

SOME NOTES ON DAYUEZHI, DAXIA, GUISHUANG, AND DUMI IN CHINESE SOURCES

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Daxia (大夏), Dayuezhi (大月氏), and Guishuang (貴霜) were three different countries once active in ancient Central Asia and were known to Chinese of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). There is general agreement that the kingdom of Daxia was conquered by the Dayuezhi tribes who had immigrated from northwest China and then divided the country into five parts, each governed by a Xihou (翺侯 *yabgu*).¹ One of them, the Guishuang Xihou, united all the lands of Dayuezhi and established a new kingdom of Guishuang (Kushan) which later became an Empire including a large part of Central Asia around the Amu Darya and northwest of India. However, in recent years there have been some disagreements about these peoples in Chinese academia, such as where the original homeland of Dayuezhi was, who could be identified as the Daxia people before the conquest of Dayuezhi, and whether Guishuang (Kushan), as one of five Xihou, could be regarded as a branch of Dayuezhi or Daxia. In order to further the research on these problems, relying mainly on the ancient Chinese sources the article will discuss in particular the identities of Daxia, Dayuezhi and Guishuang and the relations among them. Since Dumi (都密, Tirmidh, Termez), where Alexander crossed the Oxus (Amu Darya) to Sogdiana, was an important city in the time of these three kingdoms (possibly the capital of the Xihou of Dumi) and under the Kushan Empire, it will be a focus of some attention here for its relations with China from the Han to the Tang dynasties.

The evidence of the Chinese historical texts

The earliest, relatively extensive records about the Dayuezhi, Daxia and Guishuang are to be found in three Chinese historical books: the Historical Records, *Shiji* (史記), compiled by Sima Qian (司馬遷); Ban Gu's (班固) History of the Former Han, *Hanshu* (漢書); and Fan Ye's (範曄) History of the Later Han, *Hou hanshu* (後漢書). In order better to analyze the relations among these countries and peoples I translate the

original sources from Chinese, even though various translations of them have been published previously (e.g., Brosset 1828; Wylie 1881-82; Hirth 1917; Sima Qian 1993; Hulsewé 1979; Hill 2015).

1. The records in the *Shiji*.

Dayuezhi and Daxia were first introduced in the "Description of Dayuan" (大宛列傳) in the *Shiji*.

The Dayuezhi are west of Dayuan (大宛) by about two or three thousand *li* (里)² and are located north of the Oxus (媯水) [Wei Shui, the Amu Darya]. Daxia lies to the south, Anxi (安息) to the west, and Kangju (康居) to the north. Dayuezhi is a nation of nomads (行國) [literally, 'moving country'] wandering with their herds and practicing the same customs as those of the Xiongnu (匈奴). They have about one hundred or two hundred thousand archers as warriors. Formerly, the Dayuezhi were powerful and strong, and despised by the Xiongnu. As soon as Modu (冒頓) succeeded to the throne, he attacked and defeated the Yuezhi. When Laoshang Chanyu (老上單於) reigned as the king of the Xiongnu, he killed the king of the Yuezhi and turned the skull of the dead king into his drinking vessel. Originally, the Yuezhi tribes lived between Dunhuang (敦煌) and Qilian (祁連). After being defeated by the Xiongnu, they were compelled to move far away. They passed through Dayuan, and to the west of it attacked Daxia, subjugating the country. They then set up their royal court north of the Oxus. [Sima Qian 1982: 3161-3162]

Daxia lies to the southwest of Dayuan by over 2000 *li* and is located south of the Oxus. The people are sedentary. They live in houses in cities enclosed by walls. Their customs are the same as those of the Dayuan. There is no powerful king in the country. The cities and towns always have their own little chiefs. The soldiers there are weak and afraid to fight. Their people are skillful at trade and commerce. When the Dayuezhi tribes migrated westward, they defeated Daxia and subjected the people to their rule. The population of Daxia is more than a million. The capital is named Lanshi city (藍市城). One can find all manner of goods for sale in their markets. [Sima Qian 1982: 3164]

These descriptions suggest several preliminary conclusions: (1) the Dayuezhi tribes originated from the area between Dunhuang and Qilian; (2) later they were driven out of their homeland and migrated westward; (3) finally they settled north of the Oxus; (4) from there they subjugated the Daxia south of the Oxus; (5) while reduced to vassal status, the Daxia retained a semblance of semi-autonomy with their own capital.

