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Contributions to The Editor, *East Asian History*  
Division of Pacific and Asian History  
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies  
Australian National University  
Canberra ACT 0200, Australia  
Phone +61 2 6125 3140 Fax +61 2 6125 5525  
email geremie@coombs.anu.edu.au

Subscription Enquiries to Subscriptions, *East Asian History*, at the above address, or to marion@coombs.anu.edu.au

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Cover calligraphy Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿, Tang calligrapher and statesman

Cover illustration Avian signature from the time of Cao Yanlu 曹延祿 — see p.52  
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# BIRDS AND THE HAND OF POWER: A POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF AVIAN LIFE IN THE GANSU CORRIDOR, NINTH TO TENTH CENTURIES

 Lewis Mayo

In the summer of 866 four “green-shinned” goshawks<sup>1</sup> arrived at the Tang 唐 court in Chang’an 長安 (modern Xi’an 西安).<sup>2</sup> The geo-political order of

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*Notes on document referencing system and romanisation:* Dunhuang documents held in the British Library carry the prefix ‘S’ (to denote the Stein collection) before the serial number. Dunhuang documents held in the Bibliothèque Nationale carry the prefix ‘P’ (to denote the Chinese-language materials in the Fonds Pelliot). ‘Or’ denotes materials in the British Library which are not identified by a Stein number. Documents in the National Library in Beijing have the prefix ‘Beitu’. Uyghur romanisation for the most part follows the romanised and vocalised transcriptions used in James Hamilton’s editions of the Old Uyghur texts from Dunhuang. For items that are discussed frequently, I generally substitute standard English alphabet letters for Greek letters and other symbols that do not appear in the standard Latin alphabetic sequence. Thus instead of qayan and Uyγur I write qaghan and Uyghur, Yaghlaqar instead of Yaγlaqar, and so on. Chinese romanisation is in pinyin, Tibetan romanisation is in Wylie (except where I quote from scholars who have used other systems), and Khotanese follows the transcriptions used by Harold Bailey. Mongolian romanisation follows the system in Nicholas

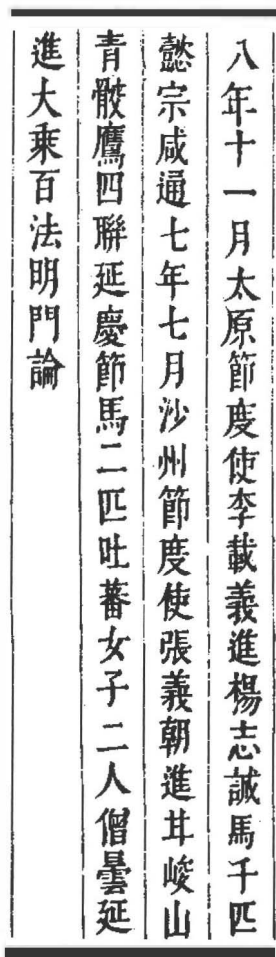
/Poppe, *A grammar of written Mongolian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1974) except for well-known names like Chinggis khan, while romanisations for Manchu essentially accord with the system used by Jerry Norman. As much as possible I have kept titles of books and articles and names of authors that are originally written in simplified characters in their original form (this applies even where a book has its title in simplified and articles contained in it are in complex characters.) Everything else, including words from Dunhuang documents that are published in simplified characters, has been written using complex characters.

<sup>1</sup> Modern scholars concur that the birds referred to as *ying* 鷹 in Chinese texts from the medieval era are goshawks. The most widely respected English-language study of hawks and hawking terminology in medieval China, Edward H. Schafer’s “Falconry in T’ang times,” *T’oung Pao* 46 (1958): 293–338, provides a systematic account of the various names for hunting birds in the period, and is confident that references to *ying* are to goshawks and not to eagles or other raptors. Schafer’s discussion of goshawks is on pp.310–11.

Profound and sincere thanks are due to Miriam Lang for her help with this paper in its various versions. It is only available to be read because of her labours and encouragement. Similar thanks are due to Marion Weeks, Helen Lo and Geremie Barmé for their support for and patience with perhaps the most troublesome contributor to *East Asian History*. It is a privilege to be able to publish in such a wonderful journal. I offer thanks and apologies to Craig Benjamin, David Christian and Beth Lewis who bent over backwards to help me get my work into volumes which they were editing, and retained no resentment when I could not do so. I am very much indebted to Dilber Thwaites for teaching me modern Uyghur, which has been of decisive importance for this paper. I also wish to acknowledge Ruth Barraclough for reading through an earlier draft of this work. Paul Kroll provided a meticulous and supportive review for *East Asian History* in which he was kind enough to disclose his identity. I also thank the other reviewer for very nice words about the paper. I am grateful to James Hamilton for answering a query, to Igor de Rachewiltz for consultation about Mongolian matters, to Brian McKnight for bird-related assistance, and to both of the latter for their long-term friendly concern for my progress.

Figure 1

The Ganjun shan goshawks in the annals of imperial power: entry in the Cefu yuangui recording their arrival in the Tang court in Chang'an



ninth-century Central Asia structured the lives of these hawks, an order which the birds themselves helped to constitute. The goshawks were subjects and emanations of the authority of Zhang Yichao 張議潮,<sup>3</sup> the Han 漢 Chinese warlord who had taken control of the string of oases between the Yellow River and the Tarim basin after the collapse of Tibetan imperial rule in the 840s. They came to Chang'an as a gift from Zhang to the Tang emperor Yizong 懿宗, his formal suzerain, in honour of Yizong's birthday.<sup>4</sup>

The origin of these birds was specifically recorded: they came from Ganjun shan 甘峻山, the Ganjun mountains near Ganzhou 甘州 (present-

/of invaluable help in my work.) E. H. Schafer makes reference to these goshawks in "Falconry in Tang times," p.311, and in *The golden peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1963), p.94. In the earlier work Schafer translates the name as "blue shins," and in the latter "green shanks." In "Falconry in Tang times," Schafer quotes J. J. L. Duyvendak in *T'oung Pao* 35 (1940) that "blue-shinned" was a hunters' metaphor of magical import. *Qingqiao* 青骹 or "green-shinned" appears as an epithet or metonym for goshawks in a number of pre-Tang literary works. It is found in the paean to the goshawk ("Yong ying shi" 詠鷹詩) by the Sui 隋 emperor Yangdi 煬帝 that is included in the Tang encyclopedia for the instruction of princes, the *Chuxue ji* 初學記 [Record of primary learning]—see *juan* 30 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1980), p.732—and also in Zhang Pingzi's 張平子 *Xijing fu* 西京賦 [Western metropolis rhapsody], which appears in the literary anthology *Wenxuan* 文選 [Literary selections], *juan* 2 (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1986), vol.1, p.70. David Knechtges's translation of the *Wenxuan* has "Blue-necked" for *qingqiao*. See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature, Volume 1, Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals*, translated, with annotations and introduction by David R. Knechtges (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), p.221.

/lection], *juan.xia* 下 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1983), p.124. Schafer refers to the festival in *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.292, n.5 (quoted in footnote 7 below). Rong Xinjiang suggests that *Yanqing jie* refers to the area of Yanzhou 延州 and Qingzhou 慶州 (the area of modern Yan'an 延安 and Qingyang 慶陽 in Shaanxi 陝西 province) and that these were horses from this region (presumably taking *jie* to be an appellation for *jiedushi* 節度使, denoting in this case the territorial jurisdiction of a Military Commissioner, the provincial military governors who were the dominant figures in the territorial administration of the Tang empire after the An Lushan rebellion. See Charles O. Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985) p.144. On these grounds Rong suggests that Zhang Yichao's power extended west of the Yellow River into the area of modern Shaanxi. See Rong Xinjiang, *Guixi jun shi yanjiu*, p.162). However, it seems likely that the imperial birthday is meant, as Schafer suggests. The editors of the Zhonghua Shuju edition of the *Jiu Tang shu* do not underline the words (as is their usual practice with proper names). Moreover, the entry for the following year (867) in the *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 [New Tang History], *juan* 9 (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), p.260, records that the hunting birds, horses and women from the royal household were to be ritually released because of the sickness of the emperor, and that gifts of women for the *duanwu* 端午 (5th day of the 5th lunar month—by Tang times the principal midsummer festival (see Derk Bodde *Festivals in classical China* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975], pp.289–316) and *yanqing* festivals were to be banned. This makes it likely that *yanqing jie* in the entries in *Jiu Tang shu* and *Cefu yuangui* refers to Yizong's birthday.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is in the *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 [Old Tang History], *juan* 卷 19a (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), p.660. The goshawks also appear in the *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 [Lessons from the past from the Palace of Books], *juan* 169 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), p.2034. The birds are mentioned by Rong Xinjiang 榮新江 in *Guixi jun shi yanjiu* [Studies in Guixi jun history] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1996), p.162. (I wish to thank Rong Xinjiang for sending me a copy of this excellent book which has been

<sup>3</sup> In "Falconry in Tang times" Schafer describes Zhang Yichao as "a legate stationed at Shazhou (Tun-huang)"—see p.311, n.1.

