

當是之時，東胡疆而月氏盛。

“At this time the Eastern Barbarians were very powerful and the Yuezhi were likewise flourishing.”

The three attacks of the Xiongnu on the Yuezhi

009 – Years prior to 209 BC: The stratagem of the Xiongnu leader Touman

Content: The Xiongnu are a mighty nomad state in Mongolia. Its ruler Touman gave Modu, his son, as hostage to the Yuezhi. The locality is not defined. The plot is regulated by the age-old motif of “second wife with new child”.

SJ 110.6a (2888), 《史記·列傳·匈奴列傳·6》 [≈ HS 94A.5a-5b (3749), Thierry 2005: 503, texte 19]; Watson 1993,II: 134, Thierry 2005: 498, texte 16, Giele 2011: 256f.:

單于有太子名冒頓。

“The Shan-yü had an Heir named Mao-tun 冒頓.”

後有所愛闕氏，生少子，
而單于欲廢冒頓而立少子，
乃使冒頓質於月氏。

“Later, there was a beloved *Yen-chih* 闕氏 [sobriquet for a “lovely woman” ed.], who gave birth to a younger son, and the *Shan-yü* wanted to depose Mao-tun and install the younger son, so he sent Mao-tun as a hostage to the *Yüeh-chih* 月氏.”

Note ed.: On the pronunciation of 冒頓 as /*modu*/ cf. Thierry 2005: 437: “Modu et non pas Maodun or Modun”; also on the pronunciation /*chanyu*/ against the common /*shanyu*/ or /*shanyü*/.

010 – Years as before: First attack on the Yuezhi by the Xiongnu under Touman

Context: A mock-attack by the Xiongnu leader aims at having his son killed by the hostage-takers. The plot explains how the enmity between Xiongnu and Yuezhi arose.

SJ 110.6a (2888), 《史記·列傳·匈奴列傳·6》 [≈ HS 94A.5a-5b (3749), Thierry 2005: 503, texte 19]; Watson 1993,II: 134, Thierry 2005: 498, texte 16, Giele 2011: 257:

冒頓既質於月氏，而頭曼急擊月氏。

“After Mao-tun had become hostage of the *Yüeh-chih*, T’ou-man fiercely attacked the *Yüeh-chih*.”

月氏欲殺冒頓，冒頓盜其善馬，騎之亡歸。

“The Yüeh-chih wanted to kill Mao-tun; Mao-tun stole [one of] their fine horses, mounted it and fled home.”

頭曼以為壯，令將萬騎。

“T’ou-man regarded him as stalwart and ordered him to lead then thousand horsemen.”

011 – Year 209 BC and shortly afterwards: Modu succeeds Touman and attacks regions held by Han

Content: After taking power through patricide, Modu starts to reconquer all those territories which were taken from the Xiongnu under the Qin.

SJ 110.6b; 7a (2888; 2889), 《史記·列傳·匈奴列傳·6》[≈ HS 94A.3b-4a (3749; 3750)]; Watson 1993,II: 134, 135, Thierry 2005: 498, texte 16, Giele 2011: 258f., 260:

從其父單于頭曼獵，以鳴鏑射頭曼，其左右亦皆隨鳴鏑而射殺單于頭曼，遂盡誅其後母與弟及大臣不聽從者。冒頓自立為單于。

“He followed his father, the *Shan-yü* T’ou-man, on a hunt and when he [Modu ed.] shot at T’ou-man with a howling arrow, all his attendants, following the howling arrow, also shot and killed the *Shan-yü* T’ou-man. Subsequently, [Mao-tun] executed all: his stepmothers and his younger brothers as well as those among the great ministers who did not listen and follow. Mao-tun installed himself as *Shan-yü* [his reign 209-174 BC ed.]”

Note ed.: The year 209 BC depends on the date given by Xu Guang 徐廣 (AD 352-425) in Pei Yin’s *Shiji jijie*, “Commentary on the reports of the *Shiji*”, found as a note to *Shiji* 110 (2890): 集解徐廣曰：秦二世元年壬辰歲立。”*Jijie* (cites) Xu Guang (who) says: (Modu) ascended the throne in the first year of the Second Emperor of Qin, (which was) a year *renchen* 壬辰 (209 BC)” (Transl. Dorn’eich).

及冒頓以兵至，擊，大破滅東胡王，而虜其民人及畜產。

“When Mao-tun and his troops arrived, he attacked, crushed, and wiped out the King of the Tung Hu [Eastern Barbarians, under Han rule ed.] and captured his people and livestock.”

012 – Year ca. 208/7 BC or shortly later: Second attack on the Yuezhi by the Xiongnu under Modu and the expulsion from Gansu

Notes ed.: The date is adopted from Thierry. Giele (2011: 260, fn. 145) favours 206 BC instead. It all depends on how much time was needed for the conquests of the “Eastern Barbarians” after the enthronement. Modu’s forces were certainly enlarged by auxiliary

troops drawn from the recently conquered peoples. It is assumed that the attack of the Xiongnu on the Wusun, as described in the SJ (§ 013) happened basically during the same campaign, as the Yuezhi and Wusun lived side-by-side.

• SJ 110.7a (2889-2890), 《史記·列傳·匈奴列傳·7》 [≈ HS 94A.6b (3750), Thierry 2005: 504, texte 19]; Watson 1993,II: 135f., Thierry 2005: 498, texte 16, Giele 2011: 260:

既歸，西擊走月氏，
南并樓煩、白羊河南王。

“Having returned, he went west to attack and put to flight the Yüeh-chih 月氏, and south to annex the Lou-fan 樓煩 and the Ho-nan 河南 king of the Pai-yang 白羊.”

悉復收秦所使蒙恬所奪匈奴地者，與漢關故河南塞，至朝那、膚施，遂侵燕、代。

“He entirely recovered what Ch'in 秦 had sent Meng T'ien 蒙恬 to seize of the Hsiung-nu's territory. With the Han 漢, he joined the old border south of the Ho 河 up to Ch'ao-na 朝那 and Fu-shih 膚施. Then, he invaded Yen 燕 and Tai 代.”

• SJ 123.3b-4a (3161); Zürcher 1968: 360, Watson 1993: 234:

控弦者可一二十萬。
故時彊，輕匈奴，及冒頓立，攻破月氏，

“They [Yuezhi ed.] have some 100,000 or 200,000 archer warriors.

Formerly they were very powerful and despised the Xiongnu, but later, when Maodun became leader of the Xiongnu nation, he attacked and defeated the Yuezhi.”

• QHJ 《前漢紀·孝武皇帝紀三·8》; Thierry 2005: 492, texte 5:

居燉煌祈連山間。
匈奴老上單于殺月氏王。以其頭為飲器。

“(…) ils vivaient entre Dunhuang et les Monts Qilian.

Le chanyu Laoshang des Xiongnu tua le roi des Yuezhi et fit avec son crâne une coupe à boire.”

• HS 96A.14b (3890-3891), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·41》; Zürcher 1968: 364-365, Hulseyé 1979: 120-121:

本居敦煌、祁連間，
至冒頓單于攻破月氏，而老上單于殺月氏，以其頭為飲器，

“Originally [the people] dwelt between Tun-huang and Ch'i-lien.

Then the time came when the Shan-yü Mao Tun attacked and defeated the Yüeh-chih, and the Shan-yü Lao-shang killed [the king] of the Yüeh-chih, making his skull into a drinking vessel.”

• HHS 47/77 (2876), 《後漢書·列傳·西羌傳·11》; Wylie 1883: 434-435: .

至于漢興，匈奴冒頓兵強，破東胡，走月氏，威震百蠻，臣服諸羌。

“In the flourishing times of the Han, the troops of Maou-tun the Shen-yu of the Heung-noo being powerful, he defeated the Tung-hoo, passed on to the Yue-she (Getae) [Yuezhi ed.] and by his martial dignity alarmed all the barbarians, reducing the various tribes of Keang to a state of vassalage.”

013 – Year ca. 208/7 BC or later: The Wusun become a branch of the Xiongnu - the SJ version

Content: The Xiongnu kill the old Wusun king. His son was saved miraculously through animals in the Romulus fashion and taken care of by the Xiongnu leader. If the attack happened during the campaign against the Yuezhi then a date around 208/7 BC is likely. A time shortly later was possible too. The recast version of the HS has the Wusun and the Yuezhi still living together and thus the assumed attack on the Wusun by the Yuezhi would have happened prior to the attack by the Xiongnu on the Yuezhi in 208/7 BC.

SJ 123.7b-8a (3168), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·16》; Pulleyblank 1970: 155, Thierry 2005: 506, texte 21, Watson 1993,II: 237 f.:

臣居匈奴中，聞烏孫王號昆莫，昆莫之父，匈奴西邊小國也。
匈奴攻殺其父，
而昆莫生棄於野。
烏噉肉蜚其上，狼往乳之。

“When I was living among the Xiongnu I heard about the king of the Wusun people, who is named Kunmo. Kunmo’s father was the ruler of a small state on the western border of the Xiongnu territory. The Xiongnu attacked and killed his father, and Kunmo, then only a baby, was cast out in the wilderness to die.

But the birds [read “crows”, see note] came and flew over the place where he was, bearing meat in their beaks, and the wolves suckled him, so that he was able to survive.”

Note CHING: Watson seems to have confused *wu* 烏 “crow” with *niao* 鳥 “bird”.

單于怪以為神，而收長之。

“When the *Shanyu* heard of this, he was filled with wonder and, believing that Kunmo was a god, he took him in and reared him.”

014 – Year ca. 208/7 BC or earlier: The Wusun become a branch of the Xiongnu - the HS version

Content: The Yuezhi kill the Wusun king and his people flee to the Xiongnu. The

Yuezhi occupy the land of the Wusun. The king's son is born posthumously and raised by the Xiongnu ruler.

HS 61.4a (2691–2692); Zürcher 1968: 366, Thierry 2005: 507, texte 22, Hulsewé 1979: 214:

臣居匈奴中，聞烏孫王號昆莫。昆莫父難兜靡，
本與大月氏俱在祁連、焯煌間，小國也。
大月氏攻殺難兜靡，奪其地，
人民亡走匈奴。

[Chang Ch'ien reports:] “‘When I was living among the Hsiung-nu I heard of Wu-sun; the king was entitled ›K'un-mo‹, and the K'un-mo's father was named Nan-tou-mi; originally (Wu-sun) had lived with the Ta Yüeh-chih between the Ch'i-lien (mountains) and Tun-huang; and they had been a small state.

The Ta Yüeh-chih attacked and killed Nan-tou-mi, seizing his lands; and his people fled to the Hsiung-nu.”

Note ed.: According to the SJ, the same Zhang Qian heard nothing of the Yuezhi attacking their neighbours the Wusun. Here, in the comparatively recent HS, the Yuezhi are put in a bad light, possibly in preparation of an excuse for having helped in dispelling the Yuezhi some years later. Pulleyblank (1970) has provided further material to show that the Shiji is primary and the HS version also added some trustworthy details from an unknown source plus adding “arbitrary embellishments”.