2. The records in the *Hanshu*.

In the “Description of the Western Regions” (西域傳) in the *Hanshu*, Dayuezhi became the protagonist of the series of events and was described in more detail than in the *Shiji*.

The country of Dayuezhi with the city of Jianshi as its capital is 11,600 *li* from Changan (長安) [the capital of Han China]. It is not ruled by the Protector General (都護). It has 100,000 households, a population of 400,000, and 100,000 men who are qualified as warriors. To the east, it is 4740 *li* to the seat of the Protector General. To the west, one can reach Anxi (安息) [Parthia] after 49 days’ journey. To the south it borders Jibin (罽賓) [in the northwest of India]. The land, climate, agricultural products, customs, coins, and manufactured goods are the same as those in Anxi. The camels with a single hump [dromedary] are raised there.

Originally Dayuezhi was a nation of nomads wandering with their herds, having the same habits and customs as those of the Xiongnu. It had over one hundred thousand archers and became so powerful that it looked down on the Xiongnu. Formerly, the Yuezhi had lived between Dunhuang and Qilian. Modu Chanyu (冒頓單於) attacked and defeated them, while Laoshang Chanyu killed the Yuezhi king and made a drinking vessel out of his skull. The Yuezhi had to move far away. They passed through Dayuan, attacked Daxia to the west and subjugated it. Then they set up their royal court north of the Oxus.

Initially, there was no powerful king in Daxia as the cities and towns have always had their own little chiefs. The people of Daxia are weak and afraid to fight, so the Dayuezhi migrated into Daxia and made all the people there their subjects. There are five Xihou [yabgu]. All of them respect or offer tribute to the envoys from Han China. One is called Xiumi (休密) Xihou, who resides in the city of Hemo (和墨), 2841 *li* from the seat of the Protector General and 7802 *li* from Yang Guan (陽關) [Yang Pass]; a second is called Shuangmi (雙靡) Xihou, who dwells in the city of Shuangmi, 3741 *li* from the seat of the Protector General and 7782 *li* from Yang Guan; a third is called Guishuang (貴霜) [Kushan] Xihou, who lives in the city of Huzao (護燥), 5940 *li* from the seat of the Protector General and 7982 *li* from Yang Guan; a fourth is called Xidun (肸頓) Xihou, who inhabits the city of Bomao (薄茅), 5962 *li* from the seat of the Protector General, and 8202 *li* from Yang Guan; and a fifth is called Gaofu (高附) Xihou, who occupies the city of Gaofu (高附), 6041 *li* from the seat of the Protector General and 9283 *li* from Yang Guan. All five Xihou are members of the Dayuezhi. [Ban Gu 1962: 3890-3891]

By this time, Daxia had been annexed and ruled directly by Dayuezhi. Its lands had been divided into five principalities, or Xihou. The seat of the royal court of Dayuezhi was moved to the city of Jianshi (監氏, i.e. 藍市 in the *Shiji*), the former capital of Daxia.

3. The records in the *Hou Hanshu*.

The transition from the Yuezhi as wandering nomads to the sedentary Guishuang (Kushan) Empire is described in more detail in the “Description of the Western Regions” of the *Hou hanshu* (後漢書·西域傳).

The country of Dayuezhi with the city of Lanshi (藍市城) as its capital borders Anxi to the west. It takes a 49-day journey to reach there. To the east it is 6537 *li* to the seat of the governor (長史³) and 16370 *li* to Luoyang (洛陽) [the capital of the Later Han Dynasty]. It has 100,000 households, a population of 400,000, and over 100,000 men who are qualified as warriors.

Formerly, the Xiongnu defeated the Yuezhi, who were forced to migrate to Daxia and occupy it. Thereupon Daxia was divided into five Xihou: Xiumi, Shuangmi, Guishuang, Xidun (肸頓), and Dumi (都密). More than one hundred years later, Qiujuque (丘就卻), the Xihou of Guishuang, conquered the other four Xihou, established himself as their king, and named the country Guishuang. He once invaded Anxi, and took over the land of Gaofu. He then conquered Puda (濮達) and Jibin (罽賓), and annexed all their lands. After Qiujuque died at the age of more than 80, his son Yangaozhen (閻膏珍) succeeded him as the king of Gushuang. He conquered Tianzhu (天竺) and appointed a general to govern it. Since then, the Yuezhi have become a most powerful and prosperous country. All other countries call [the king of] the Yuezhi the king of Guishuang (貴霜王). The Han court, however, still calls them the Dayuezhi after their name. [Fan Ye 1965: 2920-2921]

Note in particular that Dumi is substituted for Gaofu as one of the Five Xihou and is described as a country conquered by Guishuang.

