

SOME REMARKS ON THE CHINESE “BULGAR” (Ottawa)

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The ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity of the Buluoji, an ethnic group in China during the Northern dynasties, is examined to show that it represented the Altaic remnants of the Xiongnu confederation with an Iranian/Caucasian admixture. The author solves an age-old puzzle regarding the name Buluoji which exemplifies the epochal three-way interactions between Chinese, Altaic and Iranian cultures. Evidence suggesting possible connections between the Buluoji and the European Bulgars is presented, with implications for other issues, particularly the long-hypothesized Xiongnu-Hun equation.

Introduction

In the early sixth century when the Tuoba Wei dynasty disintegrated in the wake of the Six-Garrison Revolt, there appeared in northern China a Hu “Barbarian” group with the name Buluoji (middle Chinese pronunciation b’uo lak-kiei)[1], also known as Jihu. The late Peter Boodberg was the first to identify this ethnonym with that of the Volga and Danube Bulgars[2]. Boodberg’s insightful paper unfortunately does not seem to have attracted much attention.[3]

At the time, the etymology bulga, “to mix, to become mixed” for the ethnonym Bulgar, which Boodberg followed regarding the Buluoji in China without providing substantiating data, was well-entrenched. Boodberg took Bulgar as a generic name, and considered the Bulgars in northern China just another “mixed” race, not at all related to the other Bulgar groups. Given the generally accepted view that various Bulgars groups in Europe and Inner Asia were not only related but also of the same origin, it seems worthwhile to reexamine this issue of the Bulgars of China, which also has implications for several topics related to the Xiongnu.

The origin and ethnic/linguistic affiliation.

A summary account of the Buluoji is found in Chapter 49 of Zhou shu,[4] which has been copied or abridged by several classic encyclopedic sources, namely Tong dian, Taiping huanyu ji, Tongzhi, and Wenxian tongkao.[5] Other brief passages related to the group are scattered in Bei shi, Bei Qi shu, Zhou shu and other minor sources. Lin Gan’s compilation of Xiongnu materials [6] represents perhaps also the most complete collection of Buluoji data, while Zhou Yiliang and Tang Changru - have each done an extensive study on the Zahu, of which the Buluoji was regarded as a component [7].

According to Zhou shu[8], the Buluoji were minor or subordinate tribes (bie zhong) of the Xiongnu, and were the descendants of the followers of Liu Yuan, the founder of the Former Zhao Dynasty (304—329), generally regarded as a Xiongnu regime.

This earliest account appears to be at least partially accurate, namely in that the Buluoji contained in great part the remnants of the Xiongnu confederation that had not been absorbed by the Xianbei. Besides the Zhou shu testimony, additional evidence includes:

(1) As convincingly demonstrated by Tang Changru [9], the geographic distribution of the Buluoji as reflected in various records well matched that of the Southern Xiongnu during the Western Jin.

(2) Several Buluoji clan names, particularly that of the leading clan Liu, plus Huyan and Qiao, were well-recognized Xiongnu names [10].

(3) The Bei Qi shu biography of Poliuhuan Chang, whose surname was but a variant of Buluoji, states unambiguously that the clan descended from the Xiongnu [11].

(4) As will be further examined, the Buluoji belonged to a group or groups of “barbarians” loosely called Zahu during the Northern dynasties. According to Tang Changryu, the name Buluoji actually superseded the use of the latter. Tang therefore concludes that the Buluoji represented the final amalgamation of the Zahu [12]. Most Zahu groups can be linked with the Xiongnu in Chinese records. Indeed this old Xiongnu connection will have other implications to be discussed later.

On the other hand, to judge by the Zhou shu’s biezong characterization, it is difficult to argue that the Buluoji represented the original core clans of the Xiongnu or their direct, “pure-blood” descendants [13]. On the racial side, there were strong indications that the Buluoji included a conspicuous European or Caucasian admixture:

- (1) Taiping huanyu ji quoted a Sui source on a contemporary popular saying about the Buluoji being “Hu-headed but Han-tongued” [14]. This shows that, after apparent sinification (Han-tongued), the Buluoji still maintained their distinct physical appearance.
- (2) Several Buluoji and Shanhu (see later) clan names like Bai and Cao were of typical Central Asian origin [15].
- (3) If as Tang Changru has concluded that the Buluoji was the final amalgamation of various Zahu tribes, then it naturally included the Jie, well known their Caucasian physical features [16].
- (4) Another argument for the Buluoji’s Caucasian traits is the rather sudden change of the primary meaning of the Chinese character hu from referring to the Xiongnu to designating the Caucasian Central Asians, which happened to coincide with the appearance of the Zahu. This issue will be examined later. On their lifestyle, the Zhou shu account showed that the Buluoji were mostly settled at the time, and partly engaged in agricultural pursuits. However, one may not attribute this entirely to their apparent sinification (adopting Han dress and burial customs, etc., as reported by Zhou shu), or the Central Asian elements among them.

Modern archeology has revealed that, contrary to classical records, both the Xiongnu and European Huns had maintained substantial agricultural activities [17].

Despite the conspicuous Central Asian elements, we have solid evidence for the Buluoji’s steppe cultural heritage: Tang huiyao, Jiu Tang shu and Xin Tang shu all classified Buluoji music as belonging to the Beidi “Northern Barbarians”. Further, it was grouped together with that of the Tuyuhun and the Xianbei[18]. The latter two groups’ Altaic affinity is beyond doubt. Moreover, Tang huiyao and Jiu Tang shu both noted that the music was of the “cavalry” genre. Given the familiarity and popularity of Central Asian music during the Tang era[19], these official records separating Buluoji music from that of the “Western barbarians” are strong proof of the Buluoji’s nomadic past.

