MARGINALIA TO THE HISTORIES OF THE NORTHERN DYNASTIES

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I. THEOPHYLACTUS SIMOCATTA ON CHINA

As is well known, the Byzantine historian Theophylactus Simocatta (VI-VII cc. A. D.) devotes a paragraph of the seventh book of his *Historiae* [1] to the description of a great kingdom in eastern Asia which, as has been universally recognized, can only be China. The information contained in that paragraph, so justly characterized by G. F. HUDSON [2] as "the most intimate glimpse of China in European literature before Marco Polo," was undoubtedly obtained by the Byzantines from the Turks and is inserted by Theophylactus into his account of the growth of the Turkish power in Central Asia as revealed by a diplomatic communication from the Turkish khan to the court of Constantinople.[3]

This all-important source for the history of Asia during the last part of the VIth century provides us with the following fifteen items of information concerning the Middle Kingdom:

1. The country, its people, and its chief city are called Taugast, Ταυγάστ.[4]

2. The ruler (κλιματάρχης) of Taugast is termed Ταισάν which is said to mean son of god (υἱὸς θεοῦ).

3. The kingdom is not disrupted by disputed succession, the latter being hereditary in the family of the ruler.

4. Worship of idols, just laws, and temperate wisdom characterize the inhabitants.

[1] 7, 9. Ed. BEKKER, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, v. 46, Bonn 1834, pp. 286-288. Ed. DE BOOR, Leipzig 1887, pp. 260-262.

[2] G. F. HUDSON, *Europe and China*, London 1931, 127.

[3] *Historiae*, 7, 7-8, translated by CHAVANNES, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue occidentaux*, 246-249.

[4] Taugast is referred to by Theophylactus for the first time in 7, 7. On the curious mistranslation of the passage corrected by CHAVANNES, cf. *op. cit.* 246-247, n. 5.

5. A law enjoins men from wearing gold ornaments, although gold and silver derived through commerce abound in the country.

6. The country is divided in two by a great river forming the boundary between two nations, one wearing clothes dyed black, the other, red (κοκκόβαφος).

7. In the time of Emperor Maurice (582-602), the "black-coats" crossed the river, conquered the "red-(ἐρυθρός) coats," and became masters of the whole empire.

8. The city of Taugast was founded by Alexander the Great after his conquest of the Bactrians and Sogdians.

9. In the city the ruler's women ride in gold chariots drawn by an ox. The women of the nobles use silver chariots.[5]

10. The ruler of Taugast is attended at night (κατεπαννυχίζετο) by seven hundred women.

11. The women mourn the sovereign with shaven heads and in black clothes, and are forbidden to leave the vicinity of his tomb.[6]

12. A few miles away from Taugast is another city called Khubdan (χουβδάν), also said to have been built by Alexander.

13. Two rivers flow through it lined with cypresses.

14. The people of Taugast trade with the Indians [7] and possess many elephants.

15. They rear silkworms and excel in sericulture.

Repeatedly quoted and referred to as a mixture of fact and fiction, the text has never been critically examined in the light of Chinese sources. Most investigators still rely on the briefly annotated translation of the text by H. YULE [8] and limit themselves to repeating his observations which, though quite adequate for a non-sinologist of his day, are misleading when used unjudiciously.

Our analysis might best begin with items 6 and 7, of which the latter, besides providing us with an approximate dating for Simocatta's information, is taken by all commentators as referring to a

[5] In the text the last statement follows No. 10.

[6] In the text No. 11 follows No. 12, seemingly indicating that the tombs of the rulers are located in Khubdan, and not in Taugast.

[7] Northern Indians, described as having become white from living in the North. Undoubtedly a reference to the inhabitants of Eastern Turkestan.

[8] *Cathay and the Way Thither,* London 1866, pp. L-LII.

most important event of Chinese history, the re-unification of the northern and southern parts of the empire in 589 A. D. after almost three centuries of disruption.[9]

While, as we shall see later, the passage in question may contain a faint echo of the great campaign of 589 and the establishment of the Sui as masters of the whole of China, in the text of Theophylactus No. 7 is so closely bound with No. 6 and so dependent on it that the interpretation of one hinges absolutely on that of the other. Now reference to the distinct colorings of dress in the two contending nations is usually passed over in silence by students of Theophylactus or dismissed as a mere fable in the telling of which that much-maligned Byzantine scholar is supposed to have taken great delight. The present writer has long suspected that this part of Simocatta's tale, far from being an invention or a vague generalization on the various types of dress affected in different parts of the vast Chinese empire,[10] might be an exact description of the color of military uniforms worn by the contending armies. Search through Chinese texts for the substantiation of this supposition has been long and weary, information cropping up in rather unexpected places and being conspicuous by its absence in the obvious sources, treatises on military organization.

Cuneus cuneum . . . We shall begin by confronting the supposed fable with a would-be idle tale. *Sui shu* 23, *Wu hsing chih*, relates that Ch'ÊN Shu-pao 陳叔寶,[11] the last ruler of the Ch'ên

[9] Cf. HUDSON, *loc. cit.*, who, for some reason or other, gives 588 A. D. as the date of the conquest. Sir Percy SYKES (*The Quest for Cathay*, London 1936, p. 61) is apparently merely paraphrasing Hudson, but carelessly writes: . . . "the men of the *south* side crossed the river and, defeating the men on the *north* side, became supreme. Here we have an account of the struggle between the Sui and Ch'ên dynasties which ended in the unification of China under the Sui dynasty in 588." (The italics are mine.) It is no wonder that after such cavalier treatment Theophylactus appears to the above writers as a mere 'recorder of gossip' (HUDSON) or a 'recorder of tales' (SYKES).

[10] Cf. YULE, *op. cit.*, n. 4. As we shall see later, however, YULE, with his usual acumen, was on the right track, and had he had access to the Chinese sources, undoubtedly would have solved the problem.

[11] Born Dec. 10, 553; ascended the throne Feb. 20, 582. Made prisoner by the Sui troops in Feb. 589, he died at Ch'ang-an Dec. 16, 604. *Ch'ên shu* 6, *Nan shih* 10. He has no posthumous title and is known merely as the "Last Ruler," Hou Chu 後主' of Ch'ên.

dynasty, once had a dream where he saw his capital surrounded by men dressed in yellow. Deeply affected by the vision, he had all the orange trees growing near the city walls destroyed, unaware, adds the text, that the dream portended the siege of his capital by the *yellow-robed* army of the Sui. True or false, the story carried a point undoubtedly appreciated by contemporaries. The point of the tale was that CH'ÊN Shu-pao was neither demented nor unmindful of the danger presented to his empire by its powerful neighbor in the north. He did not immediately associate the "yellow men" surrounding his capital with Sui soldiers because (as was undoubtedly understood by those who read or heard the story) he was in the habit of associating his enemy's armies with some other color. Indeed, it was only a few months before his accession to the throne that the newly established Sui emperor,[12] supreme lord of the entire north, decreed that the official color at his court should be red and the color of his army's uniforms, yellow.[13]

We have not been able to ascertain the color of the uniforms of the Ch'ên soldiers, but in their color pattern the Ch'ên followed the Liang,[14] whose official color was *red* (for ensigns and flags);[15] otherwise colors varied according to year, season, and probably point of the compass, as was usual in a tradition-bound Chinese milieu. In the campaign of 589 A.D., therefore, there were "yellow-coats" (the Sui) invading the territory of the red-bannered[16] southern empire, and not "black-coats" conquering an army of red-robed warriors.

The histories of the Northern Dynasties supply us, on the other

[12] YANG Chien 楊堅, pht. Sui Wên Ti (541-581-604 A.D.), *Sui shu* 1-2, *Pei shih* 11, ascended the throne March 4, 581.

[13] *Sui shu* 1, 12. The edict was promulgated July 21, 581. On August 22, the Emperor appeared for the first time in a yellow uniform. It must have taken several months before the change could be put into effect throughout the empire.

[14] *Sui shu* 12.

[15] Supplanting green which was the color of the banners of the preceding dynasty of Southern Ch'i. *Sui shu* 10. 1a.

[16] If the Ch'ên followed in any way the usual scheme of cosmological colors, they would have adopted as their distinctive color, yellow or white, which correspond to earth and metal, either of which follows red fire in the order of elements. Yellow would have been preferable to white, the color of mourning.

hand, with numerous bits of evidence that black and red (of at least two different shades) were the official colors of the uniforms of the two Northern states of Chou and Ch'i, successors, respectively, of the western and eastern Wei, which had carried on from the first third of the sixth century a bitter struggle for supremacy over northern China. This rivalry ended in 577 A.D. with the conquest of the red-coats of Ch'i by the black-uniformed armies of Chou. Shortly after, on March 4, 581, the Sui officially supplanted the Chou, but did not change the established form of military dress until some four months later. The testimony of the Chinese sources contains both sober fact and faithfully recorded phantastic stories of colorful (ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, as Theophylactus would say) portents.