<sup>4</sup> The entries in the *Jiu Tang shu* and *Cefu yuangui* state that the goshawks were presented along with two *yanqing jie* 延慶節 horses. *Yanqing jie* was the festival for the celebration of Yizong's birthday, the 4th day of the 7th lunar month—see Zhuang Chuo 莊綽, *Jilebian* 雞肋編 [The chicken rib col-

day Zhangye 张掖), the major centre in the middle of the Gansu 甘肅 corridor.<sup>5</sup> In this precise identification of their place of origin, the goshawks marked Zhang Yichao's annexations of territory in the areas east of Dunhuang 敦煌 (usually referred to at that time as Shazhou 沙州) from the 840s to the 860s.<sup>6</sup> These goshawks were fruits and pleasures of conquest. Like all territorial conquests, this was a conquest of rival lives, the lives that obstruct or permit dominion over space—those of enemies like the remnant forces of the Tibetan empire, those of potentially disloyal allies and those of subjects and subordinates: soldiers, lieutenants, scribes, goshawk masters, and also oxen, camels, wolves, pine trees and flowers. The subjection of these birds to political power was an outcome of the subjection of the corridor itself to the military authority of Zhang Yichao; the historical condition for the possession of violent birds by political forces was a history of political violence. Their relationship to the transformation of the territorial order since the 840s was registered by juxtaposition: the goshawks arrived at the Tang court along with two Tibetan women, Ganjun shan's former rulers now made slaves.<sup>7</sup> These ornamental bodies presented before the emperor the history of the collapse of Tibetan empire and the history of Zhang's conquest, a history which the Tang court attempted to define through the title "The Army which Returns to Righteousness" (*Guiyi jun* 歸義軍),<sup>8</sup> a term of complex resonances marking both a restoration of order and something other than full integration into the systems of empire.<sup>9</sup>

The goshawks were themselves part of the stratagems that this conquest ordained, a component in the political engagement between Zhang Yichao and the Tang dynasty. Ganjun shan lay on the border with Liangzhou 涼州, conquered by Zhang Yichao at the head of a mixed Han and non-Han force in 861,<sup>10</sup> having hitherto been ruled by former subjects of the Tibetan empire. The Tang state refused to ratify Zhang's authority over Liangzhou<sup>11</sup> (which had been one of the great centres of Tang power in the Gansu corridor prior to the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion of 755–63).<sup>12</sup> In 863 (three

/Festival." See *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.292.

<sup>8</sup> For sources on the granting of the name 'Guiyi jun', see Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.3; see also Yang Jidong, "Zhang Yichao and Dunhuang in the 9th century," *Journal of Asian History* 32.2 (1998): 116–18. Yang Jidong argues that in the Han dynasty "Returning to Righteousness" was a title bestowed on foreign chieftains who had surrendered, and that in 842 the title had been given by the Tang to a Uyghur clan which had surrendered to the Tang after the collapse of the Uyghur empire (id., pp.116–17).

<sup>9</sup> Yang Jidong contends that the associations of the name 'Guiyi jun' with the surrender of foreigners meant that "when in the 850s the envoys from Dunhuang arrived at Chang'an they were considered by the Tang as aliens rather than subjects of the empire who unfortunately fell under foreign rule for about seventy years, a sense predominant in later writings. Thus the fact that the Returning to Righteousness Army itself seemed not willing to use this name also becomes understandable" ("Zhang Yichao and Dunhuang in the 9th century," pp.117–18). Rong Xinjiang has pointed out that documents produced at Dunhuang itself in the era of Zhang Yichao and his successor Zhang Huaishen do not use the term 'Guiyi jun' (although they did use this title in communications with the Tang centre). See Rong Xinjiang, "Guiyi jun ji qi yu zhoubian minzu de guanxi chutan" [The Guiyi jun and its relations with neighbouring ethnic groups: a preliminary study], *Dunhuangxue jikan* 10 (1986.2): 29, and 41, n.49 for examples.

<sup>10</sup> *Xin Tang shu*, *juan* 9, p.257, and Sima Guang 司馬光, *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 [Comprehensive mirror for aid in government], *juan* 250 (Beijing: Guji Chubanshe, 1956), p.8104. The former source gives the date of the taking of Liangzhou as the 3rd lunar month of the 2nd year of the Xiantong 咸通 era (861), while the latter puts it in the 4th year of the Xiantong era (863).

<sup>11</sup> S.6342 contains the text of the memorial in which Zhang Yichao requested official appointment as governor of Liangzhou, together with the imperial denial of the request. See Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.158, for a transcription of this document.

<sup>12</sup> "Liang-chou had more than a hundred thousand residents, reputed to be of hard and unyielding temperament, since they /OVER

<sup>5</sup> The prefecture of Ganzhou was named after these mountains, located to the east of the prefectural capital. See *Jiu Tang shu*, *juan* 40, *Dili zhi* 地理志 [Monograph on geography], *juan* 3, p.1641.

<sup>6</sup> According to the *Zhang Huaishen bei* 張淮深碑 Ganzhou was taken in 849 (see *Chi Hexi jiedu bingbu shangsbu Zhang gong dezhang zhi bei* 敕河西節度兵部尚書張公德政之碑 [Monument to the virtuous governance of his lordship Zhang, imperially appointed Minister of the Board of War and Military Commissioner of Hexi], P.2762, S.3329, S.6161, S.6973 and S.11564, transcribed by Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.400). Liangzhou was taken in 861 (Rong Xinjiang,

*Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.5; see footnote 15 below on the capture of Liangzhou for references).

<sup>7</sup> See references to *Jiu Tang shu* and *Cefu yuangui* in footnotes 2 and 4 above. These women are also mentioned in *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, where Schafer describes them as "appropriate tokens of congratulation on a national holiday" (p.50). In a footnote he states that "Chang I-ch'ao, imperial legate at Sha-chou (Tun-huang) sent them along with four goshawks and two horses for the Yen-ch'ing Festival. The following year an edict put an end to the submission of women as gifts on the occasion of this festival and the Tuan-wu

/lived under the influence of the White Tiger and Sign of Metal. Some of these citizens were Chinese, but many were of Indian extraction, surnamed in the Chinese fashion, according to their ethnic origin, Shindu, and many could trace their origin to the nations bordering the Oxus and Jaxartes. Here were prime grazing lands for horses, especially along a river which still retained its archaic Mongolian name of Tūmigen, meaning 'bone marrow' in the Hsien-pi language. It was so named for the fertility of the lands thereabout. Here also were produced fine damasks, mats and wild horse-hides, not to mention an excellent headache remedy. This Liang-chou was a true melting pot, a kind of homely symbol of the exotic to the Chinese, as Hawaii is to the American of the twentieth century. The hybrid music of Liang-chou, at once foreign and familiar, since it was not entirely either, was in fashion in the early Middle Ages of the Far East." Schafer, *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.22.

<sup>13</sup> See *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史 [New History of the Five Dynasties], *juan* 74 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1974), p.914, for an account of the history of the Liangzhou garrison troops given by some of its descendants during a visit to the emperor Mingzong 明宗 of the Latter Tang (Hou Tang 後唐) dynasty in 933.

<sup>14</sup> Yang Jidong, "Zhang Yichao and Dunhuang in the 9th century," p.127.

<sup>15</sup> For an exhaustively documented and penetrating analysis of the events surrounding Zhang Yichao's capture of Liangzhou and subsequent power struggles, see Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.155–61; see also Yang Jidong's excellent account of the issues in "Zhang Yichao and Dunhuang in the 9th century," pp.126–7.

<sup>16</sup> See *Xin Tang shu*, *juan* 217b, p.6133. The *Cefu yuangui* reports that this information was communicated to the Tang court by Zhang Yichao (see *juan* 973, p.11436).

<sup>17</sup> See *Jiu Tang shu*, *juan* 19a, p.660.

<sup>18</sup> See *Jiu Wudaishi* 舊五代史 [Old History of the Five Dynasties], *juan* 138 (*Waiguo liezhuan* 外國列傳 [Monograph on foreign countries]), 2 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1976), p.1842, which states that a white falcon (*baibu* 白鶻) was sent by the Ganzhou Uyghur to the emperor Mingzong of the Latter Tang dynasty in 933 (on 12 August, according to James Hamilton).

years prior to the goshawks' arrival in Chang'an) Yizong sent a detachment of troops from central China to garrison the town<sup>13</sup> and rebuild its walls. Liangzhou was garrisoned jointly by Tang forces and those of Zhang Yichao, and became "the border city between the two sides."<sup>14</sup> The Tang instituted strict border controls on those travelling eastward to Liangzhou, which thus became the site of an assertion of Tang authority against the conquests of Zhang Yichao.<sup>15</sup> The birds, avatars of the overall strategic situation, originated in mountains that directly adjoined this zone of contest.

The appearance of the goshawks in Chang'an thus occurred within a matrix of tense and subtle political confrontations between Zhang and the Tang court, a politics of gesture and ambiguity, in which relations of authority went unclarified. Their passing from the ruling hand of Zhang Yichao to that of the emperor Yizong was itself an ambiguous act. The transfer of authority over the birds was at one level an act of deference and loyalty: the command of distinguished birds was voluntarily given up to a superior power. But it also marked the limits of Yizong's powers of command in the Gansu corridor. The hawks were a gift, and Zhang enjoyed the honour and privilege of being their donor, *choosing* to surrender the distinguished avian lives that were at his disposal, lives whose presence in his power was a direct sign and product of his command of armed force in the region.

But the web of events and strategies acting on and through the goshawks was not confined to the marking of military strength in the eastern Gansu corridor through a subtle manipulation of the protocols of fealty. Zhang's powers of capture were under challenge by other capturing forces. At the beginning of the year in which the goshawks reached Chang'an, Uyghur forces had taken the Turfan area from the Tibetans, establishing a new political presence to the west of Dunhuang.<sup>16</sup> Later in the same year, the Uyghurs also killed the most powerful surviving Tibetan leader in the region.<sup>17</sup> The goshawks inhabited a world of continuous geo-political realignment. The strategic balances which affected them and which their journey to Chang'an helped to effect shifted constantly. Indeed, their arrival at the Tang court presaged that of Zhang himself: in the following year he went to the capital as a hostage, replacing his older brother who had died shortly before. In the ensuing period the Ganzhou mountains and the wild lives they contained fell out of the control of the successors of Zhang Yichao, and Gansu corridor birds were subjected to new political forces. The next raptor from the region whose journey to a central Chinese capital survives in institutional memory was a white falcon sent by the Uyghurs of Ganzhou to the court of emperor Mingzong of the Latter Tang.<sup>18</sup>

The conquest of birds and the conquest of lands and lives by which it is effected is subject to endless revision by later conquering acts. The involvement of Gansu falcons and goshawks in political life thus forms an historical continuum, part of a wider engagement of hunting birds with politics in China and Inner Asia (and indeed Eurasia more generally) lasting up into the present century. But this is also an episodic history, constituted



as a succession of events rather than a structure of continuously reproduced authority. The relationship of goshawks to political forces was characterised by the irregular rhythms of seizure. The capture of prey, the capture of birds themselves and the strategies of diplomacy and warfare all involved forms of power defined by discontinuity and ceaseless readjustment to circumstances. The presence of the Ganjun shan goshawks in the records of the history of the Tang empire, which makes them some of the most exalted lives originating in the Gansu corridor during this period (and has ensured their transmission over time and across space so that they are written about in Australia more than a thousand years after their deaths), marks the durability and intensity of their connections with imperial politics and its institutional memories. But this exalted individuality is a function of the sporadic and fragile nature of the power relations between hawks and human authority. It was also directly related to the specificities of an historical moment and the strategic alignments which constituted it. The goshawks obtained their place in history from the uncertainties of conquest.