The Buluoji’s steppe cultural identity is further strengthened by the limited linguistic data. A few surviving words of the Chinese Bulgars all seemed to be Altaic, Turkic in particular. Boodberg had identified kuli “slave”, and keye “fort”. This author notes that the Buluoji word weiya (jwei-nga), referring to some kind of wetland tree[21] can be identified with middle Turkic yiyac “wood”, “tree or shrub”[22]. Another toponym Kutuo, identified by Boodberg with Mongolian word kuda ,[23] was also from the area populated by the Buluoji[24]. We may add yet another piece of data: in describing the music of the “three northern-barbarian states” namely the Xianbei, Tuyuhun and Buluoji, Jiu Tang shu states that their songs sung the name kehan “khaghan” frequently, and this was particularly the case with a chapter called Boluohui an apparent variant of the root buluoji.[25] Thus we learn that the Buluoji called their ruler khaghan, a distinct Altaic trait, though the title itself may not be of Altaic origin.

To summarize, the Buluoji/Bulgars of China appear to be a group consisting of the remnants of the Xiongnu confederation that were not absorbed by the succeeding Xianbei conglomerate, with a conspicuous Europoid admixture. Their culture and linguistic affinity seems mostly Altaic.

The ethnonym Buluoji

Boodberg listed some ten attestations of this name in Chinese records, to which we can add many more. Karl Menges, in a rare citation of Boodberg's work (in a foot note!), pointed out that the Chinese character *ji* showed a terminal *-r* in the last syllable (which he again attributed to an oral communication from Boodberg)[26], in support of Menges' proposed archaic Altaic collective suffix *-gir*, attested most prominently by tribe and clan names. The ethnonym *Bulgar* represents but a variant of this suffix.

We would like to point out more prominent evidence for the *-r* ending in the name *Buluoji*, which in fact creates a direct correspondence between the names *Buluoji* and *Bulgar/Bular*. This is the *-n* ending in the variants *Poluohan/Poliuhan*, *Buliuhan*, *Buluojian* and *Bulugen*, attested mostly in personal names. It is well-known that Chinese *-n* was frequently used to transcribe a foreign *-r/l*. [27] The most prominent example is perhaps the ethnonym *Xianbei*, widely believed to be a transliteration of **Srbi* or **Serbi*. [28] For example of terminal *-r*, see Pulleyblank's reconstruction **Taxwar* of the name *Dayuan*. [28] To the argument that this usage may have "died out" in the Middle Ages, let us point out numerous medieval attestations like "Samarkand" in *Wei shu* and "Farghana" in *Tongdian*. [30] In fact such usage continued to be observed during the Yuan and the Ming, in names like for *Altai* and for *Altan Khan*. Even today, it is still seen in modern Cantonese, amply demonstrated by the official Chinese transcription for the *Timor Islands*, and for *Brunei*. Also in our particular case, we note numerous *-han* endings, whose medieval pronunciation directly indicates a consonant *or gh* in the final syllable.

Because they lived in mostly mountainous areas, the *Buluoji* was also known as *Shanhu*, "Mountain Barbarians". The direct evidence for this designation is that *Bei Qi shu* consistently uses this name to identify the *Buluoji* figures and tribes mentioned in the *Zhou shu*. *Hu Sanxing*, the Yuan historian and annotator of the masterpiece chronicle *Zizhi tongjian*, also made this observation. [31] This identification later provides an interesting piece of data on the *Buluoji*'s possible connections beyond China.

On the origin of the name *Bulgar/Buluoji*, since the early days of the seemingly unanimous opinion on *bulga* meaning "to mix, to become mixed", several alternative etymologies have been proposed. [32] Of particular interest is the etymology "Aufwähler, Aufwiegler" (подстрекатель, смутьян), now preferred by *J. Nmeth* who had earlier advocated the "mixed" theory. One notes that the *Buluoji* and in general the *Zahu* (see below) had been a perpetual "security problem" for the *Tuoba Wei* dynasty and its successors, namely the Northern Zhou and the Northern Qi (also the Sui and the early Tang) to control. The histories of these dynasties were filled with incidents of the *Zahu* insurrections and revolts, as well as the government's continued efforts to subdue or pacify them. Indeed even during the early Tang, the appearance of the name *Buluoji* was almost always related to such upheavals. The fact that the tribes were constant "trouble-makers" was expressed explicitly by *Zhou shu*. The perennial strife between the *Zahu/Buluoji* and the *Tuoba* (including its successors the Zhou and the Qi) appeared to be a carry-over of the old Xiongnu-Xianbei rivalry. [33] In this connection, "trouble-maker" in the eyes of the rulers of the Northern dynasties seems a plausible etymology for the name *Buluoji* too.

However, the *Buluoji* belonged to a group or groups of "barbarians" loosely called *Zahu* during the Northern dynasties. There are precedents for *zahu* to mean "miscellaneous

barbarians”. [34] But in our case, Zahu was evidently the short for zazhong hu [35] which in all likelihood should be understood in the context of “mixed races”. The best example is the case of An Lushan, a self-acknowledged son of a Turk father and an Iranic/Sogdian mother. [36] An was thus called a zazhong hu, translated by Pulleyblank to none other than a “hu barbarian of mixed race”. This plus the observation that the Buluoji represented the final amalgamation of such “mixed barbarians” [38] leads the author to submit that Chinese data strongly supports the traditional “mixed race” etymology for the ethnonym Bulgar/Buluoji. [39] One may note that this etymology is still preferred by a great many authorities, including the acclaimed Russian dictionary of Old Turkic *Древнетюркский словарь* and *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*. [40]

The rooster puzzle

A perplexing story recorded in *Bei Qi shu* shows a peculiar explanation of the name Buluoji. Gao Zhan, the ninth son of Gao Huan and the fourth sovereign of the Northern Qi, had a xiaoming “childhood name” Buluoji. Around the year 561 while Gao Zhan was in a precarious position of Right Chancellor under his elder brother Emperor Xiaozhao (Gao Yan), the following children’s ballad reportedly circulated in the Northern Qi: There lives in the Zhongxing Temple an old white fu bird. Whose harmonious singing was earnestly listened to everywhere.

