (2021) because the author of this thesis cannot read Sogdian):

4 wmʾʾt (k)šyʾnʾk-kwtrʾk	There was a man of a family from Kish,
5 kcʾʾn (ʾ)[nc](ʾʾ)tk cnn βγpʾwr	domiciled in Guzang. From the emperor
6 [p]tβry[δʾ]rt kcʾncʾnʾk srtpʾw	he holds the rank (of) *sabao* of Guzang,
7 • [ ] (t) pr sγwδyk-stn	… in the land of the Sogdians.

29 ʾkrty ywnʾk snkynʾk βγktʾk	This stone tomb was made by
30 βrʾyšmnβntk δrymtβntk	Vreshman-vander, Zhimat-vande (and)
31 prʾwtβntk wsʾʾn ʾBYʾ	Prot-vande, desiring
32 mʾδryh sʾcʾw wyʾʾkh	a suitable place for (their) father (and)
	Mother.

No. 12.1. An Yuanshou's epitaph (d. 683 CE):

大唐故右威卫将军…君讳元寿，字茂龄，凉州姑臧人也… (Chen, 1988, 44).

The deceased was the general of Tang… His name was Yuanshou, courtesy name was Maoning, and a person of Guzang in Liangzhou [modern Wuwei, Gansu Province].

No. 12.2. Di Liuniang's epitaph (An Yuanshou's wife) (d. 698 CE):

…夫人讳六娘，字六娘。隋开府仪同公之第六女也… (Chen, 1988, 47).

The lady was named Liuniang, and her courtesy name was Liuniang. She was the sixth daughter of a general of the Sui Dynasty.

No. 13. Kang Wentong's epitaph (d. 678 CE):

…君讳文通，字懿，青州高密郡人也… (Yang, 2004).

His name was Wentong, courtesy name was Yi, and a person of Gaomi in Qingzhou [modern Shandong Province].

No. 14. Kang Lingyun's epitaph (d. 734 CE):

大唐范阳郡节度副使…君讳令恽，字善厚，其先汲人也。昔武王伐殷，康叔封卫… (Luo and Rong, 2016, 117).

[The deceased] was a vice regional military governor in Fanyang [modern Beijing] of the Great Tang. His name was Lingyun, courtesy name was Shanhou, and his ancestors were based in Ji [modern Ji, Henan Province]. In the past, the King Wu [founder and first king of the Zhou Dynasty, ca. 1050-256 BCE] attacked the King Zhou [last king of the Shang Dynasty, ca. 1600-1050 BCE], and Kang Shu [a younger brother of the King Wu] was granted the right to establish the Wei vassal state [in this context, Kang Shu was a proud ancestor of the deceased Kang Lingyun].

No. 15.1. Yu Hong's epitaph (d. 592 CE):

大隋故仪同虞公墓志。公讳弘，字莫潘，鱼国尉纥驎人也… (SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, 89).

This epitaph is for the past gentleman Yu, who was a general of the Sui Dynasty.

His name was Hong, courtesy name was Mopan, a person of Yuhelin in the Yu state [probably in Central Asia].

No. 15.2. Yu Hong's wife's epitaph (d.?):

This epitaph was broken before discovery; thus, no information about the deceased's cultural identity is discernible.

No. 16. Cao Yi's epitaph (d. 655 CE):

君讳怡，字愿乐，隰城人也。曹叔振泽…建国命氏… (Li, 2007).

His name was Yi, courtesy name was Yuanle, a person of Licheng [modern Fenyang, Shanxi Province]. Cao Zengze [a younger brother of the King Wu of Zhou] established the [Cao] vassal state and the [Cao] clan [in this context, Cao Zhengze was a proud ancestor of the deceased Cao Yi].

No.17. An Pu's epitaph (d. 664 CE):

唐故陆胡州大首领安居墓志。君讳菩字萨，其先安国大首领… (Zhao, 1982).

This epitaph is for the past gentleman An, who was a great chieftain in the Six Hu County [probably somewhere between modern Ningxia Province and inner Mongolia] of Tang. His name was Pu, courtesy name was Sa. His ancestors were great chiefs of the An state [modern Bukhara, Uzbekistan].

No.18. He Hongjing's epitaph (d. 865 CE):

…公讳弘敬，字子肃，庐江人也。周皇叔虞之后…(Chen,1984).

His name was Hongjing, and courtesy name was Zisu, a person of Lujiang [modern Hefei, Anhui Province]. He was descendants of Yu, who was an uncle of the King Wu of Zhou.

No. 19. Shi Siming's Funeral Eulogy (d. 761 CE):

…昭武皇帝… (Yuan, 1991).

[The deceased Shi Siming was titled] Zhaowu Emperor.

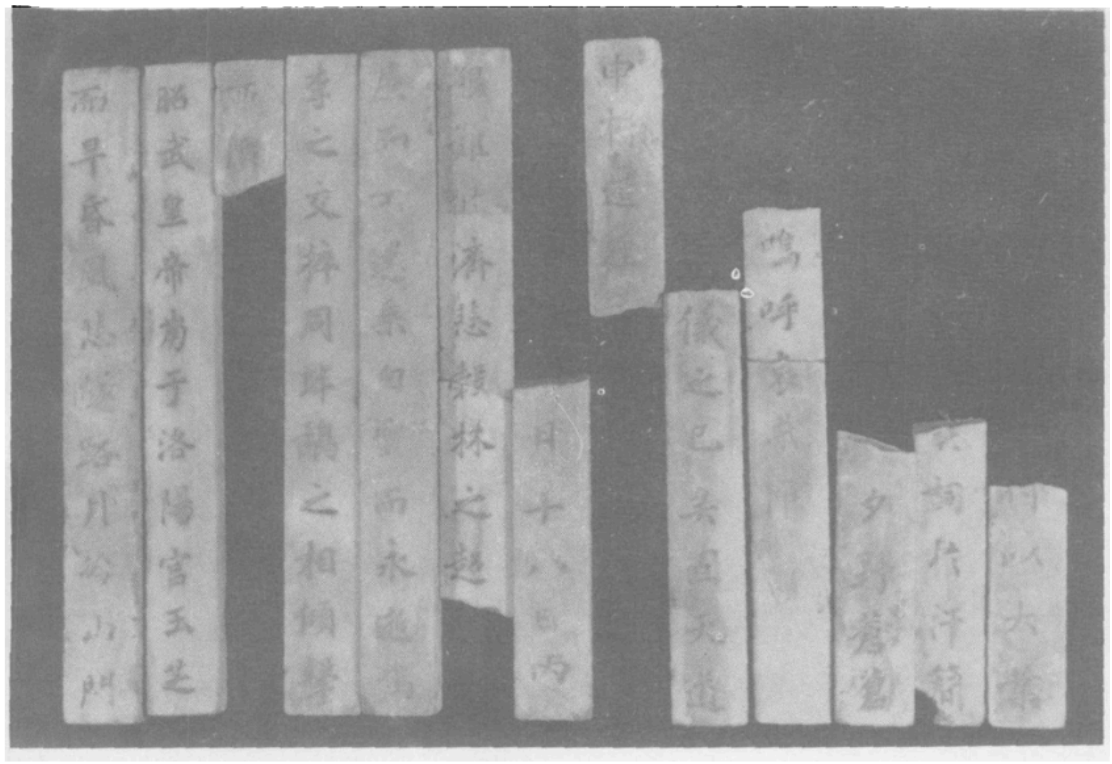
7.4 Adoption of Chinese Epitaphs

7.4.1 Forms

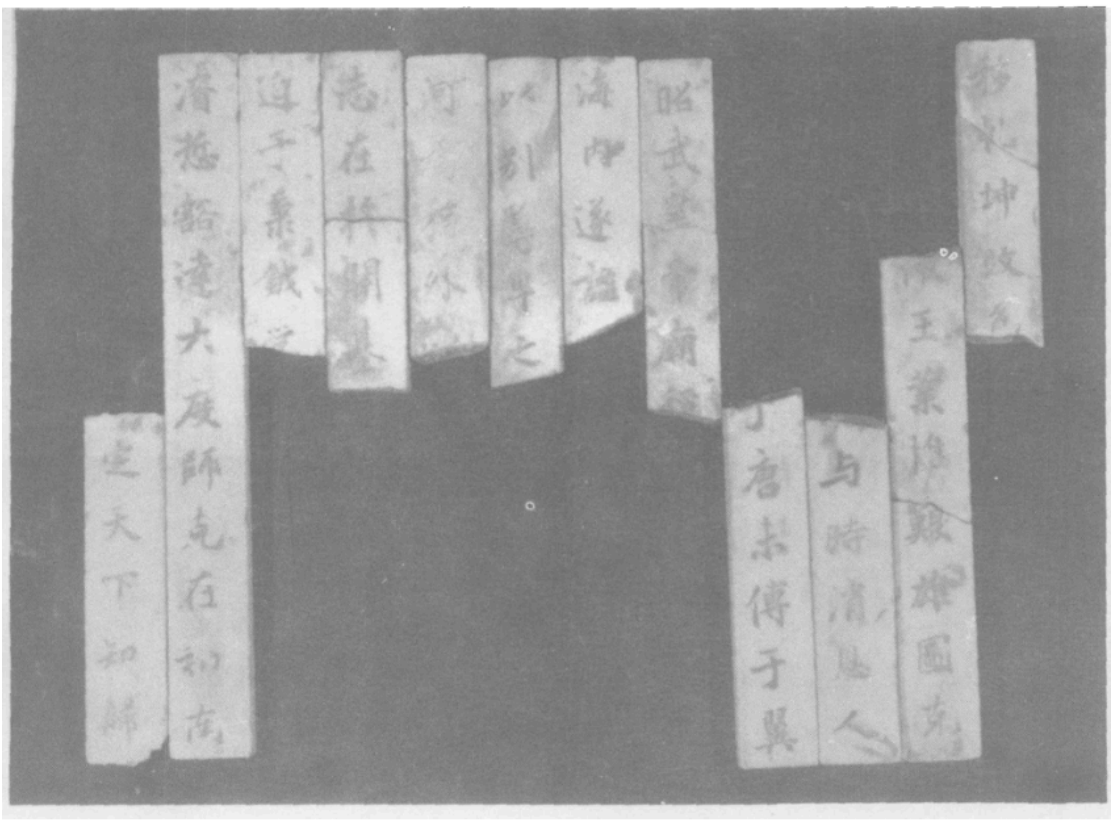
The 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs together contained 18 epitaphs; 14 of which tombs each contained one epitaph and two of which each contained two epitaphs (see Appendix 6). When only one epitaph was found in a tomb, that epitaph belonged to the deceased individual or was shared by a deceased couple. When two epitaphs were found in a tomb, they were associated with the male and the female deceased separately.

Notably, the tomb of Shi Siming (no. 19) contained a funeral eulogy rather than an

epitaph (Fig. 80) (Yuan, 1991). A funeral eulogy was a government-compiled biography of the deceased emperor and his closest family members. The text of a funeral eulogy was carved in jade, as the case of Shi Siming, seldom in stone. There was no need for the royal family to use epitaphs, and it was a serious arrogation for other unqualified deceased people to have funeral eulogies (Liu, 2012). Shi Siming was a deputy of An Lushan in the rebellion against the Tang Empire and in 759 CE, became the third emperor of the Yan state that An Lushan established. As an emperor, he had the right to use a funeral eulogy rather than an epitaph. For convenience, Shi Siming's funeral eulogy is regarded as a variation of epitaphs in this chapter.



1　哀册



2　谥册

Figure 80. Funeral eulogy in jade of the tomb of Shi Siming.

Top: a part of the funeral eulogy with emphasis on mourning the deceased Shi Siming,

known as ‘mournful words’ (*aice* 哀册). Bottom: a part of the funeral eulogy with emphasis on the biography of the deceased, known as ‘commendatory words’ (*shice* 谥册). After: Yuan, 1991, fig. 3.

As discussed in the previous section, epitaphs had been an essential Chinese burial object since the late fifth and sixth centuries (Rawson, 2001, 135). In contrast, Sogdians did not have such a custom of writing a biography for the deceased. Lerner (2005) indicated that no inscriptions even with only the deceased’s name, have been found in Sogdiana; perhaps the places where ossuaries were kept, and the mausoleums were where the names of the deceased were indicated. Facing the wholly alien Chinese custom of epitaphs, most of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdians adopted this custom, as corroborated by the 18 excavated epitaphs.

The 18 epitaphs from the Sino-Sogdian tombs differ in terms of their materials and content. Two epitaphs found in Turfan (no. 1 and 2), which date to 640 CE and 630 CE, respectively, were made of brick, and provided limited biographical information on the deceased people. Most of the 16 remaining epitaphs found in inner China were made of stone and were subsequently structured in three parts: title, prose preface, and eulogy, which provided much more genealogical and biographical information about the deceased. As indicated above, by the late fifth century, Chinese epitaphs bore some level of convention, such as the use of stone and the three-part structure of the funerary text (title, prose preface, eulogy) (Ebrey et al., 2019, 6). Apparently, the Sogdians from inner China kept up with the latest trends in epitaph use while others from Turfan still

employed outdated epitaph customs.

Between 460 CE and 640 CE, there was an independent state named the kingdom of Gaochang in Turfan (Song, 2003, 144-203). To my knowledge, no epitaphs dating to the Kingdom of Gaochang conform to these conventions. Instead, most epitaphs from the Kingdom of Gaochang were made of brick and contained limited biographical information about the deceased, as did the abovementioned two Sogdian epitaphs from Turfan. It seems that the Kingdom of Gaochang did not experience the standardisation of epitaphs that took place in inner China in the second half of the fifth century. However, the outdated epitaphs in Turfan rapidly disappeared after the area was officially annexed by the Tang Empire in 640 CE. Standard epitaphs were subsequently introduced from inner China to Turfan (Hou and Wu, 2003, 477).

The two Sogdian epitaphs found in Turfan date to 630 CE and 640 CE, the final years of the Kingdom of Gaochang. Thus, it is understandable that the two epitaphs still reflected local conventions. This phenomenon can be described as acculturation with regional characteristics. This is not to say that the Sogdians living in Turfan rejected the latest epitaph trends, but rather that the epitaphs they encountered were outdated. Both Sogdians and other ethnic groups living in Turfan, even Han Chinese, practised similar customs due to local characteristics.

7.4.2 Patterns

Chinese epitaphs were often adorned with delicate patterns. Nine of the 18 Sogdian

epitaphs, excavated from the tombs of He Fujun (no. 4), Shi Daode (no.5), An Yuanshou (no. 12.1), Di Liuniang (i.e., An Yuanshou's wife) (no. 12.2), Kang Lingyun (no. 14), Yu Hong (no. 15.1), Yu Hong's wife (no. 15.2), An Pu (no. 17), and He Hongjing (no. 18), reflected this tradition. The patterns on these nine epitaphs include the zoic (e.g., the Twelve Zodiac Animals and the Four Beasts), flowers (e.g., honeysuckles and lotus) and clouds.

The Four Beasts and the Twelve Zodiac Animals might be the most typical Chinese elements. The Four Beasts are four sacred animals in Chinese mythology and the guardians of four cardinal directions: the azure dragon (*qinglong*) in the east, the white tiger (*baihu*) in the west, the vermillion bird (*zhuque*) in the south, and the black tortoise (*xuanwu*) in the north. Each beast was usually engraved in the related cardinal direction on the surface of an epitaph cover (Rong, 2001, 48). The Twelve Zodiac Animals are based on a 12-year cycle, with each year related to an animal: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, or pig. Images of the Twelve Zodiac Animals were often added on the vertical edges of an epitaph base, frequently in groups of three (Luo, 1996, 26). Although some of the nine Sogdian epitaphs were indeed adorned with the Four Beasts and/or the Twelve Zodiac Animals, most of their excavation reports do not provide pictures of the decorations. The only visible example is Di Liuniang's epitaph (no. 12.2), although the published pictures are still fuzzy (Figs. 81 and 82).