We shall first paraphrase a passage from *Pei Ch'i shu* 2, *Pei shih* 6, which gives an account of the last campaign of KAO Huan 高歡, the powerful major-domo of the Eastern Wei. On October 3, 546 A.D. KAO Huan broke the armistice that had reigned for three years (spring 543-546) between the two hostile halves of the Wei empire. Establishing his headquarters at Chin-yang 晉陽, he made preparations for descending the valley of the Fên. In the ninth month (sometime after October 11) he laid siege to the city of Yü-pi 玉壁 [17] which barred his road to the west. Yü-pi, ably defended by WEI Hsiao-k'uan 韋孝寬,[18] successfully withstood a series of fierce attacks, and some two months later, KAO Huan, disheartened and sick, was forced to abandon the siege and the campaign, having lost in the undertaking some 70,000 men.[19] On February 13, 547, he died.[20]

[17] Situated in the vicinity of modern Chi-shan 稷山, on the Fên river, Shansi.

[18] *Chou shu* 31, *Pei shih* 64, 509-580 (died Dec. 17, according to *Chou shu* 8).

[19] 20-30% of his army (*Chou shu* 2); 40-50%, according to *Chou shu* 31.

[20] On the *ping wu* day of the 1st month of Wu-ting 5 of Hsiao ching Ti of Eastern Wei, *Ch'i shu* 2, *Chou shu* 2, *Pei shih* 6, *Wei shu* 12, *Pei shih* 5. In the 2nd month of Ta-t'ung 13 of Wên Ti of Western Wei, according to another entry in *Pei shih* 5. The discrepancy is explained by the fact that news of his death was suppressed and mourning was officially proclaimed only on July 19, 547 (*Ch'i shu* 2) or July 22, 547 (*Wei shu* 12), the difference of three days to be disregarded as the first gives us the beginning, the second, the end of the period of court mourning, KAO Huan left particular instructions to his son not to make an official announcement of his death until he was sure to be in full control of the situation in Eastern Wei. The news must

The disastrous end of that brief campaign had been vainly predicted to KAO Huan, says the *Ch'i shu*, by one of his officers, Ts'AO Wei-tsu 曹魏祖. Besides, KAO Huan passed unheeded another warning. Ever since the beginning of the wars between the eastern and western Wei, it had been observed that prior to the start of a campaign black and yellow Formicidae would stage a battle in phalanxes under the walls of Yeh, the capital of the eastern Wei. Prognosticators considered that the black ants represented the western Wei whose military uniforms were black, and the yellow ants the eastern Wei whose troops dressed in yellow. The populace used to predict the outcome of a campaign on the basis of the ants which triumphed. On that occasion the yellow ants had been exterminated, presaging dire results for KAO Huan's undertaking.

Pei Ch'i shu 49, *Pei shih* 89, supply us with another story. During the Mang-shan 邙山 campaign in the spring of 543 A.D., KAO Huan had in his service a Taoist by the name of CH'I-WU Huai-wên 綦母懷文.[21] That worthy pointed out to KAO Huan that, the latter's banners being red, he had little chance to prevail against the black ones of the Western Wei (black being the color of the water element which conquers the red of fire) and suggested that they be changed to yellow ones (yellow earth being triumphant over water). KAO Huan followed his advice and ordered the banners dyed in ocher.[22]

Liang shu 5, under Ch'êng-shêng 3, relates that in the sixth month of that year (on August 12, 554) a black vaporous emanation in the form of a dragon appeared in the palace. *Sui shu* 23 repeats the story, adding that black being the color of the Chou,

have leaked out, for HOU Ching 侯景 of whose loyalty KAO Huan was especially doubtful, rebelled on February 18, and surrendered to the Western Wei (*Ch'i shu* 3, *Wei shu* 12, *Pei shih* 5). It would appear from *Wei shu* 108, 4, 8a that it was the Wei emperor who betrayed the secret.

[21] The *Ch'i shu* text appears to be the primary source, as KAO Huan is referred to by his temple name, Kao-tsu, and the Eastern Wei army is spoken of as 官軍, "the government army."

[22] Ocher yellow 赭黃, probably an orange shade of yellow, produced by dyeing the originally red silk yellow. The text adds that the banners became known as Ho-yang 河陽 banners.

the portent presaged the subsequent terrible invasion of Liang by the northerners. The same *Sui shu* chapter tells us that in 547 dragons were observed fighting in a river, after which a white dragon fled south pursued by a black one. The latter was recognized as a symbol of Hou Ching, the traitorous adventurer then in the service of the western Wei, who in the autumn of that year surrendered to Liang Wu Ti.[23]

According to the same source, in 568 A. D. the death of a yellow dragon, found in a tree and inadvertently wounded by a woodcutter, presaged the death of the Ch'i sovereign in that very year.[23a] In 576 they observed in Ch'i a desperate fight between a *red* serpent and *black* one resulting after several days in the death of the red serpent. The fall of Ch'i followed the next year. During the same twelvemonth a black dragon fell down from the sky and died in Chou, indicating clearly that the end of the Chou themselves was near. In both passages the editors are careful to indicate that the colors symbolize the respective dynasties. In 573 in Ch'ên black clouds were interpreted as predicting a victory for the Chou, which supposedly followed in the next year.[24] In 577 in Chou (*Sui shu* 23) three animals resembling water buffaloes were observed, one yellow, one red, one black. The black ox and the red one had been fighting for a long time, when the *yellow* one gored the black from the side so that it died. After this the yellow and red animals disappeared into the river. Again the text explicitly states that the yellow ox symbolizes the yellow uniforms of the Sui, while the red one stands for their flags. Judging from the context (the black ox fighting the red one), the red animal symbolizes the Ch'i as well. On March 27, 580, record

[23] He had been in the service of the Western Wei less than six months. For his biography see *Liang shu* 56, *Nan shih* 80.

[23a] That of Kao Chan, the "abdicated ruler" of Ch'i. The "dragon" was probably some rare lizard.

[24] Scattering, the clouds formed shapes resembling pigs. According to *Sung shu* 33, the pig is the symbol of the barbarians of the North. The Chou victory is said to be that of Wang Kuei 王軌 (*Chou shu* 40) over the famous and heretofore seemingly invincible Wu Ming-ch'ê 吳明徹 (*Ch'ên shu* 9) of Ch'ên. There must be some mistake in dating, however, as Wu Ming-ch'ê's defeat took place in 578 A. D. (*Chou shu* 6, *Ch'ên shu* 5).

the annals of Chou (*Chou shu* 7), adjutant birds perched in front of the recently completed T'ai chi 太極 palace in Lo yang, while near Yung chou a black dragon was seen fighting a red one, the combat resulting in the death of the former. There is no doubt that in the mind of the historians the red dragon and the red caruncles on the adjutants' heads were portents of the inevitable triumph of the Sui. The maniacal last emperor of the Ch'i, *Pei shih* 8, *Pei Ch'i shu* 8, used to have fortifications erected and, ordering people to dress in black and attack the forts, he would shoot at them with arrows while pretending that they were Chou troops.[25] During the reign of the same sovereign, a mad śramana of Ch'i is said (*Sui shu* 23) to have been wandering about making obeisances to black crows and insulting Buddhist monks, obviously presaging the extinction of the Ch'i by the Chou and the persecution of Buddhism by the latter.[26]

The above evidence indicates sufficiently that between c. 543 and 577 the western Wei (Chou) and the eastern Wei (Ch'i) troops were clearly distinguished by the color of their uniforms, those of the first being black, and those of the second, red or yellow, and that these color associations were firmly established in ominal lore and in the popular mind. The color patterns affected by the two rival Chinese states must have been well known to the Turks who were in intimate contact with both powers, and there is thus no doubt that the famous passage in Theophylactus Simocatta's text refers primarily to events in Northern China. The river dividing the two nations is thus undoubtedly the Yellow river, and not the Yangtse, as generally believed, the "black-coats" are the Chou, and the "red-coats," the Ch'i.

The conquest of the Ch'i took place, however, in 577 A. D., a year which would fall in the reign of Justin II, and not in that

[25] Literally, Ch'iang 羌 troops. Under the Northern Dynasties Ch'iang was a popular name for the inhabitants of Shensi and whatever power occupied that territory.