Monk rings the bell at night after hearing it. [41] As the spin doctors of the day explained in *Bei Qi shu*, the Chancellor’s residence was exactly where the Zhongxing Temple used to be, and the fu bird, “meaning rooster”, referred to Gao Zhan’s childhood name Buluoji. The ballad was therefore an omen of Gao Zhan’s ascendance to the throne.

Divination based on children rhymes was a time-honoured tradition (or much-exercised political manoeuvre) in China. Of particular import in this case is the political connotation of the rooster. Starting in the Northern dynasties, a golden rooster became a token of the imperial voice, especially in proclaiming an imperial amnesty a standard act to celebrate the enthronement of a new emperor. [42] Actually there was a similar story during Gao Zhan’s reign as the Northern Qi emperor in which one of his prince nephews was similarly linked with a rooster in a children rhyme, presaging the latter’s imperial fortune. Not to take any chances, Gao Zhan had the nephew immediately put to death. [43]

On this key link the rhyme allegedly prophesying Gao Zhan’s enthronement has two difficulties. First, character fu “duck”, or more generally “water bird” [44] has never been attested as referring to a rooster — there does not appear any way to explain this peculiar allusion within classical Chinese literature and linguistics. [45] Secondly, if Zhan’s childhood name Buluoji was to serve the allusion, as *Bei Qi shu* explicitly stated, an extensive search of ancient and modern Turco-Mongol sources yields no clue to the word implying or pertaining to “rooster”.

Despite his examination of the case of Gao Zhan regarding this xiaoming, as well as his other detailed study of the Gao regime, Boodberg completely avoided this “rooster story”, which had a conspicuous appearance in *Bei Qi shu* regarding Gao Zhan’s accession to the throne. This author admits to have been too baffled for years for a solution to the aforementioned double puzzle until he realizes the Central Asian elements in both the Northern courts and the Buluoji.

We submit that an answer to both difficulties is found in the Iranic root mwr for “bird”. [46] In old and middle Chinese, labials m- and b- were often interchangeable, particularly in transcribing non-Chinese words and names. Examples include muxu <*buxsux “alfalfa”, moheduo “hero”, [47] Pojie (b’uo-tsia) mole (mualk) wan (miwan) became Turkic ban and wu (mu) became bou. [50] In our particular case, at least four Chinese transcriptions

of the root bula start with m-. The bul- > mwr- equation leads to the identification of fu “water bird” with buluoji, partially answering our double puzzle on linking fu with Gao Zhan’s childhood name.

Here mwr- is a fairly general root for “bird”. What about the specific “rooster” insinuation which in fact was the gist of the prophecy? The answer lies in the twelve- animal cycle, widely in use in Inner Asia at the time. Corresponding to the Chinese year of rooster, the Sogdians used none other than the word mryy.[51] This point makes the Iranic/Sogdian equation a perfect answer to the original double puzzle. It is both intriguing and telltale that the fu’s “rooster” allusion would be derived from an Iranic word.

Despite the popularity of the twelve-animal cycle among the steppe people within the sphere of Chinese cultural influence (an issue to be further examined later), and the above Iranic equation, Gao Zhan’s childhood name Buluoji was not chronographic, as he was recorded to have been born in 538, a “horse” year.[52] In other words, though the contemporary “campaign managers” went to an Iranic/Sogdian word in order to demonstrate the divine political message, Gao Zhan’s “barbarian” name derived from elsewhere, perhaps either in Gao clan’s questionable ethnic background, or that Gao Zhan himself had been a “trouble-maker”.[53] While this case is an interesting example of the three-way interaction between the Altaic, Iranic and Chinese cultures, it does not seem to suggest yet another etymology for the ethnonym Bulgar. A related issue is the heavy Iranic elements in the ethnic northern regimes of the era, which were largely ignored by the sinocentric classic historiography.[54]

Were the Buluoji related to European Bulgars?

If the name Buluoji is a cognate to Bulgar as Boodberg has proposed, then a natural question is: were the Bulgars of China in any way related to their European and Inner Asian namesakes? Boodberg apparently did not think so. However, we think there are several indications suggesting such a link:

- (1) The use of the animal cycle as shown by the famous Bulgarian Prince’ List.[55] Though the underlying dizhi cycle was attested as early as in Shang oracle bones, there has been some doubt on the true origin of the animal “mapping”. However, in addition to the observation that some of the dizhi names appear to be pictographs of the corresponding animals,[56] recent archaeological discoveries have shown that the animal cycle had been in use in China no later than the Warring States era, much earlier than what was thought before.[57] The Austroasiatic link uncovered by Jerry Norman[58] further makes the China-to-steppe transmission route beyond dispute. The apparent historical fact remains that other Inner Asian peoples namely the Turks, the Tibetans, the Mongols, and various ancient Indo-Iranic groups in the region who used the animal cycle had all been in direct contact with the Chinese cultural world. Louis Bazin for example has documented this fact in the case of the Turks.[59] It would be very hard to explain why the Bulgars, of whose calendar the animal cycle was a centerpiece, should be an exception.
- (2) The Arab author al-Nadim’ s statement on the Bulgars having once used the Chinese script,[60] suggesting again that they had had direct contact with the Chinese. Indeed this testimony corresponds well with the Zhou shu description that the Buluoji leaders knew quite a bit of [Chinese] writing, yet their language was “like that of barbarians”.[61]