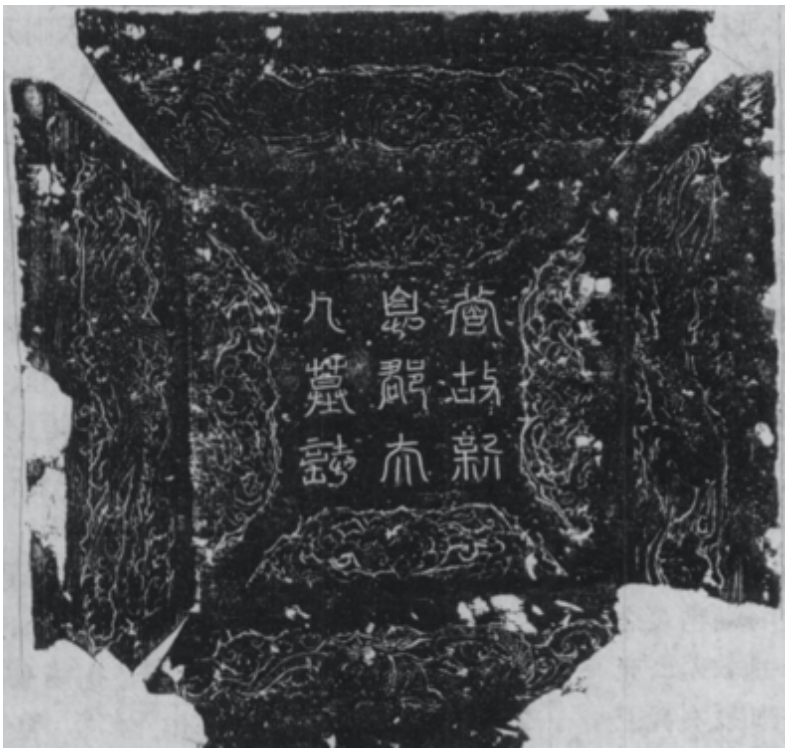


Figure 81. Rubbing from the epitaph cover of Di Liuniang.

The inscription in the centre says: ‘epitaph of the past [An Yuanshou’s] wife titled Xinxijun of the Tang Dynasty’ (唐故新息郡夫人墓志). The inscription is legible. According to Chen (1988), the patterns on the inner vertical edges are flowers and those on the outer vertical edges are the Four Beasts. However, the patterns are indiscernible. After Chen 1988, p.48, fig. 27.

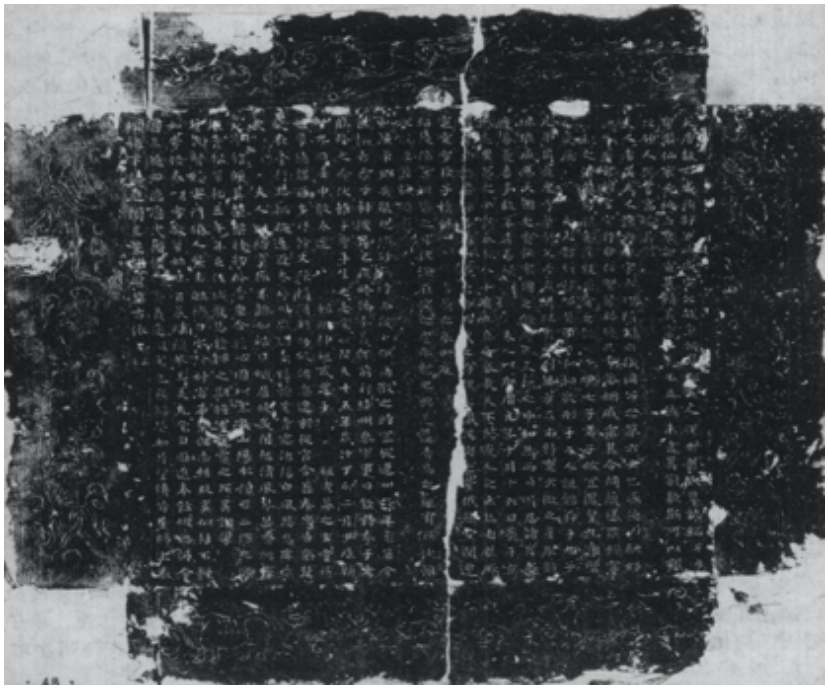


Figure 82. Rubbing from the epitaph base of Di Liuniang.

The inscription in the central area is Di Liuniang's lengthy biography. The inscription is legible. According to Chen (1988), the patterns on the vertical edges are the Twelve Zodiac Animals. However, the patterns are indiscernible. After: Chen 1988, p.48, fig. 28.

A lotus pattern, rooted in Buddhism, also appears on the Sino-Sogdian epitaphs. It is a symbol of the Buddha's awakening and a reminder that all beings have the same potential to attain enlightenment. Lotus blossoms were extensively used in every aspect of Buddhist art and literature across cultures (Ma, 2015, 117-20). Of the selected Sino-Sogdian epitaphs, the most noticeable example is Yu Hong's epitaph cover (no. 15.1) (Fig. 83). The cover tablet was decorated with up to 12 lotuses of three different types. The central inscription is surrounded by four larger, rounded lotuses and four smaller, rounded lotuses, and four pearls supported by lotus petals appear along the perimeter.



Figure 83. Facsimile of the epitaph cover of Yu Hong.

The inscription in the centre says: ‘epitaph of the past Yu gentleman titled *Yitong* [an official title for generals] of the Sui Dyansty’ (大隋故仪同虞公墓志). The patterns on the narrow field surrounding the words are four larger rounded lotuses and four smaller rounded lotuses. The patterns on the inner vertical edges are four pears supported by lotus petals. The patterns on the outer vertical edges are dense honeysuckles. After: SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, p.88, fig.123.

More interestingly, during the sixth century, epitaph covers seem to have been treated as diagrams of the heavens. The name of the tomb-owner was usually engraved at the centre of the epitaph cover, surrounded by different decorative patterns alluding to the heavens, such as clouds, the Four Beasts, and lotuses. The hope was that the tomb-owner would stay in the heavens and be protected by these sacred creatures (Rawson, 2001, 138). Although it might be an exaggeration to state that each pictorial epitaph from the Sino-Sogdian tombs implies that the owners accepted Chinese cosmology, some pieces clearly represent the Chinese design of the heavens, as is the case for the epitaph cover from the tomb of Yu Hong illustrated above (see Fig. 83). The name of the deceased, Yu Hong, is placed at the centre surrounded by 12 different types of lotuses. In Chinese Buddhist cave temples, such as the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, lotuses were frequently placed at the apex of a dome to signify the apex of the sky (Rawson, 2001, 139).

7.5 Sogdian Characteristics in Epitaphs

7.5.1 Shi Jun's Bilingual Epitaph

The tomb of Shi Jun (d. 579 CE) (no. 11), a Sogdian *sabao* of the Northern Zhou Dynasty, was found in Xi'an. His tomb contents have been separately discussed in the previous empirical chapters, and the focus here is the epitaph in two languages discovered in his tomb (Fig. 84).

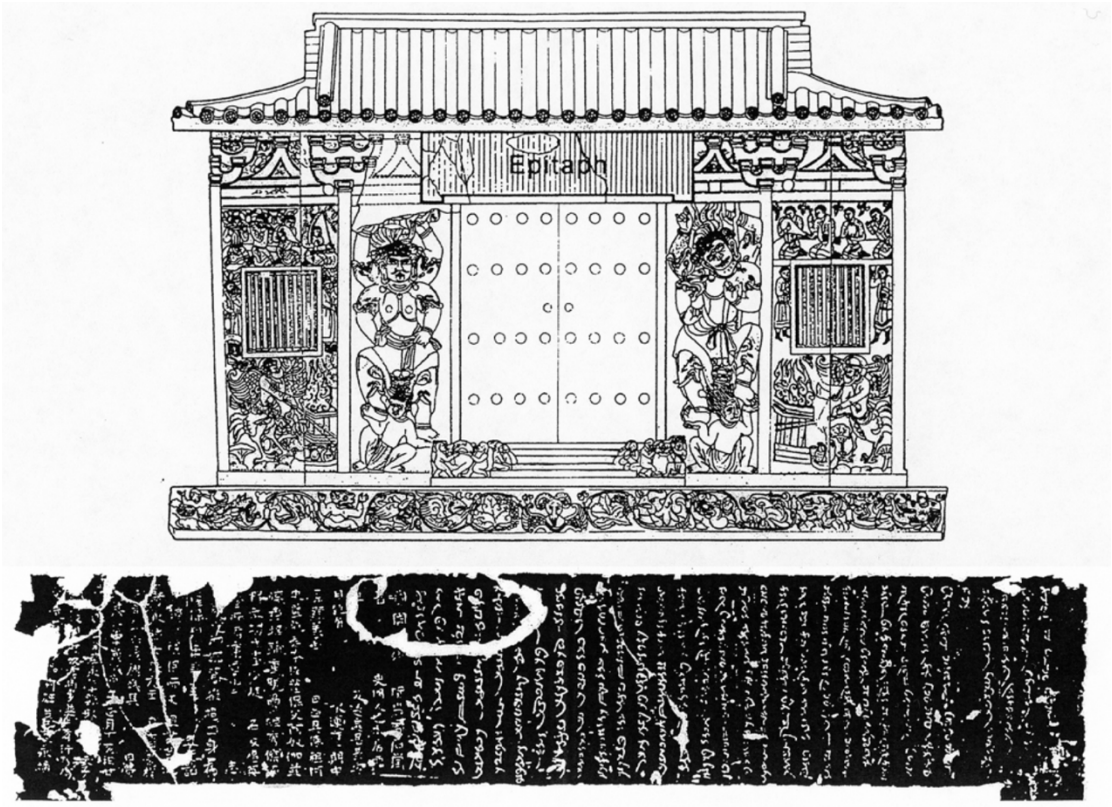


Figure 84. Sogdian-Chinese epitaph from the tomb of Shi Jun.

After: Dien, 2009, p.43, fig.3.

The first point is the location of the epitaph. As mentioned previously, epitaphs were usually placed between the main burial chamber and the tomb entrance (Shi, 2012). However, Shi Jun's epitaph was incised on the lintel above the door of the house-shaped sarcophagus, the only such case thus far known.

The unique location of the epitaph highlights the significance of the house-shaped sarcophagus. The biographical words were engraved on the lintel of the house-shaped sarcophagus instead of on a typical stone slab placed on the ground. As with the hipped roof and the two latticed windows, the epitaph itself here functioned as the lintel, a

component of the house-shaped sarcophagus. It seems that the epitaph was no longer a burial object belonging to the large space (i.e., underground tomb) but rather a component of the smaller space (i.e., the house-shaped sarcophagus).

Yang (2014, 297) suggested that the epitaph and other images of the house-shaped sarcophagus were parallel with patterns of ossuaries. Ossuaries found in Sogdiana and adjacent regions in Central Asia often feature several decorative patterns. The fact that most of Shi Jun's bones were found in the house-shaped sarcophagus adds weight to the idea that sarcophagi and ossauries were analogous. In other words, the former was a larger version of the latter, featuring different decorative patterns, including the lintel-like epitaph.

Another interesting point is that the epitaph was written in Chinese and Sogdian. The Chinese and the Sogdian texts are separately inscribed in the left and the right sections of the epitaph, respectively (from the readers' viewpoint) (see Fig. 84). Translation of both texts showed that they basically included the same content[33] with minor differences. Even if one of these texts was not included, the remaining text would independently function as an epitaph. However, from the point of view of cultural differences, the coexistence of the two languages might have been necessary to highlight Shi Jun's two ethnic identities (e.g., Sogdian and Chinese).

[33] Section 3 of this chapter provides some texts and translations related to the cultural affiliations of the deceased Shi Jun. The full texts and their translations can be referred to in Yang (2014, 294-310). Sims-Williams (2021) provided the latest translation of the Sogdian epitaph.

This method of representing the dual identities of the deceased by writing the same funerary biography in two different languages was adopted by non-Han elites for much of the Middle Ages, even though the number of examples in available archaeological findings may seem relatively small. The earliest instance is Shi Jun's Sogdian-Chinese epitaph dating to 579 CE, followed by An Youpoyi's Sogdian-Chinese epitaph (739 CE), Gezhui's Turkic-Chinese epitaph (795 CE), and Lady Ma's Pahlavi-Chinese epitaph (874 CE) (Rong, 2020).

7.5.2 Content

a. Names

There was a longstanding convention of creating Chinese-style surnames for non-Han people based on their native lands, including among Sino-Sogdians. They bore distinctive surnames and each surname could be linked to a specific Sogdian city-state (De la Vaissière 2005, 119-120). For example, a Sogdian male bearing the surname Kang 康 would indicate that he or his ancestors were from the Kang state (modern Samarkand, Uzbekistan).

A list of Sino-Sogdian surnames was organised by Chinese official historians in the Middle Ages, and these were known as the 'nine surnames of Hu' (*jiuxinghu* 九姓胡) or the 'nine surnames of Zhaowu' (*zhaowujiuxing* 昭武九姓). Notably, these lists varied across official historians (for details, see Section 1.2.3). The most complete list is from the *Sui History* (*Sui shu* 隋书, juan 83, 5a), which records ten states of Sogdiana

(corresponding to the ten surnames of Sino-Sogdians), including the states of Kang, Mi, Shi, Cao, He, An, lesser An, Nasebo, Wunae, and Mu.

Of the 18 discovered epitaphs, 17 surnames of the epitaph owners (i.e., the deceased) are known (see Appendix 6), including five people with the surname Kang, three people with the surname An, three people with the surname Shi, two people with the surname He, two people with the surname Di, one individual with the surname Yu, and one individual with the surname Cao. The surnames of Kang, An, Shi, He, and Cao are all on the abovementioned list of the 'nine surnames of Hu' from the *Sui History*.

Regarding the surnames of Di and Yu, it is commonly recognised in the academic community that these two surnames originated from two states in Central Asia, although their specific geographical locations are still a matter of debate (Luo and Rong, 2016, 293; Wertmann, 2015, 95). Considering that most people with the surname Di or Yu were Zoroastrians and had close relationships with those who were undisputedly Sogdians (as identified by the 'nine surnames of Hu') by means of marriage and working relationships, they have been customarily regarded Sogdians, or at least as non-Han people highly influenced by Sogdian culture.

Interestingly, two opposite points of Sogdian acculturation can be detected based on their surnames. On the one hand, having a Chinese-style surname was a straightforward way to integrate into the Chinese environment. Except for the surname Mi 米, which was exclusively used by Sogdians, all other known Sino-Sogdian surnames were also adopted by contemporaneous residents of different ethnicities in China (Pulleyblank, 1952).

Conversely, the Chinese-style surnames of Sogdians underlined their Sogdian roots because these surnames were not sufficiently Sinicised. Although their surnames basically took a Chinese form, they originated in distant city-states in Sogdiana. In the Middle Ages, when a native Chinese person encountered someone with a traditional Chinese surname such as Li, Liu, or Zhang, the native Chinese person would not consider the matter of ethnicity. However, if an individual surnamed Kang was encountered, the surname might prompt a question about his or her ethnicity because it was inextricably linked to the Kang state in Sogdiana (modern Samarkand, Uzbekistan).

If the Sogdians wanted to cut ties with their less Sinicised surnames and a certain Sogdian background, adopting more authentic Chinese surnames was a viable option. Such instances frequently occurred during and after the An Lushan Rebellion (755-763 CE) because of strong xenophobia against Sogdians in China. Sogdians had to try to hide their true origins. For example, An Chongzhang (704-777 CE), a grandson of An Yuanshou (607-683 CE) (no. 12), made a sincere request to the Tang emperor to change his surname because he felt ashamed to share a surname with An Lushan. His request was granted, and his family was allowed to bear the surname Li, the name of the royal family of the Tang Dynasty, due to his enormous contributions to the dynasty (De la Vaissière 2005, 220-222).