The Chinese sources are of paramount importance for historians of ancient Bactria, who, however, encounter many problems when using them to reconstruct the history of the people, places, and events. My discussion which follows concerning the origin of Dayuezhi, the identity of Daxia, and the relations among the Daxia, Dayuezhi and Guishuang, is based on my understanding of these Chinese sources and new archaeological finds.

The origins of Dayuezhi

Generally Chinese scholars agree that original location of Dayuezhi (Great 大 Yuezhi 月氏) was in the west of China, from the western part of Gansu (甘肅) province to the Tianshan Mountains of today’s Xinjiang, at least in the period before the Yuezhi were expelled by the Wusun tribes from the valley of the Ili River.

According to Japanese sinologist Fujita Toyohachi (藤田 丰八), the original location of the Yuezhi, as recorded in the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, was between Dunhuang at the western end of Gansu, and the Qilian Mountains which run south of the Hexi Corridor (河西走廊), right around the modern city Zhangye (張掖, ancient Gan Zhou). Later they were defeated by the Xiongnu and had to move westward to the land of Sai (塞地); again they were driven from there by their western neighbors, the Wusun (烏孫) tribes who were among the vassals of the Xiongnu. Hence it seems probable that the Yuezhi lived and once occupied a territory between the easternmost Tianshan Mountains and the Qilian Mountains (Fujita 1935, pp. 77-95; 1935, pp. 59-99). In other words, the Yuezhi people would have been wandering for a time in what is today Gansu Province. However, an annotation in the “Biographies of Wei Qing and Huo Qubing” (衛青霍去病傳) in the *Hanshu* indicates that Qilian means the Tianshan Mountains (天山), because the Xiongnu called Qilian “Tian” (天, sky, heaven).⁴ If so, we are dealing not with today’s Qilian, but rather with the Tianshan Mountains in Xinjiang. Alternatively, in the opinion of Professor Lin Meicun (1998, pp. 64-69), “Qilian” as a word may originate from the Tocharian language spoken by the Yuezhi. He thinks that Yuezhi were a branch of Tocharians. In that case, Qilian refers to the Kunshan (昆山), i.e. the Kunlun Mountains (昆侖山), known in Chinese documents that antedate the Qin and Han dynasties. In the *Shiji*, “Qilian” should just be the modern Qilian Mountains and Dayuezhi should be the Tochari of the classical documents in Greek.

However, Professor Yu Taishan⁵ has a different idea about the location of Dunhuang and Qilian: Dunhuang had not been set up as a county (郡 *jun*, prefecture) at that time when Zhang Qian (張騫), the first envoy who had been sent to the Western Regions by Emperor Han Wudi (漢武帝, 140-87 BCE), returned from Daxia in 126 BCE. Therefore, “Dunhuang” refers to the modern Qilian Mountains in Gansu because it had been mentioned as “敦薨” (Dunhong) in the *Classic of Mountains and Rivers* (山海經, *Shan Hai Jing*) (Shan 2011, p. 70), dating from the Warring States Period (475[or 453]-236 BCE). Yu accepts the identification of Qilian with the modern Tianshan, and suggests the original place of Yuezhi people should be located between the Qilian Mountains of today’s Gansu and Tianshan Mountains as well as the Altai Mountains in Xinjiang (Yu 2012, pp. 88-92). In other words, his conclusion is similar to that of Fujita Toyohachi (except in the matter of identifying the so-called Dunhong Mountains with the Qilian Mountains – see below).