015 – Year after 208/7 BC: The Wusun become militarily active

Content: Living with the Xiongnu, the Kunmo becomes a war hero in the SJ story after training received from his foster tribe. He guards the western frontier for the Xiongnu and finally takes his people still further west. The Yuezhi are not mentioned, but also not excluded, as they could have been among the people he fought when he “several times won merit in battle”. In any case, he only occupied new lands at the end of his career according to this account.

SJ 123.7b-8a (3168), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·16》; Pulleyblank 1970: 155, Watson 1993,II: 238:

及壯，使將兵，數有功，單于復以其父之民予昆莫，令長守於西城/域。

“When Kunmo had grown to manhood, the *Shanyu* put him in command of a band of troops and he several times won merit in battle. The *Shanyu* then made him the leader of the people whom his father had ruled in former times and ordered him to guard the western forts.”

昆莫收養其民，攻旁小邑，控弦數萬，習攻戰。

“Kunmo gathered together his people, looked after them and led them in attacks on the small settlements in the neighbourhood. Soon he had 20,000 or 30,000 skilled archers who were trained in aggressive warfare.”

Note ed.: Note the numbers: the Wusun have 20 or 30 thousand warriors, the Yuezhi in their new home still had more than 100,000.

Note CHING: The translation “20,000 or 30,000” for *shuwan* 數萬 “some ten thousand” is risky. It can mean any amount more than 20,000 but less than 100,000.

016 – Year 206 BC: The Large (group of) Yuezhi flee to an intermediate home in the West

• HS 96A.14b (3890-3891), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·41》; Zürcher 1968: 364-365, Hulsewé 1979: 120-121:

月氏乃遠去，過大宛，西擊大夏而臣之，都媯水北為王庭。

“The Yüeh-chih thereupon went far away, passing Ta Yuan and proceeding west to attack and subjugate Ta Hsia.

The principal city was established north of the Kuei River to form the king’s court.”

• QHJ 《前漢紀·孝武皇帝紀三·8》; Thierry 2005: 492, texte 5:

月氏乃遠去，西過大宛，擊大夏而臣之，

國都媯水。

其土地與安息同俗，

其餘小眾不能去者，保南山，號小月氏焉。

“Les Yuezhi alors s’enfuirent loin vers l’ouest, traversèrent le Da yuan, ils attaquèrent le Daxia qu’ils soumirent.

La capitale du royaume est Guishui.

Son territoire a les mêmes coutumes que l’Anxi.

Un petit groupe parmi eux qui n’avait pu fuir se plaça sous la protection des [tribus] Qiang des Nanshan, on les appelle les Petits Yuezhi.”

Note ed.: The troublesome juxtaposition of a “capital/principal city” (*du* 都) and a “king’s court” (*wangting* 王廷) is absent from the QHJ version, also the location “north of the Oxus”. According to Thierry (2005: 492, fn. 101) the author simply left out the following *bei* 北 “north” to say: “La capitale du royaume est au nord de la rivière Gui”.

017 – Year 206 BC: The Smaller (group of) Yuezhi flee to the southern mountains

Context: A sentence common to SJ and HS in this paragraph defines 小月氏 as a “small group” 小眾, and thus my interpretation of 小月氏 is “Smaller (group) of Yuezhi”, in

contrast to the most commonly used translation of “Lesser Yuezhi”, which leaves open in which respect the deficiency is to be seen.

Apart from the sweeping statements in the preceding paragraph a number of texts speak of the “Smaller (group of) Yuezhi” who did not join the westward movement but fled into the Nanshan mountains just south of their traditional habitat. Nonetheless, some texts link this movement into Nanshan to the third attack *anno* 176 BC, implying that the less mobile refugees went back all the way 1300 km from the Ili river, their supposed common intermediate home, to the Southern Mountains south of Dunhuang. This is unlikely as has been realized before, and referred to by Hulswé (1979: 121, fn. 286): “(...) Chang Ch'un-shu [*Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica* 37, vol. II, 1967a: 681–749 ed., *non vidi*], p. 712, note 1, rightly points out that the *hsiao* 小 or Smaller (group of) Yüeh-chih fled westward as a result of the attack under the Hsiung-nu ruler Mao-tun, and not under his successor Laoshang, as is clearly stated in the Memoir on the Western Ch'iang in the history of the Later Han, *HHSCC Mem.* 77.23b.”

• HHS 47/77 (2899), 《後漢書·列傳·西羌傳》, 48; Wylie 1883: 474, Hill (p.c.):

湟中月氏胡，其先大月氏之別也，舊在張掖、酒泉地。

月氏王為匈奴冒頓所殺，餘種分散，西逾葱嶺（v.l.葱嶺）。

其羸弱者南入山阻，依諸羌居止，遂與共婚姻。

“The Yuezhi *hu* [non-Chinese peoples of the north] of Huangzhong [about 10 km west of modern Xining in Qinghai Province], were a branch of the Da Yuezhi of former times. In ancient times they lived in the region of Zhangye [in the centre of the Hexi Corridor] and Jiuquan [west of Zhangye].

The king of the Yuezhi was killed by the Xiongnu Modu. The rest of the tribe scattered west over the Congling (Pamirs).

Those who were emaciated and weak went south through the mountain passes, staying in the dwellings of the various Qiang [tribes], and then intermarried with them.”

• SJ 123.4a (3162), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·10》; Watson 1993,II: 234, Thierry 2005: 491 § 3 = HS 96A.10a (3891), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·41》; Hulswé 1979: 120–121, Chavannes 1905b: 527, fn. 1, Hill 2015,II: 119 = app. L:

其餘小眾不能去者，保南山羌，號小月氏。

[The Yuezhi went south to Daxia and:] “The remaining small group [of the Yuezhi] who were unable to leave sought protection among the Ch'iang [Qiang] tribes of the Southern Mountains and were termed the Hsiao Yüeh-chih [Xiao Yuezhi].”

• Weilue 《魏略·西戎傳》 cited in Sanguozhi 《三國志·魏書三十·倭人傳·10》, Hill 2004: Section 3, Chavannes 1905b: 526–528:

敦煌西域之南山中，從婁羌西至蔥嶺數千里，有月氏餘種，

蔥朮羌、白馬、黃牛羌、各有酋豪，北與諸國接，不知其道里廣狹。

“Dans les montagnes du Sud 南山 de Touen-houang 敦煌 et des contrées d’occident, depuis les Jö K’iang 婁羌 jusqu’ aux (monts) Ts’ong-ling 蔥嶺, sur une étendue de plusieurs milliers de *li*, il y a des restes des *Yue-tche* 月氏, les Ts’ong-tseu K’iang 蔥朮羌, les Po-ma 白馬, et les Houang-nieou K’iang 黃牛羌; chacun de ces peuples à ses chefs; ils sont au Nord limitrophes des divers royaumes; on ne sait ni les distances (qui les separent de la Chine), ni l’étendue (de leurs territoires).”

018 – Years after 206 BC: The intermediate habitat was first inhabited by the Sai (Śaka), then by the Yuezhi, finally by the Wusun

Content: There is only one text which defines the intermediate habitat of the Yuezhi as the final location of the Wusun in geographical terms. It was first taken by the Yuezhi, possibly after being “put to flight” in the second attack early in the reign of Modu (§ 019). East of Sogdiana and north of the towns of the Taklamakan leaves a long stretch of land, encompassing the valleys of the Ili near Lake Balkash but also the area around Urumqi.

HS 96B.1a (3901), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·1》; Zürcher 1968: 365-66, Hulsewé 1979: 144:

烏孫國, (...)

東與匈奴、西北與康居、西與大宛、南與城郭諸國相接。
本塞地也,

大月氏西破走塞王, 塞王南越縣度, 大月氏居其地。

“The state of Wu-sun (...)

[Wu-sun] adjoins the Hsiung-nu in the east, K’ang-chü in the north-west, Ta Yüan in the west and the various states of the walled towns in the south.

Originally it was the land of the Sai.

When the Ta Yüeh-chih turned west, defeated and expelled the king of the Sai, the latter moved south and crossed over the Suspended Crossing; and the Ta Yüeh-chih took up residence in his lands.”

Note ed.: The “Suspended Crossing” was located either in the narrow valley leading south to Hunza or rather the passage along the Indus west of Chilas. Any of the two are a long way from Lake Balkhash where most interpreters locate the Sai and later the Yuezhi and Wusun. It is difficult to imagine why Scythians should move south through Sogdiana and Bactria for more than 1000 km as the crow flies to search, find and use with their animals the most uncomfortable transit towards Gandhara or Taxila, while they could use a number of relatively easy passes across the Hindu Kush. The HS parallel says only that “the Sai moved a considerable distance to the South” (Hulsewé 1979: 216). Therefore, it seems that the pressure on the Scythians must have occurred much

closer to the passes in Wakhan which lead to the Suspended Crossings. Starting from the upper valley of the Ili a withdrawal south would have led them into the eastern parts of the Pamirs, where Ptolemy locates groups of Scythians descent (Humbach & Ziegler 2002: fig. 36), as does the HS, cf. below mentioning Xiuxun (Hsiu-hsün) and Juandu (Chüan-tu).

Note Hill: I suggest: “it was Sai territory” rather than “the land of the Sai” which implies it was the only or the main land of the Sai. I think it was only one of a number of regions controlled by Sai peoples.

019 – Years after 206 BC: The Yuezhi make the Sai (Śaka) move south across the mountains

• HS 96A.7a (3884), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·31》; Hulsewé 1979: 104-105:

昔匈奴破大月氏，大月氏西君大夏，

“When, formerly, the Hsiung-nu conquered the Ta Yüeh-chih, the latter moved west and established themselves as master of Ta Hsia;”

而塞王南君罽賓。

“It was in these circumstances that the king of the Sai 塞王 moved south and established himself as master of Chi-pin.”

塞種分散，往往為數國。

自疏勒以西北，休循、捐毒之屬，皆故塞種也。

“The Sai tribes split and separated and repeatedly formed several states.

To the north-west of Shu-lo [Kashgar ed.], states such as Hsiu-hsün and Chüan-tu are all of the former Sai race.”

• HS 96B.1a (3901), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·1》; Zürcher 1968: 365-66, Hulsewé 1979: 144:

烏孫國，(...)

東與匈奴、西北與康居、西與大宛、南與城郭諸國相接。

本塞地也，

大月氏西破走塞王，塞王南越縣度，大月氏居其地。

“The state of Wu-sun (...)

[Wu-sun] adjoins the Hsiung-nu in the east, K’ang-chü in the north-west, Ta Yüan in the west and the various states of the walled towns in the south.

Originally it was the land of the Sai.

When the Ta Yüeh-chih turned west, defeated and expelled the king of the Sai, the latter moved south and crossed over the Suspended Crossing; and the Ta Yüeh-chih took up residence in his lands.”