- (3) Chinese data suggest Central Asian elements in the Buluoji, which is further strengthened by this author's Sogdian solution to the "Rooster puzzle". Given the prominent role the Sogdians and other Central Asians had played in the spread of Manichaeism, particularly to the Turkic-speaking people,[62] al-Nadim's statement of the Bulgars having used "Manichaean scripts"[63] now has added implications.
- (4) Omeijan Pritsak has suggested that the most prominent "Geschlecht" (род) Dulo on the Bulgarian Princes' List be identified with the Xiongnu clan name Tuge (Old Chinese pronunciation *d'o-klak).[64] The leading clan of the Buluoji in China was repeatedly identified as Liu. This clan name among the Xiongnu and the Zahu has been proven to refer to none other than Tuge.[65] The prestige carried by the clan name Tuge may indeed be partially based on this connection, for Liu was the name of the Han imperial house and the Xiongnu nobles' adoption of the name was allegedly based on them being the descendants of some Han imperial princess. Bei Qi shu which was compiled during the Tang). Along this line we have identified an intriguing datum. In the year 751, Tang troops led by Korean general Gao Xianzhi suffered a decisive defeat at the hands of the Arabs and local Turk groups on the banks of Talas River.[66] As a result, many Chinese became prisoners of war and were sent to the heartland of the Abbasid Arab empire. According to Joseph Needham, this event much accelerated the spread and transmission of Chinese technologies and inventions, paper-making in particular to the rest of the world.[67] One such prisoner Du Huan eventually made it back to China via the ocean trade route and recorded his travels based on this extraordinary experience, which included, inter alia, an eyewitness report on Chinese craftsmen working in the Abbasid Arab capital Aqla (Kufa).[68] Among a few precious remaining pieces of Du Huan's since lost memoir Jingxing ji preserved Tongdian compiled by Du Huan's clansman Du You, we find the following passage:

In the countries I traveled through overland [Central Asia to the Abbasid capital], there was but one kind of Mountain Barbarians, yet several different religions.[69] After years of living in Central and West Asia, Du no doubt was very familiar with the cultures and linguistics of this region.[70] Therefore his choice of the name Shanhu instead of the standard Tang-time designation Hu for Iranic Central Asians is intriguing. In our view Du's wording has both racial and linguistic underpinnings, and very possibly reflects the flourishing of, if not the Buluoji/Bulgars per se, at least many Turkicized Iranic groups in the area,[71] which was consistent with the subsequent Turkicization of much of the region. On the other hand, we indeed have an earlier record on Buluoji persons travelling westward into the Ruanruan (Jua Juan) territories,[72] demonstrating the Buluoji's exchanges with people beyond China

The above items may not be conclusive, but they suggest that the issue merits further study. As for long-distance migrations undertaken by the Inner Asian nomad tribes, the Tuyuhun and the Volga Kalmyks are two well-known examples,[73] among many others.

The Xiongnu and the ethnonym Hu

Despite centuries of extensive interactions with the two Han dynasties and their successors, both in violent warfare and through peaceful exchanges, the ethnic and linguistic identity of the Xiongnu has remained to this day an enigma. The question is: Were the

Xiongnu Mongols? Or Turks? Or neither? Ever since Shiratori Kurakichi started the research on this subject early this century, the issue for quite some time was the choice between a Mongolian and a Turkic identity for the Xiongnu.[74] But Edwin Pulleyblank in 1963 advanced the theory based on linguistic data that the Xiongnu might not be Altaic at all. Likely enlightened by Otto Maenchen-Helfen's earlier observation,[75] Pulleyblank proposed that the Xiongnu language belonged to the Yenissei group, with Kettish as its modern relative.[76]

Related to this issue is an old yet elusive puzzle in Xiongnu-Chinese relationships, namely the change of the primary meaning of character hu. From the two Han dynasties on down until well into the Southern-Northern dynasties, Hu as an ethnonym had primarily referred to the Xiongnu (and members of their confederation).[77]

But during the Tang, Hu became largely reserved for Central Asians. This issue has attracted the attention of several prominent scholars. None has provided a satisfactory explanation for this rather sudden change in the meaning of character hu. [78]

Though the Buluoji could not with certainty be traced back to the "hard-core" Xiongnu, the disintegration and dispersion of the latter under the growing Xiabei pressure and dominance apparently resulted in the appearance of various Hu groups leading to the summary Zahu designation with the Buluoji as its last representative. This process is relatively well documented in Chinese sources.[79] While we still cannot answer with certainty the question of ethnic identity, the reconstruction of the process of its break-up inevitably leads to the inference that the original Xiongnu federation had a major Europoid component.[80] Maenchen-Helfen has also demonstrated the increasing Caucasian elements in the Xiongnu during and after the Han Dynasties.[81] At least, we can conclude with much certainty that the end-product of the break-up of the Xiongnu Empire included many Altaicized Caucasian groups. The Hephthalites, the War-Huns and/or the White Huns, etc., represented perhaps such groups who migrated westward,[82] whereas the Buluoji (and other Zahu groups) remained behind. It is worth noting that from early on, the Turks were also known to have descended from the Zahu.[83]

We submit that the ethnonym Buluoji/Bulgar may serve as the missing link for the change of the primary meaning of the hu designation, which happened to coincide with the appearance of the Zahu in the Northern dynasties. The fact that Buluoji/Bulgar was the last name for the Zahu was not a mere accident. As we have examined earlier, the evolution of the Zahu included the increasing Caucasian elements in the former Xiongnu groups. With the continued intermixing between the Xiongnu remnants and the Indo-Europeans both native in northern China and from Central Asia, coupled with the westward movement of many such groups, the name Hu acquired in a relatively short time its new primary designation. Besides, this may also have been a harbinger of Central Asia's turkicization.