Apart from the texts cited above from the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, the biography of Zhang Qian in the *Hanshu* provides more detailed and clearer information on

the homelands of Dayuezhi and the complicated relation between Yuezhi, Wusun and Xiongnu. It is Wusun that had been conquered by the Xiongnu. then became their vassals, and finally drove Dayuezhi out of Wusun and forced them to escape westward:

The king of Wusun is called Kunmo (昆莫). His father Nandoumi (難兜靡) [and his people] originally lived with Dayuezhi as neighbors in the lands between Qilian and Dunhuang. Wusun is a small country. Dayuezhi attacked Wusun, killed the king Nandoumi, and occupied the land of Wusun. Wusun people took refuge with the Xiongnu. Kunmo is son of the dead king had been recently born... and was brought to Xiongnu... When he came of age, the Chanyu (單于) [the highest ruler of the Xiongnu confederacy], the ruler of Xiongnu, gave him his father’s people ... By that time, Yuezhi had been defeated by the Xiongnu and moved westward to attack the king of Sai (塞王). The king escaped far away and his land was annexed by Yuezhi. Since Kunmo had become powerful, he asked the Chanyu to permit him to revenge for his father. So he marched westward and defeated Dayuezhi. Dayuezhi had to migrate westward again and into the land of Daxia. [Ban Gu 1962: 2691-2692]

The Yuezhi are generally considered to be related to the Indo-Europeans who probably came into the west of what today is China during the second millennium BCE. Mummies with Europoid features have been unearthed in the Taklamakan Desert of Xinjiang, buried there nearly 4000-3500 years ago.⁶ Are they related to the later Yuezhi? The answer is not certain.⁷ But some of the same or similar names of races such as Yuezhi (月氏), Yushi (禺氏), and so on, were also mentioned as early as in the Western Zhou period (西周, 11th-8th century BCE). Their locations were to the north or the northwest of China.⁸ This evidence may help us to resolve the problem of the origin of Dayuezhi.

The identification of Dunhuang (敦煌) with today’s Qilian Mountains by Yu Taishan might be problematic. In his opinion (2012, p. 89), the county or prefecture of Dunhuang was probably established in 111 BCE, which would mean that Zhang Qian could not have mentioned the name of the place as Dunhuang in his original report to the emperor. Yu takes it for granted that Sima Qian might have substituted Dunhuang for the Dunhong (敦薨) provided by Zhang Qian. However, his only proof for this hypothesis is to cite a mountain named Dunhong in the legendary *Shan Hai Jing*. That of itself is hardly enough to infer that the place name introduced first by Zhang Qian was not Dunhuang but Dunhong. In fact, according to the description of Dunhong in the *Shan Hai Jing*, this mountain seems to be located to the north and northeast of the Kunlun Mountains. Even if Qilian could be identified with this “Dunhong,” Yu’s argument cannot deny the fact that the Dayuezhi originally lived in this area that was

covered by the county or prefecture of Dunhuang set up 15 years after Zhang Qian's return in 126 BCE.

The identity of Daxia

Daxia, the farthest country Zhan Qian reached, had been subjugated by Dayuezhi when he arrived there in 128 BCE. But it is strange that Zhang Qian did not indicate the original location of Daxia as he did for Dayuezhi. Why? What relationship is there between this Daxia and the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom?

Yu Taishan thinks Daxia might be also an ancient people with the same name who once lived in the northwest of China; later, they immigrated into Bactria. The routes taken by Daxia were similar to those later followed by Dayuezhi, first to the Ili (伊犁河) and Chu River (楚河) valleys, before establishing their own country in Bactria. He identifies Daxia with the Tochari, one of the four Scythian nomad groups which "took away Bactriana from the Greeks" as mentioned by Strabo (1988: 11.8.2) and assumes Daxia could be a transliteration of Tachari (for his detailed arguments, see Yu 2012, pp. 46-53, 62-66). This inference implies: (1) it is Daxia not Yuezhi who conquered the Greek Bactria; (2) so-called Tochari can be identified only with Daxia, not with Yuezhi.

In response, I have several observations:

First, the absence of any indication of the origin of Daxia in the *Shiji* means that Zhang Qian and Sima Qian (whose knowledge about Daxia derives from the former) could have not known its origin. Maybe what Zhang Qian gleaned from the natives was that the origin of Daxia had no relationship to China and it was a country that had been established long ago in its current location. Had he known Daxia originated from China, surely he would have referred to that fact as he did in his description of Dayuezhi. So, in the eyes of Zhang Qian, there was no connection between the Daxia in Bactria and any people who had lived in China.

Yu Taishan's identification of Daxia with Tochari is also problematic. True, Dayuezhi once occupied the Sai land and Sai people had to move westward. However, could Daxia be identified with one of the Sai tribes? According to the *Hanshu*, the king of Sai and his tribes were forced southward to pass through Xuandu (悬度, the Hanging Pass) into Jibin (罽宾) (Ban Gu 1962: 3901). There is no indication that they passed or settled in Daxia.