Sino-Sogdian personal names also provided dual Chinese and Sogdian cultural connections. 17 personal names of the epitaph owners (i.e., the deceased) are known based on their epitaph inscriptions (see Appendix 6). Although all 17 personal names were written in Chinese characters, some were transcriptions of original Sogdian names.

For Chinese people, a transcribed name was easy to pronounce, but its meaning was difficult to understand.

Two clearly transcribed names among the 17 examples are Kang Fumian (no. 2) and Shi Suyu/Siming (no. 19). Fumian in Chinese refers to face-cover, which was rarely used as a given name. It was transcribed from the Sogdian word *pwtymʾnk*, meaning 'somebody like Buddha' (Wang, 2019a). Suyu, Shi Siming's original personal name, is considered to derive from Sama, who is a divine figure in Zoroastrianism and whose name means black. The Sogdian name was replaced by Siming, an authentic Chinese name, as granted by Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-756 CE) (Chen and Mair, 2015).

When considering the relatives of the 17 epitaph owners, more transcribed names emerge. Shi Jun's epitaph mentions seven Sogdian names. Shi Jun's grandfather was named Rashtvantak (*rštβntk*), which was transcribed as Ashipantuo 阿史盘陀. His father was named Wanuk (*wnʾwk*), which was transcribed as Anujia 阿奴伽. He himself was named Wirkak (*wyrkʾk*) and his wife was named Wiyusi (*wyrkʾk*); however, the Chinese version of the epitaph does not provide their transcribed names. His eldest son was named Vreshmanvantak (*βrʾyšmnβntk*), which was transcribed as Pisha 毗沙. His two younger sons were named Zhematvantak (*δrymtβntk*) and Protvantak (*prʾwtβntk*), which were transcribed as Weimo 维摩 and Fuluduo 富卤多, respectively (Yang, 2016, 302-303). Notably, both Pisha 毗沙 and Weimo 维摩 were Chinese Buddhist words. The selection of Buddhist words in the transcription of their Sogdian names suggested that the family held Buddhist beliefs (Yang, 2016, 302-303).

Moreover, these three sons' Sogdian names all included the Sogdian word vantak

(*βntk*): *βrʾyšmnβntk, δrymtβntk*, and *prʾwtβntk*. This was a quite common Sogdian name and generally refers to the slave of someone (usually a god or goddess) (Wang, 2019b). However, vantak (*βntk*), the second half of the ethnic name set for Shi Jun's three sons, was uniformly omitted from their Chinese transcriptions. Chinese given names are usually composed of one or two characters. Due to the word limit of the Chinese given name, vantak (*βntk*) was most likely used as a courtesy name, as was the case for Shi Shewu. In the case of Shi Shewu, an ancestor of Shi Daode (no. 5), his given name was Shewu, and his courtesy name was Pantuo. Shewu and Pantuo were not Chinese words. If linked together, Shewupantuo equates to *δrsmtβntk*, meaning the slave of Demeter, a Greek goddess (Wang, 2019b).

b. 'A Person of Someplace'

In Chinese epitaphs, the phrase 'a person of someplace' was a necessary component. The phrase was flexible in its meaning and could refer to the birthplace and/or the usual place of residence of the person. For example, 'a person of Chang'an' means that this person was born in Chang'an and/or usually resided in Chang'an.

The phrase 'a person of someplace' was not only an objective description but also associated with the idea of Chinese ethnicity from the perspective of geography. The Chinese territories were thought to be the best places in the world. The Chinese people, the so-called civilised people, were expected to live in a civilised area (i.e., China, lit. the Central Kingdom). In contrast, foreigners, so-called barbarians, were expected to live outside the civilised area (Abramson, 2008, 114-17). Once a non-Han individual

was bornin or permanently moved to China, he or she was considered Chinese, at least in terms of geography.

The 18 discussed epitaphs were all found in Sino-Sogdian tombs; thus, these epitaph owners undisputedly lived in Chinese territories for a certain amount of time before their death. In such cases, the Chinese identity of these Sino-Sogdians could be represented in the simple phrase 'a person of someplace' once the residence was recorded as a Chinese city. As expected, many Chinese cities are documented in those epitaphs: Jiaohe (in modern Turfan, Xinjiang) (no. 1), Guzang (modern Wuwei, Gansu Province) (no. 10 and 11), Gaomi (modern Gaomi, Shandong Province) (no. 13), and Yi (modern Fenyang, Shanxi Province) (no. 16) (for the texts and translations, see Section 2 of this chapter).

However, three epitaphs highlighted the non-Chinese origins of the deceased by referencing non-Chinese lands. Di Caoming' epitaph (no. 8) states that '[the deceased was] a person of a Western country' (Luo and Rong, 2016, 283). 'A Western country' was an abstract term for any country to the west of China. In the context of Di Caoming's epitaph, this term refers to the Di state, whose specific geographical location remains a mystery but is supposed to have been in Central Asia. Similarly, Yu Hong's epitaph (no. 15.1) states that '[the deceased was] a person of Yuhelin of the Yu state' (SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005, 89). Yuhelin was most likely an ancient city somewhere in the Yu state, although the specific geographical location also remains unknown.

The most interesting phrase is '[the deceased was] a Yuezhi from Bactria'

appearing in He Fujun's epitaph (no. 4) (Wu, 1988). The ancient Chinese believed that the ancestors of Sogdians were Yuezhi, who were once based in the ancient city of Zhaowu in the Gansu corridor prior to their long-distance movement into Central Asia (for this legend, see Section 1.2.3). The epitaph owner was surnamed He, indicating that he was a Sogdian from the He state (Kushaniya, west of Samarkand). However, the author(s) of the epitaph of He Fujun (most likely his children) did not directly describe his Sogdian origin but instead cited the Chinese legend.

He Fujun's Sogdian origins were replaced by the reference to the Yuezhi in his epitaph. If the author(s) of the epitaph wanted to highlight He Fujun's Sogdian origins, 'a person of the He state' was a simple claim, as with the abovementioned cases of Di Caoming and Yu Hong. If the author(s) wanted to emphasise his Chinese identity, a Chinese city would have been documented. Thus, the adoption of the Chinese legend about the Yuezhi and Sogdians warrants deeper consideration.

It is true that the Yuezhi were a non-Han group, but their home was purportedly in the Gansu corridor according to the Chinese legend, and this was an indisputable part of China since the territorial expansion of Emperor Wu of Han in the early second century BCE. Compared with Sogdians, Yuezhi people were more familiar to the Han people who believed the legend because the Yuezhi were originally based in a Chinese territory. From this viewpoint, the Yuezhi could be regarded as members of the multi-ethnic Chinese state, but Sogdians were not. Thus, the substitution of the Yuezhi for the Sogdians (or the He state) in He Fujun's epitaph probably indicates a certain compromise in terms of his ethnic identity. On the one hand, He Fujun (and his family)

did not want to abandon their true ethnic roots. On the other hand, a closer connection to the Han people was desired.

c. Ancestry

Ancestral information was an essential element in Chinese epitaphs and could come in the form of full accounts of the father, grandfather, and great-grandfather of the deceased or a brief reference to a remote but well-known ancestor. As with the abovementioned phrase 'a person of someplace', ancestral information was not only an objective description but also a domain of ethnic boundaries. The non-Han identities of somebody's ancestors indicated that this non-Han family was likely located at the edges of the Chinese territory (lit. the Central Kingdom) in principle, as Heaven separated the races in this way (Abramson, 2008, 97). The non-Han identities of somebody's ancestors also meant that this non-Han family had an exotic appearance, as the Chinese realised early that physical features were heritable (Abramson, 2008, 102).

The 18 discussed epitaphs were all discovered in Sino-Sogdian tombs. Apparently, these epitaph owners' ancestors were Sogdians. Perhaps unexpected is that only three epitaphs truthfully represent the owners' ancestral information (no. 9, no. 11, and no. 17). Kang Ye's (no. 9) ancestors were descendants of the royal family of Kangju (modern Samarkand, Uzbekistan), Shi Jun's ancestors (no. 11) were based in the Shi state (modern Shahrisabz, Uzbekistan), and An Pu's ancestors (no. 17) were great chiefs of the An state (modern Bukhara, Uzbekistan) (for texts and translations, see Section 2).

In contrast, many Sogdian epitaphs claim that the ancestors of the dead people were native Chinese. Kang Lingyun's ancestors (no. 14) were based in Ji (modern Ji, Henan Province). Kang Shu was one of his well-known ancestors and was the first king of the Wei vassal state of the Western Zhou Dynasty. Similarly, Cao Zhengze was respected as a great ancestor of Cao Yi (no. 16). Cao Zhengze was the first king of the Cao vassal state of the Western Zhou Dynasty. In An Jia's epitaph (no. 10), Huangdi, a mythical Chinese sovereign and cultural hero who has long been respected as a Chinese cultural ancestor, was even claimed to be An Jia's actual ancestor (for texts and translations, see Section 2).

The abovementioned Chinese legend about the Yuezhi was incorporated into Shi Daode's epitaph (no. 5). His ancestors were based in Feiqiao in Jiankang. Feiqiao was a town within the ancient city of Jiankang. Jiankang was an alias of Zhaowu, the hypothetical homeland of the Yuezhi (Luo, 1988). As with the abovementioned He Fujun, Shi Daode was likely described as a Yuezhi as a clever way to emphasise his Sogdian identity and Chinese connections.

d. Marriage

Zoroastrianism praises consanguineous marriage as a good deed. The earliest documented example of such a marriage occurred in the Achaemenian Persian (c. 550 BCE- 330 BCE). Cambyses II (r. 530 BCE- 522 BCE), the second king of the Achaemenian Persian, married his two sisters (Zhang, 2010, 137). Under the influence of Zoroastrianism, consanguineous marriage occurred in Sogdiana, but it was not

compulsory for all Sogdians. This custom was strongly antithetical to Chinese morals; thus, it was criticised by contemporary Chinese who knew of it (Zhang, 2010, 137). It seems that most Sogdian residents in China abandoned consanguineous marriages, probably as a result of the serious criticism they encountered there. The only known instance of Sino-Zoroastrian consanguineous marriage occurred with Lady Ma. Her epitaph (874 CE) was written in Pahlavi and Chinese and was excavated in Xi'an in 1955. In the Chinese version, Lady Ma's husband is named Su Liang, who was a Persian Zoroastrian. However, in the Pahlavi text, Su Liang is described as Lady Ma's father (Zhang, 2010, 143).

With their movement along the silk roads and into China, Sogdians developed a new custom of marrying people only from the same ethnic group. Although Sogdians in China preferred to be connected to a certain city-state, such as the Kang state or the An state, numerous Sogdians from different city-states lived together in their autonomous communities. Thus, the custom of endogamy could be practised within the same group of Sogdians, such as the Kang-Kang marriages, but also between two different groups of Sogdians, such as the Kang-An marriages. However, the former choice was not permitted by the Tang court because the Tang Chinese generally considered people with the same surname to be from the same family. Marriage between two people from the same family was considered strictly immoral and likely to lead to unhealthy children (Zhang, 2010, 141).

Some Sogdians in China disregarded this prohibition, as attested by some marriages documented on their epitaphs. In the case of Shi Jun (no. 11), his Chinese

epitaph states that his wife was surnamed Kang. In the Sogdian version, his wife was named Wiyusi (*wyrkʾk*), born in Xiping (modern Xining, Qinghai Province). Thus, Wiyusi, Shi Jun's wife, was a Sogdian born in Xiping whose ancestors were from the Kang state (modern Samarkand, Uzbekistan). This was thus a Shi-Kang marriage. In terms of An Yuanshou's wife (no. 12.2), she was surnamed Di, indicating her Sogdian origin even though the geographical location of the Di state is unclear, as mentioned above. This was thus an An-Di marriage. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know the surname of Yu Hong's wife (no. 15.2) because her epitaph was broken before discovery, and the surviving tablets did not provide this information (for texts and translations, see Section 2).

In addition to the two documented Sino-Sogdian endogamies, Zhang (2010, 142-145) provides other examples based on epitaphs without an archaeological context. These examples all date before the An Lushan Rebellion, which further confirms Rong's (2001, 134) suggestion that almost all Sogdian males chose their spouses from within the same ethnic community before the An Lushan Rebellion. Of course, pioneering Sogdian immigrants primarily lived in autonomous settlements, so they did not have many opportunities to form relationships with Han people (Rong, 2001, 135). More importantly, they may have wanted to maintain their ethnic characteristics in this way (Rong, 2001, 135).

The family education of Shi Hedan (d. 669 CE) provides a glance into how the Sogdians kept and lost their ethnic characteristics through marriage. Shi Hedan was a relative of Shi Daode (d. 678 CE) (no. 5), and both were both buried in the Shi family

cemetery in Guyuan. According to the epitaph found in the tomb of Shi Hedan, he was married twice. His first wife was Sogdian, originating from the Kang state (modern Samarkand, Uzbekistan), as indicated by her surname Kang. His second wife was Chinese, with the surname Zhang. Shi Hedan had two sons who adopted distinct stylistic names: the elder was named Huluo and the younger was named Huajing. Huluo is a non-Han name, and its exact meaning is unknown. In contrast, Huajing is a conventional Chinese name (Luo, 1996). This discrepancy might be attributed to the fact that their mothers had distinct cultural backgrounds. It seems plausible that the first endogamous marriage emphasised the Sogdian heritage of the family, while the second, Chinese, emphasised her Chinese culture.

e. Profession

The Sogdians had two distinguishing qualities, commercial savviness and miliarial prowess. The later quality most likely developed under the influence of the Turkic lifestyle. Sogdians and other non-Han (e.g., Uighurs and Türks) with military prowess were highly praised by the Chinese. Li Linfu (693-753 CE), a chancellor during Emperor Xuanzong's reign, expressed at court the stereotype that 'non-Han are skilled at fighting and brave' (Abramson, 2008, 48). An accompanying stereotype was non-Han illiteracy. Thus, non-Han generals controlling strong armies were presumed to lack the literary ability to threaten the Confucian elite's monopoly of the bureaucracy (Abramson, 2008, 21). Many Sogdians and Türks, such as An Lushan and Shi Siming, were employed as generals in the Tang period. The consequent An and Shi rebellion, of course, suggested that these appointments were not entirely wise.

The 18 research epitaphs confirm that almost all the Sogdians were members of the military. For example, Kang Yexiang was a general (no. 1), Kang Fumian was a guard (no. 2), and He Fujun was a general (no. 4) (for texts and translations, see Section 2). These Sogdians exploited their military prowess to gain wealth and rank in China.

Ironically, these Sogdian epitaphs do not mention commercial activities at all. The absence of references to commercial activities in the epitaphs might result from a Chinese regulation in which officials were prohibited from engaging in commercial activities because trade and commerce were considered lowly. Merchants in China were legally discriminated against. For instance, they were banned from taking the imperial examination (Hao, 2016). These Sogdian military elites probably obeyed these Chinese regulations, or they had commercial activities but did not want to leave evidence of such activities in words. The Sogdians also did not portray images related to commerce or trading in Sogdiana. Frantz Grenet (2005, 305-324) has observed that nowhere in the surviving art of Sogdiana is there any reference to trade, despite this being the basis of most Sogdians' wealth. However, images alluding to trading activities appear on the surface of stone funerary furniture, which was a new art form when the Sogdians began settling in China.