[26] Yü-wên Yung 宇文邕 (Kao-tsu Wu Huang-ti of Chou 543-561-578 A. D., *Chou shu* 5-6), an ardent anti-Buddhist and anti-Taoist, proscribed both religions and ordered their statues and books destroyed (edict promulgated June 21, 574). The persecution continued until his death, but both faiths were re-established in favor in 579 during the reign of his son Yü-wên Pin 贇 (pht. Hsüan Ti, 559-579-580).

of Maurice. Two explanations of the discrepancy are possible. Simocatta's information came unquestionably from turkish sources, either from the famous letter of khan Tardou to Emperor Maurice [27] or from data collected for the Constantinople chancelleries by Byzantine ambassadors to the Turks. News of the conquest of Ch'i, which was completed in February-March 577, may have been conveyed by the Turks to Valentinus [28] who, as is not improbable, was still in territory controlled at that time by the Khan. If the account of the events of 577 had been included in Tardou's letter of 598, the Ch'i conquest may have been dated in the original document as having occurred in the time of the reigning Khan, *i. e.* Tardou. Now Tardou's reign being practically synchronous with that of Maurice (576-c.603 *vs.* 582-602),[29] it is possible that the Byzantine translators or commentators of the document substituted the name of the sovereign of the Romans for that of the barbarian ruler.

On the other hand, the conquest of Ch'ên by the Sui in 589 A. D. could not have passed unnoticed by the Turks. The story of Sui Wên Ti presenting to the Turkish ambassadors [30] his great general HAN Ch'in-hu 韓擒虎 [31] as the mighty conqueror of the empire south of the Yangtse has become famous in Chinese literature. Though it was only events in northern China that were of primary interest to the Turks, one might conceive that the latter also transmitted news of happenings farther south. One should, however, imagine the bewilderment of the Foreign Office at Constantinople on being informed that in a far-off land "black-coats," having disposed of "red-coats," turned red (or yellow) themselves

[27] This is a natural supposition based on the order of narration in the text of Theophylactus. It is not, however, binding, as the paragraph dealing with Taugast can also be interpreted as being an independent appendix to the substance of the khan's communication.

[28] According to Menander (ed. BEKKER and NIEBUHR, *Corpus* . . . , v. 19, Bonn 1829, 397-398), Valentinus left Constantinople sometime in 576. His journey to Ektel and back must have taken at least two years, probably more, as he was detained for a considerable time at the khan's court. Cf. CHAVANNES, *Documents* . . . , 239-241.

[29] On Tardou's dates, cf. CHAVANNES, *op. cit.*, 48-51.

[30] Probably in 591 A. D. when two important embassies from the Turks arrived at Ch'ang-an, *Sui shu* 2.

[31] Also called HAN Ch'in (the last character *hu* being taboo in T'ang texts), 538-592, *Sui shu* 52.

and subsequently proceeded to make war on some more "red- (or non-descript) coats," first crossing one mighty river from west to east, then a mightier one from north to south, etc. We cannot blame the poor clerks for being satisfied with the first half of the story and either dismissing the rest entirely or lumping the two accounts together and twisting their chronology slightly in the process.

It is thus more likely that Simocatta's account of Taugast deals fundamentally with northern China just prior to and immediately after 577 and describes primarily the state of affairs in Chou and Ch'i, most probably ante-dating the establishment of the Sui. Item No. 10 here becomes pertinent to our discussion. The enormous number of female attendants that Theophylactus attributes to the ruler of Taugast does not tally at all with what we know of the character and the court organization of Sui Wên Ti, the conqueror of Ch'ên. He is reputed to be the only monogamist among Chinese emperors,[32] and the number of palace women of rank during his reign did not exceed fifty before his wife's death in 601 A. D. and one hundred and twenty after that date.[33] It is true, on the other hand, that Chou Wu Ti, the Chou emperor under whom the subjugation of Ch'i was achieved, favored also stringent regulations limiting the number of ranking women attendants and is said to have curtailed the list at one time to no more than a dozen.[34] His successor, however, was as extravagant as the profligate emperors of Ch'i. He had his empire searched for the most beautiful women to be taken into the palace as concubines and attendants, built lavishly decorated quarters for them, and increased the number of ranks and titles for women to a hitherto unknown degree.[35]

[32] YANG Chien is said to have sworn to his wife, Empress Wên-hsien 文獻 (553-602), daughter of *Tu-ku* Hsin 獨孤信 (503-557, *Chou shu* 16) whom he married in 566 that he would never be unfaithful to her. He broke his promise but once, the unfortunate object of his affection being immediately murdered by the jealous empress, and took unto himself concubines only after her death. As TU-KU Hsin himself is said to have betrothed his daughter to YANG Chien, we seem to have in this case an interesting instance of child marriage. *Sui shu* 36.

[33] *Sui shu* 36, introduction.

[34] Cf. the end of his biography. Also edict in 11th month of 577, *Chou shu* 6.

[35] *Chou shu* 7. Cf. 5th month of 579.

On the side of the Ch'i, the last sovereign's (KAO Hui) insane extravagance in distributing ranks and official emoluments to his women has become proverbial in Chinese history. Over 500 palace ladies are mentioned as attending him at table or levee.[36] But it is in his father's (KAO Chan) biography that we find an indication that Theophylactus' information was amazingly accurate. It is again a supernatural story that supplies us with the evidence. In the third month of 565 A. D., relate *Pei shih* 8 and *Ch'i shu* 7, a ghost described as very corpulent, with face indistinct but with two white tusks protruding from his lips, appeared in the park of the imperial palace. The emperor himself saw it only in a dream, but the vision was attested by the seven hundred palace women attending the emperor at night.

Passing on to item No. 9 which describes briefly the chariots of the noble women of Taugast, we must note that the description agrees more with what little we know of the official regulations of the Ch'i (rather than the Chou). Chariots decorated with gold (gilding or inlay) were in common use at the courts of all dynasties; the minute regulations covering every type of vehicle and the pattern of decoration have been preserved in dynastic histories, and those of the period under consideration are found in *Sui shu* 10.[37] The Chou ceremonial is quite complicated; only some vehicles for women are said to be drawn by oxen, the majority of palace chariots being described as horse-drawn. For the Ch'i only few details are given, but among them we find that princesses of the blood (公主 kung chu) rode in varnished chariots, both chariots and oxen being decorated with gilt and solid silver. At the same time while gold decorations are said to be prescribed for chariots of officers of higher rank, those of lower rank could use only copper which would indicate that there existed a definite gradation in the use of different metals according to official position. The distinction that Simocatta's text draws between the women of the ruler and those of the nobles could thus well have been based on reality. In addition, according to the *Sui shu*, the regulations of the Wei[38] (on which those of Ch'i

[36] *Pei shih* 8, *Pei Ch'i shu* 8. [37] Cf. also as a convenient reference *T'ung tien* 65.
[38] Dating from 516 A. D., *Wei shu* 108. 4.

were based) allowed but one horse or ox for the chariots of nobles below the rank of *wang*; the Chou rules seem to have permitted the use of teams.

The use of gold for decorating men's chariots does not conflict with the supposed law which prevailed according to Theophylactus in Taugast (item No. 3), prohibiting men the use of gold ornaments, as it would seem that καλλωπίζεσθαι of the text applies only to personal adornment. We can find no mention in Chinese sources of such a law obtaining either in Chou or Ch'i, unless it refer to one of the insane regulations issued by the megalomaniac Chou Hsüan Ti (YÜ-WÊN Pin) who ordered all his officers to remove the golden clasps from their hats, lest his own resplendent imperial majesty suffer from lack of contrast in adornment with the court surrounding him. With less probability we may have here an allusion to the activities of Hsüan Ti's father, Wu Ti (YÜ-WÊN Yung) of Chou, a much more sympathetic character, but, as we have already noted, definitely inclined towards puritanism. He is said to have used no gold or jewelry personally, ordered the destruction of many elaborate palaces and buildings, notably in the conquered territory of Ch'i, and prohibited architectural decorations. There is, however, so far as we have been able to discover, no record of his having promulgated sumptuary laws regulating the personal appearance of his subjects. It is, however, not unthinkable that wearing no gold ornaments himself, he did not allow his officers to indulge in this extravagance.

Items No. 3 and No. 4 require no special comment. Worshipping of statues (ἀγάλματα) refers, of course, particularly to Buddhism which was stronger in Ch'i than in Chou, while undisputed (officially) succession, just laws, and σωφροσύνη of the inhabitants can be said to be natural clichés which nomads would use to describe a thickly settled, highly civilized, and orderly (even in those troubled days) country like China.

The name of the ruler of Taugast given in item No. 2 presents, however, unusual interest. Since the day of KLAPROTH ταισάν translated by the Byzantine writer "son of God" has been supposed to be a corruption (either by the author or a copyist) of Chinese *t'ien-tzŭ* 天子—"Son of Heaven." J. MARQUART, who

was well acquainted with Theophylactus' work and quotes it repeatedly, boldly emended ταισάν into *ταυσαι and even used this emendation as a basis for tampering with the transcription of a foreign title in Armenian.[39] YULE hesitatingly suggested T'ai-tsung 太宗,[40] the temple name of the great sovereign of the T'ang dynasty. As universally recognized, this is out of the question, as the T'ang emperor became known under that title only after his death in 649 A.D., and there is absolutely no evidence that Simocatta wrote (or even lived) beyond that date.