### *The Politics of Hawk Control*

The prominence of hawks, falcons and eagles in Eurasian political life over the past two millennia or so might be explained as a matter of political *culture*. Aristocracies, royal families and imperial dynasties (or their imitators, such as the rulers of Nazi Germany) practised hawking and falconry, it could be said, because hunting with birds functioned as a demonstration of martial strength, a political theatre in which power could be organised and displayed. In this framework, hawks and falcons are part of a politics of spectacles and signs, in which power “shows itself” through hunting birds.

This analysis of falconry interlocks with a conception of birds of prey as symbols of power. The emblem of the eagle encapsulates the might of Rome; the Uyghurs have “Whirling Falcons” (Huihu 回鶻) as the official rendering of their name in Chinese.<sup>19</sup> The capture and use of fierce birds in the hunt is thought of as an attempt to deploy these symbols in the flesh, to mark more fully and perfectly the link between political power and the majesty of wings and talons. Political involvement with birds is, according to this approach, an attempt by ruling forces to find and articulate an image of themselves.

But a sociology of hunting can also be advanced to account for this interest in birds of prey. Hawking was shared pleasure in the violence of predatory birds, socially controlled and directed. Hawks helped to constitute elites, as elites possessed the power to acquire hunting birds and to use them, and gained an experience of their own cohesion by participating in the collective joys of the hunt. The Ganjun shan goshawks would thus appear as part of a long-distance establishment of social solidarities, effected by a common love of fine birds and their use. Hunting with birds crossed borders: Korean kings, Khitan chieftains, Uyghur qaghans, Tang emperors and

/Significantly, the emperor ordered that the bird be set free (see Mingzong’s decree on hunting birds in the *Cefu yuangui*, *juan* 168, p.2029, translated in note 62 below). James Hamilton gives a French translation of the passage in *Les Ouïghours à l’époque des Cinq Dynasties* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955), p.76, stating that a pair of falcons was given, evidently interpreting the word *lian* 聯 as “pair.” *Lian* has been glossed by Schafer as a measure word for hawks sent as tribute, deriving from the bindings with which they were lashed to their perch (see “Falconry in Tang times,” p.312, n.4).

<sup>19</sup> See n.20 below for references to the granting of the name “Whirling Falcons.”

<sup>20</sup> See *Xin Tang shu*, *juan* 217a, p.6134; also *Jiu Tang shu*, *juan* 195, p.5210. The change of name resulted from a request from the Uyghur qaghan for a change from the old way of transcribing the name Uyghur, the new characters 回鶻 “taking the meaning that they were swooping, light and swift like falcons” (*Old Tang History*) or “swift and fiercely predatory in the manner of falcons” (*New Tang History*). See Colin Mackerras, *The Uighur empire according to the Tang dynastic histories* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972), pp.97 and 108 for a translation from these sources. There are different dates for the granting of this title in various sources (discussed by Mackerras, pp.158–9). If it did not occur in 789, when Dezong’s daughter was married to the Khan Tun Baya of the clan of the Yaŷlaqar, it would have been in 809 at the beginning of the reign of Baoyi 保義 Qaghan (Ai tāŷridā qut bulmīš alp bilgā qaŷan). See also the remarks by James Hamilton in *Manuscrits Ouïgours du IXe-Xe siècle de Touen-houang*, vol.1 (Paris: Peeters-France, 1986), p.88.

independent regional military leaders like Zhang Yichao were all interested in hawks and falcons, and through this common interest, they could establish a foundation for diplomatic exchange. The common enjoyment of bird violence established a mutually intelligible code, a lingua franca understood by princes, nobles and emperors from Normandy to the Bohai gulf.

A more sceptical sociology of interest and power might see this pervasive concern with birds as a function of the basic commonalities of interest between these ruling élites. A common interest in hawks, it might be argued, *translates* shared interests and investments in hierarchies of authority which are common to politically dominant groups across state boundaries. Hawks are thus a medium for mutual recognition for those occupying the commanding heights of the social and political landscape. To analyse hawks simply as symbols for power or vehicles for social interests, however, would mean overlooking many aspects of the relationships of hawks and power. Such an analysis would not, for example, focus on the political arts and techniques to which hawks were subjected in the process of their capture and use, which are thereby relegated to the status of technical instruments. Neither would it consider the political relationships involved in acquiring, transporting and keeping birds, nor those generated by bird control. In short, the specificities of hawk politics, and of hawking as a specific political domain, would be ignored.

In the engagements between hawks and political forces and interests, the total ensemble of political relations and the specific technologies of hawk control operate in tandem. Without the relations of conquest (the histories of war, the machinery of administration and the protocols of diplomacy), the project of capturing and using hawks either does not occur or occupies a lowly place in the order of social power. Without the techniques of catching hawks and acquiring their abilities, the relations of power that hawks engender (and the political problems and possibilities that arise in relation to hawks and to hawks alone) do not exist.

The grand politics that unfolded around and upon hunting birds was pre-eminently a politics of territorial authority. That is to say that the politics of territorial authority was also, at some level, a politics of birds of prey. Even in cases where the relationship of birds to power seems to be most clearly analogical—as in the use of “Whirling Falcons” to refer to the Uyghurs—what is occurring is a placement of hunting birds in political relations structured in terms of territorial power (and the people it involves), and a definition of those political relations in terms of hunting birds. Falcons and Uyghurs become explicitly identified in the Chinese language<sup>20</sup> at a specific point in the history of empire in Central Asia: the name was granted in 789 by the court of the emperor Dezong 德宗 (reigned 779–805), shortly after Dunhuang’s final annexation by the Tibetans. In other words, the incorporation of falcons into the Chinese definition of the Uyghurs was a political act, arising out of geo-political imperatives, and a response to a specific problem of protocol: what name should be granted another imperial regime by its respectful peer

in its own language? This history establishes a permanent link between falcons and Uyghurs at the level of names, which will be reproduced in all the political claims, and particularly claims over territory, made by those acting *in the name* of the Uyghurs. Is it entirely coincidental, then, that the bird sent by the Ganzhou Uyghurs to the court of the Latter Tang (a dynasty itself of Turkic origin, but nonetheless one attempting to enact the forms of central Chinese imperial rule) was a falcon?

Thus the effect of history on birds of prey is an issue of spatial politics. The goshawks of the Ganjun mountains were a product of Zhang Yichao's power over "empty" spaces, the spaces where goshawks lived.<sup>21</sup> This entailed a hierarchy of command, a direct command of those who caught and looked after the hawks and of those who escorted the birds to the imperial capital, as well as a general command over political institutions. In short, the whole machinery of Zhang's administration—its military and governmental powers, its powers over territory—was enlisted in the domination (or the

<sup>21</sup> The Northern Goshawk (*cangying* 蒼鷹) (*Accipiter gentilis*) is a forest-dwelling bird. The habitat of the birds is described as "Mature woods, particularly coniferous, but also deciduous or mixed; mostly near edges of woods. Both lowlands and mountainous areas, from sea-level up to mountainous subalpine woods ... Greatly favours clearings, due to greater variety and availability of prey; maximum densities in areas where cultivation interspersed with patches of forest, with as little as 15% tree cover overall." See Josep del Hoyo, Andrew Elliott and Jordi Sargatal, eds, *Handbook of the birds of the world*, vol. 2, *New World vultures to guinea fowl* (Barcelona: Lynx Edicions, 1994), p.162. (For information on the Northern Goshawk's occurrence in Gansu, see Wang Xiangting 王香亭, ed., *Gansu jizhui dongwu zhi* [Vertebrate fauna of Gansu] (Lanzhou: Gansu Kexue Jishu Chubanshe, 1991), p.351, which notes that ornithologists had observed the bird in the area of the Qilian shan 祁连山, the mountain range which is the southern boundary of the Gansu corridor, throughout the summers of 1985 and 1986, but had not discovered nests). Access to the goshawks for Zhang Yichao thus involves some degree of control over the forested mountain regions of the Gansu corridor, which are removed from the centres of power in the agricultural oases. A standard English-language reference to the Northern Goshawk in China is John MacKinnon and Karen Phillipps, *A field guide to the birds of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.213. The bird has been granted protected status by the

/ current Chinese government—see MacKinnon and Phillipps, id., p.537. A comprehensive description of its behaviour, appearance, reproduction, diet and distribution as these were known to ornithological science in late 1970s Europe is found in Stanley Cramp, ed., *Handbook of the birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. The birds of the Western Palearctic*, vol.2, *Hawks and bustards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp.148–57. This source notes that the bird had "suffered markedly from human persecution, leading to major declines in most areas in the late 19th and early 20th century," with some recovery after 1939 to 1945 "often followed by further declines from the late 1950s" (Cramp, id., p.149). This phase of pre-World War II decline registered by the bird counting technologies of modern European ornithology (which attests to an enormous cultural investment in the life circumstances of birds) coincides with the time in which the events narrated in T. H. White's *The goshawk* (Harmondsworth, MdLx: Penguin Books, 1963) took place. This book presents in intense detail the attempts of an English schoolmaster to train a goshawk for falconry. Its life and the process of its being disciplined for hawking (presented by White as an art from the past, rare in modern life) are recounted in diary form, following the biographical structure habitually deployed for the textual presentation of 'living things' (human and non-human) in industrial societies; thus the hunting bird acts as an incitement to text production and self narration. The disciplines of modern peda-

## Figure 2

*A Northern Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis)—the major target of the power technologies of hunting with birds in medieval China and Inner Asia. The bird in the photo is immature, not yet in full adult plumage. Photo by J. A. Spendelow*



/gogy and the observing passions it involves (in which the 'love of nature' and the 'management of the self' are profoundly interconnected) constitute a distinctive environment for the exercise of techniques of hawk governance, marking off this 1930s goshawk historically from its relatives in the ninth-century Gansu corridor. Despite the continuity of the handling procedures involved, T. H. White's 'Gos' is enmeshed in a different set of power relations from those affecting the Ganjun shan birds, exemplified in the different forms of writing in which their existence is recorded.