Another Chinese scholar, Lei Haizong (2002, p. 352), suggests the name of Daxia came from Daha (Daae, Dahae), one branch of the Scythians. However, this identification too may need to be reconsidered, because these Dahae nomads seemed to have lived along the east of the Caspian Sea as far as Hyrcania as a separate

tribe that co-existed with the eastern Massagetae and Sacae. They had never occupied Bactria or founded their country there (Strabo 1988: 11.8.2).

Therefore, we have to look for other way to resolve the problem of the identity of Daxia. It is possible that, in order to indicate clearly to the emperor the farthest country he had reached, Zhang Qian borrowed this name from an earlier Chinese book in which a homonymic country located in the north or northwest of China had been mentioned (Huang 1996, p. 355). No matter what the origin of Daxia's name could be and who had established it, Daxia as a country actually existed in Bactria long before Zhang Qian arrived. Then what can be the relationship between this Daxia and the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, and who eventually occupied it?

In my opinion, the four tribes mentioned by Strabo should be Scythians who lived in the steppe north of the Syr Darya and who often invaded the lands controlled by the Greeks. When Syrian King Antiochus III entered Bactria in 209 BCE in order to re-establish control of this satrapy, Euthydemus, then King of Bactria, defended his own position, arguing that the northern nomads were their common enemy. If he were not recognized as King of Bactria, "neither of them would be safe; for considerable hordes of Nomads were approaching." In fact, one tribe of Scythians had invaded Hyrcania near Bactria (Polybius 1993: 11.39; 10.48). Thus it can be seen that the successive raids of nomads from the steppe was actually a serious threat to the Greek kingdom. Modern archaeology and numismatics support the conclusion that King Eucratides I of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom died in ca. 145 BCE (Justinus 1853: 41.6.1-5). When Zhang Qian arrived in Bactria (Daxia) in 128, Daxia had already been subjugated by Dayuezhi.

It is thus possible that those four Scythian tribes might have invaded Bactria and even stayed there for a short time. However, they did not conquer this kingdom completely, and at least a large part of them must have passed through the Hindukush and eventually settled in the south of Afghanistan and the southwest of Iran, thence known as Seistan. Since it is clear from the Chinese sources that Daxia was conquered by Dayuezhi, could we identify Dayuezhi with one of the four tribes? This seems to be possible if, contrary to Yu Taishan, we regard the Tachari as Dayuezhi rather than Daxia. In later Chinese sources, Bactria was called Tuhuoluo (覩貨邏, 吐火羅), where Dayuezhi and later Kushans (one of the Xihou of Dayuezhi) ruled for centuries.

Judging from our current knowledge of the sources and recent research, I would venture the hypothesis that, whether the Dayuezhi were one of the four tribes

or another nomadic tribe from the northwest of China, it was they who delivered the *coup de grâce* to the weak Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. The Dayuezhi departed from the land of Sai in ca. 176 BCE.⁹ We cannot know exactly when they arrived north of the Amu Darya via Da Yuan, but it was before Zhang Qian reached Dayuezhi and Daxia in 128-126 BCE, within two decades of the death of Eucratides I. The Bactrian Greeks still had not retreated entirely to India; and the rule of Greeks in eastern Bactria continued until ca. 130 BCE (Bopearachchi 1991, p. 453). Zhang Qian remarked that “There is no powerful king in the country. The cities and towns have always their own little chiefs. The soldiers there are weak and afraid to fight.” This is precisely the political situation in Bactria after Eucratides I was overthrown. So the hypothesis that Greek rule in Bactria was ended by Dayuezhi seems to be justified.

The location of the Five Xihou

The location of the Five Xihou is controversial. Were they divided only in the land of Daxia in the south of the Oxus or in all lands of Dayuezhi along the two sides of the Oxus after Daxia had been annexed by the latter? Or were they first established in the north of the Wei River (the Oxus, Amu Darya), then expanded south to the Daxia Zhang Qian visited? There are different lists of the Xihou in the *Hanshu* and *Hou hanshu*: in the former, the five Xihou are Xiumi, Shuangmi, Guishuang, Xidun, and Gaofu; in the latter, Gaofu has been replaced by Dumi [Ban Gu 1962: 3891; Fan Ye 1965: 2921]. Which list is more believable?