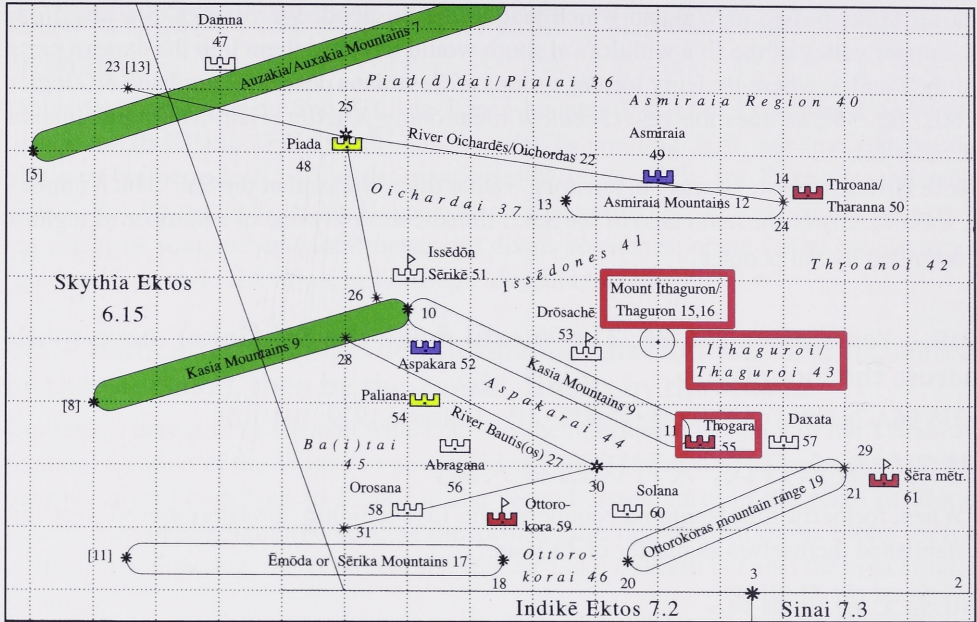


Fig. 1: Xinjiang on Ptolemy’s map (after Humbach & Ziegler 2002, fig. 37), with possible parallels in blue, green and yellow and alleged “tocharoi” sites framed in red.

Note ed.: If the Wusun actually followed the Large (group of) Yuezhi into the valleys around Ili-Kazak in Xinjiang (44°N, 82° E; not Ili-Almaty, Kazakhstan) then they would have gone for one of the best areas for horse breeding (Werning 2007b). The realms of the Xiongnu, Kangju and Dayuan may be disputed, but the “walled towns in the south”, if taken as Kucha and Aqsu, would perfectly answer the description. The two Śaka tribes settling to the north-west of Kashgar, after the split due to Yuezhi take-over, likewise fit this scenario. A withdrawal from Gansu towards the upper Ili could and may have used the northern route inside the Taklamakan or the route along the northern slopes of the Tianshan range. Seeing the Śaka withdraw towards the South seems to speak in favour of an approach from the North.

020 – Years after ca. 206 BC: The locations of the Sai (Śaka) and the end of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom

Content: The situation of countries prior to the movements of Śakas and Yuezhi is given in Strabo 11.8.8, who cites Eratosthenes (ca. 273-194 BC), who describes a succession from North to South: Scythians, Sogdians, then Bactria. The Massagetæ live to the West of the Sogdians along the Oxus. The same simple scheme is also given in all reports of Alexander’s explorations on the Oxus and the regions north of it.

Eratosthenes, who died in 194 BC, would probably have heard of dislodged Sai tribes from north of Sogdiana, if they were dispelled down south in the course of the second attack 206 BC.

Radt text 2004,3: 348; comm. 2008,7: 287; transl. Jones 1928,V: 269, Radt 2004,3: 349:

φησὶ δ' Ἐρατοσθένης τοὺς Ἀραχωτοὺς καὶ Μασσαγέτας τοῖς Βακτρίοις παρακεῖσθαι πρὸς δύσιν παρὰ τὸν Ὠξόν, καὶ Σάκας μὲν καὶ Σογδιανούς τοῖς ὅλοις ἐδάφεσιν ἀντικεῖσθαι τῇ Ἰνδικῇ, Βακτρίους δ' ἐπ' ὀλίγον (τὸ γὰρ πλεον τῷ Παροπαμισῶ παρακεῖσθαι)· διείργειν δὲ Σάκας μὲν καὶ Σογδιανούς τὸν Ἰαξάρτην, Σογδιανούς δὲ καὶ Βακτριανούς τὸν Ὠξόν·

“Eratosthenes sagt (fr. III B 63 Berger), die Arachoter und Massageten lägen westlich neben den Baktriern am Oxos entlang, und die Saken und die Sogdianer lägen mit ihren ganzen Territorien Indien gegenüber, die Baktrier dagegen nur zu einem kleinen Teil (denn größtenteils zögen sie sich am Paropamisos entlang); die Saken und die Sogdianer würden durch den Iaxartes, die Sogdianer und die Baktrianer durch den Oxos getrennt;” (...)

Note ed.: The Graeco-Bactrian kingdoms of Bactria remained unmentioned in Chinese sources. Their annihilation occurred before the ambassador Zhang Qian found the Yuezhi there in 121 BC. Because the Yuezhi drove the Śaka from their homeland, the latter have been regarded as the destroyers of the Macedonians. P. Bernard (1980: 443) reconstructed a date of ca. 145 BC for the downfall of Ai-Khanum. The date favoured by Bernard was replaced by a date in the first century BC by Lerner (2011) and defended against Lerner by Holt (2012).

Note Cribb: The 145 BC date for the destruction of Ai-Khanum is a highly questionable construct. The arguments are: the latest coins at Ai-Khanum are issues of Eucratides I and, a dated inscription found at Ai-Khanum gives a ‘year 24’ date; therefore year 24 is of Eucratides I and equals 145 BC, therefore that is the year of the city’s destruction. This cannot stand for the following reasons:

1. The latest coin from an Ai-Khanum hoard is a coin of Eucratides II – a successor of Eucratides I – misidentified in the report by F. Holt (1981: 17 and pl. XII, no. 129).
2. The coins found in the excavation are all low denominations, coppers and silver obols. Eucratides I (ca. 171-145 BC) is the last issuer of coppers and obols in Bactria, his three (or four) successors do not issue these denominations, only higher value silver coins. So the found coins cannot form a *terminus ad quem* for the city’s destruction.
3. There is no evidence to link the year 24 with Eucratides I – it might well be a year in his reign, but there is no evidence.
4. We don’t know when Eucratides I began his reign, just that he was thought to be a contemporary of Mithradates.

021 – The Xiongnu realm with the Yuezhi in the West

Content: The Yuezhi lived at the western border of the Xiongnu even after being put to flight during the second attack. The HS copyist leaves out 月氏, because at his time the Yuezhi had already moved away from those regions.

SJ 110.8a (2891), 《史記·列傳·匈奴列傳·9》 [≈ HS 94A.5a (3751) = Wylie 1874: 410]; Watson 1993,II: 136, Giele 2011: 262:

諸左方王將居東方，直上谷以東，接穢貉、朝鮮；
右方王將居西方，直上郡以西，接 月氏、氏、羌；

“All Kings and Leaders of the Left direction settle in the Eastern region. Those who directly [face] Shang-ku and beyond, adjoin eastwards to the Wei-mo and Ch’ao-hsien. The Kings and Leaders of the Right direction settle in the Western region. Those who directly [face] Shang Commandery and further west, adjoin to the Yüeh-chih 月氏, the Ti 氏 and the Ch’iang 羌.”

Note ed.: The text does not allow one to say where exactly this “west of” has to be located. Given the wide extent of the Xiongnu realm under Modu the intermediate location of the Yuezhi west of his lands remains uncertain.

022 – Can Ptolemy be used to define the intermediate home?

There seem to be two views on where exactly the Yuezhi went after being “put to flight” by the Xiongnu, both views being derived to some extent from the *Geography* of Ptolemy, who places a people called Thaguroi or Ithaguroi near a mountain called Thaguron or Ithaguron (cf. fig. 1, p. 46). Any assumed connection of the Yuezhi with these terms presupposes that the terms are related to the Tocharoi at all, that the spelling differences don’t matter (cf. Henning 1949: 158f.), and that the Yuezhi were known as Tocharoi, or called themselves Tocharoi, or were at least closely related to Tocharoi, before they subdued the Daxia people in Bactria decades later and 2000 km away. Humbach & Faiss (2012: 21, 39) propose to keep the Ithagouroi separated from the Tocharoi. However that may be, the tribal self-designation as *tocharoi/tukhāra* does not force us to expect the languages called “Tocharian” as being part of the equation.

A) The valleys of the Ili and Chou

A careful survey of Chinese sources on the location of the Wusun was presented by Shiratori 1902. He convincingly defines the location of this nation after its shift west as the upper courses of the Ili and Haidu (1902: 129). He does not deal with any previous occupation of the same area by the Yuezhi. In 1932 Herrmann located the Tapourai of Ptolemy 6.14.7 along the “Tschu” at the northern slopes of the Alexander Range (Taras-Bishkek-Tokmok), which he equated with the *Τάπουρα ὄρη*. By declaring the π as a miswritten γ, he kept the Tocharians in the game. In this he was followed by Benjamin (2007: 42).

B) Near Urumqi at the Bogda shan

De la Vaissière (2009: 533) went another way by equating Thagouron with “the four *twyry* countries of the later Turkish sources, from Qarashahr to Besh-Balik, with the isolated Thaguron mountain, clearly the Bogda shan, in the middle of the four *twyry* countries, slightly to the North-East of the Kasia-Tianshan”.

Note CHING: De la Vaissière’s theory is based on Henning (1938: 550) by the mention of *ctβ’r twyr’kc’ny* in Sogdian on the Karabalgasun Inscription, which Henning identified as some place between Kucha and Besh-Balik. Henning (1938: 560) tried to exclude Kucha from the candidates, but in his posthumous article (1978: 226) the “Four Tuγri Land” was identified explicitly as (1) Kucha, (2) Yanqi (Karashahr), (3) Turfan, (4) the district to the North of Turfan, centering upon Besh-Balik.

Yoshida reread Henning’s *ctβ’r twyr’k’ny* as *ctβ’r twyr’ystn*. He (2011: 84) mentioned that “the four Tughri countries” are probably more restricted to Kucha and Yanqi, or even including Turfan, since the passage concerns fights between Old Tibetans and Old Uyghurs around Kucha and Yanqi, while Besh-Balik seemed already under Old Uyghurs’ control.