Now ταισάν represents a most faithful transcription of Chinese *t'ai shang* 太上, an imperial title with an interesting history and especially frequent in our period. The title *t'ai shang* was created by Liu Pang, the founder of the Han dynasty, for the purpose of honoring his father.[42] Between 300 and 630 A.D., Chinese histories register the following cases of its application as the title of an abdicated emperor, usually one whose son officially rules in his stead:

1. On February 4, 301, SSŬ-MA Lun 倫 [41a] deposed the imbecile SSŬ-MA Ch'ung 衷 (Hui Ti of Chin 259-290-306). On the next day, having imprisoned the fallen emperor in the citadel of Chin-yung, he conferred upon him the title of *t'ai shang: Chin shu* 4.

2. About January 400 A.D., LÜ Kuang 呂光, ruler of Hou Liang 後梁, abdicated in favor of his son Shao 紹 and adopted himself the title of *t'ai shang*. He died a day or so later: *Shih-liu kuo ch'un-ch'iu* 81, *Chin shu* 10, *Wei shu* 2, *Chin shu* 122.[42]

3. On September 21, 471, TO-PA Hung 弘 (Hsien-tsu Hsien-wên Ti 顯祖獻文 of Wei, 454-466-471-476) having abdicated in favor of his son, accepted the title *t'ai shang*, urged upon him by

[39] *Ungarische Jahrbücher* 9, 100-101.

[40] *Op. cit* (in note 8), L, n. 3, LI, n. 2. In order to justify his equation, Yule suggests that Theophylactus might have inserted the supposed name of T'ai Tsung at a time later than 628, the chronological terminus of his work.

[41] In 201 B.C., *Shih chi* 8, *Han shu* 1 B. Already in 221 Ch'in Shih Huang-ti had used the title to honor posthumously his own father Chuang-hsiang Wang 莊襄王 of Ch'in (249-247 B.C.), *Shih chi* 6.

[41a] Biography in *Chin shu* 59.

[42] Three years previously, nearing the sixtieth year of his life, Lü Kuang had assumed the title of *t'ien wang* 天王.

his officers as a suitable designation for the father of a reigning emperor. Liu Pang's father's holding of the title was pointed out as a precedent. T'o-pa Hung continued to be known as *t'ai shang* until his death on July 20, 476: *Wei shu* 6.

4. On June 8, 565, Kao Chan of Ch'i abdicated in favor of his son.[43] He assumed the title of *t'ai shang* retaining it until his death on January 13, 569: *Ch'i shu* 7-8, *Pei shih* 8.

5. On February 4, 577 Kao Hui of Ch'i, his son, who had abdicated his tottering throne to his son, was given the title of *t'ai shang*. He was captured 24 days later by Chou troops: *Pei shih* 8, *Ch'i shu* 8, *Chou shu* 6.

6. On April 1, 579, Yü-wên Pin of Chou abdicated in favor of his son and assumed the title of *t'ien yüan* 天元 *huang-ti*, specially created for the occasion. It was apparently Pin's megalomania which made him dissatisfied with the traditional appelation. He spent the remainder of his life elaborating regulations and inventing fitting titles for his empresses and now super-exalted entourage and died in June 580.[44] It is quite likely that during this period his subjects and foreign ambassadors, unable to follow the wild vagaries of his title-obsessed mind, called him by the traditional name for "abdicated" emperors: *Chou shu* 7, *Pei shih* 10.

7. On April 2, 586, Sui Wên Ti is urged through the petition of a certain Kao Tê[44a] 高德 to abdicate the throne to his son and assume the title of *t'ai shang*. He refuses to follow the precedent established during the two preceding dynasties and relinquish the responsibilities of his high office: *Sui shu* 1, *Pei shih* 11.[45]

8. On December 17, 617, Li Yüan (the future T'ang Kao-tsu), having captured Ch'ang-an and set up a puppet regime with Yang Yu 侑 as emperor, conferred upon Sui Yang Ti, the reigning sovereign and father of the boy, the title of *T'ai shang*: *Sui shu* 4-5, *Pei shih* 12.

[43] Prompted, it is said, by astrological considerations. [44] See note 95.

[44a] Note that, judging from his surname, that individual was a member of the former royal clan of Ch'i.

[45] Observe, however, that Yang Chien changes his *nien-hao* to 仁壽 *Jên-shou* in 600 when he was *sixty* years old and demotes his heir-apparent. He undoubtedly feared that he would be forcibly made *t'ai shang* because he had completed a full cycle of life. Hence, we believe, the *shou* "(continuous) long life" in his new *nien-hao*.

9. On September 3, 626, Li Yüan himself was forced to abdicate in favor of his son, Li Shih-min.[46] He was proclaimed *t'ai shang*, a title he continued to bear until his death on June 25, 635: *Chiu T'ang shu* 1, *T'ang shu* 1.

It is noteworthy that those of the *t'ai shang* who abdicated voluntarily in favor of young, or even infant, sons reserved for themselves the right to manage important affairs of state, especially matters of foreign policy. Thus, T'o-pa Hung as *t'ai shang* is mentioned as leading in the second and third months of 472 a military expedition against the Juan-juan and the T'ieh-lê; in the winter of 472-473 he again campaigned against the Juan-juan; in the 10th month of 473 he placed himself at the head of an army moving to suppress a rebellion in the south, and in the 10th month of 475 he held a military review, apparently staged for the benefit of Juan-juan envoys (*Wei shu* 7A). Kao Chan appears to have retained almost complete control over state affairs as the majority of edicts issued between 565 and 569, the first part of the nominal reign of his son, were promulgated in his name (as *t'ai shang*). Yü-wên Pin likewise seems to have ruled as *t'ai shang* as arbitrarily as he did before his abdication.

During the period that interests us there were, then, in Northern China three rulers who bore the title of *t'ai shang*: one in Ch'i from 565 to 569, another in the same state for a fortnight in 577, and one in Chou from April 579 to June 580. It is interesting to observe that it is under Kao Chan (particularly in his *t'ai shang* years) that diplomatic relations between Ch'i and the T'u-chüch Turks became intimate. Acutely conscious of the danger to Ch'i of an alliance of the Turks with the Chou, Kao Chan tried desperately to win the Turks over to his side. It appears that in the three last years of his life he succeeded, at least partially, in his purpose, for although the Chou continued on good terms with the Turks, the latter sent embassies to Ch'i in 566,

[46] Note again that Li Yüan, who was born in 566, was then sixty years old. His deposition was a foregone conclusion and it merely remained to decide who would be his successor. The murderous conflict between his sons was apparently provoked by the temptation which the tradition that a ruler should not attempt to continue on the throne beyond the appointed three score years offered them.

567, and 568, and there is no doubt that envoys of the Ch'i *t'ai shang* were active at the ordo of the Turkish Khan during the same years.[46a] During the last two years of Chou Hsüan Ti's (YÜ-WÊN Pin) reign the Turks, while continuing diplomatic relations with the Chou, lent their support to the Ch'i pretender KAO Shao-i 高紹義,[47] cousin of the last *t'ai shang* of Ch'i, in his hopeless struggle against the *t'ai shang* of Chou. The Chinese title of "abdicated" emperors who exercised the real power behind the throne was thus well known at the court of the Turkish Khans. The appearance of that title in preference to *t'ien-tzŭ* (or its persian-turkish translation *baγpur*[48]) in the text of Theophylactus may even give us a clue to the date of the composition of the abstract of information on China prepared by the Turks for the benefit of the Byzantines. The fresh memory of the state of affairs in Ch'i and of the latter's extinction, a *t'ai-shang* (prohibiting wearing of gold ornaments by men) on the throne, and the enormous size of the Taugast ruler's gynaeceum, all tend to indicate that the Turkish brief of information on which Simocatta's text is based, dates from the last years of the Chou dynasty, most probably from the period April 579-June 580.

Professor Pelliot was the first to recognize[49] that Taugast the name under which China appears in our text has its origin in the ethnic designation of the Turkish or Mongol speaking ruling class of the T'o-pa Wei dynasty, the **t'ak-buât* 拓跋 of the Chinese sources. The name is well attested in early Turkish and Central Asiatic documents in the form *Tabγač* or *Tabqač*, which was also adopted by the Moslem sources.

A primary ethnic name has no etymology. If the social group it designates has had a history of any significance, an ethnic designation early becomes a whole system of linguistic associations

[46a] Because of interference by the Ch'i, the marriage of the Chou emperor with a T'u-chüeh princess was delayed from 565 to 568 A. D.: *Chou shu* 9.