<sup>22</sup> What distinguishes a technology from a practice is the presence of *articulated* systems of knowledge, and of agents who embody and monopolise that knowledge.

<sup>23</sup> See Wei Yanshen's 魏彦深 "Rhapsody on the goshawk" [Ying fu 鷹賦]: "Tie the long skin on the two feet. Flying, it does not chase by its original nature; eating, it does not fulfil its own desires," *Chuxue ji*, *juan* 30, p.731.

<sup>24</sup> Soldiers, however, must be taught violence by their masters, as part of their training. The violence of hawks is appropriated, a violence that is practised outside of social power, taught by adult hawks to chicks as part of life. The hawk that cannot kill will die; it will starve if it fails to provide itself with the means of life. The soldier who cannot kill risks death at the hands of others—by his (rarely her) enemies in war, or by his superiors or peers for failing in his duty. When a hawk is tamed it is brought within the same structure of authority as the soldier. It will die if it fails to kill—when it fails to fulfil the role that authority has assigned to it and its superiors are displeased with it.

<sup>25</sup> The hawk is an adjunct to the majesty of governing power, its own body held close to the magnificent body of the ruler, amplifying and marking that magnificence. "On his right, his goshawk on his arm; on his left, his hound on a leash," Schafer, "Falconry in T'ang times," p.316. The quotation is from the biography of Zhang Chong 張充 in the *Nan shi* 南史 [Southern History], *juan* 31 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), p.811. These subdued, vigorous and violent bodies, this restrained power to kill rendered obedient by the process of training, were part of royal bearing. Literally bound to the kingly body, they are constituents of its social presence, a concrete sign of its powers and its wealth, the very things that brought dog and hawk within its grasp.

service) of the goshawks, themselves a manifestation of the extractive and dominating capacities of the political machine.

This overall spatial power was indivisible from the problems of the recognition of authority, and of entitlement, which surrounded Zhang's rule in the Gansu corridor, problems which framed the presentation of goshawks to Yizong. But these relations and forms of power were not simply a context for the goshawks' lives; rather, they informed the whole project of hawk governance, and were themselves constituted and informed by the modes of power involved in the governance of hawks.

A technology of sovereignty was enacted on and through the bodies of the goshawks.<sup>22</sup> The power exerted on these birds was first of all a physical power. For hawks caught in the Gansu corridor and transported overland to the Tang capital, the primary power relation was one of *handling*, the action of holding and restraining, but also of keeping alive and carrying across space. The goshawks were literally held in the hand. To possess and control hawks is to subject them to the action of the hands. Power must take hold of these fierce bodies to bring them within its grasp.

Authority over goshawks was exercised through objects (jesses, leashes, perches, gloves), tools of constraint that allowed people under Zhang's command and later at the Tang court to take possession of the powers of talons and beaks and to insulate themselves against those powers.<sup>23</sup> As with other disciplines, these physical instruments are deployed in conjunction with an ensemble of disciplining practices, calculated actions performed and repeated to subject the birds to an ordering regime. Through this application of tools and techniques the violent energies of goshawks are brought within the orbit of social power, constrained and directed for social ends. The power of disciplining is both the method for establishing authority over hawks and the domain in which that authority is exerted.

Such power can only be exercised after a programme of training, concerted attention and effort directed at the birds' bodies. It is not simply a matter of subduing the goshawks but of managing them, deploying the capacities which make them desirable—their sense of sight, their wings and feathers, their talons. Social power needs to make hawk bodies docile in order to take hold of them, but it must keep this docility within limits. The bird must retain its ferocity, its capacity to strike and kill; thus it has the same substance as the discipline of soldiers, who must also retain their violent powers while being amenable to the commands of those who direct them.<sup>24</sup> The life of tamed hunting birds involves a dynamic of constraint and release. If grasping in the hand constitutes the fundamental form of the authority exerted on hawks, that authority finds its fulfilment and its *raison d'être* only when the bird is unleashed to kill, and when it returns voluntarily to the hand which rules it.

The relations that surrounded the goshawks (and other tamed hunting birds) were thus of a political character. They constituted an art of control, poised between subjection and licence. Here power partakes of the form of

*mastery*. It is mastery in the three senses of the word: ownership, control and instruction. The mastering interest is simultaneously owner, ruler and teacher, and the mastered life is owned, ruled and taught.<sup>25</sup> But the political identity of the relationship was not merely that of disciplining force and disciplined body. Once brought under human control, the goshawk ceases to perform its activities of catching and killing for itself or its kin; it acts under the auspices of an authority and on behalf of that authority. The goshawk is placed in a position of service. Its actions of watching, pursuing and striking become *duties*, performed for others: for Zhang Yichao, the emperor Yizong or his delegates.

The goshawks, if properly directed, would do the bidding of their masters without hesitation; they would kill for them, or delight them through the exhibition of their powers of flight and pursuit or through the perfection and elegance of their physical appearance, a token of their powers. But they could also refuse to obey,<sup>26</sup> or perform their duties poorly.<sup>27</sup> The history of hunting with birds was haunted by the spectacle of the timid hawk or the frightened falcon, the bird that did not return when called or caught the wrong quarry. An elaborate body of techniques was deployed to avoid these disappointments, these failures of birds to conform to the expectations and dreams of power. Hawks could be soothed, distracted, caressed, educated with lures and, if their resistance to co-optation proved too great, discarded.

To rule hawks properly involves an understanding of the governed life to secure mastery of it. In practice this was achieved by a governance of the bird's appetites and senses. In the main this involved a strategic inhibition of the bodily needs and attributes of hawks through practices like the denial of food<sup>28</sup> or the sewing up of the eyelids.<sup>29</sup> Like all discipline, it was directed at producing a state of bodily conformity to authority. But the hawk's own delicacy prescribed a limit to this disciplinary project: the very faculties that made it desirable (its sight and its feathers) could easily be damaged during training.<sup>30</sup> Authority over goshawks presumed knowledge, judgment, scrutiny and restraint.

The "essence" of the tamed hawk is that it should move on its own, that it should leave the controlling hand and return to it. The relation of human authority to hawks was that of co-optation. Authority co-opted the hawk's autonomy of action, prescribing its limits and ordaining the occasions on which it would be exercised. Wildness—the freedom to fly and kill—was to be retained but regulated, confined to specific times and places (the rehearsals of training and "exercise" or the theatre of the hunt, their "proper" domain). In other words, the power relation of master to hawk is one of *authorisation*. Domination of hawks took the form of licensed independence, of birds being *set free* to pursue what they would pursue in the wild.

The management and manipulation of the desires and capacities of subordinated lives to make them serve a mastering interest applied equally to the Ganjun shan goshawks and to the emissaries who carried them to

<sup>26</sup> "It will stop and not be called." Wei Yanshen, "Rhapsody on the goshawk," p.731.

<sup>27</sup> Hawks are divided by quality: some are brave and some are timid, or they may be lazy and easily shocked (see Wei Yanshen, "Rhapsody on the goshawk," p.731).

<sup>28</sup> Balance is required in starving the bird to bring it under control: "just enough reduction in flesh is sought to produce sufficient hunger to stimulate the bird's desire to eat from the falconer's hand and to return to him when called. There are falconers who attempt, through emaciation and extreme hunger, to reduce their birds to obedience in a very short time . . . . The rapidly and much-starved bird learns to hate her keeper, and should she escape she is more difficult to recapture . . . . A slow method of training is better in every respect, for the falcon develops settled habits (which become second nature) and she grows to love her master. This system is also better for the falcon's physical condition, for a sudden alteration is against avian nature but a gradual change may be beneficial." Casey A. Wood and F. Marjorie Fyfe, trans., *The art of falconry by Frederick II of Hohenstaufen* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1943), p.160. I thank Mark and Dian Elvin for lending me a copy of this book.

<sup>29</sup> On seeling, sewing up eyelids to prevent the bird from becoming frantic, see Frederick II (trans. Wood and Fyfe), *The art of falconry*, p.137. The point of seeling is explained as preventing the falcon from seeing people (whom she hates by nature) until she has "grown to enjoy being with them and being fed by them," p.149. The extreme sensitivity of raptorial sight is a central problem of management: "Entirely blinded falcons may without distinction rest satisfactorily on any form of perch or block; since they cannot see anything at all they are not likely to be affected by visual irritants that usually lead to restlessness and a desire to fly off the roost," p.163. Seeling was used as a technique in Chinese handling; see Wei Yanshen, "Rhapsody on the goshawk," p.731, and Schafer's "Falconry in Tang times," p.315.

<sup>30</sup> Questions of proper handling are central; the bird's plumage must not be damaged as a result of mishandling. See Frederick II (trans. Wood and Fyfe), *The art of falconry*, p.149.