As I argued in my postdoctoral report in 2012 (cf. CHING 2015: 21-23), thus far all the attestations of Sogdian *twyry* and Old Uyghur *toχri* (or *tohri* by current convention) are after the 9th century, i.e. since the early days of West Uyghur Kingdom, including the Karabalgasun Inscription dated by YOSHIDA and MORIYASU between 808-821 CE. So *tohri* may be too late to discuss prehistorical issue. If it was – as *ctβ’r twyr’ystn* among the Sogdians in the 9th century – once used among the Old Uyghurs to designate some region between Kucha and Besh-Balik, and if it was – for whatever reason – used to designate the “Tocharian A” language around the 10th-11th century, readers should note that so far scholars are still unable to find any self-designation sounding like *tohri*, Τόχαροι or Thaguron in Kuchean (i.e. Tocharian B) and the A language.

Therefore, possibly *twyry* or *tohri* was initially a term for designating the people immigrating from Tocharistan (Bactria) under the pressure of Islamic powers, before its meaning was shifted to four administrative centers in the Old Uyghurs’ territory and then to the name of Tocharian A, which called itself “the *Arśi* language” and became one of the most culturally and officially important languages in the West Uyghur kingdom.

Recently, I (CHING 2014) discussed the term 吐火羅言 *tuhuoluo yan* (lit. the Tuhuoluo language) in the biography of Liyan. This monk stayed in Kucha in the beginning of the eighth century and then became an important scholar, translator and interpreter for Tang emperors. He was praised for his competence in speaking and reading various languages and scripts, including Chinese, Sogdian, the languages of the Four Garrisons (Kucha, Agni, Khotan, Kashgar), etc., and finally the *tuhuoluo yan*, which is in all probability a language spoken in Tokharistan. In other words, *tuhuoluo* was a term denoting a certain people and land, west of the Pamirs, approximately corresponding to the historical Tocharistan/Bactria, in the concept of Tang Chinese.

Note ed.: To whomever the Turkish sources refer, the Yuezhi would necessarily have

to be called something similar to Greek “Tocharoi” in the third cent. BC, at the time they lived in those areas, to give their name to a place (Thogara) and a mountain (Ithaguron/Thaguron). Once we follow the prehistory of the Tocharoi/Yuezhi, as outlined by Henning (1978), with a twin people called Tukri and Guti, moving from the Zagros mountains to the confines of China by the end of the third millennium BC, then the precondition for the many named sites was given. The coordinates where Ptolemy places city and mountain coincide nicely with Hami for the site and the “white” Karlug-tag (Karlik Shan) for the mountain. Shiratori (1902: 105) has shown that this single and particular mountain was called *tianshan* in Han times, “mountain of the gods”, a term later extended to the whole range up to Kashgar. For Ptolemy’s informer, this site was worthy to be mentioned as a stand-alone mountain. The Karlug-tag could then have been this mountain sacred to a people inhabiting (also) the Hami area. Situated at the end of the Kasia Mountains, as are Hami and Karlug-tag, Thogara and mount Ithagouron may be rather looked for here than at Qarashar and Bogda shan far away in the middle of the present Tianshan range. Aydemir (2013: 76f.) lists *tuhulu* 吐胡蘆 as a township in the northeast of Hami, in the 9th century mentioned as *tugulike* 圖古里克, under Sogdian influence. In any case, centuries after the Yuezhi had been dispelled by the Xiongnu and after the Silk Road was opened, these terms resembling those used for the Tocharoi must have been still in use among non-Yuezhi people. This is not impossible as we also have on Ptolemy’s map the Ottorokorai people in front of the Ottorokora mountain just south of Thogara, clearly the people called in Sanskrit texts, also in Mahāyāna texts (Lévi 1905: 282, 297), living in an area deserted only in the fifth cent. AD (Werning 2007a). The areas occupied by the Uttarakurus according to Ptolemy (Humbach, Ziegler & Faiss 2002: fig. 37) are where we have the Nanshan mountains and the eastern part of the “Southern Route” towards Bactria and India.

It seems thus perfectly possible that people calling themselves something resembling Greek ‘Tocharoi’ lived at the eastern end of the (present) Tianshan, with a meeting place defined by the sacred mountain Thagouron. Aydemir (2009) has shown that people linked with the Tocharoi lived in Kucha up to the 12th century. Most telling is the map in Aydemir (2013) which shows through toponyms where people with names similar to *tuhoulou* may have lived: from Hami to the Tuğur töbä teği around 45°N 90°E, to Turfan, Kucha, Kisilsu and also Khotan.

A nation with such an extended prehistory can be expected to insist on its self-designation even after shifting its habitat into foreign regions. Ammianus Marcellinus reports twice (§§ 104, 126) that the “Bactrians” forced all other tribes to be subsumed under their own name, a procedure about which the Tocharians have been the most upset. Ammianus seems to have confused the two terms while witnessing heated complaints about this misnaming: If the Tocharians, i.e. the Yuezhi in our “Chinese” terminology, forced others to use their name, then the “true” Bactrians would have good reason to be upset.

023 – Year 176 BC: Third attack on the Yuezhi – Modu reports about a devastating attack by the Xiongnu under the Wise King of the Right

Content: The Xiongnu king Modu reports to the Han court about the reason behind a certain amount of mutual misunderstanding with ensuing hostilities. A culprit is pointed out on the Xiongnu side, the “Worthy King of the Right”, and condemned to attack the Yuezhi to kill or subjugate each one of them, thus depriving the Han of their potentially best ally. – The date has been fixed by Thierry (2005: 450) as following June 177 up to the early months of 176 BC.

SJ 110.10b (2896), 《史記·列傳·匈奴列傳·16》[≈ HS 94A.11a (3756-3757), Thierry 2005: 504, texte 19]; Watson 1993.II: 140, Thierry 2005: 500f., texte 16, Giele 2011: 270f.:

其明年，單于遺漢書曰：

天所立匈奴大單于敬問皇帝無恙。

前時皇帝言和親事，稱書意，合歡。

“The next year (176 B.C.), the *Shan-yü* presented the Han with a letter, that read: “The great *Shan-yü* of the Hsiung-nu, who has been enthroned by Heaven, respectfully inquires about the Emperor’s well-being. When the Emperor of former times spoke about the matter of marital alliance, [he] abided by the intent of the letter [of the agreement] and [we] met in joy.”

漢邊吏侵侮右賢王，右賢王不請，聽後義盧侯難 SJ:氏/HS:支 等計，與漢吏相 SJ:距/HS:om.，絕二主之約，離 SJ:兄/HS:昆 弟之親。皇帝讓書再至，發使以書報，不來，漢使不至，漢以其故不和，鄰國不附。

“[Now,] the Han border functionaries have invaded [the territory of] and insulted the Worthy King to the Right. The Worthy King to the Right, without asking for permission, listened to the plan of the *Hou-yi-lu* 後義盧 Marquis Nan-chih 難氏 and others to distance themselves from the Han officials, to break the agreement of the two rulers and separate from the brotherly kin.

The Emperor’s reprimanding letters repeatedly arrived, and I have sent out envoys so as to report back in writing [but they] did not come [back], nor did [any] Han envoy arrive. If the Han because of this do not make an alliance, the neighboring countries will not support [the Han].”

今以小吏之敗約故，罰右賢王，使之西求月氏擊之。

以天之福，吏卒良，馬彊力，以夷滅月氏，盡斬殺降下之。

“Now, because petty functionaries spoiled the agreement, [I] have punished the Worthy King to the Right and send him westward to request [the territory of] the Yüeh-chih and to attack them.

Thanks to heavenly fortune, the quality of functionaries and soldiers, and the great strength of the horses, we used barbarians to wipe out the Yüeh-chih 月氏 and to completely cut down and kill them or make them surrender.”

定樓蘭、烏孫、呼揭及其旁二十六國，皆以為匈奴。諸引弓之民，并為一家。

“We stabilized Lou-lan 樓蘭, the Wu-sun 烏孫, the Hu-chieh 呼揭, and twenty-six states next to them. All these were made the Hsiung-nu’s. All bow-drawing peoples are united in one house.”

Following is the reaction of the ministers at the Han court (Giele 2011: 272):

單于新破月氏，乘勝，不可擊。

“The *Shan-yü* has just defeated the Yüeh-chih and has the momentum of victory. He cannot be attacked.”

Note ed.: This letter is the cornerstone of early Yuezhi chronology. It is reliably dated and shows how smugly the Xiongnu ruler concealed his own role: He makes lower officials responsible for the raids on Han territory and puts all the higher responsibility on the shoulders of the King of the Right. We have to keep in mind that according to heritage rules this should be one of his sons. First the Han were heavily molested by the attacks of the “Worthy King of the Right”, and then the reputed culprit is “punished” by having to search for the Yuezhi in order to finish them off, the only important possible ally of Han. Who is this son? The only active son in all passages surrounding this event is Jiyu 稽粥, (for the pronunciation cf. Thierry 2005: 501, fn. 140) after his enthronement later called Laoshang Jiyu Chanyu [老上稽粥單于, SJ 110 (2898)] or simply Laoshang Chanyu (老上單于), the Heir to the throne. No word is ever lost on the King of the Left, who should be the ordinary successor according to SJ 110 (Watson 1993,II: 136). But there is no fixed rule, since according to SJ 111 and 123 (Watson 1993,II: 150, 232) a Worthy King of the Left “attacked the *Shanyu*’s heir and set himself up as the new *Shanyu*”, showing that the envisaged heir was not the King of the Left, while in SJ 111 (Watson 1993,II: 160) it is the Chief Commander of the Left who is preferred as successor.

How did the King of the Right manage to dispel the mighty “large group” of the Yuezhi? The translator Giele has understood the enigmatic passage and seen that “Barbarians” enlarged the forces of the King of the Right. Who were these barbarians? There was a discussion during the symposium about *yi* 夷 “barbarians” and its connotation in this context.

Pondering over Watson’s translation where the term is left out, Hill proposed to take it as “Eastern Barbarians”, while CHING in contrast regarded it as part of the verbal expression, i.e. *yimie* 夷滅 “wipe out, extirpate”, which is used frequently in SJ (5 times) and HS (12 times). Moreover, it is questionable whether the “Eastern” barbarians were

ever active in the West in Modu's time. The translation of Giele dispenses with any cardinal direction. In fact, Shiji 123 (騫既至烏孫，烏孫王昆莫見漢使如單于禮，騫大慚，知蠻夷貪，乃曰，“When Zhang Qian reached the kingdom of the Wusun, the king of the Wusun, Kunmo, tried to treat the Han envoys in the same way that the Shanyu treated them. Zhang Qian was greatly outraged and, knowing that the **barbarians** were greedy, said [...],”) shows that 夷 applies also to the Wusun, a tribe once living rather in the West of the Xiongnu.

It needs no stretch of fantasy to assume that the auxiliary troops of Wusun stock, led by the Kunmo, were part of the attack of the Xiongnu on the Yuezhi.

What happened during this attack? The king of the Yuezhi was beheaded and his skull turned into a drinking cup. Overrun by superior forces, deprived of their king, the surviving Yuezhi had to withdraw.

024 – Years before 174 BC: Attacks 2 and 3 on the Yuezhi by the Xiongnu - in a nutshell.

Content: Two attacks on the Yuezhi are summed up, one by Modu, the other by his son who makes a drinking cup from the Yuezhi king's skull. SJ and HS differ substantially.