[47] *Pei Ch'i shu* 12. He was the third son of KAO Yang. In 577 he refused to lay down arms before the Chou and fled to the Turks. The latter eventually sold him to the Chinese.

[48] On which see particularly G. FERRAND, L'élément persan dans les textes nautiques arabes, *JA* 1924, 243.

[49] *TP* 1912, 792.

of great complexity, pregnant with the memories and hopes of the bearers of the name, and conscious or unconscious reactions of their friends or foes, a magnetic field where forces of self- or mutual induction are constantly at work. Add to it sophisticated scholastic etymologizations which, as soon as they penetrate into the consciousness of the semi-educated, show great tenacity of life (one is almost tempted to say virulence), and we can well imagine how hopeless is any attempt at a simple, unilateral etymological explanation of a given ethnic name. No historically registered interpretation, on the other hand, is valueless, because in the majority of cases such an interpretation, however fanciful or scholastic, originated in the consciousness of a social group or class which, from within or from without, participated in the life of the ethnos bearing the name in question. In case of an ethnic name of considerable antiquity, we shall probably never be able to tell what particular significance such a name originally had, as it is quite probable that the majority of them originated in what one may describe as a henopoetical stage of linguistic development, and the means of research at our disposal can hardly enable us to penetrate beyond the veil of so-called "popular etymology." But for the historian and student of social institutions, after all, to know what people thought a name meant is much more important than to discover what its real significance had been once upon a time.

In *HJAS* 1, 180-185 we reviewed briefly some of the meanings ascribed to *Tabγač ~ Taugast ~ *T'ak-buât. A few additional observations will further reveal the complexity of the problem. To sum up all the material from Chinese sources which the present writer has been able to gather, the name of the T'o-pa was given the following interpretations:

1. "Lords of the *Soil*" 土 which, from the context of *Wei shu* 1 where the interpretation is found, could mean: (a) the soil, as one of the Chinese cosmological elements, (b) the soil of the northland. Suggested Turkish forms: **tabaq-čï*—"those of the soil,"[50] **taγ-bašï*—"lords of northland" (lit. mountains).

[50] It is not impossible that Wei Shou had also in mind mo. **tabuγat* ~ **tabuγač* < √tabu—"five," the "soil" 土 being the fifth of the Chinese five elements.

2. "Slave." This meaning suggested by later Chinese commentators is apparently based on hints dropped by contemporary Chinese sources that the T'o-pa were in some way ashamed of their name as indicative of a low or servile origin. The Turkish original would be in that case *tapïγčï*—"slave." [51]

3. The Chinese surname Ch'ang-sun 長孫 which was adopted by one of the branches of the T'o-pa clan and which might be translated as "honoring (lit. treating as elder) a grandson," would tend to indicate that some of the T'o-pa preferred to semantize their name as a combination of some form of *tap*—"to honor" + *ačï* < **hačï* [52]—"grandson."

4. "Braided heads" 索頭 is the usual designation of the T'o-pa in the histories of the southern Chinese dynasties. Possibly based on *tuγ*—"tail" (which a braid of hair left on top of the skull resembles) + *baš*—"head," as indicated by another transcription of the T'o-pa name, T'u-fa 禿髮 **t'uk-pi̯ʷɒt* (= "bald" + "hair"). [53]

5. T'u-fa was also supposed to mean "covered" or "born in a blanket." The possible origin of this explanation is that *T'ak-buât was interpreted as a Mongol compound of *toγ*—"to be born" + *qubča*—"to cover." [54]

6. The fact that the sinicized T'o-pa adopted as their Chinese surname the word 元 Yüan—"original," while the T'u-fa had their name changed to 源 Yüan—"source" [55] (of a river), is another indication that the second syllable of the name T'o-pa was interpreted as containing the Turkish word *baš*—"head," but also "origin," "source of a river." [56]

[51] More specifically, "female slave." *Sung shu* 95 and *Nan Ch'i shu* 57 maintain that the T'o-pa were descendants of the Han general Li Ling 李陵 who surrendered to the Hsiung-nu in 99 B. C. and married, according to *Nan Ch'i shu*, a Hsiung-nu woman named T'o-pa 托跋.

[52] On which cf. Pelliot, Mots à H initiale dans le mongol, *JA* 1925, I, 202-203.

[53] Cf. Kurakichi Shiratori, The Queue among the peoples of North Asia, *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko*, 4. (1929), 1-70.

[54] The first element could also be *daχu*—"fur-coat" or *toχom*—"saddle-cloth."

[55] Cf. *HJAS* 1, 168.

[56] Several examples of the last in the Orkhon inscriptions. Possibly underlying the Chinese transcription *pa-ssŭ* 跋斯 **b'uât-si* in 跋斯處折施山 of *Chou shu* 50. Cf. Грумм-Гржимайло, Западная Монголія и Урянхайскій край, vol. II, 209.

7. A purely Chinese and fanciful etymology is suggested by *Wei shu* 1, where the mythical ancestor of the T'o-pa who lived under the legendary emperor Yao won fame by driving out, 逐 **d'ịuk*, the she-demon of drought, 魃 *b'uât*.

8. The metallurgical customs of the early T'o-pa and the legends which tell of their boring their way to civilization through mountains lead us to believe that their name was often interpreted as mo. **toᵝuγačï*—" metal-worker " or **dabaγačï*—" they who pass through mountains." [57]

The suggested " turco-mongol " etymologies would indicate that the metathesis of the guttural and the labial in T'ak-b'uât (*vs.* tk. *Tabγač* which undoubtedly registers more or less faithfully the original " Altaic " name) is not accidental and that on the Chinese frontier **Tabγač* was often sounded **Taγbač* or even **Toγbač*.

Applied by the Turks to the whole of northern China, the name of the T'o-pa was apparently used by them in the sixth century to refer also to the Chinese court and its seat. The proximity of Taugast to Khubdan indicated in No. 12, Khubdan unquestionably referring to the Ch'ang-an district,[58] leaves no doubt as to the fact that it is the capital of Chou that is described in the text of Theophylactus, no mention being made of Yeh, that of Ch'i.

The origin of the name Khubdan or Khumdan as referring to the great western metropolis of China has never been satisfactorily explained. We suggest that the name is a transcription of Chinese Hsien-yang 咸陽, arch. **g'ɒm-dang*,[58a] the name of the old capital of Ch'in and in our period still an important city (the seat of a *chün*) northwest of Ch'ang-an and situated at the confluence of the Wei and the Fêng (cf. in this connection No. 13). The respective situation of Ch'ang-an and Hsien-yang at this particular period is a complex question demanding detailed topographical study. There is no doubt, however, that of the two, Ch'ang-an was at the time farther from the banks of the Wei, and the

[57] Cf. *HJAS* 1, 179-183, 185.

[58] Khubdan is the Syriac Kūmdān of the Nestorian Monument and the Khumdān خملان of the Arabic sources.

[58a] Note that, as in *t'ai shang* > taisan, Chinese final *-ng* is rendered by foreign *-n*.

mention by our text of two rivers flowing through the city would apply to Hsien-yang better than to Ch'ang-an.[59] The only difficulty in the way of accepting the derivation of Khumdan from Hsien-yang is that it would presuppose the borrowing of the name sometime in the Han period, while Khumdan is not attested in foreign sources before Simocatta.

The reputed founding of the two cities by Alexander the Great, besides being the usual application of the Alexandrian Saga to a description of a distant foreign land,[60] has two rational explanations. The antiquity of the Hsien-yang district and the approximate date of its founding may well have been known to the informants of the Byzantines. Hsien-yang (and Ch'ang-an, the two together treated as one administrative district) being founded in 349 B. C., the brief Turkish " Baedeker " would have informed the Greeks that the city was some 930 years old in 580 A. D. A quick computation would carry a Greek scholar back to the time of Alexander the Great (with 20 years' approximation, it would give him 329 B. C., the date of the invasion of Bactria). The existence of foreign colonies in Shensi and Kansu[61] would further lend support to the Greeks' belief that the Macedonian's conquests extended as far as China. It is not unthinkable, at the same time, that the Turks themselves, acquainted with at least fragments of the saga of the great conqueror, would have confirmed the above natural supposition of the Greeks. This interesting question deserves, however, special consideration.

Of the remaining items on our list, Nos. 14 and 15 call for no comment, except that in the mention of elephants we have the first positive indication that the information of the Turks extended to districts south of the Yellow river, the wording of the text precluding the possibility that the elephants mentioned were

[59] There are many references in Chinese sources to willows lining the rivers and canals near Ch'ang-an and Hsien-yang, but we have found so far no mention of cypresses. *At spes non fracta.*

[60] Some three centuries later the Arabic geographer Qudāma repeats Simocatta's tale, mentioning two Chinese cities founded by Alexander, of which one is Khumdan. On the second, see PELLIOT, *JA* 1927, 138-141.