<sup>31</sup> A letter accompanying the gift of a white goshawk offered to the emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r.712–56) by the eighth-century official Zhang Wei 張謂 states that when unleashed in the imperial parks the hawk would “pursue the foxes and hares in the royal gardens; following the order of the seasonal periods it will chase the birds and sparrows of the Forbidden Forest [the imperial parklands].” As much as catching game for the emperor’s table and providing entertainment, the goshawk is charged with keeping order in the royal parks, preventing the unconstrained growth of wild lives (such as foxes) which threaten, when vigilance is relaxed, to run out of control, producing wild disorder at the heart of the governed space of the imperial capital. The goshawk is thus an agent in the preservation of control within the palace. See Zhang Wei, “Jin baiying zhuan” 進白鷹狀 [Formal petition accompanying a white goshawk submitted as tribute], *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 [Complete Tang prose], *juan* 375 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1990), p.1684. This bird was procured in Central Asia, where Zhang Wei was serving as an official. See also the three letters that accompanied the presentation of sparrowhawks to the Tang emperor, which state that the sparrowhawk patrols the Forbidden Forest of the imperial palace chasing small birds, hastening back and forth to serve the emperor, hitting its target every time, and desiring to display its powers in the imperial presence. The three letters are contained in the *Gantang ji* 甘堂集 (P.4093), a collection of prose writings originating in central China of which a copy was preserved at Dunhuang. A photographic reproduction of the relevant section of *Gantang ji* (leaves 15 and 16 of the manuscript) can be found in Chen Zuolong, *Dunhuang guchao wenxian huizui* [A collection of the finest documents amongst ancient copies from Dunhuang] (Taipei: Hsin-wen-feng, 1982), p.478. For a corrected transcription, see Zhao Heping, *Dunhuang biaozihuang jianqi shu yi jijiao* [Dunhuang petitions, letters, missives and etiquette guides, edited and corrected] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe, 1997). I thank Zhao Heping 趙和平 for allowing me to copy this work when it was still in manuscript. Modern scholars have attributed the *Gantang ji* to the ninth-century Tang scholar-official Liu Ye 劉艱. Liu Ye was active in the reign of Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 846–59), and so his

Chang’an at Zhang Yichao’s behest. Authority over those who act (and especially travel) on their own, but are expected to return to the controlling hand, is a fundamental constituent of political practice, connected with the problem of exercising dominance at a distance. Neither hawking nor command over delegates involves a complete and unrelenting constraint of the governed body, as is the case with the control of slaves or oxen; rather, these consist in adroit and skilful authorisation, the granting of powers to act (to move, and especially to kill) in the name of the ruler/governor. The apparatus of rules which prescribe and limit the powers of delegates may be regarded as one of a variety of strategic instruments through which the ruler manages those who do his bidding.

The capture of the goshawks and their deployment in hunting thus involved an *art of seizure*. The qualities of birds, like the qualities of generals or taxation commissioners, were historically variable, depending also on the speed and cunning of the pheasants or hares pursued—which, like the qualities of hawks, was a matter of fortune.

By capturing fierce birds, political power was able to capture wild lives that otherwise eluded its grasp, the small, fast-moving creatures like pheasants and hares that outran or flew away from it.<sup>31</sup> No less than governed humans, these lives were targets for political authority. But the goshawks also brought into the orbit of political power a whole range of human lives (all of those, from the catchers and trainers of hawks, to ambassadors, courtiers and poets) who were in some way tied to the networks of relations that surrounded the capture and use of hunting birds. The network was inherently a structure of authority relations; possession of hawks involved the possession of a full complement of *subordinates* who were mobilised to sustain and perform the activity of hunting with birds, not to mention the retinue of associates and deputies who participated in the ceremonies of the hunt.

At a foundational level the acquisition of the capturing powers of hawks by these networks was the product of work with a net.<sup>32</sup> The net itself is a “work” (in the old sense of work as an object created out of woven or knotted

/writing about the submission of sparrowhawks to the emperor is approximately contemporary with the arrival of the Ganjunshan goshawks in Chang’an. Liu seems to have served in Shaanxi near Huazhou 華州 which, as Schafer notes, had compulsory tribute of falcons and sparrowhawks to the Tang court (see *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.94); this may be connected with his sparrowhawk letters. On the career of Liu Ye and the *Gantang ji*, see Zhang Xihou, *Dunhuang ben Tangji yanjiu* [Studies on the Dunhuang copies of Tang collected literary works] (Taipei: Hsin-wen-feng, 1995), pp.275–316.

<sup>32</sup> In modern social and political theory, networks are thoroughly detached from net works. This is in part because the capture of wild lives is now placed at an enormous distance from the practice of high-level politics. The net is wielded in strictly economic domains, such as industrial fishing or the unloading and loading of ships. The net functions in politics as an image of lattices and encompassment: the safety net of social welfare (the term borrowed from the marginalised entertainment practices of the circus), the economic net, or—in its most ideological and most abstracted form—the net of global electronic communications (which is still, however, brought into being by a physical net of cables crossing space).

threads). The most prized birds were the passage hawks, caught in a net, for these already possessed killing and flying powers.<sup>33</sup> The Tang falconry manual of Duan Chengshi 段成式 describes the net used for the taking of goshawks with great specificity, setting down the size of its holes, their number and arrangement, how it should be kept (including protection from insect attack), what poles should be used for it, how to detect hawks coming near, the use of decoys and the time for its deployment.<sup>34</sup>

The lives caught in these nets may be distinguished or undistinguished. What offers historical distinction to the hawks entangled in these nets is the networks in which they are embedded. These networks include those of political figures (rulers and governors), of institutions (diplomatic reception offices, the royal mews), of practices (hunting and hawking, poetry writing, banqueting), of systems of knowledge and language (falconry treatises, medicinal systems, poems and essays), of ethical structures (moral and political critiques of falconry, doctrines of rulership), and the networks of histories (the memories of birds that have gone before, and thus the ensemble of practices and words which organise hawk lives). The plethora and diversity of writings about hunting birds in circulation in Tang times marks the density of these networks and the interests involved in them. The physical act of disentangling the hawk from the lines of the net is followed by a network of social procedures which bring its life into line with the orders prescribed by this mesh of people, institutions, knowledge and practice.

The exercise of power on the goshawks is thus effected in an order of lines and spaces. The defining character of net works and networks is the strategic management and deployment of “power lines.” Yet these power lines are constructed by, and draw their logic from, the spaces which come between them. The well-made net consists of a matrix of lines which organises its spaces. It is not a flat, dense obstructive surface; if it were, it could not accomplish its capturing work. This order of lines and spaces is produced to apprehend mobility: the net is made to secure power in the empty space of the air, to take possession of the lives which move through it. It does this by exploiting space, a space which renders the net invisible to the flying bird or which allows the net to pass swiftly through the air as it is thrown. The work of the net (in the sense of the use of the net) involves a proper positioning of the lines, a secure placement in the appropriate space or a skilful holding of the lines which guide and form it.

In this way the logic of nets, work and networks is constituted by the interplay of line, space and mobility. The net's lines and spaces exist to capture moving things, above all birds and fish, moving lives which command space through their command of movement. But work with the net involves its own mobility: the net is a structure that is moved around, its structure of flexible lines making it detachable and transportable. The human, political network which apprehends the net and its work (or more precisely, apprehends what the net and its work have apprehended) must be mobile too. It must extend itself across space to bring within its web the lives that

<sup>33</sup> See Schafer, “Falconry in T'ang times,” p.299, n.2. Netting would seem to have been a means for catching goshawks in the Guiyi jun. An inventory of expenditures of cloth and paper from the Guiyi jun government refers to the “goshawk netter (*wangying ren* 網鷹人) Cheng Xiaoqian 程小遷.” See lines 88 of P.4640v. in Lu Xiangqian, “Guanyu Guiyi jun shiqi yi fen buzhi poyong li de yanjiu—shishi P.4640 beimian wenshu” [Studies on an inventory of cloth and paper expenditures from the Guiyi jun period—an attempted analysis of the document P.4640 verso], in Lu's *Dunhuang Tulufan wenshu lungao* [Papers on Dunhuang and Turfan manuscripts] (Nanchang: Jiangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1992), p.103.

<sup>34</sup> Duan Chengshi, *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 [Youyang miscellany], *qianji* 前集, *juan* 20: *Rou jue bu* 肉攫部 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1981), p.193. Schafer, “Falconry in T'ang times,” pp.319–21. See also the poem of Sui Yangdi: “Moving through Shuo 朔, wishing to go to Heng 衡 [both are in Shanxi 山西, on the route of hawk migrations], it suddenly falls into the nets, then is bound ornamentally with a leash and taken as a present to the ruler,” “Yongying shi,” *Chuxue ji*, *juan* 30, p.732.

<sup>35</sup> This is the succession traced in Wei Yanshen's "Rhapsody on the goshawk," which outlines the progress from capture in the net to being tied with jesses and performing the work of hunting. See *Chuxue ji*, *juan* 30, p.731.

<sup>36</sup> Net work is something mobilised: a work that is made mobile. At the same time the mobility of the bird, passing from hand to hand (from the hawk catcher to the forces of local government to the emissaries to the reception agencies at the capital to the imperial hawk masters and to the emperor himself), mobilises a network of relations between people, places, institutions and knowledge, things that otherwise remain dormant. The skills of goshawk handlers, understanding of diplomatic protocol, familiarity with overland routes (managing the difficult journey through the Gansu corridor across the Yellow River and through the territories of Eastern Gansu and Shaanxi), and a grasp of the nuances of geo-political alignments and of the desires and intentions of ruling forces—all of these things are brought into play, and brought into contact with each other, by a network of connections.

are not found at its heart, just as Zhang Yichao's network of authority spread itself outwards into the Ganjun shan, ordaining the capture of birds there.

Once caught in these nets and networks, the goshawk is subjected to other power lines.<sup>35</sup> In training the hawk and hunting with it, the most basic form of handling is the manipulation of the lines that tie the bird, its jesses, the lines whose tying (to the legs of the hawk) is one of the crucial marks and instruments of its incorporation by human power, distinguishing it from wild hawks and from other captive birds which were not tied to people in this way (that is, birds whose ties to power were of a different, less visible character). While the skilful tying of these lines provides the foundation for the exercise of power, the lines are only important because of their dialectical relationship to the release of the bird into empty space.

The movement of the birds overland from the Gansu corridor activates the network of relations between political centres and political forces (between Zhang Yichao and his headquarters at Dunhuang and Yizong in the Tang capital) by creating a link across space, by joining what is separated by the weakness of power and the strength of distance. Under these conditions, political authority is not a dense, even fabric as it is in areas of concentrated settlement (as in centres of plant cultivation or cities, where governed lives exist in close proximity), but a fine and stretched mesh, something we see in the objectified diagrammatic form of historical maps of the communication networks of medieval Central Asia, on which single lines join the points of settlement into a lattice, but the vast majority is blank space. At this abstract macro-level, settlements appear as knots of power. The movement of the bird, its mobility, makes it an instrument for the creation of ties between those separated by vast spaces, between ruler and governor who had never seen each other in person—in other words, the tying of power knots into a network.<sup>36</sup>

The biological reproduction of the goshawks was not socially controlled or determined. As lives captured in the wilds, it was only through the reproduction of net works and networks that power over hawks could be exercised and reproduced. The birds marked capturing capacities—capacities that were at the heart of politics, as the honour and ability of political power was registered in what it could catch. This is not merely because of the analogy between politics (visible particularly in militarised contexts) and physical strength, but because the capture of lives involved political skills of diverse kinds. Strategic competence played itself out in a network, and the management of a network required strategy. This extended from the capture and training of the birds to their transmission in a web of diplomatic relations and their use in hunting—or their ceremonial release. Ties were formed and put into action: the strings knotted to constitute the net, the tying of jesses, the linking of hawk catcher and trainer to superiors, the joining between centres of power and their peripheries, and between one centre and another, the ties of ruler and subject. In all these links, bonds and knots of power, force and thing joined indivisibly together.