• SJ 123.4a (3162), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·10》; Zürcher 1968: 360, Thierry 2005: 491 § 3, Watson 1993,II: 234:

故時彊，輕匈奴，及冒頓立，攻破月氏，
至匈奴老上單于，殺月氏王，以其頭為飲器。
始月氏居敦煌、祁連間，及為匈奴所敗，乃遠去，過宛，
西擊大夏而臣之，遂都媯水北，為王庭。

“Formerly they were very powerful and despised the Xiongnu, but later, when Maodun became leader of the Xiongnu nation, he attacked and defeated the Yuezhi.

Some time afterwards his son, the Old *Shanyu* [“old” is the literal translation of *lao* in Laoshang ed.], killed the king of the Yuezhi and made his skull into a drinking cup.

The Yuezhi originally lived in the area between the Qilian or Heavenly Mountains and Dunhuang, but after they were defeated by the Xiongnu they moved far away to the west, *beyond Dayuan* [italics ed.], where they attacked and conquered the people of Daxia and set up the court of their king on the northern bank of the Gui River.”

Note ed.: 過大宛, which could produce “beyond Dayuan”, is found only in the accounts of the HS and QHJ (§ 016); Watson seems to have combined the parallel sources. These events around the Yuezhi took place around 208/7 BC and after June 177 BC, a few decades before Zhang Qian was living with the Xiongnu. He will have met eye witnesses and heard reports about the two events, the one effected by Modu, i.e. the first dispersal from the area linked to Dunhuang, and the second event – 至 “some time afterwards” – by Laoshang *Chanyu*. Research so far has regarded the term *Chanyu* (cf. note to § 012)

as referring to the time after the reign of Modu. Generally, after the first mock attack by Touman, it is Modu who is credited with the complete dispersal of the Yuezhi, attacking in person early at Gansu and much later sending his “King of the Right”, who may have been none other than his son Jiyu 稽粥, who would soon succeed him under the regal name of Laoshang Chanyu.

• HS 96A.9b-10a (3890-3891), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·41》; Hulsewé 1979: 120:

至冒頓單于攻破月氏，
而老上單于殺月氏，以其頭為飲器，

“Then the time came when the Shan-yü Mao Tun attacked and defeated the Yüeh-chih, and the Shan-yü Lao-shang killed [the king] of the Yüeh-chih, making his skull into a drinking vessel.”

Note ed.: The HS parallel drops *zhi* 至, “some time afterwards” and inserts *er* 而, “and”, and so combines the two actions into one. The SJ connected Modu with attack no. 2 and Laoshang with no. 3. Here in the HS, we have Modu and Laoshang both participate in no. 3, either because of ignorance or because its author also saw both men active, one as the ruler active behind every hostile activity, the other his son cutting off a head. Again we have to supply “Laoshan *Chanyu*” with a “future”, just like the term Dunhuang is used for the area before a town of this name was actually built (cf. note to § 004).

My reconstruction makes Modu in person dispel the Yuezhi solely from “Dunhuang” towards the intermediate habitat “in the West”. Somewhat later, his son Jiyu 稽粥, the future *Laoshang Chanyu*, while still King of the Right, effects a crushing defeat at the intermediate home, in company with auxiliary troops, also Wusun. His father reports about this final blow to the Han in a letter. Shortly later he dies.

025 – Year 174 BC: The secret departure of the Wusun from the Xiongnu to an undefined location - the SJ version

Context: The flow of the story (cf. Watson as below) leaves no doubt that it was the death of Modu which triggered the flight of the Wusun from their homeland. Haloun (1937: 248, fn. 3) provides no alternative, but excludes Laoshang for the same reason.

SJ 123.7b-8a (3168), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·16》; Watson 1993,II: 238:

單于死，昆莫乃率其眾遠徙，中立，不肯朝會匈奴。

“When the *Shanyu* died [Modu, 174 BC ed.], Kunmo led his people far away, declared himself an independent ruler, and refused any longer to journey to the meetings of the Xiongnu court.”

匈奴遣奇兵擊，不勝，以為神而遠之，因羈屬之，不大攻。

“The Xiongnu sent surprise parties of troops to attack him, but they were unable to win a victory. In the end the Xiongnu decided that he must be a god and left him alone, still claiming that he was a subject of theirs but no longer making any large-scale attacks on him.”

Note ed.: This short note shows that the Kunmo dared only leave the Xiongnu – who had killed his father according to the SJ – after his foster father Modu had died. Where did he go? Through the campaign against the Yuezhi in the former Śaka lands he had come to know the area, he knew that it was suitable pasture land, and that it was empty. He also knew how the Xiongnu trained their spies and troops and thus he was able to counteract all attempts at subduing him again.

026 – Year ca. 174 BC: The Wusun chase the Yuezhi out of their intermediate home – the HS version

HS 61A.5a (2692), cf. HS 96A.10b = Hulsewé 1979: 216-217, Thierry 2005: 507, texte 22, Zürcher 1968: 366:

昆莫既健，自請單于報父怨，
遂西攻破大月氏。大月氏復西走，徙大夏地。
昆莫略其眾、因留居，

“When the *k'un-mo* (Nan-tou-mi's son) had grown up, he himself asked the *shan-yü* (of the Hsiung-nu) for permission to requite the injury (inflicted upon) his father, and subsequently he went to the West and attacked and defeated the Great Yüeh-chih. (Thereupon) the Great Yüeh-chih again moved (further) westwards and migrated to the territory of Ta-hsia. The *K'un-mo* seized their masses (= the groups of Yüeh-chih who had been left behind ?) and consequently remained in (this ancient Sai territory).”

Note ed.: *fu* 復 “again” shows that one move westward has happened before and the text in fact uses “west” twice. A double shift west from Gansu should lead along the southern or northern slopes of the Tianshan to the upper Ili valley and then through the Pamir area or Ferghana, while a first move to the basin of Ili and Chou would require a second shift south. But a shift “south” is never referred to in any account about the movements of the Yuezhi.

Thierry (2005: 507f., fn. 155) protests with good reasons against the translation of Hulsewé.

The dubious story in the HS about the Yuezhi killing the Kunmo's father now receives a supporting chapter with Kunmo attacking the Yuezhi all alone, dispelling them and taking their land. All this with 20 to 30 thousand horsemen. The HS reworking of the SJ passages introduces dramatic effects without real need.

In all calculations about dates and persons the start can only be the year 176 BC, when the Han emperor received the letter from Modu. In the preceding year the devastating

attack on the Yuezhi had happened under the King of the Right, most likely with Wusun horsemen in his armies. The Wusun chief, with his title of Kunmo, must then have been “adult”, that is older than 30 years. According to Hill (2015,II: 127), citing dictionaries, a man was *zhuang* 壯 only at thirty.

In the year he was born his nation was deprived of its independence. At the same occasion, or shortly before that, Modu had dispelled the Yuezhi, in the year 208/7 BC at the earliest. It is possible that the Yuezhi and the Wusun as their allies were attacked together. In that case the Kunmo was almost exactly 30 years old when he came along with the Xiongnu to chase the Yuezhi after June 177 BC.

Previous models are based on the idea that the Chanyu whose death was the reason for the secret departure of the Wusun, must have been Laoshang who died in 158 BC or 160 BC (Thierry 2005: 502, fn. 142), simply because an old Kunmo was seen by Zhang Qian sometime after 119 BC, and because the Han sent a princess to him around 110-105 BC (HS 96B; Hulsewé 1979: 147, Pulleyblank 1970: 156). When born around 208/7 BC he would have been close to 100 years old when the princess was on her way. This is definitely too advanced in age to be credible, and even a decade or two less would hardly improve the picture. But Pulleyblank (1970: 158; cf. Thierry 2005: 506, fn. 151) has stressed that “Kunmo” is not a personal name, but a title, although some editors have failed to understand that. If *kunmo* was used by the Wusun as *chanyu* was used by the Xiongnu, then the miraculously saved Kunmo born 208/7 BC may well have had an “old” son or even grandson acting as Kunmo in or after 110 BC. Zhang Qian would not have cared for the difference as this was his first visit with the Wusun.

For our reconstruction of the events around the Yuezhi I accept the year of about 208/7 BC, or shortly later, from Thierry (2005: 450) for the first dispersal by Modu from Gansu, and after June 177 BC (Thierry 2005: 450) for the smashing defeat in the intermediate habitat by an army led by the future Laoshang Chanyu in the latter years of the ruling Modu Chanyu. This view goes some way to explaining why it is always Modu who is made responsible for the dispersal of the Yuezhi, why Laoshang is mainly credited with acquiring the skull of the Yuezhi king, why no “King of the Left” succeeds Modu and possibly why the Wusun could occupy a land that was previously held by a much stronger force.

027 – The Yuezhi are dispelled by the Xiongnu, not by the Wusun

Context: All restatements following the HS passage in time leave the Wusun out of account. Either they were nothing but auxiliary troops for the Xiongnu under the “Old Shanyu”, or they simply moved into the intermediate land after it was deserted by the Yuezhi. The suggestion of a forceful expulsion of the Yuezhi by the Wusun has little to recommend it.

• HS 96A.7a (3884), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·31》; Hulsewé 1979: 104-105:

昔匈奴破大月氏，大月氏西君大夏，

“When, formerly, the Hsiung-nu conquered the Ta Yüeh-chih, the latter moved west and established themselves as master of Ta Hsia; (...)”

• HHS 88/118.9a-9b (2921), 《後漢書·列傳·西域傳·30》; Zürcher 1968: 367, Hill 2009: 29:

初, 月氏為匈奴所滅,
遂遷於大夏,

“Formerly, the Yuezhi were defeated by the Xiongnu.
They then moved to Daxia [Bactria].”

• HS 96B.1a-1b (3901), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·1》; Zürcher 1968: 366, Hulsewé 1979: 145:

故烏孫民有塞種、大月氏種云。

“It is said: ‘For this reason, among the people of Wu-sun there are [elements of] the Sai race and the Ta Yüeh-chih race.’”

Note ed.: If the Smaller (group of) Yuezhi had separated from the still undivided Yuezhi nation during a raid of the Wusun after the final battle, the *da* 大 would not have been necessary. As it is it shows once again (cf. § 017) that the separation was regarded as having happened previously.

028 – Years 176 BC ff.: After the third attack the Yuezhi are mananged by the son or the wife of the beheaded king

Content: After the king of the Yuezhi was deprived of his head the Chinese chronicles know little about them until the tribe forced its supremacy onto the Bactrians. SJ and HS differ in one detail:

• SJ 123.2a (3158), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·2》; Thierry 2005: 514, texte 29, Watson 1993,II: 232:

大月氏王已為胡所殺, 立其太子為王。既臣大夏而居,
地肥饒, 少寇, 志安樂,

“Since the king of the Great Yuezhi had been killed by the Xiongnu, his son had succeeded him as ruler and had forced the kingdom of Daxia (Bactria) to recognize his sovereignty. The region he ruled was rich and fertile and seldom troubled by invaders, and the king thought only of his own enjoyment.”