Sogdiana had been one of the largest exporters of Chinese horses since the emergence of the silk roads. Thus, Sogdians were considered skilled breeders and herders (Zhang, 2018). Many Sino-Sogdians pursued related occupations that capitalised on their familiarity with animals. Shi Daode (no. 5) and his family provide the most fitting examples of this situation. Over approximately one century, multiple

members of three generations of the Shi family in Guyuan grazed horses for the Tang court: Shi Shewu (d. 609 CE), Shi Daoluo (d. 655 CE), Shi Suoyan (d. 656 CE), Shi Tiebang (d. 666 CE), Shi Hedan (d. 669 CE), and Shi Daode (d. 678 CE) (Luo, 1996; YLK, 2014). The Shi family's livelihood completely depended on the Sogdian tradition of breeding horses.

The abovementioned Shi Hedan (d. 669 CE) began his career in 626 CE as a head of the directorate of horse pasturages, and he was then transferred to the imperial court of the Tang Dynasty to take up the position of official interpreter (Luo, 1996, 206-211). Although his epitaph does not indicate the languages that Shi Hedan was responsible for translating, it is likely that he could communicate with the Türks, Sogdians, and Chinese. Beginning in the last quarter of the sixth century CE, official texts of the Turkic Empire were written in the Sogdian alphabet (Marshak and Negmatov 1996, 242). Another Sogdian linguistic talent was Shi Siming, who may have understood as many as six foreign languages according to *The New Tang History* (*xin Tang shu* 新唐书, juan 244a, 37). Given his Sogdian and Turkic origins, the six foreign languages assuredly included the Sogdian and Turkic oral languages. Shi Siming started his career with amazing language skills, enabling him to become responsible for the cross-border trader on behalf of Tang China (Yuan, 1991).

Aside from these three occupations (e.g., warriors, horse-breeders, and translators) associated with Sogdian skills and talents, some Sogdians directly held ethnic titles. The 18 focal epitaphs include the following ethnic titles: *sabao* (no. 10 and 11), *tianzhu* (no. 8 and 9), and grand chieftain (no. 17) (for texts and translations, see Section 2).

Sabao originally referred to a caravan leader or merchant chief, and in the fifth through seventh centuries, it was absorbed into the Chinese bureaucracy (for details, see Section 1.2.3). Regarding the title *tianzhu*, the word *tian* represents an early form of the Chinese character for Zoroastrianism. *Tianzhu* most likely referred to the high Zoroastrian priest in a given Sogdian community. Given the Sogdian tradition of the unification of the state and the church to some degree, the *tianzhu* was probably also in charge of certain civilian affairs (Luo and Rong, 2016, 294-295). According to its literal meaning, the title grand chieftain was most likely given to a Sogdian leader in charge of Sogdian subjects. Compared with those of *sabao*, the titles of *tianzhu* and grand chieftain were not formal Chinese governmental positions but were instead used to indicate an absolute ethnic leader decided by autonomous Sogdian communities themselves (Luo and Rong, 2016, 285).

Shi Siming's funeral eulogy (no. 19) lists a remarkably interesting title: Emperor Zhaowu (*zhaowu huangdi* 昭武皇帝). This was a mixed title, which appeared to be flexible in its meaning based on the reader's preconceptions. For his Sogdian followers, Shi Siming was still a Sogdian noble because zhaowu was the Chinese transcription of the Sogdian word *jamåk*, meaning jewel, and it was a Sogdian royal title (De la Vaissière, 2003). On the Chinese hand, the combination of zhaowu and the emperor was commonly used as a posthumous title borne by Chinese emperors because zhaowu itself was a good word in Chinese contexts, meaning accomplished and martial (Yoshida, 2003). Shi Siming probably used this elaborate title to highlight his dual

identities. In other words, he was likely attempting to show his status within the two distinct cultural and political systems simultaneously (e.g., Chinese and Sogdian).

7.6 Conclusion

Epitaphs were an essential element in Chinese tombs by the late fifth and sixth centuries. The Sogdians adopted this Chinese burial object practice, as attested by 18 epitaphs from the 20 selected Sogdian tombs. They adopted not only forms but also traditional Chinese images such as those of Twelve Zodiac Animals and the Four Beasts, which were used as decorative patterns on some Sogdian epitaph tablets.

A clear difference existed in the Sogdian epitaphs between those excavated from Turfan and those excavated from inner China. The Sogdian epitaphs from Turfan were much simpler than those from inner China, such as they included less expensive brick materials and brief inscriptions. This reflects the contemporary fact that epitaphs in inner China had some complicated conventional regulations by the late fifth century, while residents in Turfan did not keep up with the latest epitaphs and still employed 'outdated' epitaphs.

Although biographical texts for the deceased were completely absent in Sogdiana, it is an oversimplification to say that owing an epitaph was a significant step towards Sinicisation because the epitaphs bore Sogdian characteristics in terms of their placement, language, and content. Shi Jun's epitaph provides the most interesting example of placement and language, as it was incised on the lintel above the door of

the house-shaped sarcophagus and was written in both Sogdian and Chinese. Regarding the content, many of the epitaphs were carefully narrated and organised in such a way as to imply that both the Sogdians and the Chinese belonged. This is especially noticeable in terms of names, the phrase ‘a person of someplace’, ancestry, marriage, and profession of the deceased.

Chapter 8. Discussion and Conclusion

8.1 Overview

This study has examined Sogdian funerary practices through a large corpus of empirical data from 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs, including tomb constructions, body treatment, epitaphs, and other grave goods within their original archaeological contexts. A brief overview is provided to describe the discoveries and arguments presented in each chapter.

Altogether, 129 currently discovered tombs in China can be linked to Sogdians living in medieval China (fifth through ninth centuries), either single tombs or entire graveyards. Most of the 129 tombs contained an epitaph inscription clearly identifying their owner as Sogdian, and only a few tombs without burial inscriptions are identified based on artefacts featuring strong affiliations and iconographic comparative studies. Considering the length of this thesis, in the present study, only 20 of the 129 Sogdian tombs are selected as representative examples for in-depth analysis. Notably, the tombs represent a restricted sample of the Sogdian population in northern China by virtue of them being high-ranking soldiers and officials (and their families).

This thesis starts with an analysis of Sogdian tomb constructions. According to the material used for the burial chamber, the Sogdian tombs can be divided into three categories: earth-chambered tombs, brick-chambered tombs, and stone-chambered tombs. All three tomb forms are identical to those of other tombs in medieval China. The governments in northern China had specific regulations regarding for the tomb

form used by subjects in different political strata. The Sino-Sogdian tomb types either conformed with these provisions or were allowed by the government as a reward for the deceased individuals' contributions. The Sogdians became subjects within court-dominated Chinese society. Meanwhile, most Sogdians retained their own cultural traits in different ways, such as through body orientation, the embellishment of the chamber floor using unique elements, use of a Rock-cut tomb, and use of pictorial stone doors. These methods were not Sogdian natal funerary practices, but new forms based on established Chinese models.

Chapter 5 discusses how the corpses of the Sogdians were handled and how their human remains were preserved. Except for the corpse of An Jia, which was clearly exposed to scavengers and burned prior to burial inside the tomb, most of the Sogdians adopted the Chinese convention of maintaining the integrity of corpses. Moreover, all these Sogdians employed several types of Chinese burial receptacles, including reed mats, wooden coffins, corpse platforms, and stone funerary furniture (i.e., stone funerary beds and house-shaped sarcophagi). The first type was a Turfan regional burial receptacle, while the last three types were mostly used in inner China. Although all four of these types were basically Chinese, the use of corpse platforms and stone funerary furniture can be brought in line with traditional conventions of Sogdian Zoroastrianism because they can isolate the deceased from sacred plants and earth. Stone funerary furniture also provides a broad space for Sogdian elites to depict their life stories or to symbolise their values, among which many themes derive from the Sogdian and Zoroastrian backgrounds.

Chapter 6 discusses how the Sogdians furnished their tombs with objects. Particular attention is given to two categories: Chinese tomb figurines and articles with strong Sogdian affiliations. A considerable number of the selected Sogdians employed tomb figurines, but their usage appears to be somewhat self-restricted; normally, only a dozen tomb figurines were found in one Sogdian elite's tomb, much fewer than those recovered from contemporary Chinese tombs. In contrast, the Sogdians had a passion for furnishing their tombs with Western-affiliated items, such as two gold burial masks, Western jewellery (two gem-set gold rings and a gem), and Western coins (six Byzantine gold coins or imitations). These items were not native to China but were imported from the West along the silk roads, which indicates that the Sogdian owners of these items maintained certain contact with the West. More interestingly, some items embodied certain customs. By collecting and analysing analogical instances (i.e., Byzantine gold coins, Sassanian silver coins, and their imitations, held by the deceased in the hand or mouth or placed somewhere near the body), the author attributes the custom of placing Western coins near the deceased to a Sogdian convention derived from the Hellenistic practice of 'Charon's obol' and suggested that it had developed into a regional custom in Turfan in the Middle Ages.

Chapter 7 changes the focus to the epitaphs, which were an essential element in Chinese tombs, and no comparable objects have been found in Sogdian proper. Almost all the selected Sogdians accepted the Chinese tradition not only in terms of form but also in terms of imagery, as traditional Chinese decorative patterns appeared on epitaph tablets. Some Sogdian epitaphs bear the images of Twelve Zodiac Animals and the Four

Beasts, which are symbols of the Chinese cosmology. Epitaph tablets from the Sogdian tombs in inner China are often made of stone, structured with three fixed components (title, prose preface, eulogy), and bear lengthy testimony, while those from the Sogdian tombs in Turfan do not feature such characteristics. A plausible explanation for the Turfan epitaph style is that Turfan's independence caused it to be left behind in inner China during the standardisation of epitaphs in the fifth century. On the other hand, the Sogdians still expressed their own identities within Chinese-style epitaphs. The most specific example is Shi Jun's epitaph in two languages that was written in Sogdian and Chinese, for the purpose of highlighting Shi Jun's double cultural identities. More general signs of acculturation can be perceived in the narrative of the Sogdian epitaphs. Many epitaphs were delicately narrated and organised to imply both Sogdian and Chinese identity, especially by representing their names, the phrase 'a person of someplace', their ancestry, marriage, and profession.

8.2 Discussion

8.2.1 Sogdian Preference for Stone

Stone was one of the most common materials used in the Sogdian tombs. The six tombs of the He family cemetery in Guyuan (no. 6) were carved into a low outcrop composed of gypsum resembling a mound. Many similar pictorial stone doors have been discovered, namely, in the tombs of Di Caoming (no. 8), Kang Ye (no. 9), An Jia (no. 10), Shi Jun (no. 11), An Yuanshou (no. 12), An Pu (no. 17), Shi Siming (no. 19),

and tomb M6 of the He family cemetery (referring to no. 6). Sogdian elites completely took over the use of stone funerary furniture (i.e., stone funerary beds and house-shaped sarcophagi) in the second half of the sixth century (Müller, 2019, 383).

In Chinese contexts, stone was a preferred material for the tomb construction because it is durable. Given the relatively expensive cost of stone (e.g., exploiting and transporting), except in royal mausoleums, stone chambers and graveyard monuments were seldom created during the Northern Dynasties (Xu, 2017, 5). By the Tang Dynasty, stone-chambered tombs were almost exclusively used by royal houses (Wang, 2018). Thus, funerary stones, especially those in large structures such as stone chambers and stone funerary furniture, were a status symbol in Chinese society.

The Sogdian preference for stone was not wholly rooted in Chinese fashion but might have additional religious considerations. This proposition is inspired by the disparate designations of a house-shaped sarcophagus found in the tomb of Shi Jun. The 'stone hall' 石堂 in Chinese was replaced by the 'stone house of gods' *βγkt'k* (Sims-Williams, 2021) (for the illustration, see Fig. 84; for contents of Shi Jun's epitaph in Chinese and Sogdian, see Section 7.3). Xu (2017, 123) suggested that the 'house of gods' probably originated from the Chinese concept of 'heavenly palace'. Here, my doubt lies in why the house dedicated to gods must be made of stone rather than another material, such as timber or brick. Therefore, my proposition is that stone might be a holy material in Zoroastrianism, which has seldom been discussed by scholars.

Fortunately, there are many pieces of evidence for my proposition that funerary stones in the Sogdian tombs probably functioned as a holy material for isolating the

sacred earth from the polluted corpse. In ancient Central Asia and modern Mumbai, India, brick, and stone were and are the necessary materials required to build the *dakhama* (an aboveground facility for the exposure of corpses) (Wu, 2014, 9). The Zoroastrians building the *dakhama* in Mumbai are Parsees, whose ancestors migrated from Persia following its conquest by Arab Muslims in the seventh century (Guo, 2005, 21-24). The Parsees also came to Canton, China, with British trading activities and wars during the Qing period (1635-1912 CE). Parsees in Canton abandoned the Zoroastrian celestial burial, but their dead were entombed in granite coffins to avoid polluting the good soil (Guo, 2005, 166-171). According to Mary Boyce's fieldwork, which took place in the village of Sharifabad in Iran between 1963 and 1964, local Zoroastrians practised a funerary custom that depended on stone and other holy materials. When a person died, his or her relatives lifted the body and placed it on a stone slab somewhere within the house, around which sand was strewn around it to protect the good earth (Boyce, 1977, 148).

One might say that the Sogdians used stone in their tombs to highlight their nobleness in Chinese fashion, a symbol of cultural assimilation into Chinese society. However, my finding indicates otherwise because stone has special religious meaning in Zoroastrian beliefs, which was rather a way to highlight their natal traditions in the Sogdian acculturation process in China.

8.2.2 Sogdian Preference for Gold

Many gold products have been found in the Sogdian tombs. Two gold burial masks were recovered from the tombs of Shi Daode (no. 5) and YKJM33 (no. 6). Two gem-set gold rings were discovered from the tombs of Shi Shewu (referring to no. 5) and Shi Jun (no. 11). Six burials of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian examples each contained one Byzantine gold coin or an imitation, including Kang Yexiang (no. 1), Shi Daode (no. 5), YKJM33 (no. 6), Kang Ye (no. 9), Shi Jun (no. 11), and An Pu (no. 17). All these gold products were placed near the deceased, such as gold coins in the mouth or the hand, gold masks on the face, and gold rings near the hand.

Ancient Chinese aristocrats did not have the custom of interring gold articles in tombs. Spirit articles (*mingqi* 明器/冥器), the most important category of Chinese burial assemblages exclusively provided for the soul of the deceased, were usually made of cheaper materials such as clay. On some occasions, although gold objects were chosen from the leftover things of the deceased, they were not placed next to a dead person's skin (Lu, 2016). Instead, Chinese aristocrats were more likely to wrap the deceased in burial jade because burial jade was believed to transform the corpse into an awesome, supernatural being (Wu, H., 2010, 132), exemplified by jade burial masks (see Fig. 73) and 'jade suits' (Fig. 85).

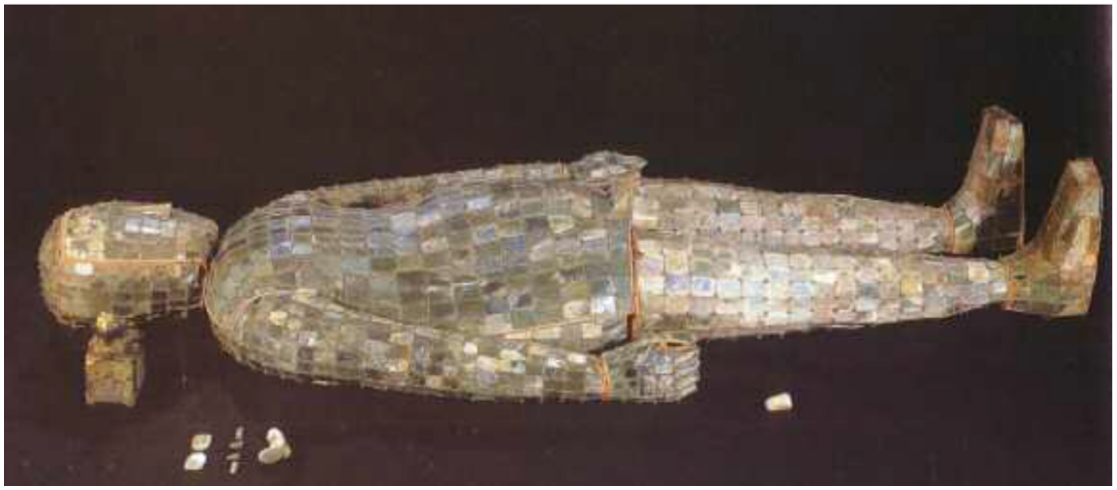


Figure 85. The ‘jade suit’ of Liu Sheng (d. ca. 113 BCE), Baoding, Hebei Province. After: Wu, H., 2010, p.134, fig. 129.