But hawk control is political not simply because of the relationships between people which it makes possible. As a disciplining practice, hawking differs from that of other prominent forms of animal 'domestication' in that it involves techniques and relationships which are political in character. The hawk life that it produces is an ennobled one, granted powers denied to many other "domestic" animals, in particular the power to go where it chooses and to kill (which it does "aggressively," rather than "defensively" like a guard dog). This freedom of movement places the hunting bird in a position of social privilege relative to other birds: it is nobler than its prey, and nobler than birds confined to cages. It is placed above the birds it catches, and the training to which it has been subjected marks it off from birds which have been imprisoned because their loyalty to their masters is suspect. Not only is it the object of noble attention, and thus positioned in the more elevated regions of human social space; its position in the avian hierarchy is superior because it is given rights which other birds do not enjoy.

Hawking is also an ennobling discipline for the humans who perform it. Medieval Chinese writing about hunting with birds constitutes it as a practice of those in elevated positions in the social hierarchy just as clearly as does the falconry writing of western Europe. Like all things upon which writing is unfolded, it is situated in a web of elegant phrasing that links it to a wider practice of cultivated domination. If the process of bringing the bird within the grasp of power embeds it in political relations, placing it amongst those who issue commands, it also disciplines the master, who must acquire the discipline of the art of mastery over birds, accompanied by other disciplines such as bodily comportment, horsemanship, and the ability to command subordinates and to create goodwill amongst peers and inferiors.<sup>37</sup>

It is often observed that hunting was a rehearsal for politics, in particular a training ground for war.<sup>38</sup> But hunting *was* politics,<sup>39</sup> a part of political processes. It required political techniques of control, licensing and discipline; it was not just a *symbol* of them. It was also an activity constituted by political relations between hawks and people, as well as political relations of people to each other and to other forms of life (including the horses, dogs and leopards which accompanied the hawks on the hunt, the trees, shrubs and grasses of the open ground where the hunt took place, and the animals and birds killed as game). The practices of the hunt were embedded in the overall ensemble of activities which constituted royal life. The playing out of political relations extends to all spheres in which the bodies of kings, emperors, khans and nobles are in one sense or other in action.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Through this those in charge can learn the management of the socially competitive structures of hunting and the mastery of the body and the passions, and thus acquire the mastery in relations with the self and with others that is essential to the business of command. For a subordinate, involvement with hawks taught how to negotiate the struc-

tures of hierarchy, to work out one's place in the order of power, to earn affection through judicious compliments, and to discover the risks to oneself through attention to the quirks of those above (observing their likes and dislikes, which are most clearly on show in the field of enjoyment where those in charge may lose themselves in the game).

<sup>38</sup> See for instance K. A. Wittfogel and Feng Chia-Sheng, *History of Chinese society: Liao (907-1125)* (New York: American Philosophical Society, 1949): "From earliest times hunting was an integral part of nomadic life; pastoralists, fearful of killing off their milk-producing animals, looked to game to augment their meat supply. However, the hunt also provided valuable military training. This was recognized by Chingis Khan who included rules of the communal hunt in his 'Laws.' In another connection he refers to the duties of soldiers in wars and in hunts in the same sentence. These two aspects of the hunt also characterized the Liao period; even though the economic function shrank in significance, hunting still remained part of the life of the Ch'i-tan horsemen 'in order to provide for their daily needs' ... At the same time the hunt offered an opportunity for maneuvers which were of value in military training," p.119. Wittfogel and Feng construe Khitan 契丹 devotion to hunting as part of a fundamental commitment to cultural and political traditions: "The continued requests for tribute falcons and eagles must be taken as an index of the passion with which the Ch'i-tan rulers clung to their traditional tribal habits" (p.120).

<sup>39</sup> See the previous note regarding the lack of distinction between hunting and war in the codes of Chingis Khan.

<sup>40</sup> This is most obvious in the states with strong links to Northeast and Inner Asia, such as the Khitan Liao 遼, in which the political and administrative domination of agricultural lands and the extraction of grain, cloth and labour from them can be conceived as something which supported the whole apparatus of the annual royal hunts in which the Khitan emperors engaged. See Fu Lehuan, "Liaodai sishi nabo kao wu pian" [Five studies on the 'Nabo' hunts of the four seasons in the Liao period], *Liaosbi congkao* [Collected studies on Liao history] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), pp.36-172. The pursuit of war itself can be constructed as a mechanism for securing the territory (and more broadly speaking, political conditions) for hunting. The construction of activities like hunting as pastimes or amusements, ancillary to 'real' politics, is itself the product of a political process associated with bureaucratic types of domination which understand politics as work or a vocation. This conception has as its opposite 'leisure' or 'private' pursuits, which must be strictly separated from the public work of those holding 'political' positions.

### *Sovereignty*

The conjunction of hawks with ruling power in so much of continental Eurasia over the last two millennia is thus a matter of the interconnection between the political nature of the techniques of authority exerted on birds and the arts and disciplines of personal conduct that are found in the hunt, and also their shared relations with a form of politics organised around the differences between ruling and ruled bodies (the technologies of pre-eminence and subordination with which they were invested, which ruler and ruled strove to master), as well as the system of titles, appointments, exactions, gifts and ceremonies and the structures of territorial authority to which they were related. The “technology of sovereignty” enacted on and through the goshawks was precisely this ensemble of relations, arts and forms of knowledge, a bodily and spatial politics which had practices of seizure as one of its primary and defining constituents.

The body of the emperor had a direct structuring effect on the lives of the Ganjun shan goshawks. Their removal from their home region, and thus their separation from their peers through the involvement with political networks and strategies that made them historically significant, was impelled by the calculation that they would be objects of royal favour. The splendour of their bodies and powers, it was hoped, would contribute to the adornment of the emperor and add to his majesty, and thereby command his attention and affection. In other words the circumstances of their lives were structured by a sovereignty of ornamentation, and by the ornamentation of sovereignty. Of course, this adornment was effected in part by the specific character of the authority relations exerted upon hawks, which simultaneously conferred powers of command and superiority—complete mastery over subordinated lives—and offered the charisma of a life whose autonomy was licensed, whose return to the ruling hand was a matter of its own choice. Moreover, the flexibility of the strategies and timetables of gift-giving within which they were transmitted, and the relations of honour and respect that their presentation evinced (both the honour to the recipient and the honour to the donor, who was distinguished and set apart by having such distinguished lives at his disposal), constituted relations of sovereignty in the sense of a territorial rapprochement structured by deference and loyalty. The goshawks were thus part of the arts and politics of pre-eminence by which the sovereign—the pre-eminent body—was constituted.

This pre-eminence, it must be stressed, was not a simple assertion of superiority *unilaterally* claimed by the ruler. Rather it was a strategic engagement between subject/donor and ruler/recipient. Sovereignty is a relationship and, like all relationships, it is a matter of practice and manoeuvre. Its model is not the contract, characterised by fixed and defined obligation (as it is in the theories of Hobbes and Rousseau), but rather the field of organised contest, like the hunting ground, in which mobile bodies act together *largely* without direct command or direct reference to the rules,

through an incorporated grasp of the overall terrain and the distribution of forces within it. Under these conditions, the acknowledgment of pre-eminence is less a matter of rigorously maintained postures of deference than an *unspoken* enactment of authority relations, in which there is a constant struggle to maintain order. Sovereignty, even in its most codified and rigorously restricted definitions in juridical and political theory, depends on this overall order of power, and on the technologies of comportment, recognition and judgment together with the awareness of space and time which constitute it.<sup>41</sup>

The European formulation of sovereignty as a doctrine, an abstract and universal principle of legitimate governance, a problem of the sovereign will and its limits, was itself a manoeuvre in the field of sovereignty struggles. The notion of a permanent principle of government produces a more profound and complete co-ordination of the conduct of those engaged in authority struggles, whose strategies henceforth cohere around a single stake: that of political power explicitly defined as sovereignty. The *theory* of sovereignty is but one (historically specific) element of the *practices* of sovereignty. The exercise of sovereignty, even in the narrow sense assigned to it in constitutional law and political philosophy, is a matter of sovereignty *events* and sovereignty *relationships*, political happenings and engagements that go far beyond the sphere of prohibitions and rights.

Thus the ceremonies of the court, the details of the imperial diet and clothing, royal entertainments and pastimes, the animals in the emperor's stables, parks, aviaries, kennels, mews and pasturelands, the perfumes scenting his chambers, and the brushes, ink, pictures and books in his study are not a "superstructure" or a "representation" of sovereignty (and thus a source of legitimacy, i.e. an ideological device designed to generate acceptance of "power" through "belief"). Rather they are part of a *practice* of sovereignty; they are inseparable from other domains of governance, which relate to the command of subordinates and of territory. Moreover, it is a domain of strategic *relations* in which the emperor is not simply a body amongst things, but a life politically engaged with other lives, and with the things that sustain them. This engagement is not restricted to humans (ministers, eunuchs, palace women, servants, military men, tax collectors etc.) but also includes other animate beings and inanimate objects.

Alternatively, goshawks could be thought to have a profound kinship with a politics founded on seizure and death as principal modalities of power. Their co-optation by political interests might be interpreted as part of a theatrical and violent mode of governance, in which the vengeance of the wrathful king was a central theme:

The sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing; he evidenced his power over life through the death he was capable of requiring. The right which was formulated as the 'power of life and death' was in reality the right to *take* life or *let* live. Its symbol, after all, was the sword. Perhaps this juridical form must be referred

<sup>41</sup> These definitional struggles were indivisible from a series of physical powers and techniques of command and punishment that enacted themselves directly on bodies, those of the king and those of his subjects. Without these powers, which ranged from the art of royal comportment to the practices of judicial interrogation, sovereignty had no reality.