Most Chinese scholars understand the evidence of these texts to mean that the dynasty of Guishuang was established by one branch of Dayuezhi because the Guishuang was one of the five Xihou who belonged to Dayuezhi. But Yu Taishan points out that the five Xihou were divided in the land of Daxia, namely Bactria in the south of the Oxus (even including the eastern mountainous area, that of the so-called Tochari) after it was annexed finally by Dayuezhi. Later Guishuang, one of the five Xihou of Daxia, conquered the other four and their previous suzerain Yuezhi (i.e. Puda, 濮達, mentioned in the *Hou hanshu*, exterminated by Qiujiuque [Fan Ye 1965: 2921]), and founded the Guishuang Empire [see Yu 2012: 53-62; 2005, p. 122 n.314-p. 125 n. 336; p. 283 n. 226; pp. 283-284 n. 232; p. 285 nn.234, 237]. Yu Taishan claims that Dumi should be excluded from the list, as the author of the *Hanshu* could not have made a mistake. There were two names of Gaofu in the Western Regions, one in the Valley of Kokcha River in the north of the Hindukush, the other in the upper valley of the Kabul River. The author of the *Hou hanshu* must have confused Gaofu as a Xihou with Gaofu as a kingdom. Thus, he wrongly thought himself obliged to substitute

Dumi for Gaofu, since the kingdom of Gaofu had been annexed by Guishuang [Yu 2005, p. 287 nn. 243-246; for Gaofu in the *Houhanshu*, see Fan Ye 1965: 2921].

Several critical remarks might be made regarding this hypothesis.

First of all, the status of Daxia and the relations between Daxia and Dayuezhi should be clarified. According to the *Shiji*, Daxia had been conquered by Dayuezhi and become its vassal, with its own capital but no powerful king. Surely Daxia must have lost its land in the north of the Oxus, because the domain of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom in its heyday would have included Sogdiana north of the river (see below). Before the arrival of Zhang Qian, Dayuezhi had subdued Daxia but occupied only the part of Daxia north of the Oxus, as is confirmed by the location of their capital there [Sima Qian 1982: 3161-3162, 3164]. However, in the *Hanshu* and *Hou hanshu*, Daxia as a vassal of Dayuezhi disappeared. Instead, one united and larger kingdom of Dayuezhi (including Daxia) emerged in Bactria. The capital of the Dayuezhi kingdom also was moved to the city of Jianshi (Lanshi), the former capital of Daxia [Ban Gu 1962: 3890-3891; Fan Ye 1965: 2920-2921]. This means that Dayuezhi had occupied all the land of Daxia before the later envoys of Han China arrived. The five Xihou who went to pay their respect or tributes to the Chinese envoys thus belonged to Dayuezhi, not to Daxia.

Secondly, Yu Taishan fails to take into account the difference in the territories of Daxia in different periods. As mentioned above, whether or not Daxia was the original Greek kingdom or a new country founded by Daxia (Tochari), as Yu assumed, it should have included all lands of the Bactrian kingdom, which controlled not only Bactria but also Sogdiana. Even if the Parthians at one time took from the Greeks two provinces (Turiva and Aspionus) in the west of the Bactrian kingdom (Strabo 1988: 11.11.2), the land between the Oxus and the Jaxartes (Syr) rivers (at least the land from the Iron Gate south to the Oxus¹⁰) was under the rule of Greeks in Bactria for nearly two centuries from Alexander the Great to Eucratides I. Hence the original lands of Daxia were as large as the Bactria the Greeks once controlled. That the Daxia Zhang Qian visited was located in the south of the Oxus was just the result of the first conquest of Daxia by Dayuezhi.

The *Hou hanshu* indicates quite clearly that Daxia, substituted for Dayuezhi, was divided into five Xihou: “Originally Yuezhi was defeated by Xiongnu and was forced to immigrate into Daxia and occupied it. Then Daxia was divided into five Xihou: Xiumi, Shuangmi, Guishuang, Xidun, and Dumi.”