The abundance of gold articles found in the Sogdian tombs indicates that the Sogdians had a strong interest in using gold products as burial offerings, probably resulting from the use of gold as a symbol of power in Sogdian discourses. Mercantile activities were one of the economic bases of Sogdian society, in which wealth was closely associated with power and status (Lin, 2003). In the words of B. I. Marshak (Azarpay, 1981, 27), ‘royal life in Sogdiana was not an expression of official grandeur but a reflection of the luxurious life of affluent men’. Gold was effectively used in Sogdiana to show off wealth, and the honour and authority behind it. The tight connection between gold and power is attested to by two documented customs:

> ‘People in the Kang state [modern Samarkand, Uzbekistan] consider the first day of June to be New Year's Day. When this day comes, the king and ordinary people all put on their new clothing and cut their hair and beards. In the woods east of their

capital, they hold celebrations, including horse-riding and archery, for seven days. On the last day, a gold coin is placed on the card. Whoever can shoot the coin will be granted the throne for a day' (*Tongdian*, juan 193).

'The King of An [modern Bukhara] is seated on a camel-shaped gold throne, the King of He [Kushaniyah] is seated on a goat-shaped gold throne, and the King of Persia wears a gold diadem and is seated on a lion-shaped gold throne' (*Suishu*, juan 83).

Archaeologists have not found a real object to match the description of an animal-shaped gold throne in Central Asia. The southern wall painting from a house with a granary in Panjikent illustrates a similar throne (Fig. 86). Depicted on the southern wall were two life-sized seated figures of a god and a goddess on a throne. On the side of the god the throne was supported by a camel's head and on the side of the goddess the throne was supported by a mountain ram's head (Marshak and Raspopova, 1990).



Figure 86. Reconstruction of the mural on the southern wall.

After: Marshak and Raspopova, 1990, fig. 16.

In China, stone funerary beds found in Sogdian tombs of high-ranking individuals were probably analogous to animal-shaped gold thrones. The stone funerary beds contained a long platform for sitting or sleeping on and several animal-shaped stone statuettes as bed legs (for illustrations see Figs. 38-41). The shape of the funerary beds resembles the throne portrayed in the southern wall painting, but the construction materials were changed to stone, probably to accommodate the Chinese convention of choosing substances other than gold in funerary contexts.

In addition to its secular function as a symbol of power, gold was probably an indispensable tribute to gods in the Sogdian sacrificial inventory. The two gold burial

masks (from the tombs of Shi Daode and YKJM33) both carry a crescent motif topped by a globe (for illustrations see Figs. 67-68). This is a common artistic expression of Zoroastrian worship of sun and moon. Moreover, all six Byzantine gold coins or imitations from the tombs of Kang Yexiang, Shi Daode, YKJM33, Kang Ye, Shi Jun, and An Pu, functioned as payments for the ferryman Charon, an ancient Greek custom. It seems that the Sogdians thought gold objects were good gifts to gods wherever the gods came from.

Therefore, the presence of abundant gold articles in the Sogdian tombs largely recalled their cultural heritage in the Sogdian acculturation in China. The Sogdians used these gold articles not only to show off their wealth and power, but also probably to pay tribute to gods.

8.2.3 Turfan versus Inner China

This thesis identifies four significant differences in funerary customs between Turfan and inner China. First, all six extant ossuaries with archaeological backgrounds were found in Xinjiang, two of which were found in Turfan. None of these typical Sogdian Zoroastrian objects were unearthed from inner China. Second, wooden coffins were the dominant type of burial receptacle in inner China, while residents of Turfan were more likely to use reed mats to support corpses. Third, epitaph tablets from inner China were often made of stone, structured with three fixed components (title, prose preface, eulogy), and bear lengthy testimony, while those from Turfan did not feature

such characteristics. Fourth, placing Western coins near the deceased was commonly accepted by people in Turfan across ethnic groups, while it was still a Sogdian ethnic norm in inner China.

The Sogdian acculturation correspondingly reflected the geographic distinction between Turfan and inner China. Specific to the 20 selected Sogdian burials, two burials were found in Turfan (no. 1 and no. 2) and the remaining 18 burials were all found in inner China. The descendants of the Sogdian deceased in Turfan carried out burials in the Turfan style, such as using a reed mat to support the body and a simple epitaph for the deceased. Similarly, the Sogdian deceased people in inner China were dealt with in another fashion. Therefore, the Sogdian acculturation in China showed regional differences, especially in terms of Turfan versus inner China.

Turfan was conquered by Han China in 107 BCE. After the fall of the Han Dynasty in 220 CE, Turfan was virtually independent but was a tributary of various Han Chinese local regimes based in Northwest China or powerful nomadic people such as the Rouran and the Turkic. In 640 CE, Turfan was conquered by Tang China, another powerful dynasty unified all Chinese territories after the Han Dynasty (Song, 2003, 15-21). An immediate consequence of Chinese direct or indirect rule in Turfan was the influx of thousands of Han migrants into Turfan. The original inhabitants of Turfan were a seminomadic people who did not have an indigenous system of writing, known as the Jushi 车师 or Gushi 古师 peoples in Chinese historical records. Later, Han Chinese immigrants overshadowed indigenous residents, so Sogdians considered Turfan a Chinatown in the early seventh century (Hansen, 2012, 84-112).

Although Turfan had been conquered by Han Chinese by means of military and culture in the Middle Ages, it was more cosmopolitan than many areas of inner China were. Turfan was at one of the westernmost points in China at the intersection of several silk roads; therefore, it absorbed various cultures with which it interacted (Fig. 87). Moreover, before it was officially annexed by the Tang Empire in 640 CE, Turfan retained virtually independent status for centuries. For its survival and development, Turfan had to handle the surrounding powers, such as nomadic people on the north, sedentary Han people on the south and east, and Central Asians on the west. Residents of Turfan engaged in different cultural traditions, consciously or unconsciously; thereby they developed into a heterogeneous society. From approximately 580 CE to 700 CE, Sassanian silver coins were used as the main form of currency there. Ancient literature written in diverse languages, such as Chinese, Sogdian, Turkic, Persian, and Tibetan, was found there (Hansen, 2012, 84-112). These situations did not occur in many areas of inner China; thus, it is understandable why Turfan was different from inner China regarding the four identified funerary customs, as mentioned above.

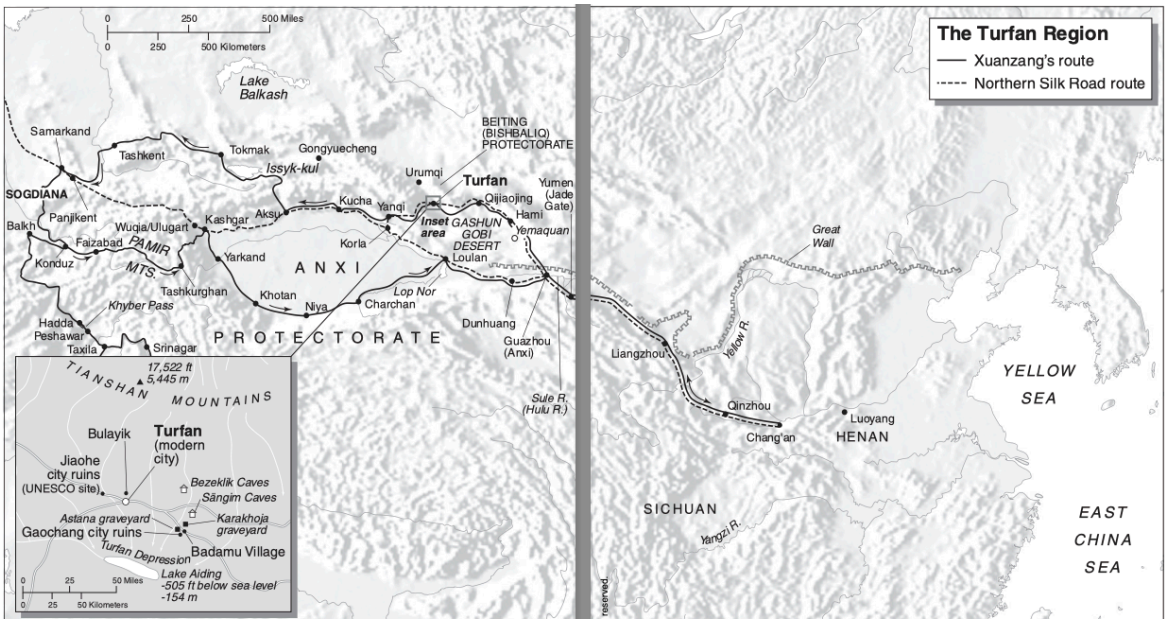


Figure 87. Map of Turfan in the seventh century.

After: Hansen, 2012, p.86 and 87.

8.2.4 Multicultural Interactions

Regarding Sogdian acculturation in medieval China, the relationship between Sogdian culture and Han Chinese culture was certainly the main axis of transmission. However, the Sogdian tomb owners lived during a time when northern China was dominated by the nomadic Xianbei (i.e., the Northern Dynasties) or when China gradually became a cosmopolitan empire (i.e., the Sui and Tang Dynasties). Sogdians were part of multicultural Chinese societies, where diverse people exchanged aspects of their own culture. Looking at Sogdiana, their homeland, there was also a multicultural characteristic, which was even more complicated because the region was often covered by non-Sogdian overlords. For these reasons, analyses of the empirical chapters have attributed some mortuary objects and images of the Sino-Sogdian tombs

to third-party influences (i.e., neither Sogdian nor Chinese), of which the Greeks, the Turkic people, and Buddhists are worth noting.

Sogdiana was conquered during the military campaigns of Alexander the Great from 329 to 327 BCE. This conquest marked the beginning of the Hellenistic period of Sogdiana, which lasted until 146 BCE (Walter, 2006, 4). One of the most noticeable impressions of the Hellenistic period was 'Charon's obol', which refers to coins being placed in burials (usually in the mouth of the deceased) as payments to the ferryman for transport across the river Styx to the afterlife (Brown, 2013, 41).

As mentioned above, six burials of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian examples each contained one Byzantine gold coin or an imitation. All these gold coins were placed close to the deceased, such as in the mouth or the hand. Apart from symbolising the wealth and power of the deceased, the specific locations of these coins hint that they were probably dedicated to Charon. Admittedly, this argument might be tentative because some Chinese scholars have disagreed with the Hellenistic origin of the practice of placing Western coins next to a dead person's skin and have tended to attribute the practice to a local Chinese custom (Xia, 1974; Li, 1995; Wang, 2003). However, empirical analysis based on many related archaeological materials supports the connection between these Western coins from the Sino-Sogdian tombs and the Hellenistic practice of 'Charon's obol' (for analysis, see Section 6.5.3).

By the mid-sixth century, Sogdiana had passed into the hands of the Türks; therefore, a Turco-Sogdian symbiosis was nurtured along the silk roads. The Sogdian commercial network expanded across Eurasia under the protection of the powerful

Türks, who were provided in return with the Sogdians' diplomatic negotiations and political services (De la Vaissière, 2005, 199-225).

The cooperation between the Türks and the Sogdians was faithfully represented on sculptured slabs found in Sogdian tombs. The stone funerary bed from the tomb of An Jia (no. 10) might be the most detailed example to represent this cooperative relationship. The stone bed carries 12 pictures on its slabs, three of which continuous pictures depict negotiations between a Turkic leader and a Sogdian leader (for illustrations see Fig. 57). The depicted Sogdian leader might refer to the deceased An Jia since he was employed as a *sabao*, who actively engaged in foreign relationships with Turkic people for his Sogdian community or the Chinese government because the *sabao* officials had been absorbed into the Chinese bureaucracy by the fifth through seventh centuries.

In terms of Sino-Sogdian religions, although Zoroastrianism was widespread, Buddhism played a significant role. Many given names of the Sino-Sogdians derive from Buddhist terms, such as Kang Fumian (no. 2), Pisha and Weimo, who were two sons of Shi Jun (no. 11), and An Pu (no. 17) (for their interpretations, see Section 7.5.2). Many Buddhist patterns were added to sculptured slabs in the Sino-Sogdian tombs. The most interesting example might be the stone door to the tomb of An Jia (no. 10). The uppermost crescent part on An Jia's tomb door largely depicts a Zoroastrian scene (see Figs. 31 and 32). However, the large Zoroastrian fire altar in the centre of the scene is supported by three camels standing on a lotus base, a typical Buddhist symbol. Based on these instances, it is certain that Buddhist deities were an important part of the Sino-

Sogdian pantheon.

Buddhism most likely created an intermediate realm between various competing beliefs. It might have provided an acceptable religion for everyone taking part in the complicated Sogdian acculturation process.

For the Sogdians, although Buddhism was heresy in Sogdiana, many people at least partially believed in Buddhism when they set out on a journey along the silk roads. At the nascent stage of Chinese Buddhism in the third century, Sogdians facilitated its spread and development by translating Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Chinese, adding commentary adapted to the Chinese worldview, and sponsoring Buddhist activities (Walter, 2006, 61). Thus, for Sogdians who settled in China after a long journey, Buddhism was not the most traditional religion but was an alternative.

Similar situations can also be seen on the Chinese side. In the Middle Ages, court-ordered anti-Buddhist activities took place three times for different reasons, among which the foreign nature of Buddhism was a common excuse (Wu, J., 2010, 8). At the same time, Buddhism experienced rapid Sinicisation and became truly Sinicised by adopting indigenous Chinese ideas by the Tang period (Lewis, 2009a, 215). Thus, for contemporary Chinese people in the Middle Ages, Buddhism was transforming from wholly alien to Sinicised.

8.3 Response to Research Questions

1) If the Sogdians assimilated into the host culture, in what ways and for what

reasons did they do so?

2) Did the Sogdians maintain their cultural heritage? If so, in what ways and for what reasons did they do so?

The above discoveries and discussions have shown that Sogdians assimilated to the host culture, as is evident in the use of Chinese underground tomb constructions, Chinese burial receptacles, Chinese tomb figurines, and Chinese biographical epitaphs. The adoption of these tomb constituents made Sogdian tombs identical to other tombs in medieval China.

On the other hand, the Sogdians did not abandon their cultural heritage but practised it in different ways. They commissioned pictorial mortuary slabs, such as stone doors, stone funerary beds, and house-shaped sarcophagi. Images related to the Sogdian or Zoroastrian traditions were obtained on the surface of these mortuary slabs. Several modifications of Chinese tomb constructions were made to align with the traditional conventions of Sogdian Zoroastrians, such as the change in the body's orientation from north to south and the use of some holy elements (e.g., stone, sand, brick, and charcoal) to isolate the earth from the polluted body. Some descriptions of the biographical epitaphs were also left, reminding readers of their Sogdian affiliations.

Three factors likely contributed to Sogdian cultural assimilation and maintenance in one way or another. First, regional differences are evident, especially regarding one geographic distinction: Turfan versus inner China. As discussed above, the culture in Turfan was slightly different from that in inner China due to the specific geographical location and political situation of Turfan. The Sogdian burial settings truthfully

reflected the regional differences.