The Xiongnu and the Huns

Another related topic is the enormously popular identification of the European Huns with the Xiongnu in Chinese records. W. B. Henning's study of the "ancient Sogdian letters",[84] particularly about the Sogdian name xwn, was once acclaimed as having finally proved such a link.[85] But Maenchen-Helfen soon pointed out the problems in this "final proof".[86] Denis Sinor has also discounted this evidence and considers the theory yet unproven.[87] The possible connection between the Buluoji in China and the European Bulgars may provide some fresh arguments on this old question.

As we have demonstrated, the link between China's Bulgars and the Xiongnu confederation is well-substantiated. On the other hand, the European Bulgars' connection to the Huns has also been recorded ever since the nomad's first appearance in European history.

In fact contemporary European sources kept equating the Bulgars with the Huns.[88] At the very least, the Hun-Bulgar connection was much more tangible than the Hun-Xiongnu identification. Therefore, if the Buluoji in China can be successfully identified with the European Bulgars, the prolonged controversy on the Hun-Xiongnu identification may for the first time be examined using more than just a plausible phonetic correspondence.

Final remarks

In addition to their connections and implications beyond China discussed in this essay, the Buluoji also had an enormous impact on Chinese history, political as well as cultural, which went largely unrecognized in the traditional sinocentric historiography. We have already touched upon the Buluoji's political role. The best example must be the Six-Garrison Revolt which eventually brought down the Tuoba Wei regime. It was first started and led by a person named none other than Poulihan Baling.[89] What may have been neglected even more was the Buluoji's significant contributions to China's cultural and religious heritage. For example arguably the most prominent real-life figure in the vast Dunhuang grotto arts the Buddhist monk Liu Sahe who was of well-documented Buluoji ethnicity.[90] But perhaps the least noted case was the author Lu Fayuan of the single most important historical treatise on Chinese phonology, namely *Qieun*. [91] Here the clan name Lu was but the sinified form of Buliu, yet another variant of the root Buluoji. Even today, one cannot but marvel at the great accomplishments of such a presumably "marginal" "barbarian" group in medieval China.

[1] The old and middle Chinese pronunciations are largely based on Bernhard Karlgren *Grammata Serica Recensa*, Stockholm: The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Bulletin No. 29, 1957; reprint, Goteborg, 1964.

[2] Peter Boodberg, Two notes on the history of the Chinese frontier — II. The Bulgars of Mongolia, *HJAS*, 1 (1936) 291—307.

[3] To this author's knowledge, Karl Menges appears to be the only scholar to quote Boodberg's said work in two essays: *Etymological notes on some Pacanag names*, *Byzantion* 17 (1944-45) 256—280, and *Altaic elements in the Proto-Bulgarian inscriptions*, *Byzantion* 21(1951) 85—118.

[4] Beijing 1971 edition, pp. 897—99.

[5] Du You, *Tongdian*, Shanghai 1935, 197.1067; Yue Sh , *Taiping huanyu ji*, Taipei 1963, 294.646—47; Zheng Qiao, *Tongzhi*, Shanghai, 1935, 200.3208—09; Ma Duanlin, *Wenxian tongkao*, Shanghai 1936, 342.2686.

[6] *Xiongnu shiliao huibian* , Beijing 1985

[7] Zhou Yiliang, *Beichao de minzu wenti yu minzu zhengce*, in *Wei-Jin Nanbeichao shi lunji*, Beijing 1963, 116—176. Tang Changru, *Wei-Jin za-hu kao*, in *Wei-Jin Nanbeichao shi luncong*, Beijing 1962, 382—450.

[8] Zhou shu's other theory, namely that the Buluoji descended from the Rong and Di of the Spring and Autumn period, can be disregarded. See Zhou Yiliang, *op.cit.*, p. 151. It was popular among the Chinese historians of the time to trace the Northern nomads back to ancient "barbarians" in early Chinese records. As Pulleyblank has stated in *The Chinese and their neighbours in prehistoric and early historic times*, in David N. Keightley ed., *The Origins of Chinese civilization*, Berkeley 1983, 411—66, such claims usually had little substantiation. See also Jaroslav Prusek, *Chinese Statelits and the Northern Barbarians in the Period 1400—300 B.C.*, Dordrecht 1971, 222—23.

[9] Tang Changru, *op.cit.*, p. 443.

[10] Yao Weiyuan *Beichao huxing kao*, Beijing 1958, pp. 277 and 288.