Citing the newest archaeological evidence, French scholar Frantz Grenet (2006) argues these Xihou could have originally settled north of the Oxus River in an arc from the Wakhsh Valley to Termez around the Hisar-Baisun-Kuhitang ranges and later expanded to the south of the Amu Darya. I tend to agree with him, for his hypothesis seems not to contradict the Chinese records, if we regard the Daxia first mentioned in the *Shiji* as the remains of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. It is possible that Dayuezhi could have divided the new domain into five Xihou as soon as they subjugated Daxia (the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom); later they removed their court to the south part of the country and completely annexed it. The domains of the five Xihou certainly also increased after they penetrated this new land. So it seems reasonable to infer that the five Xihou should have been the five largest tribes of Dayuezhi; among them, Guishuang later become so powerful that it could defeat and unite the other four Xihou and finally establish an empire. Because Guishuang (Kushan) once was one part of Dayuezhi, the country they founded was still called Dayuezhi, the original title of it in China, and their kings were called by other countries kings of Yuezhi (Fan Ye 1965: 2921).

The status of Dumi (Termez).

In Chinese sources, the *Hou hanshu* contains the first mention of “Dumi” (Termez) as one of the five Xihou. As mentioned above, the author of *Hou hanshu* explicitly stated that he had corrected the mistake in the *Hanshu*. He pointed out clearly that there was only one Gaofu country in the Western Regions. Since Gaofu had been an independent and large kingdom in the southwest of Dayuezhi, and had never been subjected to Yuezhi before, it could not be one of the five Xihou. So he substituted Dumi for Gaofu [Fan Ye 1965: 2922]. Although Yu Taishan denies Dumi was one of the five Xihou, he speculates that the royal court of Dayuezhi might have settled in Dumi in the early period of the conquest of Daxia by Dayuezhi, or it might be as a seat of another Xihou after Dayuezhi moved their capital to the south of the Oxus. However, he does not indicate which Xihou it would be [Yu 2012, p. 56; 2005, p. 283 n.231].

As the hypothesis of Grenet indicated, it is also possible to infer from the Chinese sources that in fact Dumi should be listed as a Xihou:

- There is no evidence to confirm the existence of two Gaofu. The description of Gaofu in the *Hou hanshu* was more detailed and concrete than in the *Hanshu*. That “Gaofu was in the southwest of Dayuezhi, also one large country” means it was located in south of the Hindukush. Both in the pronunciation of the name and the location given in the Chinese records, Gaofu

could be identified with “Kopphen” in Greek, i.e. the upper valley of the Kabul River. When the five Xihou were divided, Dayuezhi had subjugated only Bactria and had not invaded south of the Hindukush. If we wish to locate the Gaofu Xihou mentioned in the *Hanshu*, we must search in Bactria.

- Dumi has been identified by archaeological finds as one garrison in the early Hellenistic period, although there are some disputations about its founders and names.¹¹ Later it became an important city and a Buddhist center in the Kushan period and even a capital of the Kushan Empire [Leriche and Pidaev 2007, pp. 209-10, and Fig. 1; Ravaut 2006]. So it is quite possible that it could have been selected as the seat of the Xihou of Dumi in the period of Yuezhi.

- Dumi played an important role in the history of Central Asia after the Kushan Empire disappeared. In the Tang Dynasty the famous Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang (玄奘, 600–664 CE) visited a city named Dami (咄蜜) in ca. 630 CE, which was located at a strategic site on the north bank of the Oxus:

Dami country has a territory over 600 li from its east to west and over 400 li from its south to north. The big capital has a circumference over 20 li but the east-west direction is long and the south-north direction is narrow. There are above ten Buddhist temples and monasteries with more than 1000 Buddhists in the city. Both stupas and statues of Buddha are more magical and efficacious. [Ji et al. 1985: 103]

This record indicates Dami was still a center of Buddhism in the first half of the seventh century, a fact that has been confirmed by recent archaeological finds [Leriche and Pidaev 2007; Fussman 2013].

Dami was also mentioned in the *New Tang History* (新唐書 *Xin tangshu*):

There is one race of Dami settling along the north of the Oxus (縛芻水, Fuchushui). Their kingdom is in a length of 600 li from its east to west. [Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi 1975: 6248]

Dami was the westernmost country that had contact with Tang Dynasty China:

From Dami down to other countries, all different races live together. Chinese name their countries after them. They have no contacts with Tang China; so the records about them are too confused and strange to be confirmed.” [Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi 1975: 6250]

Furthermore, the country of the Dami people was referred as “Daman” (怛滿) or “Damo” (怛沒):

Daman also is named Damei. To the east of it is Tuobasi (陀拔斯), to the south of it is Dashi (大食) [the Arabian Empire]. It will take a one-month journey to reach any one of the two countries. To Qilan (岐蘭) in the north of it one would reach after 20-days’ journey; to Dashi in the west of it one would reach after a one-month journey. Daman

or Damo is located in the plain of the north of the Oxus. There are a great many lions among the local animals. It borders the country of Shi (史) in its northwest, and its territory is not beyond the Pass of Iron Gate.