Second, official regulations of the governments in North China (i.e., the Northern Zhou, the Northern Qi, the Sui, and the Tang) affected how the Sogdians and/or their families built their tombs and displayed artefacts for viewing by members of their society and in the afterlife. This process is described as 'institutionalised'. Only when the Sogdian deceased was buried in an official, idealised way, would he or she be recognised as a member of the system.

The Chinese governments had a longstanding tradition of establishing political order on basic principles of ritual practice. The *Rites of the Kaiyuan era of the Great Tang* (*Datang kaiyuan li*) of 741 CE, a Tang court-sponsored compilation, draws on several classical ritual texts of earlier times to produce a synthesis of proper ritual practices, of which the mortuary regulations were presented in a separate chapter, known as *xiongli* 凶礼 (rites for inauspicious events) (Yang, 2019, 11).

The 20 selected Sogdians largely followed official mortuary rituals, as attested by their choice of tomb constructions linked to their social standing. On some occasions, tomb constructions certainly overstepped the boundaries of the deceased's authority because official rewards had been given to them or were given to recognise their ancestors' contributions. Thus, the Sogdian burial arrangements either conformed with ritual regulations or represented official rewards. The Sogdians adhered to official mortuary rituals, perhaps due to their status. Almost all the Sogdians were officials, thus they were gradually institutionalised in their mortuary rituals to legitimate their subject roles to their court employers.

A good example is an event that took place in Taiyuan, cited several times above in the chapters with descriptions of the Sogdian tombs. Li Hao, the mayor of Taiyuan during the earlier years of the Kaiyuan period (713-741 CE), abolished a local burial custom lasting for several years because it violated the orthodox Chinese treatment of the body. In this 'unorthodox' practice, the corpses of a group of monks and their disciples were not interred in the soil but were used to feed birds and animals in a suburb (Cui, 2003, 22). If the mayor of Taiyuan at that time was a Sogdian, how would have the Sogdian mayor dealt with the event? It seems much more likely that the Sogdian mayor would stand with the Chinese governments in retaining the idealised mortuary rituals.

The process of 'institutionalisation' probably affected the Sogdian cultural maintenance via the opposite approach, by enforcing the assimilation of Chinese customs. Perhaps under the pressure of the court, the Sogdians chose not to adopt mortuary practices in response to the blatant defiance of the official rituals. A common characteristic of these methods of Sogdian cultural maintenance was its tendency towards private expression. The burial arrangements with Sogdian cultural elements (e.g., pictorial mortuary slabs, suggestive biographical contents, and the orientation of the body) could only be known by an extremely limited number of people who were allowed to access the Sogdian underground tombs. An obvious contrast is the absence of traditional Sogdian burial structures near the Sogdian burial complexes, such as *dakhama* (a place for the exposure of corpses) and *naus* (an aboveground family mausoleum to preserve ossuaries).

It is supposed that the pioneering Sogdian immigrants were engaged in a strategic game with the Chinese courts, which eventually determined that the Sogdians maintained their own culture in a private way. Although conditions of the supposed game were not accounted for, a similar event that occurred between the Qing court and Parsees can be used as a reference point. Like Sogdians, Parsees were pious followers of Zoroastrianism. The Parsees came to Canton, China, with British trading activities and wars during the Qing period. In 1847, the British needed to lease a cemetery in Huangpu, Canton for the Parsees, who were subjects of the British empire. The Qing court granted the request in general but rejected the request of the Parsees to build a brick wall in the cemetery because it was against traditional Chinese funerary practices. The planned brick wall might have referred to *dakhama* (a place for the exposure of corpses), which still survives as a practice in Mumbai, India, where many Parsees settled. Consequently, the Parsees abandoned the establishment of the brick wall and accepted traditional Chinese underground burials, but their deceased people were entombed in specially designed stone coffins to protect good earth (Guo, 2005, 166-171).

Third, Zoroastrianism might be the most important mechanism driving Sogdian cultural maintenance. Zoroastrian beliefs were the primary concern when the Sogdians modified their typical Chinese burial practices. For example, the head of the deceased Sogdians reoriented southwards because north is the dwelling place of the Zoroastrian corpse demon. The Sogdians also used several elements (e.g., stone, sand, brick, and charcoal) to embellish the floor of their burial chambers for the purpose of purity

according to Zoroastrianism.

Admittedly, Sogdian mortuary practices were influenced by various cultures, such as Turkic, Hellenistic, and Buddhist groups, as discussed above; however, all these cultural traits appeared less important than Zoroastrianism. Many mortuary stones found in the Sogdian tombs (e.g., stone funerary furniture and stone doors) contained imagery that reflected the Sogdian religious customs. Although deities and pious scenes from Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Zoroastrianism co-appeared on the surface of these mortuary stones, Zoroastrianism themes usually occupied the largest space. For example, two large Buddhist four-armed guardians were portrayed on the southern wall of Shi Jun's sarcophagus to protect the whole burial facility. The other three walls of the sarcophagus (i.e., the west, the east, and the north walls) largely carry secular activities and religious scenes deriving from Zoroastrianism, especially the east wall, which featured an elaborate illustration of Shi Jun and his wife crossing the Bridge of Judgement (*Chinvat*), a Zoroastrian vision of judgement and journey to paradise documented in texts but seldom represented visually (for illustrations see Figs. 59-62).

The depictions on Kang Ye's stone funerary bed might be an extreme example. Almost all the scenes on the panels of the stone bed were based on certain Chinese models, and the deceased Kang Ye was depicted in these scenes as a native Chinese gentleman, judging by the long, pointed beard, the typical Chinese headdress, and the long robe with overlength sleeves. Even on the pictorial stone bed with such strong Chinese influences, Zoroastrianism was still illustrated by a fire altar, the most iconic representation of this religion, while other religious images were absent (for

illustrations see Figs. 49-52).

3) If the Sogdians simultaneously exhibited traits associated with these two different cultures, what was the relationship between their cultural borrowing and their cultural maintenance?

a. Integration

Based on the answers to the two research questions above, Sogdians can be said to feature the characteristic of hybridity during their acculturation in China. The Sogdians adopted the Chinese tomb structure, treated the corpse, and buried objects in accordance with the burial practices of a strictly Confucian society. At the same time, their tombs included imagery on mortuary slabs and words on epitaphs that reflected the Sogdians' religious and cultural identities.

Based on the framework of acculturation theory established in Chapter 3, cultural maintenance and cultural adaptation might intersect to create four alternatives for acculturation outcomes. From the perspective of ethnocultural groups, the four alternatives are termed: integration (adopting the host culture and maintaining the heritage culture), assimilation (adopting the host culture and discarding the heritage culture), separation (rejecting the host culture and maintaining the heritage culture) and marginalisation (rejecting the host culture and discarding the heritage culture). From the perspective of the broader society, the parallel concepts are termed: multiculturalism (which occurs when cultural diversity is an objective of the broader society), melting pot (which occurs when assimilation is demanded by the broader society), segregation

(which occurs when separation is demanded by the broader society), and exclusion (which occurs when margination is demanded by the broader society and becomes ethnocide in its extreme form).

Given these classifications, the Sogdian acculturation outcome in medieval China was certainly integrated (adopting the host culture and maintaining the heritage culture). On the side of medieval Chinese society, a phenomenon of multiculturalism probably existed. Although the cultural openness of medieval China has been touched upon sometimes throughout this thesis by secondary references, it is not safe to draw conclusions because the basis of this thesis is archaeological materials related to Sino-Sogdians. Thus, my primary conclusion is limited to Sino-Sogdian themselves.

This outcome is not very surprising because the Sogdians were good at accommodating themselves to other people. They could get on well with the different conquerors of Sogdiana, such as the ancient Greeks and the Turkic people. Moreover, they were known as polyglots and excellent traders and therefore were of great benefit to their overlords as cultural and commercial mediators. Beneath the surface of this observation of integration, it is particularly interesting to explore the mechanisms of Sogdian integration.

b. Creative Integration

The Sogdians did not faithfully follow the funerary custom of two cultural traditions (i.e., Sogdian and Chinese) but created new forms by combining them. The pictorial programme featured on the Sogdian stone funerary furniture is a good example.

Although Chinese people had a habit of decorating their stone funerary furniture, they never adopted Zoroastrian themes. When Sogdians settled in China and accepted Chinese stone funerary furniture as their burial receptacles, Zoroastrian images were used as decorative patterns, which largely originated from Sogdian or Sassanian Persian artistic expressions.

Some new practices are difficult to explain based on extant knowledge, especially in terms of the use of stone funerary beds. An Jia's bones were not found on the top of the stone bed but were lying on the north side of the burial passageway, and some of the bones contained several clear smoke marks. Although the analysis in Chapter 5 has identified that the corpse of An Jia was exposed to scavengers and burned prior to burial inside the tomb following the local Sogdian local version of Zoroastrian funerary practices, it is still difficult to understand why An Jia's bones were ultimately placed on the north side of the burial passageway rather than on the prepared stone bed. A probable reason for such a new practice may have been personal. No strict regulations on stone funerary beds had existed; thus, An Jia and other Sogdians could propose their own methods for employing Chinese burial receptacles.

c. Dichotomic Integration

All the funerary practices of Sogdian cultural borrowing were 'revealable', such as outwardly Chinese tomb constructions, typical Chinese burial receptacles, tomb figurines, and biographical epitaphs. Before the Sogdian deceased was eventually buried inside his or her tomb, the tomb had normally been constructed and these tomb

components had been prepared. Thus, the Chinese funerary settings adopted by the Sogdians could be viewed and evaluated by mourners, who included the closest family members and distant related people, such as colleagues, neighbours, and envoys from the court to offer condolences if the deceased was a high-ranking official.

On the other hand, all the funerary practices of Sogdian cultural maintenance were 'hidden'. The Sogdians made some modifications to the tomb constructions to align them with traditional conventions of Sogdian Zoroastrianism, such as the body's orientation and the embellishment of the chamber floor using unique elements. Although the Sogdians used traditional Chinese burial receptacles, some of them were not used to support or contain human remains. In these situations, Chinese burial receptacles were merely furniture, and human remains of the deceased were directly put on the ground or did not exist in the tomb at all. Although the Sogdians used Chinese biographical epitaphs, some words suggest the owners' Sogdian roots; the Sogdian individual Shi Jun even had an epitaph in Sogdian and Chinese. These funerary practices related to Sogdian affiliations would be known by very few mourners who were allowed to enter the burial chamber, view the set burial furnishings, and read the epitaph.

There were two contrasting spatial strategies in the Sogdian tombs. On the one hand, Chinese burial settings were exposed. On the other hand, Sogdian customs were hidden underground. These two strategies also generated distinct relationships between the Sogdian tombs and their potential visitors: the Chinese side would be viewed by other members of their societies, while the Sogdian side could be known by close family

members. Consequently, the Sogdians would successfully shape two contrasting cultural identities in a harmonising burial space. The Chinese burial settings tied the Sogdian and other powerful members of their societies (e.g., the Xianbei and the Han) as a 'we-group'. At the same time, the Sogdians were still 'one of use' in a much smaller network composed of family members, relatives, and Sogdian Zoroastrian followers.

This dichotomic integration most likely resulted from the 'institutionalised' process. As discussed above, official regulations of the governments in North China affected the ways in which the Sogdians and/or their families built their tombs and displayed artefacts for viewing by members of their society. Most of the Sogdians served for the government; thus, they wanted to be accepted by the system as equals by directly showing their Chinese-style tomb structures. For the same reason, they gingerly hinted at their Sogdian affiliations inside the burial structures. When the relatively mild 'institutionalised' factor was converted into several forms of xenophobia stoked by the An Lushan Rebellion (755-763 CE), dichotomic integration was no longer suitable for the Sogdians because they would be attacked even with their symbolic 'nine surnames of Zhaowu'. They quickly abandoned their surnames and became fully Chinese by the late Tang Dynasty.

8.4 Future Work

The research that has been undertaken in this thesis has highlighted some topics for which further research would be beneficial.

Although the cultural significance behind many Sogdian funerary practices have been analysed by the research in this thesis, others remain, especially regarding the function of burial receptacles in some Sogdian burials. For example, An Jia's bones were not found on the top of his stone funerary bed but were lying on the north side of the burial passageway. In this situation, the prepared burial receptacle (i.e., An Jia's stone funerary bed) was not practically used to support the human remains of the deceased. This thesis attributes the phenomenon to personal action. Future studies might look for underlying cultural considerations with more archaeological materials related to Sogdians found in China, Central Asia, and other regions.

A further recommendation is to apply the acculturation theory in the analysis of transcultural contacts in medieval China. This thesis might constitute the first study of Sogdian adaptation in China to be grounded in a specific framework of acculturation. The rapidly changing social and cultural environment was shaped in medieval China, in which different ethnic groups were encountered. Future studies might employ the acculturation theory to analyse the cultural adaptation of other people in the host Chinese society, such as Xianbei, Persians, and Indians. If additional theoretical works are conducted, the emergence of a relatively common theory to guide studies on cross-cultural contacts in medieval China, probably an improved version of the acculturation theory, or a new brand theory is expected if later scholars will propose a more appropriate theory.

Glossary

Zoroastrian technical terms include many variants in different languages, such as the *Avesta* (Av.) and Middle-Persian (MP). In the field of Sogdians in China, the use of Zoroastrian terms is confused. Different scholars have different preferred spelling of these terms, and they often do not precisely note the original language when quoting. For each Zoroastrian technique term, it is written in a relatively common form in the text of this thesis, and this form is listed first in the glossary, followed by alternative spelling from other languages.

Term	**Definition**
Barsom (MP)/ Barvsman (Av.)	A bundle of twigs, tied together with a date palm cord, traditionally held by laity and priests during prayer.
Caharom (Guj.)	A ceremony solemnized on the fourth morning after death, at the time when the soul is supposed to cross the *Chinvat* bridge.
Chinvat (Av.)/Chinwad (MP)	A bridge which souls of the dead cross, and where they are judged.
Dakhma (Av.)	A place for the exposure of corpses, also known as the 'tower of silence'.
Druj nasush (MP)	The corpse demon.
Garonmana (Av.)/Garothman	Heaven, also known as the 'House of Song'.

(Guj.)/Garodman (MP)	
Naus (Ar.)/Frawart-Kate (Sogd.)	An aboveground family mausoleum containing ossauries for the bones of the deceased.
Padam (MP)/ Padan (Pers.)	A white cloth mask used by a priest during ceremonies to keep his breath from directly touching the fire.
Sagdid (MP)	Lit. 'a dog's gaze', this term refers to the practice of exposing a corpse to the gaze of a dog, which is believed to drive away some of the power of evil and pollution.
Sraosha (Av.)/Srosh (MP)	A spirit being who guards the soul for three days after death.
Verethragna (Av.)/Washaghn (Sogd.)	An Indo-Iranian deity, who is hypostasis of 'victory'.

This thesis primarily adopts two types of Chinese technique terms. Ancient terms are derived from Chinese classics. Current terms are proposed by Chinese archaeologists.

Ancient Term	**Definition**
Hun	Lit. 'cloud-soul', a type of souls according to the Chinese soul dualism tradition, which is believed to leave the body and fly away after death.