[61] Cf. *HJAS* 1, 283-291. As we pointed out, it is not impossible that one of those colonies was even named Alexandria.

only those received at the capital as tribute or gifts from the South.[62]

There remains only No. 11 which describes the mourning of the sovereign by his women. We would suggest that we have here an echo of the custom prevailing at the period according to which empresses, imperial concubines and other palace women, when ousted from the palace by the death of the emperor (or foreign invasion, as in the case of the Ch'i court, and other vicissitudes of life), often sought refuge[63] in Buddhist monasteries where, on taking vows, they would indeed have their heads shaven, would adapt black clothing, and remain usually in these sanctuaries the rest of their lives.

To sum up, despite several doubtful points that require further clarification, we have in the famous paragraph of Theophylactus Simocatta an amazingly accurate description of northern China at the close of the sixth century. So far as this particular peace of "reporting" is concerned, Theophylactus stands, in our opinion, completely vindicated of all charges of malicious or rhetorical distortion of his material and worthy, as a writer *vetus atque probus*, of our gratitude and attention, and of further unprejudiced and diligent study.

II. On the Use of the Animal Cycle Among "Turco–Mongols"

In his note on "Le plus ancien example du cycle des douze animaux chez les Turcs" (*TP* 26, 204-212) Professor Pelliot established that the earliest instance of the use of the animal cycle among the Turks is to be found in a letter of the T'u-chüeh Khan Sha-po-lüeh 沙鉢畧[64] to the Sui emperor Wên Ti, where the year 584 A. D. (K'ai-huang 4, *chia-ch'ên*, the 41st of the cycle of sixty)

[62] Elephants were brought into China both through the southern ports and through Eastern Turkestan.

[63] Or were forced to become nuns. For empresses we have two such cases in Ch'i (*Ch'i shu* 9), four cases in Chou (*Chou shu* 9). Three of them were empresses of Hsüan Ti (Yü-wên Pin).

[64] Title of Shê-t'u 攝圖 who reigned from 582 to 587 (died on May 18, according to *Sui shu* 1).

is designated in the preamble to the khan's communication by the character *ch'ên* 辰 of the duodenary series which corresponds to the dragon in the animal cycle.[65]

We possess, however, an even earlier example of the use of the animal cycle[66] in a "turco-mongol" milieu with more specific designation of the year by animal terms (and not by the corresponding Chinese cyclical characters). It occurs in a letter written in the year 564 A.D. by Lady Yü-wên 宇文,[67] *née* Yen 閻, to her son Yü-wên Hu 護, regent of the Northern Chou.[68]

This letter, one of the most interesting human documents of the period, was composed at the instigation of Kao Chan 高湛, the ruler of the Northern Ch'i, under the following circumstances. About 563, Yü-wên Hu, then at the height of his power, decided to put into operation against the rival kingdom of Ch'i a strategic plan of attack which had been originally conceived by Yü-wên T'ai 泰, presumably just before the latter's death. It envisaged a simultaneous invasion of Ch'i territory by Chou troops from the south and west, and by the T'u-chüeh from the north. In the first two raids the nomads ravaged the frontier districts so seriously[69] that Kao Chan, much perturbed, was forced to open peace

[65] The official Chinese calendar, one must remember, was not adopted by the Tu'-chüeh until 586, *Sui shu* 1.

[66] Chavannes' study "Le cycle turc des douze animaux," *TP* 1906, 51-122, contains the completest information on the subject.

[67] The Yü-wên appear to have been a Mongol-speaking clan. Their name, interpreted by *Chou shu* 1 as meaning "lord of heaven (or universe)," is probably to be restored as **ümün* < **i̯u-mi̯uən*. *T'ang shu* 71 B ascribes to Yü-wên the meaning of "grass" and equates it with 俟汾 **i-b'i̯uən* (on the pronunciation of the first character, cf. Pelliot, TP 26, 225-229). The Mongol word for "grass" being *ebü* + *sün* (-sün is undoubtedly a suffix), it is clear that the Chinese vacilliated between two forms **ümün* and **ebün* for the original of Yü-wên. This fluctuation of *ü* ~ *e* is indicated in many words of the Mongol written language. Among them we have *ümüne* ~ *emüne*—"front," "south." It is, therefore, quite possible that it is that word that underlies the Chinese transcription Yü-wên, the *Chou shu* explanation being based on the Chinese semantic connotations of "south": "south" > "facing south" > "sovereign" 南面. Cf. also *T'ung Chih* 30, 16a where the surname Nan 南 (= 'south') is said to have been changed under the Northern dynasties into Yü-wên.

[68] *Chou shu* 11, *Pei shih* 57. Murdered on April 12, 572 (*Chou shu* 5); on April 16, according to *Chou shu* 11.

[69] The Turks were under the command of the Great Khan Mu-han 木杆 himself, the Chinese under Ta-hsi Wu 達奚武 (504-570) and Yang Chung 楊忠 (507-568,

negotiations with the Chou and, in token of his good faith, proposed to liberate the female members of the Yü-wên family who had been kept as hostages in Ch'i for the past three decades. First setting free one of the four paternal aunts of Yü-wên Hu,[70] Kao Chan detained for a while the last and most important hostage, Hu's mother, and in order to influence more speedily the Chou regent's decision, he had a message written in the old lady's name where she implored her son to effect her release and in touching terms reminded him of the tragic experiences of their family since the year 524 A.D.[71]

In the spring of that year there had flared up on the northern marches of the T'o-pa Wei empire a rebellion which unchained all the dormant subversive forces of the realm and started the process of political disintegration that culminated, a decade later, in the split of the Wei into two rival dynasties and caused eventually the ruin and extinction of the house. Under the leadership of P'o-liu-han Pa-ling 破六韓拔陵,[72] the rebels, consisting chiefly of "barbarian" garrisons of the northern frontier posts overran the important district of Wu-ch'uan 武川.[73] Among the well-to-do families of the vicinity who strove to organize some resistance to the plundering bands was that of a certain Yü-wên Hung 肱.[74] In a skirmish with a detachment of one of Pa-ling's

the biographies of both in *Chou shu* 19). The raids took place in the 9th and 12th months of 563 (*Chou shu* 5) or 12th month of 563-1st month of 564 (*Ch'i shu* 7). The timing and coordination of the military operations were not very successful, a large contingent was defeated by the Ch'i, but the Turks, who turned up in full force, mercilessly devastated the Fên valley. A harsh winter added to the sufferings of the population.

[70] One of them, known as Princess Chien-an 建安長公主, had married Ho-lan Ch'u-chên 賀蘭初眞 and was the mother of Ho-lan Hsiang. Another, the Princess Ch'ang-lo 昌樂, married Wei-ch'i I-t'ou 尉遲俟兜 and was the mother of Ch'iung 迥 and Kang 綱 (*Chou shu* 20, 21). The one who was released in the 6th month of 564 (*Ch'i shu* 7) had married a Yang 楊.

[71] Finally released, she arrived at Ch'ang-an in November 564 where she died in 567 at the age of 80, having been spared the sorrow of witnessing five years later the ruin of her last son and the extinction of her line.

[72] On his surname, cf. *HJAS* 1, 167, n. 1.

[73] Near modern Kuei-hua ch'êng, Sui-yüan.

[74] Pht. Tê 德 Huang-ti. Two of the leading families of the region were the Ho-pa 賀拔 and the Tu-ku. The Yü-wên were allied with the first through marriage.

subalterns Wei K'o-ku 衛可孤,[75] Hung lost his eldest son Hao 顥,[76] Lady Yen's husband and Hu's father. Two years later, Hung, who had been forced to join fortunes with another rebel leader Hsien-yü Hsiu-li 鮮于修禮, himself perished together with two other sons.[77] Only T'ai, the youngest son, and two grandsons, Tao 導 and Hu, survived the debacle. T'ai, who had succeeded in escaping from the meshes into which the family had fallen and who was shrewdly making his career in the complicated political situation of the day, managed to extricate eventually his two nephews Hu and Tao, together with another nephew Ho-lan Hsiang 賀蘭祥.[78] About 531, they joined him in Shensi and followed him in his climb to power. Lady Yü-wên had not seen her son since the day when he, "attired in a purple silk robe with a belt decorated with silver," rode away to join his uncle.

"Formerly," begins her letter, "when (our family was) residing at Wu-ch'uan I gave birth to you (and your two) brothers, the eldest being born (in the year) pertaining to the rat, the second, (in the year) pertaining to the hare, and you, (in the year) pertaining to the serpent. . . ." [79]

Now *Chou shu* 10 (biography of Yü-wên Tao, the second son of Hao) states that Tao died in the twelfth month of the first year of Kung Ti of Wei, January 555 A.D., at the age of forty-four.[80] This would mean that he was born in 510-511 A.D. 511

[75] *Pei shih* 9 writes 可壞 *$g'a$-$\gamma^{\omega}âi$, possibly < mo. *γaqai*—"pig." Cf. *Ch'i shu* 50 where the last character of the name Kao A-na-hung 高阿那肱 is said to have been pronounced as if written 壞.