- [11] Li Baiyao, *Bei Qi shu*, Beijing 1972, 27.378.
- [12] Tang, *op.cit.*, p. 444.
- [13] However, *Jiu Tang shu*, Beijing 1975, 29.1072, did call the Tuyuhun “Murong biezhang”.
- [14] *Taiping huanyu ji* 35.292.
- [15] Zhou Yiliang, *op.cit.*, pp. 151—53, went as far as to conjecture that the Buluoji were originally Central Asians from the Western Regions. Tang Changru pointed out that Zhou’s claim could not be supported by the Buluoji’s geographic distribution and numerous old Xiongnu clan names.
- [16] The Jie people were said to be “high-nosed and heavy-bearded”. See Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, Beijing 1956, 98.3100. For an exposition of the Jie’s Central Asian traits, see Tan Qixiang, *Jie kao*, in his *Changshui ji*, Bei 1987, 224-33.
- [17] On the Xiongnu, see Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient Inner Asian nomads: their economic basis and its significance in Chinese history*, *JAS* 54 (1994), 1092—1126. About the Hun agriculture, see Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, Berkeley 1973, pp. 174—78.
- [18] Tang huiyao, Taipei 1963, 33.621; *Jiu Tang shu*, 29.1027; *Xin Tang shu*, Beijing 1975, 22.478—79. After the completion of this essay, the author has uncovered an interesting archeological datum regarding the Buluoji. A Tang tomb inscription, dated 705, quoted the following “old Buluoji tradition: “Watering sheep must not to be disturbed, whereas a trouble-making horse ought to be quickly eliminated”. (Zhou Shaoliang et al. comp. *Tangdai muzhi huibian*, Shanghai 1992, p. 1044.) Among other things, this old saying corroborates the notion that the Buluoji had a nomadic past.
- [19] Xiang Da, *Tangdai Chang’an yu Xiyu wenming*, Beijing 1957.
- [20] Boodberg, *op.cit.* p. 297.
- [21] *Taiping huanyu ji*, 35.293.
- [22] Mahmud al-Kashghari, *Compendium of the Turkic dialects (Turk Siveleleri Lulgati)*, edited and translated by Robert Dankoff and James Kelly, Cambridge, Mass. 1982—1985, 111. 225.
- [23] Peter Boodberg, *An early Mongolian toponym*, *HJAS*, 19 (1956) 407—08.
- [24] Please note that Pulleyblank has raised doubts on the claim that the leading elements of the Xiongnu were Altaic. See later.
- [25] *Jiu Tang shu*, 29.1072.
- [26] Karl Menges, 1951 *op.cit.*, p.87n3.
- [27] Edwin Pulleyblank, *The consonantal system of Old Chinese: Part II, Asia Major*, n.s. 9 (1963) 206—265, in particular pp. 228—229.
- [28] See for example Peter Golden, *An introduction to the history of the Turkic peoples: ethnogenesis and state-formation in medieval and early modern Eurasia and the Middle East*. Wiesbaden 1992, p. 69.
- [29] Edwin Pulleyblank, *Chinese and Indo-Europeans*, *JRAS*, 1966, 9—39.
- [30] See Feng Chengjun, *Xiyu diming*, 2nd ed, Beijing 1980. One may also see another Tang time attestation transcribing the Gandhari word *sakala, according to John Brough, *Buddhist Chinese etymological notes*, *BSOAS* 38 (1975) 581—585.
- [31] *Zizhi Tongjian*, 150.4709. That the Buluoji were also known as Shanhu has been pointed out by every author we have cited here: Boodberg, Zhou Yiliang and Tang Changru, as well as the modern encyclopaedia *Cihai*, Beijing 1980, p. 1755.
- [32] See for example, Paul Pelliot, *Notes sur l’histoire de la horde d’or*, Paris 1949, pp. 224—230; Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, Berkeley, 1973, p. 384; J. B. Rudnickij, *An etymological dictionary of the Ukrainian language*, Winnipeg 1962, 1.164—65

and Julius Németh, The meaning of the ethnonym Bulgar, in A. Rona-Tas ed., *Studies in Chuvash etymology I*, Szeged 1982, 7—13.

[33] Fang Xuanling et al., *Jin shu*, Beijing 1974, 63.1707, for example, has a telling incident showing the traditional enmity between the Tuge and the Xianbei.

[34] Chen Shou, *Sanguo zhi* Beijing 1959, 16.512. On p. 513, this was changed to zhuhu, or “miscellaneous barbarians”.

[35] For example, Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu*, Beijing 1965, 76.2463, specifically called the Xiutu cavalry zazhong huqi. The Xiutu, also known as Tuge later was identified as one of the Zahu groups.

[36] *Jui Tang shu*, 104.3213, and *Zizhi tongjian*, 216.6916

[37] *Tang shu*, 150a. 5367; Pulleyblank, *The background of the rebellion of An Lu-shan*, London 1955, p. 104nl. However, Paul Pelliot in his *Note sur les T'ou-yu-houen et les Sou-p'i*, *T'oung Pao* 20 (1921) 323—331, translated in Shen Yue, *Song shu* 96.2370, to “les tribus mélanges du Nord-Ouest”.

[38] Tang Changru, *op.cit.* p. 444.

[39] We may further observe that many newer “revisionist” etymologies for the name Bulgar seem to have been partially motivated by a sense of “political correctness” to avoid the negative connotations of the notion of a “mixed race”. But as Boodberg pointed out, this feeling was absent among the ancient steppe people.

[40] For the DTS explanation, see Nmeth’s quoted article. For the other, see Denis Sinor (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, Cambridge 1990, p. 258.

[41] *Bei Qi shu* 14.183.

[42] *Xin Tang shu*, 48.1269.

[43] *Bei Qi shu*, 11.146. See also Feng Yan, *Fengshi wenjian ji*, 4.26—27 in *Jin-Tang zhaji liuzhong*, Taipei 1963.

[44] *Shi jing*, Ode 258.

[45] *Ci Yuan*, Beijing 1988, p. 1917, in fact, can only cite the Gao Zhan story to substantiate this allusion.

[46] For ancient attestations, see Harold Bailey, *Dictionary of Khotan Saka*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1979, p. 336, and Ilya Gershevitch, *A Grammar of Manichean Sogdian*, Oxford 1954, p. 8.

[47] Lin Zhengtan et al., *Hanyu wailaici cidian*, Shanghai 1984, pp. 249, 246.

[48] Feng Chengjun, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

[49] Peter Boodberg, *An early Mongolian toponym*, *HJAS* 19 (1956) 407—08.

[50] Annemarie von Gabain, *Allturkische Grammatik*, 3. Auflage, Wiesbaden 1974, pp. 107 and 326.

[51] Harold W. Bailey, *Hvatanica*, *BSOS* 8 (1935—37) 923—34.

[52] As Boodberg discussed the case of Gao Yang in his *Marginalia to the histories of the Northern Dynasties*, II, *HJAS* 3 (1938) 225—235, errors in these dates were common.

[53] The Gao clan claimed a Han ancestry. But the family was repeatedly identified by the contemporaries as Xianbei. See Yao Weiyan *op.cit.* pp. 135—37. Tan Qixiang has suggested the possibility that the Gao was of Korean descent. See Miao Yue, *Dushi cunqao*, Beijing 1963, pp. 93—94.