Mingqi	Chinese tomb furnishings of relatively cheap materials (e.g., clay and wood) specially designated and produced for the soul(s) of the deceased, also known as the 'spirit article'.
Nine surnames of Hu/Zhaowu	Collective designations for Sogdians by contemporary Chinese in the Middle Ages.
Po	Lit. 'white-soul', a type of souls according to the Chinese soul dualism tradition, which is believed to leave the body and dwell in the tomb after death.
Sabao	A caravan leader and then an official title of Sogdian leaders in the Chinese hierarchy in the fifth through seventh centuries.
Tianzhu	A high Zoroastrian priest in a Sino-Sogdian community.
Yong	A type of spirit articles to emulate human or animals, also known as the 'tomb figurine'.
Current Term	**Definition**
Coffin platform	An (usually but not always) unadorned rectangular platform of earth, brick, or stone to elevate a wooden coffin enclosing the corpse.
Corpse platform	An (usually but not always) unadorned rectangular platform of earth, brick, or stone to directly support

	the remains of the deceased.
Horizontal tomb	A tomb cut laterally into the native rock of a mountain that contains multiple sequential burial chambers.
House-shaped sarcophagus	Large stone boxes mirroring traditional Chinese wooden architecture.
Stone funerary bed	A couch-like platform of stone stands on feet with a surrounding pictorial screen.
Stone funerary furniture	A collective designation for stone funerary beds and house-shaped sarcophagi.
Vertical pit tomb	A tomb built as an open pit in the ground that contains a box-like timber coffin.

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Appendix 1. The known 129 Sino-Sogdian tombs.

Number	Family/public cemetery	Name of tomb owner	Burial date	Location	Looted	Reference
1-36	Yes	Kang family	6th-7th C.	Jiaohe, Turfan, Xinjiang	Yes	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 5-56
37-96	Yes	Kang family	6th-7th C.	Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang	Yes	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 5-56
97-101	Yes	?	Sui-Tang	Nanyuan, Guyuan, Ningxia	Yes	NHWKY, 2022; NWKY, 2009, 84-116
102-103	Yes	?	Sui-Tang	Jiulongshan, Guyuan, Ningxia	No	NWKY, 2012, 122-127
104-109	Yes	Shi family	Sui-Tang	Guyuan, Ningxia	Yes	Luo, 1996; YLK, 2014
110-115	Yes	He family	7th- 8th C.	Yanchi, Ningxia	Yes	Wu, 1988
116	No	?	N.Zhou-Sui	Tianshui, Guansu	Yes	Zhang, 1992
117	No	Di Caoming	579	Jingbian, Shaanxi	Yes	Luo and Rong, 2016, 269-299
118	No	Kang Ye	571	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Yes	Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009
119	No	An Jia	579	Xi'an, Shaanxi	No	SKY Shaanxi, 2003
120	No	Shi Jun and Lady Kang	580	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Yes	Yang, 2014
121	No	An Yuanshou and Lady Di	684	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Yes	Chen, 1988
122	No	Kang Wentong	697	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Yes	Yang, 2004

Number	Family/public cemetery	Name of tomb owner	Burial date	Location	Looted	Reference
123	No	Kang Lingyun	734	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Yes	Wang, 2000
124	No	Yu Hong and an anonymous lady	592	Taiyuan, Shanxi	Yes	SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005
125	No	Cao Yi	655	Fengyang, Shanxi	No	Li, 2007
126	No	An Pu and Lady He	709	Luoyang, Henan	No	Zhao, 1982
127	No	He Hongjing	865	Daming, Hebei	Yes	Chen, 1984
128	No	Shi Siming	762	Beijing	Yes	Yuan, 1991
129	No	?	573	Qingzhou, Shandong	Yes	Xia, 2001

Appendix 2. The 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs.

Tomb	Representative example of a family/public cemetery	Number of deceased	Date	Burial date	location	Looted	Reference
1.Kang Yexiang (M11)	Yes, Kang family (app. 1, no. 1-36)	M (1) & F (1)	559–640	649	Jiaohe, Turfan, Xinjiang	Yes	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 21
2. Kang Fumian (M212)	Yes, Kang family (app. 1, no. 37-96)	M (1) & F (1)	? –630	630	Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang	Yes	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 229
3. Tianshui	No	?	?	N. Zhou-Sui	Tianshui, Gansu	Yes	Zhang, 1992
4. He Fujun (M3)	Yes, He family (app. 1, no. 110-115)	No	616–700	700	Yanchi, Ningxia	Yes	Wu, 1988
5. Shi Daode	Yes, Shi family (app. 1, no. 104-109)	M (1)	612–678	678	Guyuan, Ningxia	Yes	Luo, 1996, 87-103
6. YKJ M33	Yes, public cemetery (app. 1, 102-103)	M (1) & F (1)	Sui	Sui	Jiulongshan, Guyuan, Ningxia	No	NWKY, 2012, 125
7. M1401	Yes, public cemetery (app. 1, 104-109)	M (1) & F (1)	Early Tang	Early Tang	Nanyuan, Guyuan, Ningxia	Yes	NHWKY, 2022
8. Di Caoming	No	M (1)?	?	579	Jingbian, Shaanxi	Yes	Luo and Rong, 2016, 269-299
9. Kang Ye	No	M (1)	512–571	571	Xi’an, Shaanxi	Yes	Xi’an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009

Tomb	Representative example of a family/public cemetery	Number of deceased	Date	Burial date	location	Looted	Reference
10. An Jia	No	M (1)	518–579	579	Xi'an, Shaanxi	No	SKY Shaanxi, 2003
11. Shi Jun	No	M (1) & F (1)	494–579	580	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Yes	Yang, 2014
12. An Yuanshou	No	M (1) & F (1)	607–683	684	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Yes	Chen, 1988
13. Kang Wentong	No	M (1)	618–678	697	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Yes	Yang, 2004
14. Kang Lingyun	No	?	?	734	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Yes	Wang, 2000
15. Yu Hong	No	M (1) & F (1)	533–592	592	Taiyuan, Shanxi	Yes	SKY Shanxi, TWY, and TJW, 2005
16. Cao Yi	No	No	581–655	655	Fenyang, Shanxi	No	Li, 2007
17. An Pu	No	M (1) & F (1)	601–664	709	Luoyang, Henan	No	Zhao, 1982
18. He Hongjing	No	?	807-865	865	Daming, Hebei	Yes	Chen, 1984
19. Shi Simin g	No	M (1)	703–761	762	Beijing	Yes	Yuan, 1991
20. Qingzhou	No	?	?	573	Qingzhou, Shandong	Yes	Xia, 2001

Appendix 3. Construction of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs. References: see app. 2.

Tomb	Tomb-L (m)	Passage-L (m)	Chamber	Number of airshafts	Number of niches	Sealed door	Orientation
1. Kang Yexiang (M11)	?	8.46	Earthen-built Rectangular L: 3.44 W: 3.06 H: 1.56	0	0	Earth-built H: 0.68	Tomb: West-East, 95° Head of the deceased: 1 male: South 1 female: South
2. Kang Fumian (M212)	?	9.16	Earthen-built Almost rectangular L: East wall 3.4, West wall 2.78, South wall 2.7, North wall 2.82 H: 2.18	0	0	Earth-built H: 0.4 (rem.) W: 1.18 Thick: 0.45	Tomb: North-South, 185° Head of the deceased: 1 male: West 1 female: West
3. Tianshui	?	4	Brick-built Rectangular L: 4.2 W: 4.2 H: 3.44 The floor was paved with tiles. Below these titles is an upper layer of sandy soil and a lower layer of charcoal.	0	0	Brick-built H: 1.58	Tomb: North
4. He Fujun (M3)	?	13	Stone-built Rectangular L: 6.5 W: 3.7 H: 2.2	0	4	No	Tomb: North-South, 205°
5. Shi Daode	39.75	28.5	Earthen Square L: East wall 2.4, West wall 2.6, South wall 2.9, North wall 2.5 W: 1.2 H: more than 2.5	7	0	Brick-built H: 1.4	Tomb: North-South, 160°

6. YKJ M33	8.2	1.2 (rem.)	Earthen-built Trapezoidal W: South wall 2.4, North wall 2.54 H: 1.56	1	1	Earth-built H: 0.07 (rem.) W: 0.66 Thick: 0.53	Tomb: Southwest-Northeast, 160° 1 male: Southeast 1 female: Southeast
7. M1401	?	29	Earthen-built Trapezoidal L: 3.8 W: 3.8 H: 2.5	5	2	Brick-built H: 1.08 (rem.) Thick: 0.38	Tomb: South-North, 172°
8. Di Cao ming	?	?	Earthen-built	?	?	Stone-built	?
9. Kang Ye	?	?	Earthen-built Square L: 3.3 W: 3.4 H: 1.6	?	?	First door: brick-built H: 0.3 (rem.) Second door: stone-built	Tomb: South-North, 179° 1 male: West
10. An Jia	35	8.1	Brick-built Almost square L: 3.64 W: 3.68 H: 3.3	5	5	Stone-built H: 2.2 W: 1.4	Tomb: South-North, 186°
11. Shi Jun	47.26	16.3	Earthen-built Square L: 3.7 W: 3.5 H: 0.5 (rem.)	5	5	First door: brick-built Second door: stone-built H: 1.65 W: 1.65	Tomb: South-North, 186°
12. An Yuan shou	60.2	17	Front chamber: Brick-built Almost square L: 2.64 W: 2.74 Rear chamber: Brick Almost square L: 4.4 W: 4.1	5	2	Stone-built	Tomb: South-North, 172°

13. Kang Wentong	?	26	Front chamber: Brick-built Square L: 2.24 W: 2.44 Rear chamber: Brick Almost square L: 3.76 W: 3.96	3	2	Brick-built H: 1.04 (rem.)	Tomb: South-North, 180°
14. Kang Lingyun	?	?	?	5	6	?	?
15. Yu Hong	13.65	8.5 (rem.)	Brick-built Square L: E and W walls: 3.66 (direct), 3.9 (sloping) N and S walls: 3.55 (direct), 3.8 (sloping) H: 1.65-1.73 (rem.) Thick: 0.34	0	0	Stone-built W: 0.8	Tomb: Southwest-Northeast, 205°
16. Cao Yi	?	?	Brick-built Square L: 3.1 W: 3.08	?	?	?	Tomb: South-North, 179°
17. An Pu	?	?	Earthen-built Almost square L: 2.95 W: 3.55 H: 1.9	?	?	Stone-built	Tomb: South-North, 168° 1 male: South 1 female: South
18. He Hongjing	?	?	Stone-built Circular Diameter: 6 The floor was paved with slabs. Under the slabs were two layers of wooden boards with turpentine smell.	?	?	?	?

19. Shi Siming	?	20.6	Main chamber: Stone-built Square L: 5.54 W: 5.05 Left side chamber: Stone-built Right side chamber: Stone-built	0	8	Marble-built H: 3.8 W: 1.5 Thick: 0.7	Tomb: South-North
20. Qingzhou	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

Appendix 4. Body treatment of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs. References: see app. 2

Tomb	Burial Receptacle	Human remains when discovered
1. Kang Yexiang (M11)	A reed mat on an earthen platform	2 deceased: 1 male skeleton and 1 female skeleton Both on top of the platform with the reed mat
2. Kang Fumian (M212)	A reed mat on an earthen platform	2 deceased: 1 male skeleton and 1 female skeleton Both on top of the platform with the reed mat
3. Tianshui	A stone funerary bed Wooden coffin traces on top of the bed	1 or 2 deceased: scattered bones On top of the stone funerary bed, initially inside a wooden coffin
4. He Fujun (M3)	A stone platform	No
5. Shi Daode	An earthen platform Rotten woods and coffin nails in the mud	1 deceased: scattered bones The skull near the tomb door and some bones in the mud
6. YKJM 33	No	2 deceased: 1 male skeleton and 1 female skeleton Both on the ground
7. M1401	An earthen platform	2 deceased: 1 male skeleton and 1 female skeleton Both on the ground
8. Di Caoming	Seven stone bases, which were probably components of a stone funerary bed	1 deceased: scatter bones On the entrance passage
9. Kang Ye	A stone funerary bed	1 deceased: 1 male skeleton On the stone funerary bed
10. An Jia	A stone funerary bed	1 deceased: bones cleaned of the soft tissues with smoke marks On the north side of the corridor
11. Shi Jun	A house-shaped sarcophagus	2 deceased: scattered bones Most bones inside the house-shaped sarcophagus and some bones scattered around the burial chamber

12. An Yuanshou	A brick platform Coffin ashes around the burial chamber	2 deceased: scattered bones Inside the burial chamber
13. Kang Wentong	A brick platform	1 deceased: scattered bones On the brick platform
14. Kang Lingyun	?	?
15. Yu Hong	A house-shaped sarcophagus	2 deceased: scattered bones Inside the sarcophagus, under the planks covering the base of the sarcophagus, and around the burial chamber
16. Cao Yi	No	No
17. An Pu	Two earthen platforms Rotten woods and coffin nails on them	2 deceased: 1 male skeleton and 1 female skeleton Each skeleton separately on one platform, initially inside a wooden coffin
18. He Hongjing	?	?
19. Shi Simin g	?	1 deceased: scattered bones
20. Qingzhou	Nine stone slabs, which were probably components of a house-shaped sarcophagus	?

Appendix 5. Burial objects of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs. References: see app. 2.

Tomb	Chinese-style miniature figurines	Western objects	Others
1.Kang Yexiang (M11)	0	1 Byzantine solidus (imitation)	4 pottery vessels
2. Kang Fumian (M212)	0	0	19 pottery vessels, 1 bronze hairpin, 1 bronze eye-cover
3. Tianshui	5 stone figurines	0	1 chicken-head spouted pitcher, 1 lamp stand, 1 gold hairpin, 1 stone pillow, 1 bronze mirror
4. He Fujun (M3)	Several wooden figurines	0	2 glass beads
5. Shi Daode	3 ceramic figurines	1 Byzantine solidus (imitation), 1 gold burial mask,	1 gold belt buckle, 2 gold belt plagues, 1 bronze mirror
6. YKJM33	0	1 Byzantine solidus, 1 gold burial mask	2 pottery vessels, 1 gold belt buckle, 1 gold belt plaque, 1 gold hairpin
7. M1401	33 clay figurines	0	115 glass beads, 35 bronze coins, 7 bronze belt plaques, 2 bronze belt buckles, 3 bronze belt end-pieces
8. Di Caoming	?	?	?
9. Kang Ye	0	1 Byzantine solidus	1 bronze belt buckle, 4 bronze plaques, 1 bronze coin
10. An Jia	0	0	1 gilded bronze belt, composed of 12 parts: 1 buckle, 10 plaques, 1 end-piece
11. Shi Jun	0	1 gold finger-ring, 1 Byzantine solidus	1 ear pendant, 1 gilded bronze belt buckle, 1 lamp
12. An Yuanshou	133 ceramic figurines	0	0
13. Kang Wentong	21 ceramic figurines	0	2 porcelains, 1 lamp, 1 jade vessel, 2 bronze vessels, 1 bronze coin

Tomb	Chinese-style miniature figurines	Western objects	Others
14. Kang Lingyun	?	?	?
15. Yu Hong	16 stone figurines	0	1 marble lamp, 7 bronze coins, 1 porcelain bowls
16. Cao Yi	9 ceramic figurines	0	3 pottery vessels, 2 porcelains
17. An Pu	97 ceramic figurines	1 Byzantine gold solidus	2 pottery vessels, 11 porcelains, 2 bronze coins, 1 bronze mirror, 1 agate bead
18. He Hongjing	?	?	?
19. Shi Siming	5 ceramic figurines, 2 bronze figurines, and 1 stone figurine	0	5 jade ornaments, 1 agate ornament, 2 ivory ornaments, 1 glass ornament, 2 silver ornaments, 1 gilded bronze knocker, 17 gilded bronze belt buckles, 10 gilded bronze belt plaques, 18 gilded bronze belt end-pieces, 3 porcelains
20. Qingzhou	?	?	?

Appendix 6. Epitaphs of the 20 selected Sino-Sogdian tombs. References: see app. 2.