• HS 61.1a-1b (2688), Thierry 2005: 517, texte 30, Hulsewé 1979: 207:

大月氏王已為胡所殺, 立其夫人為王。既臣大夏而君之,

“The king of the Ta Yüeh-chih had been killed by the nomads, and his wife had been established as king [*sic*]; having subjugated Ta Hsia she reigned over it.”

Note ed.: Following the “[*sic*]”, Hulsewé (1979: 208f., fn. 770) discusses in a lengthy

footnote the statements of commentators about old readings, one being *fu ren tai zi* 夫人太子 “(his) wife (and) heir-apparent” in the HS, instead of *fu ren* 夫人, “wife”. Another ms mentioned in Pei Yin’s *Jijie* 集解 is the commentary of Xu Guang 徐廣, which reads the same *fu ren* 夫人 for the SJ version instead of *tai zi* 太子 “heir-apparent”. Possibly, both mother and heir-apparent ran the tribal affairs in common. Although cross-contamination between SJ and HS is probable, the SJ reading, as usual, should be preferable. On the other hand, the role of women in Yuezhi/Kushan society (cf. § 111) would not exclude women taking on responsibility in times of distress. Cf. also Thierry 2005: 60.

029 – Year 166 BC: Xiongnu attacks on Han China

Context: The Xiongnu launch a devastating attack on Han China near the gate of Anding and continue to attack all neighbouring countries. Han is in dire need of support and will therefore search allies in the West. This is the incentive for contacts with the Da Yuezhi.

SJ 110.13a (2901), 《史記·列傳·匈奴列傳·24》≈ HS 94A.9b (3761); Watson 1993,II: 145, Giele 2011: 277:

漢孝文皇帝十四年，匈奴單于十四萬騎入朝那、蕭關，殺北地都尉印，
虜人民畜產甚多，遂至彭陽。
使奇兵入燒回中宮，候騎至雍甘泉。

“In the fourteenth year of the Filial Han Emperor Wen (166 B.C.), 140,000 horsemen of the Hsiung-nu *Shan-yü* entered Ch’ao-na 朝那 and the Hsiao 蕭 Pass, killing [Sun] Ang 印, the Capital Commandant of Pei-ti, and capturing commoners and livestock in very great numbers.

Then, they reached P’eng-yang 彭陽. They had surprise troops enter and burn down Hui-chung 回中 Palace, and their scout cavalry reached Kan-ch’üan 甘泉 of Yung 雍.”

030 – Years around 235-225 BC and later: Justin = Pompeius Trogus abbreviated, on the inroads of Scythians into Bactria and Sogdiana

Justin, *Prologue* to chapter 41; Arnaud-Lindet 2003:

In Bactrianis autem rebus ut a Diodoto rege constitutum imperium est deinde quo repugnante [so Arnaud-Lindet with mss; edd. regnante] Scythicae gentes Saraucae et Asiani, Bactra occupavere et Sogdianos.

“En ce qui concerne l’histoire de la Bactriane, comment fut établi l’empire par le roi Diodote : puis, malgré ses luttes défensives, des peuples scythes, les Sarauques et les

Asiens, s'emparèrent de Bactres et des habitants de la Sogdiane.”

This is decisively different from the reading with *regnante*, as given in Humbach & Faiss (2012: 21), meaning:

“(…) under the rule of Diodotus, King (of Bactra), the Scythian tribes of the Saraucae and Asiani occupied Bactra and Sogdiana.”

Note ed.: The reading and interpretation of Arnaud-Lindet is superior to the one preferred by Humbach & Faiss and makes Diodotus resist the invaders. If we think of Diodotus II then the time span between his biographical data (ca. 235-225 BC) and the dispersal of the Śakas by the Yuezhi around 200 BC is relatively small and the terse formulation may well cover a series of movements of different Śaka branches starting in the time of Diodotus II to continue into the reigns of his successors.

Only two Scythian tribes are listed, the Sa(*ka)rauka and the Asiani, obviously coming from the North, suppressing the Sogdians, then seemingly under Greek rule, and Bactria itself.

031 – Year ca. 145 BC: Northern tribes wrest Bactria from the Greeks

Content: These texts present a multi-phased takeover. First, the Śakas possess land beyond the Jaxartes (Syr Darya), then the Śakas cross the river and live with the Sogdians in Sogdiana, then come the Asii, the Pasiiani, the Tocharians and the Sakaraukas, obviously leaving Śakas and Sogdians behind where they have been and occupy Bactria at the expense of the Graeco-Bactrians.

• Strabo *Geographika* 11.8.2, text Radt 2004,3: 341f., comm. Radt 2008,7: 280-282; transl. Jones 1928,V: 259+261, Radt 2004,3: 341+343:

οἱ μὲν δὴ πλείους τῶν Σκυθῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Κασπίας θαλάττης ἀρξάμενοι Δάαι προσαγορεύονται, τοὺς δὲ προσέφους τούτων μᾶλλον Μασσαγέτας καὶ Σάκας ὀνομάζουσι, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους κοινῶ μὲν Σκύθας ὀνόματι, καλοῦσιν, ἰδίᾳ δ' ὡς ἐκάστους· ἅπαντες δ' ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ νομάδες.

μάλιστα δὲ γνώριμοι γέγονασι τῶν νομάδων οἱ τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἀφελόμενοι τὴν Βακτριανὴν, Ἄσιοι καὶ Πασιανοὶ καὶ Τόχαροι καὶ Σακαραῦκαι ὀρμηθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς περσίας τοῦ Ἰαξάρτου τῆς κατὰ Σάκας καὶ Σογδιανούς, ἣν κατεῖχον Σάκαι.

“Die meisten Skythen werden, angefangen beim Kaspischen Meer, Daer genannt, die weiter östlich als diese wohnenden nennt man Massageten und Saken, die übrigen bezeichnet man allgemein als Skythen und einzeln mit ihren besonderen Namen; alle sind größtenteils Nomaden.

Am bekanntesten sind von den Nomaden diejenigen geworden die den Griechen Baktrien entrissen haben: die Asier, die Pasiனர், die Tocharer und die Sakarauker, die von dem anderen Ufer des Iaxartes her kamen, das den Saken und Sogdianern gegenüber liegt und im Besitz der Saken gewesen war.”

Note ed.: The Pasiāni have found various explanations. Haloun (1937: 244, fn. 2, with further literature) emends *πασιανοι* to *η ασιανοι*; Humbach & Faiss (2012: 21 § 7.2.2) see Pashtuns at work: “In the sequence *Asioi kai Pasiānoi, Pasiānoi*, immediately following *Asioi*, is suspect of being corrupted by perseveration from *Parsiānoi* < °*Parsyānoi*, that tribe thus being ancestors of the modern Pashtūns (< **Parśuvāna*-), speakers of Pashtō (< **Parsuva*-) in Afghānistān south of the Hindukush, see Parsia city Ptolemy *Paropanisadai* 6,18,5 read °*Parsya* and Parsiana city 6,18,4 read °*Parsyana*.” – What reads *Σακαραῦκαι* in most editions is *Σακάραυλοι* καὶ in the manuscripts. Piankov (2010: 99, fn. 10) explains this as a copyist’s emendation from an original *σακαραυκα και Αυλαγα* in line with the map of Ptolemy (Humbach & Ziegler 2002: fig. 30). – There seems to be some confusion; where Trogus had Asiani and Sakaraukas intruding we see here *asioi* and (*p*)*asiānoi* and Sakaraukas at work, as if the *asiani* split in two in the course of transmission, not to speak of the Aulagas. In addition, the Tocharians are included as if they were Scythians too. Probably we have to do with a series of population shifts, roughly contemporary, along different paths, merged into one short summary.

• Strabo *Geographika* 11.8.4; Jones 1928,V: 263, text Radt 2004,3: 342, comm. 2008,7: 282, transl. 2004,3: 343:

Σάκαι μέντοι παραπλησίας ἐφόδους ἐποίησαντο τοῖς Κιμμερίοις καὶ Τρήρσι, τὰς μὲν μακροτέρας, τὰς δὲ καὶ ἐγγύθεν. καὶ γὰρ τὴν Βακτριανὴν κατέσχον καὶ τῆς Ἀρμενίας κατεκτήσαντο τὴν ἀρίστην γῆν – ἦν καὶ ἐπόνυμον ἑαυτῶν κατέλιπον τὴν Σακασηγὴν – καὶ μέχρι Καππαδόκων, καὶ μάλιστα τῶν πρὸς Εὐξείνῳ, οὓς Ποντικοὺς νῦν καλοῦσι, προῆλθον.

“Die Saken jedoch unternahmen ähnliche Kriegszüge wie die Kimmerier und Trerer, teils in die Ferne, teils auch in die Nähe. Haben sie doch Baktriane besetzt, das beste Land Armeniens erobert – das sie auch nach sich Sakasene benannt hinterlassen haben – und sind bis zu den Kappadokern, besonders denen am Schwarzen Meer, die man jetzt Pontiker nennt, vorgedrungen.”

Note Fussman: Strabo is evidently right. But that means that the Chinese text quoted in §§ 018+019 saying that “When the Ta Yueh-chih turned west, defeated and expelled the king of the Sai, the latter moved south and crossed over the Suspended Crossing” is at least partly wrong because it means they went *all* to Gilgit over the Pamirs, where indeed Litvinsky dug out their tombs, but it seems very unlikely that large numbers of Sai with their flocks and belongings could have successfully negotiated the Suspended Crossing and narrow passages of Hunza and Gilgit let alone finding enough pasture there for their animals.

Note ed.: On Strabo mixing different Saka groups cf. Herrmann 1914: 1789a.

032 – Years 140-135 BC: Progress in the exploration of the Western Regions by the Han emperor

Content: Unsettled by the constant attacks of the Xiongnu, the Han put their hope into an alliance with the Yuezhi.

SJ 123.1a-1b (3157), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·1》; Watson 1993,II: 231:

大宛之跡，見自張騫。張騫，漢中人。建元中為郎。

“Zhang Qian was the first person to bring back a clear account of Dayuan (Ferghana). He was a native of Hanzhong and served as a palace attendant during the *jianyuan* era (140-135 BC).”

是時天子問匈奴降者，皆言匈奴破月氏王，以其頭為飲器，月氏遁逃，而常怨仇匈奴，無與共擊之。

“At this time [Jianyuan 建元 period, 140-135 BC ed.] the emperor questioned various Xiongnu who had surrendered to the Han and they all reported that the Xiongnu had defeated the king of the Yuezhi people (Indo-scythians) and made his skull into a drinking vessel.

As a result the Yuezhi had fled and bore a constant grudge against the Xiongnu, though as yet they had been unable to find anyone to join them in an attack on their enemy.”