[76] Pht. Shao-hui 邵惠 Kung: *Chou shu* 10, *Pei shih* 57.

[77] Hsien-yü Hsiu-li's revolt took place in the first month of 526 and he was killed in the ninth month. From lady Yü-wên's letter it would appear that Yü-wên Hung perished in one of the early skirmishes with government troops. Lien 連, the second son, was killed with his father. The third, Lo-shêng 洛生, was executed by Êrh-chu Jung, probably about 528.

[78] According to *Chou shu* 5 and *Pei shih* 10, Hsiang died on March 19, 562. He was 48 at the time of his death (*Chou shu* 20), and was thus born in 515. Indeed, his biography states that he was orphaned at the age of eleven, while in Lady Yü-wên's letter he is said to be younger than Hu.

[79] The passage is noticed in Chavannes' study, *op. cit.* (in note 66), 71, but no observations are made on its significance.

[80] Computing, apparently, *à la chinoise*. We do not know, however, whether the nomads followed the Chinese practice of reckoning the period of gestation as a full

was a *hsin-mao* year (the 28th of the sexagenary cycle) and a hare year in the cycle of twelve animals, which would tally perfectly with the statement in Lady Yü-wên's letter.

As to Shih-fei 什肥, Hao's eldest son,[81] the same source informs us that he was fifteen years of age at the time of his father's death which, as we know, occurred in 524. This would give us 509-510 for the date of his birth. The nearest rat year is 508 (the 25th of the cycle, *wu-tzŭ*). The discrepancy is not great and Shih-fei's age as given in *Chou shu* 10 must be considered as approximate.

The same slight difference is also found in the biography of Yü-wên Hu. As stated in his mother's letter, he was born in a year of the serpent, which would fall in 513 A.D. (*kuei-ssŭ*, the 30th year of the cycle of sixty). His biography says, however, that he was eleven years old at the time of his father's death and seventeen when Yü-wên T'ai summoned him to P'ing-liang 平涼 in 531. In her letter his mother states, furthermore, that he was twelve about the time of Hsien-yü Hsiu-li's defeat, that is in 526. Considering the figures cited as designating Hu's real chronological age, we get for the date of his birth 513, 514, 514 respectively, a very close approximation.

The animal cycle was, then, in use among people of nomadic origin living on the northern frontier of China about 500 A.D. It would seem, moreover, that it was not unusual at that period to adopt the animal cycle designation of the year as the name of a child born within that twelvemonth. One of the clearest indications of that custom is supplied to us by the *Yo-fu shih chi* 樂府詩集 ch. 86 (ed. *Ssŭ-pu ts'ung-k'an*, p. 7 ab). This work quotes a passage from a *Yo-fu kuang t'i* 樂府廣題 which refers to an order issued in 546 by Yü-wên T'ai on the occasion of Kao Huan's attack on Yü-pi.[82] Yü-wên speaks there of his archenemy as the rat or son of the rat 鼠子.[83] As we know

year of a person's life. It is not impossible that for less important individuals of nomadic extraction age was established in the usual way, counting from the year of birth.

[81] Killed by Kao Huan about 534. A filial son, he remained at Chin-yang with his mother: *Chou shu* 10.

[82] For this campaign, see *suprā*.

[83] It is not certain whether 子 is to be taken as meaning "son" or whether it was already used as a particle at this period.

from his biography, the founder of the Ch'i house died on February 13, 547 A. D. at the age of fifty-two. He was thus born in 496 A. D. which was a rat year (13th of the cycle, *ping tzŭ*).

We find another illustration of the custom in the history of the same house. In the biography of KAO Yang 高洋 (pht. Hsien-tsu Wên-hsüan Ti 顯祖文宣帝, 529-550-559 A. D.), second son of KAO Huan, *Pei shih* 7, we are told that among the several prophecies which forecast the length of his reign there was a ditty which ran: 馬子入石室三千六百日 "the son of the horse [will] enter the stone chamber [for] 3600 days." The text goes on to explain that the "stone chamber" refers to the Yeh palaces built in the fourth century by SHIH Hu 石虎[84] (a pun on the character *shih*: (1) stone, (2) the proper name SHIH), and that "3600 days" gives the length of KAO Yang's reign.[85] The latter is called 馬子 "son of the horse" because he was born in a *wu* (cyclical character corresponding to the *horse* in the animal cycle) year.

A grave difficulty presents itself here. KAO Yang was born in 529 A. D. which was a year of the cock, the nearest horse year being 526. While the prophecy, probably postliminary, cannot be taken too seriously, it would be unsafe to dismiss offhand the specific explanation of the text that "son of the horse" refers to the emperor's birth in a *wu* (horse) year. KAO Yang died on November 25, 559 at the age of 31.[86] Making all possible allowances, he could not have been born before 528-529. At the beginning of his biography in *Pei-shih* 7 it is furthermore, said that he was born at Chin-yang 晉陽 of which his father became

[84] By some, at least, "stone chamber" must have been understood as meaning the grave.

[85] He actually reigned less: from June 5, 550 to September 25, 559, about 3300 days. *Pei shih* records also that when KAO Yang inquired of a Taoist from T'ai-shan how many years were granted to him, the fortune-teller replied: "Thirty." Later, Yang expressed to the Empress Li his fear that he would not live beyond the 10th day of the 10th month of his 10th year. He died, indeed, on that very day. The characters composing his *nien hao* T'ien-pao 天保 were said to be dissected into 一大人只十 "one great man only ten" which was supposed to be another indication of the length of his reign.

[86] Counting in the Chinese fashion. *Ch'i shu* 49, in an account of another prophecy gives him 32 (Chinese) years of age at the time of his death.

governor not before 528. On the other hand, as the family is said to have been in straitened circumstances 家徒壁立 at the time, it could hardly refer to the period when KAO Huan's star was well in the ascendency.[87] The possibility that KAO Yang was born in 526 is supported by the story contained in both *Ch'i shu* 4 and *Pei shih* 7 that just before his birth the room where his mother resided was lighted at night by a red glare.[88] Now *Pei shih* 6 and *Ch'i shu* 1 relate that when KAO *Huan* first came to join ÊRH-CHU Jung 爾朱榮 and followed him to Ping chou (of which Chin-yang was the administrative seat) he rented there a small room or hut 團焦 [89] from a certain P'ANG Ts'ang-yen 龐蒼雁. The several supernatural manifestations observed near the hut by the landlord's family after KAO Huan took up residence in it included a red glare extending up to the sky. The hut was preserved as a shrine exactly in the state it was when the KAOS occupied it and was turned into a palace under KAO Yang. It is quite possible that the latter was thus honoring the place of his birth. It is not improbable, then, that KAO Yang's age at the time of his death is incorrectly given by the historians and that he died in his 34th, and not 31st year.[90] A solution of our difficulty, is, we believe, possible without convicting of falsehood either chroniclers or prophets. In explaining the term "son of the horse" the text of the *Pei shih* says: 帝以午年生故曰馬子 "the emperor being born in a *wu* year is therefore spoken of as 'son of the horse.'" In the context of the chapter 帝 "the emperor" obviously means KAO Yang. But was it necessarily so in the original document used by the historian? The second of KAO Yang's successors was his brother KAO Chan

[87] In the story of the flight of KAO Huan's family from TU Lo-chou 杜洛周 which must have taken place in 525-526, *Ch'i shu* 1 mentions among the children only KAO Chêng 澄 and a daughter.

[88] According to *Pei shih* 7, he owed to this supernatural manifestation, his Hsien-pi name which was Hou-ni-yü 侯尼于, meaning child of good omen 有相子. One might read the transcription 侯尼干 **i-ni-γân* and equate it with a hypothetical turco-mongol **hïlγan*—"omen." Cf. PELLIOT, *JA* 1925, 243-244.

[89] Sometimes written with 標 *piäu* for 焦 *ts'iäu* indicating, in our opinion, a *BTS-intial in both phonetic groups.