<sup>42</sup> Michel Foucault, *The history of sexuality* 3 vols. (Harmondsworth, Middx.: Penguin Books, 1978): 1, p.136.

<sup>43</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), pp.48–9.

to a historical type of society in which power was exercised mainly as a means of deduction ... a subtraction mechanism, a right to appropriate a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, goods and services, labor and blood, levied on the subjects. Power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it.<sup>42</sup>

On the surface, the power enacted on the goshawk might seem to be precisely this power of deduction: the emperor or the legate co-opting the power to take life, enacting its supremacy in the capture of hunting birds, harnessing their powers to kill, and deducting hares, pheasants, quail, wild geese and swans from the store of living things. In such a reading, the transfer of sovereignty over the goshawks from Zhang Yichao to Yizong would be conceived as an act of offering to the sovereign the most distinguished and exalted powers of seizure and death available, thereby establishing the emperor's pre-eminence in the empire-world. The interest of the ruling power in the deathly energies of birds, by this account, would be part of its constant assertion of might through displays of overweening power. Hawks, it then follows, would be part of a more general politics of ceremonial death, which is intrinsic to the constitution of sovereign authority. The classic account runs as follows:

The public execution ... has a juridico-political function. It is a ceremonial by which a momentarily insulted sovereignty is reconstituted. It restores that sovereignty by manifesting it at its most spectacular. The public execution, however hasty and everyday, belongs to a whole series of great rituals in which power is eclipsed and restored (coronation, entry of the king into a conquered city, the submission of rebellious subjects); over and above the crime that has placed the sovereign in contempt, it deploys before all eyes an invisible force. Its aim is not so much to re-establish a balance as to bring into play, as its extreme point, the dissymmetry between the subject who has dared to violate the law and the all-powerful sovereign who displays his strength. Although redress of the private injury occasioned by the offence must be proportionate, although the sentence must be equitable, the punishment is carried out in such a way as to give a spectacle not of measure but of imbalance and excess; in this liturgy of punishment, there must be an emphatic affirmation of power and of its intrinsic superiority. And this superiority is not simply that of right, but that of the physical strength of the sovereign beating down upon the body of his adversary and mastering it: by breaking the law the offender has touched the very person of the prince; and it is the prince—or at least those to whom he has delegated his force—who seizes upon the body of the condemned man and displays it marked, beaten, broken. The ceremony of punishment, then, is an exercise of 'terror'.<sup>43</sup>

In the terms set up by this conceptualisation and practice of sovereignty, goshawks would appear above all as a force of awe: their seizing and killing of birds and animals establishes an inequality between those in possession of violent powers and those who must bow before them. Their pursuit of prey resembles the ferocity of the ruler against all who defy him. Those who rule

possess powers of destruction that are complete and unrelenting; the supremacy that their hawks have over rabbits or pheasants equates with their own superiority to all possible opponents.

Such an account of hawks and hawking hinges on a formulation of power understood as operating through signs and levies.<sup>44</sup> According to such a formulation, the hunting bird functions as a mark of power, a symbol of violence that is also a deduction and an incarnation of the power to deduct, to take away; the bird is procured through requisitions and taxes, and offers the power to seize game. These powers and signs are articulated in codes—in game laws, heraldry, and sumptuary regulations that aim to clarify and maintain boundaries of rank. Moreover, the problems of the rights of one power in relation to another (particularly in competing claims to land and the lives in it) are of course central to the “feudal” order from which most modern juridical conceptions of sovereignty derive. As a practice carried out in space defined by property divisions, hunting with birds would seem inevitably bound up with the whole question of jurisdiction, and thus with rights and prohibitions, that is with the problem of “justice.”<sup>45</sup> Falconry, in this formulation, is defined by the game park and the heraldic crest, in which the bird's violence is integrated with a whole system of signs and deductions that uphold and create it. Moreover it is directly involved in the rapport between autonomous military power and the claims of royal supremacy that are supposedly a defining feature of “feudalism.” Hunting birds would seem to fuse the two aspects of the sovereign—that of regalia and ceremony (signs of power like the crown or the falcon on the fist) and that of the law, the ensemble of rights and prohibitions through which the powers of seizure are codified and enforced. These divisions, moreover, would be seen to equate with the two bodies of the king: the physical body (the bearer of signs) and the body politic (the ensemble of laws), both of which exert themselves upon the bodies of hawks and falcons.

Seen through these frameworks, the history of the Ganjun shan goshawks would seem to be part of the problem of the sovereign as a juridical being on the model of European monarchy. Such an approach would stress that the birds were the gift of a regional military leader, possessed of exclusive powers in his own domain but competing with his monarch for jurisdiction over a particular piece of land, Liangzhou. Moreover, they would be seen as part of a struggle over the power to deduct, the fundamental element in sovereignty in this formulation: Zhang Yichao denied Yizong the right to levy taxes or raise troops directly in the areas under his command, but sent the goshawks and other gifts instead, structuring the relationship as one of allegiance and loyalty rather than direct administrative subordination. In such a formulation, sovereignty has the character it has in Hobbes or Rousseau—something that is taken away or kept, like territory, which the empire may lose, as was the case with the loss of Gansu to the Tibetans or the establishment of autonomous provinces in Hebei 河北 in the wake of the An Lushan rebellion. Yizong's acquisition of full and complete sovereignty over

<sup>44</sup> “In feudal societies power functioned essentially through signs and levies. Signs of loyalty to the feudal lords, rituals, ceremonies and so forth, and levies in the form of taxes, pillage, hunting, war and so on. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a form of power comes into being that begins to exercise itself through social production and social service. It becomes a matter of obtaining productive service from individuals in their concrete lives. And in consequence, a real and effective ‘incorporation’ of power was necessary, in the sense that power had to be able to gain access to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, attitudes and modes of everyday behaviour.” Foucault, *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1977–1984* (London: Routledge, 1988), p.125.

<sup>45</sup> “Justice was the central modality of political power—specified as such by the very nature of the feudal polity. For the pure feudal hierarchy ... excluded any ‘executive’ at all, in the modern sense of a permanent administrative apparatus of the State for the enforcement of the law: the parcellization of sovereignty rendered one unnecessary and impossible ... Thus political power came for a period to be virtually identified with the single ‘judiciary’ function of interpreting and applying the existing laws. Moreover in the absence of any public bureaucracy, local coercion and administration—policing, fining, tolling, and enforcing powers—inevitably accrued to it. It is thus necessary always to remember that medieval ‘justice’ factually included a much wider range of activities than modern justice, because it structurally occupied a far more pivotal position within the total political system. It was the ordinary name of power.” Perry Anderson, *Passages from antiquity to feudalism* (London: NLB, 1974), pp.152–3.

<sup>46</sup> See *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 251, pp.8120–52. See also Robert M. Somers, “The end of the T’ang,” in *The Cambridge history of China*, vol.3, *Sui and T’ang China 589–906*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Arthur Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pt 1, pp.695–700.

<sup>47</sup> See *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 244–50, pp. 8077–90, and Somers, “The end of the T’ang,” pp.688–92.

<sup>48</sup> Such as the apparatus of imperial ritual and official titles and ranks which were the monopoly of the emperor (see Howard J. Wechsler, *Offerings of jade and silk: ritual and symbol in the legitimation of the T’ang dynasty* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985]). Stephen Owen speaks of the inflation of ranks after the rebellion as a devaluation of the empire’s symbolic currency, which encouraged the kind of counterfeiting strategies that included the bestowal of titles in the *Guiyi jun* which had not been formally granted by the court. See Owen, *The end of the Chinese ‘middle ages’: essays in mid-Tang literary culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), p.10.

<sup>49</sup> To some extent this argument concurs with the position of Naba Toshisada 那波利貞 (and perhaps with that of Naitō Konan 内藤湖南 before him) that, in the late Tang, social relations were characterised by a wider diffusion of techniques and knowledge of ceremonial behaviour, seen in such things as the increasing use of etiquette handbooks. He correlates this with the dissolution of earlier aristocratic divisions. See Naba, *Tōdai shakai bunka shi kenkyū*, [Studies of Tang-dynasty social and cultural history] (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1974), ch.1.

<sup>50</sup> See E. H. Schafer and B. E. Wallacker, “Local tribute products of the T’ang dynasty,” *Journal of Oriental Studies* 4.1–2 (1957–58), pp.213–48.

the hawks—a loss to Zhang Yichao—would be the product of a lack of substantive powers of sovereignty over the Gansu corridor. Moreover, the goshawks could be construed as part of the insignia of the emperor, a constituent of imperial magnificence, exhibited in excursions and hunts which are the mark of the emperor’s sovereignty, demonstrating his command of allegiances as far away as the Ganjun mountains. They would be seen as a sign that procures recognition of his pre-eminence. At the same time, for an emperor engaged in the suppression of revolts amongst the provincial armies under his control (Yizong put down the uprising of the forces of Pang Xun 龐勳<sup>46</sup> and, before that, had crushed the rebellion of Qiu Fu 裘甫),<sup>47</sup> the violence of birds could be understood as an analogue for the ruthless pursuit and destruction of those petty beings who resist the imperial will, whose inferiority is demonstrated in their deaths. These deaths would serve as a warning to their peers, who, like pheasants seeing a hawk in the sky, will not dare to congregate openly in defiance of its powers.

But the above accounts of hunting birds as “symbols” all rest on a decipherment of what it is that goshawks “represent”—which means that, like any sign, they must be “decoded.” This decoding requires a caste of interpreters to explicate the correspondences between birds and a certain order of power. If such an exegesis was ever carried out in relation to the Ganjun shan birds, it was not a matter of public record: there is no guarantee that any such “message” was understood by those who received it. The sovereignty technologies enacted on the goshawks were *more than* a sovereignty of signs and deductions codified and explained. They consisted of “protocols of seizure,” and of ceremonies of ornament and rivalries over imperial bodies. The technology of handling and the disciplines of space and bodies which are common to both hawking and ceremonies like gift-giving involve not political *images* but political *practices*. These practices are the basis for the goshawks’ incorporation into an historical and political situation, and thus into a matrix of sovereignty relations.