033 – Year 123 BC: Fight between the Parthian Artabanus I with Scythians and the “Thogarii”

Context: Parthia under Phraates II (ca. 138-127 BC) was attacked by Scythians from ca. 130 BC onwards. Phraates' nephew and successor Artabanus I inherited the problem. The relationship between Scythians and Tocharians is unclear, they could have been allies or simply neighbours. Artabanus seems to treat them as allies.

• Justinus, *Prologus libri 42*, liber 40.2.2.1; Arnaud-Lindet 2003:

In huius locum Artabanus, patruus eius, rex substituitur. Scythae autem contenti uictoria depopulata Parthia in patriam reuertuntur. Sed et Artabanus bello Tochariis inlato in brachio uulneratus statim decedit.

“À sa place, son oncle paternel Artaban devient roi. Quant aux Scythes, satisfaits de leur victoire, ils rentrent dans leur patrie après avoir ravagé la Parthie. Cependant Artaban, ayant déclaré la guerre aux Tochariens est blessé au bras et meurt aussitôt.”

034 – Year 119 BC: The Parthians take revenge for Artabanus I by attacking the Guti

Context: The “Tocharians” of the previous paragraph are the “Guti” in the account of the counter attack.

- Babylonian Astronomical Diary, no. 118A, Obverse A19-A22 dealing with October 119 BC; Sachs & Hunger 1996: 320-321, Assar 2006: 139:

A18: '(...) (...) [ITU] BI U₄-15-KÁM^{kuš}SAR^{meš} šá¹Ar-šá-ka-a LU[GAL a-na]

A19: ^{lí}pa-ḫat⁷ E^{ki} u ^{lí}pu-li-ta-an šá ina E^{ki} SAR^{meš} ina É IGI-TUḪ-A šá-su-ú ak-ka-i šá ^{lí}ER-ÍN^{meš} MAḪ^{meš} NIGIN^{ma} ù ana LÚ.NE GIN^{meš} ana UGU DUMU LUGAL u ^{lí}ERÍN^{meš}-šú šá URU^{meš} S[UD^{meš}]

A20: [šá KUR G]u-ti-i^{<ki>} šá a-na¹Ar-ta-ba-na-a ŠEŠ-iá GAZ^{ku} ù as-di-ir ana tar-ši-šú-nu u LÚ.NE e-pu-šú it-ti-šú-nu GAZ^{tu}₄ GAL^{tu}₄ ina lib-bi-šú-nu áš-kun e-lat 2 LÚ x [.....]

A21: [x x x] ul GAZ^{meš} u DUMU LUGAL u ERÍN^{meš}-šú TA LÚ.NE BAL^{ma} a-na ár-ki-šú a-na KUR^{meš} dan-nu-tú iḫ-ḫi-is ITU BI ^{lí}GAL ERÍN^{meš} šá [ana] UGU 4 ^{lí}GAL ERÍN^{meš} áš-šú seke-[ri[?]] (...)]

A22: [x x x] x TUḪ-ir ITU BI ^{lí}Ar-ba-a-a GIM šá ina IGI^{ma} KÚR^{meš} ḫu-ub-tu SAR^{meš} ITU BI ¹Ar-šá-ka-a LUGAL ina URU^{meš} SUD^{meš} šá KUR Gu-ti-i^{ki} áš-šú U LÚ.NE D[Ú[?] x]

“A18: (...) That [month], the 15th, a leather document of King Arsaces

A19: [which] was written to the governor of Babylon and the (Greek) citizens who were in Babylon, was read in the House of Observation; accordingly, many troops assembled and went to fight against the son of the king and his troops of the [remote] cities

A20: [(of the G)utian (country) who killed my brother Artaban, and I set up (troops) opposite them, and fought with them; a great killing I performed among them; except two men [(...)]

A21: [(...)]were not killed; and the crown prince and his troops fled from the fight and withdrew to the difficult mountains. That month, the general who is above the four generals for damming[?]

A22: [(...)] (...) departed. That month, the Arabs became hostile, as before, and plundered. That month, King Arsaces [went] to the remote cities of the Gutian country in order to fight.”

Note de la Vaissière: Guti might be an archaizing name from the Babylonian past applied to new invaders from Bactria, or an attempt to transcribe the ancient pronunciation of Yuezhi, /nguti/. We do not have enough data to decide. If this is an actual transcription, then the relationship Yuezhi/Tokhar might be similar to the Turk/Oghuz or Rouran/Avars or Mongols/Tatars ones, i.e. the relationship between the name of the confederation layer (Yuezhi) and that of the actual peoples or tribes (Tokhar).

035 – Years before 121 BC: From South-West China to Bactria via India prior to the mission of Zhang Qian

SJ 123.6b (3166), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·14》; Thierry 2005: 515 § 29, Watson 1993,II: 235f.:

騫曰：“臣在大夏時，見邛竹杖、蜀布。問曰：‘安得此？’大夏國人曰：‘吾賈人往市之身毒。身毒在大夏東南可數千里。其俗土著，大與大夏同，而卑溼暑熱云。其人民乘象以戰。其國臨大水焉。’

“‘When I was in Daxia,’ Zhang Qian reported, ‘I saw bamboo canes from Qiong and cloth made in the province of Shu [both in Sichuan ed.]. When I asked the people how they had gotten such articles, they replied: ‘Our merchants go to buy them in the markets of Shendu.’ Shendu, they told me, lies several thousand *li* southeast of Daxia. The people cultivate the land and live much like the people of Daxia. The region is said to be hot and damp.

The inhabitants ride elephants when they go into battle.

The kingdom is situated on a great river.”

Note ed.: The cloth must have had shown particular decorative patterns and the bamboo objects must have been skilfully plaited to appear as of Chinese origin to Zhang Qian. Since cloth and bamboo objects can be transported without much effort such long-distance trade appears quite credible.

036 – Year 121 BC: Han ambassador Zhang Qian describes the Yuezhi land in northern Bactria

SJ 123.3b (3161), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·10》; Zürcher 1968: 360, Thierry 2005: 490 § 3, Watson 1993,II: 234:

大月氏在大宛西可二千里，居媯水北。
其南則大夏，西則安息，北則康居。

“The Great Yuezhi live some 2,000 or 3,000 *li* west of Dayuan, north of the Gui (Oxus) River.

They are bordered on the south by Daxia, on the west by Anxi (Parthia), and on the north by Kangju.”

Note Hill: The 2000 or 3000 *li* equal 832 to 1247 km - which would place them well into Sogdiana.

• SJ 123.3b (3161), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·8》; Zürcher 1968: 360, Thierry 2005: 510, texte 26, Watson 1993,II: 234:

康居在大宛西北可二千里，行國，與月氏大同俗。控弦者八九萬人。與大宛鄰國。國小，南羈事月氏，東羈事匈奴。

“Kangju is situated some 2,000 *li* northwest of Dayuan. Its people likewise are nomads

and resemble the Yuezhi in their customs. They have 80,000 or 90,000 skilled archer fighters. The country is small, and borders Dayuan. It acknowledges nominal sovereignty to the Yuezhi people in the south and the Xiongnu in the east.”

Note CHING: Here to translate 行國也 as “a nation of nomads” is satisfying, whereas the translation of the first passage of HS in § 007 as “a land of nomads” is not so appropriate. Literally *xingguo* 行國 means “moving country / union of tribes”. Thus I would translate the passage in § 007: “The Great Yuezhi was originally a moving people / country. It changed its location following its herd. The way of life is the same as that of Xiongnu, ... etc.”

• QHJ 《前漢紀·孝武皇帝紀三·8》; ed.:

康居國在烏孫西北，去長安萬二千三百里，戶十三萬，口六十萬，與大月氏同俗。

“Kangju country is situated north-west of Wusun. Distance to Chang-an 12.300 *li*. Families 130.000, heads 600.000. Habits similar to the Great Yuezhi.”

Note ed.: In QHJ Wusun has taken the place of Dayuan. On the geography and misconceptions regarding Kangju cf. Shiratori 1902: 121ff.

037 – Year as before: Han ambassador Zhang Qian describes Daxia as different from Yuezhi and without king

Note ed.: No mention of the five *yabghus*. Cf. Chavannes 1907: 189, fn. 2: “En 128 av. J.-C, l’ambassadeur chinois Tchang K’ien trouva les Ta Yue-tche encore au Nord de l’Oxus; ils avaient déjà soumis le Ta-hia, mais ils n’occupaient pas encore son territoire; c’est donc postérieurement à cette date qu’ils envahirent le Ta-hia.”

• SJ 123.2b (3160), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·5》; Thierry 2005: 497, texte 15, Watson 1993,II: 233:

騫身所至者大宛、大月氏、大夏、康居，而傳聞其旁大國五六，

“Zhang Qian in person visited the lands of Dayuan, the Great Yuezhi, Daxia, and Kangju, and in addition he gathered reports on five or six other large states in the neighbourhood.”

• SJ 123.5b (3160), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·6》; Thierry 2005: 509, texte 24, Watson 1993,II: 233 = quotation from the ambassador’s report:

其北則康居，西則大月氏，西南則大夏，東北則烏孫，東則扞采、于窳。

“Dayuan is bordered on the north by Kangju, on the west by the kingdom of the Great Yuezhi, on the southwest by Daxia, on the northeast by the land of the Wusun, and on the east by Yumi and Yutian (Khotan).”

• SJ 123.5b (3164), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·13》; Watson 1993,II: 235:

大夏在大宛西南二千餘里媯水南。
其俗土著，有城屋，與大宛同俗。
無大君長，往往城邑置小長。
其兵弱，畏戰。善賈市。

“Daxia is situated over 2,000 *li* southwest of Dayuan, south of the Gui River. Its people cultivate the land and have cities and houses. Their customs are like those of Dayuan.

It has no great ruler but only a number of petty chiefs ruling the various cities. The people are poor in the use of arms and afraid of battle, but they are clever at commerce.”

及大月氏西徙，攻敗之，皆臣畜大夏。
大夏民多，可百餘萬。
其都曰藍市城，有市販賈諸物。
其東南有身毒國。

“After the Great Yuezhi moved west and attacked and conquered Daxia, the entire country came under their sway. The population of the country is large, numbering some 1,000,000 or more persons.

The capital is called the city of Lanshi (Bactra) and has a market where all sorts of goods are bought and sold.

Southeast of Daxia is the kingdom of Shendu (India).”

Note Hill: Lanshi actually refers to the Baghlan area - not Bactra. See Hill 2009: 558-575 (1st Edition, Appendix K): The city of Lanshi, Headquarters of Daxia; Hill 2015: 162-184 (2nd Edition, Vol. II, Appendix N): Lanshi (Baghlan) - principal city of Daxia and later the Yuezhi.

Note Grenet: In Grenet 2006: 328-330, I have tentatively suggested that Lanshi (**lâm-dieg*) is Khulm.

Note de la Vaissière: In all the sources we have Bactra is always the main emporium between Xinjiang, India and Iran, from Ptolemy to the Persian geographers. This was a much bigger town, see its archaeological remains.