[90] There is no evidence, however, that the text is corrupt in the passage where his age is given.

who came to the throne some two years after Yang's death.[91] Now KAO Chan, who died on January 13, 569 A. D. at the age of 32 years (*à la chinoise*), was born in 538 which was a horse year (55th of the cycle, *wu-wu*). It could well be possible that it is KAO Chan who is to be understood as "the Emperor" of the text (especially if we take the cynical view that the "prophecy" could not have been composed until after Yang's death). The ditty could thus be interpreted as reading: "Within 3600 days (after the accession of KAO Yang, another ruler who is) a son of the horse will enter the stone chamber."[92]

We may have a further chronogrammatic reference in another ditty dating according to *Pei shih* 5, from the period of the Wei emperors Hsüan-wu 宣武 and Hsiao-ming 孝明, that is 500-528 A. D., or taking the date ending the reign of the first and beginning that of the second, 515 A. D. It was supposed to presage YÜ-WÊN T'ai's role in the downfall of Wei and ran as follows: "As a fox, not a fox; as a badger, not a badger, the sallow-faced (?) son of a dog [will] gnaw asunder the cord" 狐非狐貉非貉焦梨狗子齧斷索. Wise interpreters, says the *Pei shih*, saw immediately in the cord a reference to the T'o-pa (*i. e.* the 索頭 "corded [or braided] heads") and in the fox, badger, and son of the dog an allusion to YÜ-WÊN T'ai's cognomen which was Hei-la 黑獺—"black otter."[93]

In order to ascertain whether the above is just a vague allusion to black otter or whether 狗子 "dog" or "son of the dog" is chronogrammatic we must establish YÜ-WÊN T'ai's date of birth. This presents a problem. His biography in *Chou shu* 2 says that he died on the day *i-hai* in the tenth month of the third year of Wei Kung Ti which would correspond to November 21, 556 A. D. He was 52 years old and was buried on the day *chia shên*, that is but nine days later. This is improbable in the light of both Chinese and nomadic customs and the practice of the day. About two months were usually required to elapse between the time of

[91] On December 3, 561: *Chou shu* 7.

[92] The number of days in that case would be, of course, approximate.

[93] It is under that name that he is usually referred to in the *Ch'i shu*. The character *t'ai* 泰 was taboo under the Ch'i as being the personal name of one of KAO Huan's ancestors.

death (or the official announcement thereof) and the day of burial, unless the will of the deceased directed otherwise. Thus KAO Huan's death was announced on July 19, 547 [94] and the burial took place on September 19, 547; Hsüan Ti of Chou died on June 8, 580 and was buried on August 8, 580.[95] Now *Pei shih* 9 reads 50 instead of 52 for YÜ-WÊN T'ai's age and has . . . 時年五十十二月甲申葬 . . . "[he was] at the time [of his death] 50 years of age. On *chia shên* of the 12th month [he] was buried. . . ." The *chia shên* day of the 12th month of that year would correspond to January 21, 557, exactly two months after the day of YÜ-WÊN T'ai's death. It is obvious that the *Chou shu* telescoped 五十 into 十二月 "12th month" and, omitting 月, produced 五十二 "fifty-two." The *Pei shih* is thus correct and YÜ-WÊN T'ai was fifty years old at the time of his death in 556. He was then born in 506-507. As 506 was a dog year (the 23rd of the cycle, *i hsü*) it is quite likely that T'ai was indeed nicknamed "son of the dog." In the early part of his biography, however, his age at the time of HSIEN-YÜ Hsiu-li's death which occurred in 526 is given as eighteen. This must be considered in the light of the foregoing as approximate or may be the result of a clumsy re-arrangement of the sources used by the historian.[96] The paragraph in question speaks of YÜ-WÊN T'ai following his father in the latter's campaigns of 524-526, and T'ai's age as given could well refer to the first date 524, when T'ai would have indeed been 18 years old.

We have thus three cases of men born between 496 and 538 A. D.

[94] Cf. note 20.

[95] According to *Pei shih* 10, 11 and *Chou shu* 7, 8 he fell ill on June 8. YANG Chien, who was about to be exiled to Yang chou, "was summoned" to the palace to attend the emperor in his illness and on June 22 the latter died. *Sui shu* 1 gives June 8 as the day of the emperor's death and June 20 as the date of the proclamation of the news. It is quite likely, therefore, that Hsüan Ti was murdered on the very day YANG Chien arrived at the palace and his death was kept secret for a fortnight by Chien and his fellow-conspirators in order to gain time for arranging their affairs. Decrees issued within these 12-14 days were undoubtedly forged as all the sources indicate.

[96] The *Chou shu* text has 少隨德皇帝. . . . The character 少 ("in his youth") appears already some 20 characters above and its repetition is incomprehensible unless the passage in question came from a source other than that of the preceding paragraph. *Pei shih* 9 omits the second 少.

who were known under chronogrammatic nicknames containing animal cycle terms. The custom is, however, much older. In the biography of SHIH Hu 石虎, *Wei shu* 95, it is said that the great Hunnish warrior was seventeen years old in Yung-chia 永嘉 5, *i.e.* 311 A.D., this being the only clue that we have as to Hu's date of birth. He was then born in 296 A.D. which was a tiger year (51st of the cycle, *chia yin*). It appears, then, that SHIH Hu (Hu—"tiger") owed his personal name to his birth in a cyclical year consecrated to the animal that symbolized military prowess. So far as we have been able to establish this is the earliest example of the use of the animal cycle in a nomadic milieu and one of the earliest instances of the chronogrammatic use of an animal term.

There exists a faint possibility that we have a similar use of the animal cycle in the name of SHIH Hu's relative,[97] SHIH Lê 石勒. His personal name Lê, judging from the testimony of *Wei shu* 95, appears to be an abbreviation of Pei-lê 勃勒 **b'ωâi-lək*. As SHIH Lê's Chinese cognomen was Shih-lung 世龍 which contains the word *lung*—"dragon," it is not improbable that in **b'ωâi-lək* we have the transcription of a "turco-mongol" word meaning "dragon." One is tempted to compare it with the puzzling **blqsun* بلقسون (with *-sun* being obviously the well-known Mongolian suffix) of Qazwīnī, and equated with "crocodile" in the Qaitaq list.[98] Is the name chronogrammatic? SHIH Lê died on August 17, 333 A.D. at the age of sixty, according to *Shih-liu kuo ch'un-ch'iu* 13. He was born then in 273 or 274 A.D. The first year was a year of the serpent. According to the same source, SHIH Lê's death was portended in 333 A.D. by the fall of a large meteor which left a trail resembling a serpent, as well as by the death of a large snake following a two day long fight with a rat.

[97] SHIH Hu was adopted by SHIH Lê's father. He is also spoken of as *Shih* Lê's nephew.

[98] See PELLIOT, Le prétendu vocabulaire mongol des Ḳaitaḳ, *JA* 1927, 1, 289. The first part of the word may represent tk. *balïq*—'fish,' which in IBN MUHANNĀ's list of the animal cycle terms takes the place of the dragon (cf. PELLIOT, *TP* 27, 17-18). *Balïq* appears under the Chinese transcription 磨勒 *muâ-lək* as the name of a city in T'u-chüeh territory (*TPHYC* 38), the place owing its name to the excellent fish that was found in the nearby river.

In the same source is recorded, however, the appearance in a well of the capital of a black dragon which rejoiced SHIH Lê greatly. Now 272 A. D. was a year of the black dragon and it is possible that SHIH Lê, being born or conceived in that year, considered himself under that cyclical animal's special protection.[99]

Whether the chronogrammatic application of the animal cycle is of Chinese origin, or originated with the nomads is difficult to decide. For the period under consideration, we know only one case of such use of animal terms in the purely Chinese onomasticon. The biography of Ts'AO Hu 曹虎, *Nan Ch'i shu* 30, indicates that that southern Chinese officer was executed in 499 A. D. at the age of "past sixty" 年六十餘. He could thus have been born in 438 A. D. which was a tiger year and may have been given his personal name Hu—"tiger" for that reason.

The same history of the Southern Ch'i gives in ch. 19 several cases of the use of animal chronograms in a prophetical ditty dating from the time of Tung-hun hou 東昏侯 (HSIAO Pao-chüan 蕭寶卷),[100] the last emperor of Nan Ch'i. The emperor is referred to as "wild pig" 野猪; he was, indeed, born in 483 A. D., a pig year. Liang Wu Ti (464-502-549) who overthrew him is spoken of as "dragon," and 464 A. D. was a dragon year. HSIAO Ying-ch'ou 蕭顥胄 462-501)[101] is alluded to as "tiger," 462 being a tiger year. The same ditty contains an unidentifiable reference to a 馬子 "(son of the) horse." The study of the chronogrammatic use of the animal cycle in China proper constitutes, however, a larger problem beyond the scope of the present investigation.

[99] It must be remembered that SHIH Lê, having reached the age of sixty, must have been in fear for his life as the custom of putting to death (or at least setting aside) rulers who had reached that age must have been a living tradition during the period. See notes 42, 45, 46.

[100] *Nan Ch'i shu* 7, *Nan Ch'i shu* 5. Also called Fei Ti 廢帝—"the deposed emperor." Murdered on December 31, 501 A. D., at the age of 19 (Chinese).

[101] *Nan Ch'i shu* 38.