Tomb	Number of epitaphs	Material	Structure	Content	Iconographies
1.Kang Yexiang (M11)	1	Brick	Title	Surname, 'a person of someplace', name, occupation(s), the date of death	No
2. Kang Fumian (M212)	1	Brick	Title	Surname, name, occupation(s), the date of death	No
3. Tianshui	0				
4. He Fujun (M3)	1	Stone	Title-Biography-Eulogy	Surname, 'a person of someplace', ancestor(s), personality, occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date of burial	Epitaph cover: the Twelve Zodiac Animals
5. Shi Daode	1	Stone	Title-Biography-Eulogy	Surname, ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality, occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date of burial, descendant(s)	Epitaph cover: honeysuckles Epitaph base: animals, clouds
6. YKJM33	0				
7. M14010	0				
8. Di Caoming	1	Stone	Title-biography-eulogy	Surname, 'a person of someplace', ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality, occupation(s), the date of burial	No
9. Kang Ye	1	Stone	Biography-eulogy	Surname, ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality, occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date	No

Tomb	Number of epitaphs	Material	Structure	Content	Iconographies
				of burial, descendant(s)	
10. An Jia	1	Stone	Title-biography-eulogy	Surname, 'a person of someplace', ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality, occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date of burial	No
11. Shi Jun	1 (bilingual, Chinese and Sogdian)	Stone	Title-biography	Surname, ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality, occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date of burial, wife, descendant(s)	No
12. An Yuanshou	2 (one belongs to Yuanshou, the other belongs to his wife)	12.1 An Yuanshou's: stone	Title-biography-eulogy	Surname, 'a person of someplace', ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality, occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date of burial, wife, descendant(s)	Epitaph base: *Bao Xiang* flower (it forms the main body with lotus and peony as the centre, and it does not exist in nature)
		12.2 His wife's: Stone	Title-biography-eulogy	Surname, ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, the date of death, age, the date of burial, descendant(s)	Epitaph cover: The Four Beasts Epitaph base: the Twelve Zodiac Animals, clouds
13. Kang Wentong	1	Stone	Title-biography-Eulogy	Surname, 'a person of someplace', ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality, the date of death, age, the date of burial	No
14. Kang Lingyun	1	Stone	Title-biography-eulogy	Surname, ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality,	Epitaph cover: honeysuckles

Tomb	Number of epitaphs	Material	Structure	Content	Iconographies
				occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date of burial, descendant(s)	Epitaph base: the Four Beasts
15. Yu Hong	2 (one belongs to Yu Hong, the other belongs to his wife)	12.1 Yu Hong's: stone	biography-eulogy	Surname, 'a person of someplace', ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality, occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date of burial, wife	Epitaph cover: lotuses, honeysuckles Epitaph base: honeysuckles
		12.2 His wife's: stone	biography	personality, the date of death, age, the date of burial	Epitaph cover: no Epitaph base: honeysuckles
16. Cao Yi	1	Stone	biography-eulogy	Surname, 'a person of someplace', ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality, occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date of burial	No
17. An Pu	1	Stone	Title-biography-eulogy	Surname, ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date of burial, descendant(s)	Epitaph cover: honeysuckles Epitaph base: honeysuckles
18. He Hongjing	1	Stone	Title-biography-eulogy	Surname, 'a person of someplace', ancestor(s), name, courtesy name, personality, occupation(s), the date of death, age, the date of burial, descendant(s)	Epitaph cover: the Four Beasts, animals Epitaph base: the Twelve Zodiac Animals (?), waves, flowers
19. Shi Siming	1 (ceremo	Jade		Surname, occupation(s), descendant(s)	No

Tomb	Number of epitaphs	Material	Structure	Content	Iconographies
	nial jades)				
20. Qingzhou	No				

Appendix 7. Byzantine gold coins near the deceased in burials found in China.

ID reference	Coin condition		Coin debasement		Sovereign on the coin	Date of the Burial	Area of the Burial	Position relative to the deceased			Ethnicity of the owner	References
	Genuine	Counterfeit	Clipped	Pierced				Mouth	Hand	Others		
1	×	✓			Justinian I (527-565)	c. 6th C	Tomb I.3, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han?	Stein, 1928, 646
2	×	✓			Justinian I (527-565)	c.6th C	Tomb I.5, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han?	Stein, 1928, 646
3	×	✓			Justinian I (527-565)	632	Tomb I.6, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	Stein, 1928, 646

4	×	✓	×	×		639	Tomb 67TAM92, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	XWB, 1972, 8-29
5	✓	×	✓	×	Maurice (582-602)	7th C	Tomb 68TAM138, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×		XWB, 1972, 8-29
6	×	✓				596	Tomb 66TAM48, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×		XBK, 2000, 215-243
7	×	✓				645	Tomb 72TAM150, Astana,	✓	×	×	Han	XBK, 2000, 215-243

							Turfan, Xinjiang					
8	×	✓				Qu's Gaochang (502-640)	Tomb 72TAM153, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	XBK, 2000, 215-243
9	×	✓				751	Tomb 72TAM188, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	XBK, 2000, 215-243
10	×	✓				680	Tomb 73TAM191, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Torso	Han?	XBK, 2000, 215-243
11	×	✓				Tang	Tomb 73TAM2	✓	×	×	Han	XBK, 2000,

							13, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang					215-243
12	×	✓				660	Tomb 73TAM214, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	XBK, 2000, 215-243
13	×	✓				Tang	Tomb 73TAM222, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	XBK, 2000, 215-243
14	×	✓				Tang	Tomb 69TKM36, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×		XBK, 2000, 215-243

15	×	✓				5th -6th C	Tomb 76TCM1, Kaner, Turfan, Xinjiang,	×	×	Head		TDWG, 1990, 1-2
16	×	✓	×	×	Anastasius I (491-518)	640	Tomb 05TYGXM11, Gouxi, Turfan Xinjiang	×	×	Shoulder	Sogdian	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 7-53
17	×	✓				662	Tomb 05TYGXM20, Gouxi, Turfan Xinjiang	✓	×	Spine	Sogdian	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 7-53
18	×	✓				609	Tomb 05TMM203, Munaer,	✓?	×	×	Han	TW, TY, and TB, 2019,

							Turfan, Xinjiang					78-106
19	×	✓	✓	×	Justin II (565-578)	6th – 7th C	Tomb 05TMM 214, Munaer, Turfan Xinjiang	✓?	×	×	Han	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 78-106
20	×	✓	✓	×	Constans II (641-648)	6th – 7th C	Tomb 05TMM 302, Munaer, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓?	×	×	Han	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 78-106
21	×	✓	×	×		7th C	Tomb 04TBM106, Badamu, Turfan Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Kucha	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 146-187
22	×	✓	×	×	Anastasius I	7th C	Tomb 04TBM2	×	×	Head	Sogdian	TW, TY, and

					(491-518)		35, Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang					TB, 2019, 188-317
23	×	✓				6th – 7th C	Tomb 04TBM237, Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Sogdian	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 188-317
24	×	✓	×	✓	Anastasius I (491-518)	7th C	Tomb 04TBM238, Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Arm	Sogdian	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 188-317
25	×	✓	✓	✓		6th – 7th C	Tomb 04TBM252, Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Sogdian	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 188-317

26	×	✓	✓	✓		6th – 7th C	Tomb 04TBM301, Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Shoulder		TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 318-324
27	×	✓	✓	✓	5th - 6th C	664	Shi Suoyan's tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia	✓?	×	×	Sogdian	Luo, 1996, 146-164
28	×	✓	✓	×	5th - 6th C	670	Shi Hedan's tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia	✓	×	×	Sogdian	Luo, 1996, 146-164
29	×	✓	✓	✓	Zeno (474-491)	678	Shi Daode's tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia	✓	×	×	Sogdian	Luo, 1996, 146-164

30	✓	×	×	✓	Justin II (565-578)	658	Shi Daoluo's tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia	✓?	×	×	Sogdian	YLK, 2014, 168-170
31	✓	×	✓	✓	Leo I (457-474)	575	Tian Hong's tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia	×	×	Waist	Xianbei	YLK, 2009, 86-87
32	✓	×	✓	✓	Justin I (518-527)	575	Tian Hong's tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia	×	×	Collar bone	Xianbei	YLK, 2009, 86-87
33	✓	×	✓	✓	Justinian I (527)	575	Tian Hong's tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia	×	×	Head	Xianbei	YLK, 2009, 86-87
34	✓	×	✓	×	Justinian I	575	Tian Hong's	×	×	Head	Xianbei	YLK, 2009,

					(527-565)		tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia					150
35	✓	×	✓	✓	Justin I (518-527)	Sui	M4 tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia	✓	×	×		NWKY, 2012, 58-65
36	✓	×	×	✓	Justinian I (527-565)	Sui	M33 tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia	✓	×	×	Sogdian?	NWKY, 2012, 58-65
37	×	✓	✓	×	Anastasius I (491-518)	Tang	Dongjiao, Xian, Shannxi	✓?	×	×		Luo, 2003, 46-49
38	✓	×			Justinian I (527-565)	564	Li Dan's tomb, Xian, Shannxi	✓	×	×	Indian	Cheng, 2006, 391-400
39	✓	×		✓	Justin II (565-	621	He Ruoque's tomb,	✓?	×	×	Xianbei	Luo, 2003, 57-65

					578)		Xian, Shannxi					
40	×	✓	×	×	Side a: Theodosiu II (408-450)? Side b: Anastasius I (491-518)?	580	Shi Jun's tomb, Xian, Shannxi	×	×	Torso	Sogdian	Luo, 2003, 57-65
41	✓	×	✓	×		571	Kang Ye's tomb, Xian, Shannxi	✓	×	×	Sogdian	Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and

												Preservation of Cultural Relics, 2009
42	×	✓	×	✓	Justin II (565-578)?	Sui	Shangzhou, Shannxi	✓?	×	×	Sogdian?	Wang, 1997, 3-7
43	×	✓	×	×	Phocas (602-610)	709	An Pu's tomb, Luoyang, Henan	×	✓	×	Sogdian	Zhao, 1982, 24-29
44	✓	×	✓	×	Leo I (457-474)	N. Dynasties	Shuimogou, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia	×	×	Torso	Sogdian?	Gai and Lu, 1975, 182-185

Appendix 8. Sasanian silver coins near the deceased in burials found in China.

ID reference	Coin condition		Coin debasement		Sovereign on the coin	Date of the Burial	Area of the Burial	Position relative to the deceased			Ethnicity of the owner	References
	Genuine	Counterfeit	Clipped	Pierced				Mouth	Hand	Others		
1	✓	×	×	×	Khosrau II (590-628)	6th– 7th C	Tomb 04TYGXM1, Gouxi, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Sogdian	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 7-53
2	✓	×	×		Khosrau II (590-628)	6th – 7th C	Tomb 05TYGXM14, Gouxi, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Head	Sogdian	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 7-53
3	✓	×	×	×	Khosraus I (531-579)	609	Tomb 05TMM203, Munaer,	✓?	×	×	Han	TW, TY, and TB, 2019,

							Turfan, Xinjiang					64-77
4	✓	×	×	×	Khosrau II (590-628)	6th– 7th C	Tomb 05TMM 301, Munaer, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓?	×	×		TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 64-77
5	✓	×	×		Khosraus I (531-579)?	6th– 7th C	Tomb 05TMM 301, Munaer, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓?	×	×		TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 64-77
6	✓	×	×	×	Khosrau II (590-628)	6th – 7th C	Tomb 05TMM 306, Munaer, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Head		TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 64-77
7	✓	×	×	×	Khosrau II	6th – 7th C	Tomb 04TBM2	×	×	Head	Sogdian	TW, TY, and

					(590-628)		16, Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang					TB, 2019, 188-317
8	✓	×	×	×	Khosraus I (531-579)	6th – 7th C	Tomb 04TBM225, Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Torso	Sogdian	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 188-317
9	✓	×	×	×	Khosraus I (531-579)	6th – 7th C	Tomb 04TBM244, Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Sogdian	TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 188-317
10	✓	×	×	×		6th – 7th C	Tomb 04TBM301, Badamu, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Spine		TW, TY, and TB, 2019, 188-317

11	✓	×			Hormizd IV (579-590)	c. 6th C	Tomb I.3, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Eye	Han?	Stein, 1928, 647
12	✓	×			Khosrau II (590-628)	c. 6th C	Tomb I.3, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Eye	Han?	Stein, 1928, 647
13	✓	×				c. 6th C	Tomb V.2, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×		Stein, 1928, 646
14	✓	×			Yazdegerd III (632-651)	653	Tomb 60TAM302, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	Xia, 1974, 91-109

15	✓	×	×	×	Yazdegerd III (632-651)	653	Tomb 60TAM302, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	Xia, 1974, 91-109
16	✓	×		✓		653	Tomb 60TAM319, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	XBK, 2000, 14
17	✓	×	✓	×	Khosrau II (590-628)	663	Tomb 60TAM322, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	XBK, 2000, 14
18	✓	×			Khosrau II (590-628)	656	Tomb 60TAM325, Astana,	✓	×	×	Han	Xia, 1974, 91-109

							Turfan, Xinjiang					
19	✓	×				656	Tomb 60TAM325, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	Xia, 1974, 91-109
20	✓	×			Khosrau II (590-628)	665	Tomb 60TAM332, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	Xia, 1974, 91-109
21	✓	×	✓	×	Khosrau II (590-628)	706	Tomb 64TAM20, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Kucha ?	Xia, 1974, 91-109
22	✓	×			Borandukht	685	Tomb 64TAM2	✓	×	×		Xia, 1974,

					(630-632)		9, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang					91-109
23	✓	×	×	✓	Djamasp (496-498)	604	Tomb 66TAM48, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×		Xia, 1974, 91-109
24	✓	×			Khosrau II (590-628)	Tang	Tomb 66TAM73, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×		Xia, 1974, 91-109
25	✓	×			Yazdegerd (632-651)	710	Tomb 67TAM363, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han?	Xia, 1974, 91-109

26	✓	×			Khosrau II (590-628)	Tang	Tomb 67TAM77, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×		Xia, 1974, 91-109
27	✓	×			Khosrau II (590-628)	Tang	Tomb 67TAM78, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	Xia, 1974, 91-109
28	✓	×			Khosrau II (590-628)	639	Tomb 67TAM92, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×	Han	Xia, 1974, 91-109
29	✓	×			Khosrau II (590-628)	Tang	Tomb 69TAM118, Astana,	✓	×	×	Han?	Xia, 1974, 91-109

							Turfan, Xinjiang					
30	✓	×	×	✓	Khosrau II (590-628)	Tang	Tomb 72TAM149, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×		Xia, 1974, 91-109
31	✓	×	✓	×	Khosrau II (590-628)	Tang	Tomb 73TAM206, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Eye		Xia, 1974, 91-109
32	✓	×				5th-6th C	Tomb 76TCM1, Kaner, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Head		TDWG, 1990, 6
33	✓	×			Khosrau II	Tang	Tomb 64TKM8	✓	×	×		Xia, 1974,

					(590-628)		, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang					91-109
34	✓	×				Tang	Tomb 69TKM39, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×		XBK, 2000, 215-243
35	✓	×				5th -6th C	Tomb 76TCM4, Kaner, Turfan, Xinjiang	×	×	Neck		TDWG, 1990, 6
36	✓	×	×	×	Khosrau II (590-628)	7th C	Yaerhu, Turfan, Xinjiang	✓	×	×		Xia, 1974, 91-109
37	✓	×	×	✓	Peroz I	610	Shi Shewu's	✓?	×	×	Sogdian	Luo, 1996,

					(459-484)		tomb, Guyuan, Ningxia					143-163
38	✓	×	×	×	Khosrau II (590-628)	7th– 8th C	Magou, Luoyang, Henan	×	×	Head		Huo and Bei, 2001, 25-29
39-40	✓	×	×	×	Peroz I (459-484)	N. Wei	Tomb KM1, Chaoyang, Liaoning	×	×	Neck		Han, 2013, 72-74