Note Fussman: The text from the *bagolango* at Surkh Kotal knows only three cities, [Lraf, Andez, Astilgan ed.], Baghlan is not mentioned.

Note ed.: Hill (as above) discusses all proposals at length and adduces ample important secondary literature. Bactra provided the most important gate to Paropamisadae and India for people coming from northern Iran. For trade from the East towards the South, however, a more eastern site would be more useful, avoiding an unnecessary detour through Bactra. When Alexander had crossed the Hindu Kush he urgently needed fresh

provisions and at the same time he had to avoid narrow passes in pursuit of Bessos (Engels 1980: 97, fn. 110). After crossing the Hindu Kush he first found rest at Drapsaka (Arrian 3.29, “Adrapsa” in Strabo 15.2.10). Today, the first wide plain providing ample food is the one around Pul-i Khumri including Baghlan to its North. Misplaced on the geographical grid and without a road, the city occurs as *drepsa metropolis* on Ptolemy’s maps of Sogdiana (Humbach & Ziegler 2002: fig. 30), an idea copied from there by Ammianus Marcellinus (23.6.59). In its stead (Humbach, Ziegler & Faiss 2002: Fig. 28), an entry “Báctra basíleon” has its place where the Drapsaka of Alexander’s itinerary can be expected. In Ptolemy’s *Geography*, Drepsa is located in Sogdiana and the only city there which carries the name *metropolis*. With Báctra basíleon at a place where Drapsaka/Drepsa/Adrapsa can be expected, combined with a misplaced *drepsa metropolis* it seems that the confusion is again partly on the side of Ptolemy. Continued marches downstream from this Báctra basíleon lead to the next station Eukratidia, situated where Kunduz is now. Ptolemy (6.11.6) has the city in the land of the Varnoi (Humbach-Ziegler 1998: 159; 2002: fig. 28), which leads us to Warnu, written $\omega\rho\nu\omicron$ in a contract written in Bactrian, edited by Sims-Williams (1997), who with good arguments favours an identification of $\omega\rho\nu\omicron$ with Kunduz. According to Arrianus (*Anabasis* 29.1), Alexander marched from Drapsaka via Aornus to Bactra, which accords with the marching time and the need for further provisions (Naveh & Shaked 2012: 20). Once Aornos, Warnu, the Varnoi and the place called Valvālij by Arabian geographers (Minorsky 1932: 340) are accepted as referring to Kunduz then there is no possibility to escape the conclusion that Drapsaka must have its place between Kunduz and the Hindu Kush. When the Rabatak inscription speaks of the “fortress” of the city, using its Bactrian form $\lambda\rho\alpha\phi\omicron$, then again a situation in the large plains of Pul-i Khumri and Baghlan appears most natural, as it keeps the way short for those who took the figures of the gods from Rabatak into safe custody. Even accepting Drapsaka/ $\lambda\rho\alpha\phi\omicron$ as a possible centre in Kushan times it may still be debated if it has anything to do with the Chinese Lanshi, the capital of the Yuezhi. A derivation from the Bactrian $\lambda\rho\alpha\phi\omicron$, spoken /*raf*/, seems easier than to link it to $\beta\alpha\gamma\omicron\lambda\alpha\gamma\gamma\omicron$, /*bag-lang*/, “image temple”, the base of the place-name Baghlan. The topic has recently been reconsidered by Naveh & Shaked (2012: 19-21, 180) on the basis of Aramaic documents unavailable before. On their basis the identification of Aornos and Qunduz has gained in plausibility and paved the way for searching Drapsaka at a place different from Kunduz. In short: Lanshi and a site in the Baghlan/Pul-i Khumri plain would make a good pair.

038 – Year as before: For Zhang Qian the court of the Yuezhi was not in Bactria

SJ 123.2a (3158), 《史記·列傳·大宛列傳·2》; Watson 1993, II: 232 = HS 61.1a–1b (2688); Thierry 2005: 498, texte 16, Hulsewé 1979: 209:

騫從月氏至大夏，竟不能得月氏要領。

SJ: “From the court of the Yuezhi, Zhang Qian travelled on to the state of Daxia, but in the end he was never able to interest the Yuezhi in his proposals.”

039 – Year 129 BC or earlier: The Yuezhi rule southern Bactria

HS 96A.15a (3891), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·42》; Zürcher 1968: 365, Hulsewé 1979: 121:

大夏本無大君長，城邑往往置小長，
民弱畏戰，
故月氏徙來，皆臣畜之，
共稟漢使者。

“Originally Ta Hsia had no major overlord or chief, and minor chiefs were frequently established in the towns.

The inhabitants are weak and afraid of fighting,

with the result that when the Yüeh-chih migrated there, they made them all into their subjects.

They provide supplies for Han envoys.”

040 – Further contact with Chinese envoys

Context: Who are “they” who “provide supplies”? The Yuezhi or the inhabitants? A third possibility, the Yabghus, was put forward during the symposium through a proposal of Prof. Odani (cf. Odani 1999) that the text as usually printed cuts one sentence into two by an arbitrarily inserted full stop. Continuing the last sentence given above with the following one, the Yabghus come into the game through the double syntax of *zhe* 者, which could either be a part of the “Han messenger” 漢使者, or a pronoun 者, “those who”, stressing an idea that it is the Yabghus who help the Chinese messengers “gemeinsam” (de Groot 1926,II: 96, Humbach 1966: 27).

HS 96A.15a (3891), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·42》; Zürcher 1968: 365, Hulsewé 1979: 121:

共稟漢使者。
有五翕侯：

“They provide supplies for Han envoys.

There are five Hsi-hou.”

Note CHING: As both ways of understanding the syntax are legitimate a conclusion could only be found through a statistical analysis of speech habits in SJ and HS. Unfortunately, both 漢使 and 漢使者 are quite commonly used for indicating Chinese envoys and a pronominal use of 者 after 漢使 is attested as well. Personally, I prefer the two sentence solution.

Note ed.: Only the text after the full stop occurs in the parallel in the QHJ 《前漢紀·

孝武皇帝紀三·8》 showing that as early as in the times of Xun Yue 荀悅 around AD 200 the words preceding it were, at least by this author, not considered to be part of the sentence.

041 – Year ca. 109 BC: Connections with the West firmly established

• SJ 110.21a (2913), 《史記·列傳·匈奴列傳·47》 [(with context) ≈ HS 94A.15a (3773)]; Watson 1993,II: 156, Giele 2011: 293:

漢又西通月氏、大夏，

“The Han also communicated with the Yüeh-chih 月氏 and Ta-hsia 大夏 in the West (...)”

• HS 96A.7b (3885), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·33》; Hulsewé 1979: 107:

自武帝始通屬賓，

“Communications started from (the time of) Emperor Wu [140-87 BC ed.]”

042 – Year 105 BC: Han tries to put a wedge between the Western countries and the Xiongnu

SJ 110.21a (2913), 《史記·列傳·匈奴列傳·47》 [≈ HS 94A.15a (3773)]; Watson 1993,II: 156, Giele 2011: 293f.:

漢又西通月氏、大夏，又以公主妻烏孫王，
以分匈奴西方之援國。

“The Han also communicated with the Yüeh-chih 月氏 and Ta-hsia 大夏 in the West and also married the King of the Wu-sun 烏孫 to a [Chinese] princess in order to separate the states in the West supporting the Hsiung-nu [from the Hsiung-nu].”

043 – Years 87ff. BC: The Large (group of) Yuezhi have a king?

Context: At the site of Xuanquanzhi 懸泉置 “Xuanquan post”, near Dunhuang 敦煌, a military outpost was excavated from 1990 to 1992. It yielded thousands of bamboo slips with official messages, also mentioning plain Yuezhi, the Large (group of) Yuezhi and also messengers of Yabghus of the Yuezhi. Most of the slips date to the time of 111 BC to AD 29. An excellent survey of the site and the activities around it is contained in Sanft 2009 with a range of further literature. The texts are contained and studied in HU & ZHANG 2001 and HAO & ZHANG 2009.

A first report in a Western language was made by Grenet 2006, copied and translated by Hill (2009: 589 = 2015,II: 186). Grenet (2006: 339) knows of two texts, allegedly dated 87-49 and 84-73 BC, speaking of:

- “des ambassadeurs du «roi des Dayuezhi» 大月氏王”;
- and one more from 43 BC mentioning:

大月氏雙靡翮侯使者萬若

“Wanruo, l’ambassadeur du *xihou* de Shuangmi des Dayuezhi”;

• and a third text from 37 BC speaking of:

送 . . . 大月氏休密翮侯

“escorter / raccompagner (...) *xihou* de Xiumi des Dayuezhi”.

Note ed.: The last text mentions the Yabghu of Wakhan, if we take Xiumi/Homi 休密 in the sense of the Chinese pilgrims.

Note CHING: To put the *terminus post quem* of the attestation of 大月氏王 “roi de Dayuezhi” in the Xuanquan tallies as 87 BC is now far from certain. According to HAO and ZHANG’s recent edition (2009, esp. pp. 201-207), 17 Xuanquan tallies bear a reference to the Da Yuezhi 大月氏 and/or Xihou 翮侯. The earliest one with the mention of Xihou was written in 43 BC, i.e. the one about Wanruo quoted by Grenet. However, one must be aware of the fact that the two attestations of 大月氏王 reported in 2004, then referred to by Grenet (2006: 339) have been reread differently in 2009. HAO & ZHANG read only one tally with the mention of 大月 氏王 (= Tally 31 in HAO & ZHANG 2009: 207). The editors explain that it is impossible to give a precise date of this fragmentary text, because the pit where it was found contained 611 tallies. Among them, 72 pieces mention the year, but their dates are highly variable, from the reign of the Zhao 昭 Emperor (87-74 BC) to very late ones.

Note Fussman: It is impossible to know whether the Ta-Yue-zhi king is already a Kushan or not. Ta-Yue-zhi means both Yue-zhi and Kushan in these texts.

Note ed.: It seems significant that in early but undateable years there was a “king” of the Yuezhi and only *yabghus* in the years 43 and 37 BC. The end of the monarchy and the installation of a polyarchical Yabghu system may well be the point in time which is at the base of the expression “more than 100 years later”, used for the take-over of Kujula (§ 056).

The phase of the Yabghus

044 - Year ca. 80 BC [date = speculation ed.]: The installation of the five Yabghus

Questions: Did the five Yabghus exist from the time northern Bactria was invaded by the Yuezhi, or did they only later supplement or replace the Yuezhi king who, according to Zhang Qian, was still present when the land was occupied? What is the reason for the number five? Is it the topography of northern Bactria imposing a partition into five regional administrations, or was northern Bactria later supplemented by four comparatively large additional regions? It all depends on the interpretation of the toponyms.

• HS 96A.15a (3891), 《漢書·傳·西域傳·42》 = QHJ 《前漢紀·孝武皇帝紀三·8》; Zürcher 1968, 365, Thierry 2005: 498, texte 16, Hulsewé 1979: 121;