In the sixth year of the reign of Tianbao (天寶六年) [747 CE], the envoys of six countries including Daman and others were sent to China to offer their tributes and respect to the emperor of the Tang Dynasty. Then the emperor gave ... King of Daman Xiemei (謝沒) the title of 'Fengshun King' (奉順王) [the king who pays his homage and obedience to Tang China]. [Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi 1975: 6264]

These records indicate clearly the location, land, and special products of Damam or Damo (Termez) as well as its close relations with Tang Dynasty China. It was still a large country and once was a vassal state of Tang China at least in name. More information about the surrounding areas of ancient Termez may be found in *The Collation and Annotation of the Records on the Western Regions of the Great Tang Dynasty* (大唐西域記校注, *Datang Xiyu ji jiao zhu*) and the "Description of the Western Regions" in the *Xin tangshu*.

Preliminary Conclusion

The Chinese records are the most important and indispensable sources for the research on the origins of Daxia, Dayuezhi and Kushan and their destinies in Central Asia. Dayuezhi people came from the northwest of China and divided its domain into five Xihou after having occupied Daxia (including Sogdiana and Bactria geographically), one of which was Dumi. Daxia should be the Graeco-Bactrian Kingdom. However, when Zhang Qian arrived, it had been subjugated by Dayuezhi. Dumi, where Alexander crossed the Oxus River and a Greek garrison was located in the Hellenistic period, later might be one of the capitals of Kushan Empire and the capital of a vassal state of the Tang Empire.

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NOTES

1. “鬲侯” has two meanings in the ancient Chinese historical context: one indicates a person who was ruler of a principality, a feudal prince or a chieftain of one nomad tribe; the other designates a principality or tribe controlled by such princes or small chiefs. Those Xihou generally were established in a tribal confederacy.

2. “里” (li), a unit of length, equal to 415.8 meters in Han Dynasty China.

3. Generally, “長史, zhangshi” is an assistant official of the ministers or a higher officer in the central government in the Han Dynasty. Hill translates the title as the Chief Scribe. (Hill 2015, 1, p. 29), which is logical and acceptable. Here “zhangshi” is actually the highest official who was in charge of the Western Regions, which previously had been under a protector general (都護). When Ban Yong was appointed as a zhangshi of the Western Regions, the seat of the zhangshi, was in Liuzhong (柳中), modern Shanshan (鄯善) county of Xinjiang, China (cf. Fan Ye 1965: 2915).

4. This was indicated by annotator Yan Shigu (顏師古, CE 581–645) of the Tang Dynasty (Ban Gu 1962: 2481n. 2).

5. He is a famous expert on the ancient history of relations between China and foreign countries in Eurasia, who has articulated clearly most of the new ideas regarding

Dayuezhi, Daxia and Guishuang, his work incorporating many ideas from other Chinese and from foreign scholars.

6. Among them, the best known are the so-called “Beauty of Loulan” and the “Princess of Xiaohe”.

7. Regarding the ethnicity of these people, some scholars such as Victor Mair, J. P. Mallory, and David W. Anthony (as summarized by Philip L. Kohl), “attribute them as ancestral to the later Indo-European speaking Tocharians.” (Mair and Hickman 2014, p. 91). However, they evidently do not connect these people with the later Dayuezhi. See Mallory and Mair 2000 for an elaboration of their views regarding Western origins of the peoples whose mummies have been found in the Taklamakan.

8. As indicated in *The Biography of the King of Zhou Mu* (穆天子傳), *The Fragments of the Book of Zhou* (逸周書), and *Guanzi* (管子). For details, see Yu 2012, pp. 87-88.

9. Ban Gu 1962: 3756-3757. The event took place in or before the fourth year (176 BCE) of the reign of Han Wendi (漢文帝, 202-157 BCE).

10. On the intermittent rule of Greeks in Sogdiana, see Rapin 2007, pp. 45-50.

11. Some archaeologists think it was probably Alexandria on the Oxus (Leriche 2007, p. 133; Cohen 2013, pp. 277-78).