[54] Both Northern Qi and Northern Zhou courts were under some form of Zoroastrian influence. See Chen Yuan *Huoxianjiao ru Zhongguo kao*, in *Chen Yuan xueshu lunwenji*, Beijing 1980, 1:303—328. Please note that the powerful Northern Zhou regent Yuwen Hu’s style Sabao (*Zhou shu*, 11.165) was likely of Zoroastrian origin too. For the bias in classic historiography regarding ethnic regimes in China, see this author’s essay *Succession struggle and the ethnic identity of the Tang imperial house*, *JRAS Series* 3,6,3 (196) 379—405.

[55] See Omeijan Pritsak's famous study *Die Bulgarische Furstenliste und die Sprache der Protobulgaren*, Wiesbaden 1955.

[56] Zhai Hao, *Tongsu bian*, Taipei 1963, 38.22.

[57] See, e.g., Yu Haoliang *Qinjian Ri shu.jishi jiyue zhu wenti* in *Yunmeng Qinjian yanjiu*, Beijing 1981, 315—357.

[58] Jeny Norman, A Note on the Origin of the Chinese Duodenary Cycle, in G. Thurgood et al. ed., *Linguistics of the Sino—Tibetan area; the state of the art*, Canberra 1985:85—89.

[59] Louis Bazin, Man and the concept of history in Turkish Central Asia, *Diogenes*, 42 (1962) 81—97, and lately his *Les systèmes chronologiques dans le monde turc ancien*, Paris, 1991.

[60] Bayard Dodge, ed. and transl. *The Fihrist of al-Nadim: a tenth-century survey of Muslim culture*, New York 1970, 1:37

[61] *Zhou shu* 49.897.

[62] Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the later Roman Empire and medieval China* 2nd ed., Tübingen 1992.

[63] Bayard Dodge op.cit. 1:37.

[64] Pritsak op.cit. p.64. This suggestion may require some qualification: Chinese data suggests an original name Xiutuge or *cio(g)-d'oklak for the name Tuge, and one may need a c-/g- >' change of the initial. But Xiutuge may well be a short form of Xiuzhu Tuge. See *Hou Han shu* 90.29 83 and 90.2990.

[65] Yao Weiyuan *Dugu ji Tuge kao*, in Lin Gan, ed. *Xiongnu shi lunwen xuanji*, Beijing 1983, pp. 69—74.

[66] For a most extensive examination of this battle and its consequences, see Bai Shouyi *Cong Daluosi zhanyi shuodao Yisilan zhi zuizao de Huawen jilu*, in his *Zhongguo Yisilan shi cunqao*, Yinchuan 1982, 56—103.

[67] Joseph Needham, *Science and civilization in China*, Vol. 1, London 1954, pp. 236—37.

[68] Paul Pelliot, *Les artisans chinois a la capitale abbasside en 751—762*, TP 26 (1928) 110-12.

[69] *Tongdian* 193.1041.

[70] For example, Du's accurate comments on Iran having been conquered by the Arabs for more than a hundred years were quoted by Du You to correct the out-of-date Chinese account of the old Sasanid Persia. See *Tongdian* 193.1042. In addition, Du's brief description of the three major religions current in the region appears quite accurate also. Two of the religions namely Daqin and Dashi can be easily identified as (Nestorian) Christianity and Islam, respectively. The third namely Xunxun (Middle Chinese pronunciation zim zim), requires some erudition. Cihai, Shanghai 1989, p. 2788, suggests that it was likely to refer to Zoroastrianism, claiming, without providing its sources, that the Arabs had called Zoroastrians "Zemzem". This author has indeed found that the famous early Arab author Abu-l Hassan al-Mas'udi had reported that a vulgar name, not for Zoroastrians but rather for their sacred book the Avesta (Bestah), was zemzemeh. See *Muruj al-Dhahab wa Ma 'adin al-Jawhar* (The meadows of Gold), edited with a French translation by C. B. de Maynard and P. de Courteill, Paris 1861—77, II.123. In view of this evidence, Du's accusation of the Xunxun being the worst offenders of sexual morality leaves little doubt that he was indeed talking about Zoroastrianism, which was famed for practicing xvaetvadatha, "next-of-kin marriage". See for example Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. II, Leiden 1982, P. 75. In fact, the pre-Islamic Iranian tradition of consanguineous marriages had been observed from Herodotus (3.31) on down including Chinese historians. *Zhou shu* 50.920 has a similar passage on Persians having "the most immoral" marriage customs among the "barbarians",

whereas Sui shu, Beijing, 1973, 83.1856 states specifically that Persians “marry their own sisters”.

[71] In fact, Du had also accurately recorded the location of the Kharzar “Turks”. See Tongdian 139.1044

[72] Li Yanshou, Bei shi, Beijing 1974, 98.3264.

[73] Thomas D. Carroll, Account of the T’u-yu -hun in the history of the Chin dynasty, Berkeley 1953, and Stephen A. Halkovic, The Mongols of the West, Bloomington 1985.

[74] Shiratori himself seemed to have hesitated between the two characterizations. See K. Shiratori, Sur l’origine de Hiong-nu, JA 202 (1923). G. I. Constantin’s work Were the Hiung-nu’s Turks or Mongols; regarding some etymologies proposed by Shiratori, Bucarest 1958, is inaccessible to this author.

[75] Otto Maenchen-Helfen, Huns and Hsiung-nu, Byzantion 17 (1944—45) 222—243. On p. 224, Maenchen-Helfen observed that there lived in Xiongnu empire the ancestors of the present-day Ket or Yenissei-Ostiaks, and some of the Xiongnu words might have been borrowed from the Proto-Ket. See also L. Ligeti, Mots de civilisation de Haute Asie en transcription chinoise, AOH I (1950), 141—185.

[76] G. Pulleyblank, The Consonantal System of Old Chinese: Part II, Asia Major n.s. 9 (1963) 206—65. It is of particular interest to note that the same Yenissei groups have also been linked, with some degrees of success, to the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family. See Sergei A. Starostin, Praeni seiskaia rekonstruktsiia i vneshnie sviazi eniseiskikh iazykov, in E. A. Aleksenko et al. ed., Ketskii sbornik III. Leningrad 1982, pp. 144—237, and Starostin, Gipoteza o geneticheskikh sviaziakh sino tibetskikh iazykov s eniseiskimi i severnokavkazskimi iazykami, in Lingvisticheskaia rekonstruktsiia i drevneishaia istoriia Vostoka: tezisy i dokiady konferentsii, IV. Moscow 1984, pp. 19—38. The Xiongnu language problem would therefore seem to have come full circle. Indeed in another essay Sino-Tokarico-Altaica: two linguistics notes, to appear in CAJ, this author has observed possible proto-Sinic linguistic connections of the Xiongnu.

[77] For Xiongnu data, see the explanation for the clan name Tiefu in Wei shu Beijing 1974, 95.2054. For hu being the general name for the Beidi “Northern barbarians”, see Jin zhongxing shu (quoted in Lin Gan, ed. 1988, 11.1046).

[78] Wang Guowei, Xihu kao and Xihu xukao, in Guantang jilin, Beijing 1959, 13.606—19. For the essays by Cen Zhongmian and Lu Simani, see Lin Gan, ed., 1983. Both Wang and Cen tried to explain for character hu’s double meaning by alleging that the Xiongnu were largely Caucasian or had an Iranian origin.

[79] For example, Jin shu, 56.1533-34 stated that the Hu of Bingzhou “had in fact been the Xiongnu”. See Tang Changru and Lin Gan for other well-documented cases.

[80] For instance, the largely Indo-Iranic Central Asian states had for a long time been under the Xiongnu’s direct control. Some had demonstrated unwavering loyalty to the Xiongnu under the Han pressure. See Denis Sinor, ed., The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia, London 1987, p. 128. Also of interest is the “blue-eye” Xiongnu portrait. See Lin Gan, ed. Xiongnu shi lunwen xuanji, p. 81. This author thinks that a potentially fruitful direction for addressing the Xiongnu ethnicity problem is to follow up on Owen Lattimore’s ingenious notion of “progressive barbarization” (a fine elaboration of this theory is given by Peter Boodberg in a 1942 lecture, in Selected works of Pete A. Boodberg, Berkeley 1979, 1—23.), and to examine the great economic and social changes in northern China in the second half of the last millennium BC which led to the simultaneous advent two empires, one agraric and one nomadic, in East Asia. Along this line, it would seem natural to find among the Xiongnu, not only Altaic and paleo-Asiatic components, but also (native) Indo-European and proto-Sinic elements (cf. note 73) which had been “progressively barbarized” and forced into nomadism by the ever-growing intensive farming in the Chinese heartland.

[81] *The world of the Huns*, pp. 369—74.

[82] For a recent survey of some of these groups, see Peter Golden, *op.cit.*, pp. 79—83.

[83] *Sui shu* 84.1862. This Zahu origin of the Turks was maintained or copied by *Bei shi* (57.3286) and *Tongdian* (197.1067).

[84] The date of the Sogdian ancient letters, *BSOAS* 12 (1948) 601—15. Please note that Henning's dating of the letters to be after the sack of Luoyang by the Xiongnu Liu Cong j (311), once universally accepted, now seems untenable after J. Harmatta's meticulous studies. The archaeological evidence for the date of the Sogdian letters, in J. Harmatta ed. *Studies in the Sources of the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, Budapest 1979, 75—90, and Sogdian sources for the history of pre-Islamic Central Asia, in J. Harmatta ed, *Prolegomena to the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, Budapest 1979, 153—65. As Harmatta has argued, the letters were more likely to describe the events of 193 when the generals of the murdered warlord Dong Zhuo called in the (Southern) Xiongnu troops for the fightings in and around Chang'an.

[85] Read for example Prusek *op.cit.* p. 16

[86] Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *Pseudo-Huns*, *CAJ* I (1955): 101—106. However, Maenchen's use of the Tuyuhun as yet another "Hun" group in his arguments after taking his cue from the Tang period shortened appellation for the group is misplaced. Chinese records have shown unequivocally that, unlike the Zahu, the Tuyuhun had an unmistakable Xianbei origin. At any rate, the Tang time pronunciation of the character hun is certainly quite different than that of xiong .

[87] *The Cambridge history of early inner Asia*, p. 179.

[88] See for example Maenchen-Helfen, *The world of the Huns*, pp. 164, 199, 381 and 431—32. Please also note the identification of the name Irnik on the Bulgarian Princes' List with and the youngest son Ernach of Attila. See Steven Runciman, *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire*, London, 1930, pp. 279—81.

[89] *Zizhi tongjian* 149.4674. This somehow can be viewed as the final revenge the former Xiongnu groups took on the Xianbei who had earlier replaced the Xiongnu as the dominating power on the steppe.

[90] Read for example Hlne Vetch, *Lieou Sa-ho et les grottes de Mo-kao*, in *Nouvelle contributions aux etudes de Touen-houang*, Genve 1981, 137—148. Vetch unfortunately was otherwise uninformed about the Jihu, as shown by her speculation that ji in Jihu referred to Kashmir (p.147n34). Liu Sahe's reported pilgrimage to India and/or the Western Regions may provide further evidence for the Buluoji's links with Central Asia.

[91] Chen Yuan, *The Ch'ieh-yun and its Hsien-pi authorship*, *MS* 1 (1935—36) 245-52