In the late eighth and ninth centuries the relationship of ruling bodies to territory in the lands that made up the Tang empire prior to the An Lushan rebellion was structured not so much by mandatory exactions and all-powerful systems of signs<sup>48</sup> (as it perhaps had been in the early years of Tang rule) as by a strategic engagement over protocol.<sup>49</sup> Goshawks are secured by the hand of power not through mandated exactions on subordinates (although compulsory tribute in hunting birds was levied on some of the prefectures under Tang control)<sup>50</sup> but through the networks of gift transmission.

In this way, the goshawks are simultaneously marks of the reach of Yizong’s authority (which could draw forth distinguished birds from areas that he did not rule) and marks of its limits. Yet they are also part of the complex sovereignty of gifts. They underline the fact that any power of imperial seizure is dependent on the management of relations of authority between ruler and ruled, and thus with systems of protocol and deference: technologies of the body, of words, and of ornament. These relations and

technologies involve a skilled deployment of historical knowledge, a history that is incorporated in the movements of donor and recipient (who act without acknowledging their agendas largely because those agendas are not explicitly formulated as ‘plans, or ‘goals,’ but are *embodied*). The major struggles in Tang politics between the 750s and 860s revolved around the relations of “court and province” (whether or not local military leaders could appoint themselves and their successors to positions of power, whether or not they could keep their income and their soldiers in their own locality under their own command, or whether the imperial centre could appoint and dismiss officials and claim levies of grain, silk, labour and other “revenues”), around powers and systems of taxation (how revenues should be extracted and calculated) and between the inner and outer court (relations between eunuchs and officials, between rival factions in the bureaucracy and between those forces competing over the succession). This is often presented as a situation of diminished imperial sovereignty, in which the central government had less comprehensive authority over those whom it ruled, permitting the development of loci of autonomous power.<sup>51</sup>

But this was also an environment of increased complexity in the strategies of governance, in which seizure became much less a matter of formal order than of manoeuvre, in which the parties involved struggled to articulate an order of precedence in an ever-changing field. In particular the emperor’s body became the focus of competing interests, competing ethical and political projects and competing systems of ornament, pedagogy and ceremony. Hunting with birds, and the forces and interests which were engaged with it, was one constituent of this field. Hawks were very much an object of military power, and were thus connected with the relationships between the Tang centre and the provinces of the north, east and west. Following the An Lushan rebellion, these latter were often under independent military rule, and had close proximities to the rival political projects beyond the formal borders of the Tang state (those in Korea, those on the Manchurian or Mongolian periphery, those of the Uyghurs, those of the Khitan, and those of others whose polities were involved in processes of dissolution or constitution). The most distinguished hawks in Tang China originated in places that were either adjacent to or within these spheres of independent military action.<sup>52</sup> In other words, goshawks were a medium through which the world of the northern borders was brought directly into the life of the hinterland. This relationship was ruled by ceremonial exchange rather than by administrative compulsion (or, at a lower level, by market transactions).<sup>53</sup> In this way, the goshawks constituted one interest that inserted itself into the intimate life of the sovereign and into the competition that surrounded his leisure and pleasures, a competition that is above all a competition between rival forms of pedagogy. Hawking is a system of training for the royal body that competes with others: those of Daoism, with its regimes of diet and of drugs designed to procure immortality; those of Buddhism, with its meditational systems and its programmes for the control of desire; those of eunuchs with

<sup>51</sup> See the chapter by Charles Peterson, “Court and province in mid- and late T’ang,” in Twitchett and Wright, *The Cambridge history of China*, vol.3, *Sui and T’ang China 589–906*, pt 1, pp.464–560.

<sup>52</sup> In his “Paeon to two white goshawks,” Su Ting notes that the goshawks in question had been trained by generals and that these trainers were brave and fierce. See Su Ting 蘇頌, “Shuang baiying zan” 雙白鷹贊, *Quan Tang wen*, juan 256, p.1146.

<sup>53</sup> The great variety of names for different kinds of hawks and the different provenances and attributes of these laid out in Duan Chengshi's text on hunting birds suggests a highly differentiated market for the birds in Tang times. See *Youyang zazu, qianji, juan* 20, pp.194–7. See also Schafer, "Falconry in T'ang times," pp.324–35. Diplomatic exchange brought more exalted birds from more distant places, and conferred upon them the charisma of the political (rather than commercial) forces with which they were associated.

<sup>54</sup> The position of the royal mews in the formal structure of the Tang government is set out in the *Xin Tang shu, juan* 47, *Bai guan zhi* 百官志 2 [Monograph on government functionaries, part 2], p.1218. On the royal mews in the Tang, see Schafer, "Falconry in T'ang times," p.305.

<sup>55</sup> Arthur Waley, *The life and times of Po Chü-i, 772–846 A.D.* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949), pp.36–7.

<sup>56</sup> Some index of this line of argument is the critique of royal hunting and meat consumption in a Buddhist poem preserved at Dunhuang. "Shang huang quanshan duan jiu rou wen" 上皇勸善斷酒肉文 [A text of the emperor superior exhorting good and giving up meat and wine], Beitu 8412, Hai no.51. See Wang Fanzhou, *Dunhuang seng shi jiao ji* [Buddhist monastic poetry from Dunhuang, annotated and edited] (Lanzhou: Gansu Renmin Chubanshe, 1994), p.66.

their strategies for the augmentation of imperial distinctiveness; those of scholar-bureaucrats and their injunctions to austerity and duty to family and state; those of palace women with their mastery of arts of instruction and entertainment; and those of ritual specialists and their knowledge of deportment, sequence, and standards of measure and balance in the use of objects and of words in the structures of everyday life and ceremonial.

The power struggles between these pedagogic interests and projects was fundamental to sovereignty: the emperor's body was situated between them and they competed to take it over. Protocol was a central method for navigating between them, as well as a stake in and an instrument of these struggles. The goshawks, as one element in this field of attraction and repulsion, were affected directly by the trajectory of these rivalries, trajectories that were constituted in the shifting interests of the emperor. Moreover, hunting birds had a precise institution into which they were incorporated: the royal mews.<sup>54</sup> As a result, they had a specific location in the overall field of institutional struggles that were played out on and through this pedagogic competition for the imperial interest. Earlier in the Tang, the mews had been politically controversial: they were under eunuch control and were thus an object of attack by those who arranged themselves against eunuch interests. The abuses of the eunuchs who procured food for the royal hawks and dogs were extensively highlighted by scholar-bureaucrat critics. At the end of the reign of Dezong, who had become closely involved both with eunuchs and with the Hanlin 翰林 academicians who made up the inner court after the revolt of the independent military governors of Hebei in the early 780s, one of the prime actions of the clique of Wang Pi 王伾 and Wang Shuwen 王叔文 (associated with the emperor Shunzong 順宗, who briefly followed Dezong, ruling only for the year 805) was to attack the privileges of the eunuchs who were associated with falconry:

Another scandal was that of the Imperial Falconers, who had been in the habit of going round extorting money from the people of Ch'ang-an by spreading bird nets over the doors or wells, and refusing to let them be removed till paid to do so. They also crowded into taverns, ate and drank heavily and went away without paying. This type of palace racket was now suppressed.<sup>55</sup>

Rhetorically and institutionally, hunting birds were situated in a war over the emperor's private life and those who administered it, which was identified with the overall sovereignty order of the empire.

The presentation of the Ganjun shan goshawks, in company with Tibetan women and horses for the imperial birthday, situates them firmly in this domain of private imperial leisure, and the proclivities of the emperor's body. They are therefore exposed to all of the rival projects with their alternative protocols, alternative calendars (for the day and for the months and years), and histories of struggle against hawks and the institutional interests with which they are affiliated. For Buddhism they appear as a life-taking force, karmically injurious, a sign of the emperor's slavery to his passions.<sup>56</sup> For



imperial scholars they are a product of the skilful manipulations of the military officials at the periphery and of the wives of the inner court, as well as being a drain on fiscal resources, a waste of state necessities. The rivalry between hawks and these ministers of grain led to the death of Tang Taizong's 太宗 (r. 626–49) favourite sparrowhawk, which he suffocated by hiding inside his robe rather than reveal to his remonstrating minister Wei Zheng 魏征 that he was spending his time on hunting with birds.<sup>57</sup>

Through their relationship with the calendar of celebrations for the emperor (private birthday celebrations rather than those of official dynastic ritual) and with women sent as entertainers, goshawks become part of the system of imperial adornment and its politics. The augmentation of the imperial body through these contributions of ornamental pleasure produced subordinated bodies.

### *Release of the Goshawks*

In the 5th month of 867, because of imperial illness (*buyu* 不預), prisoners and criminals were liberated, 500 women from the palace were released, and “flying dragons” (fine horses in the imperial stables),<sup>58</sup> goshawks and sparrowhawks of the Army of Inspired Strategy (*sbence jun* 神策軍)<sup>59</sup> and the imperial mews were set free.<sup>60</sup> At the same time, it was forbidden for women to be submitted to the emperor as gifts on the celebration of the *yanqing* 延慶 and *duanwu* festivals.<sup>61</sup>

The release of the goshawks helps to remake the emperor as a ceremonial being (cures him of his sickness, if the ceremony of setting free the bodies in his command was indeed efficacious), atoning for his excesses in a public act of renunciation.<sup>62</sup>

When the imperial body is threatened by illness, the ornaments of the emperor's private leisure—women, fine horses, and hawks—are set free. The effects of power on hawks ebb and flow with the health of the emperor's body and of the realm. Their constraint by jesses and their exercise in the hunt occurs when the country is at peace, and when the ruler is well. At such times, he may give himself over to the pleasures of entertainment. Women, hawks

<sup>57</sup> See Wang Dang 王讜, *Tang yulin jiaozheng* 唐語林校證 [The forest of sayings from the Tang, edited and verified], *juan* 3 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1987), p. 217. See also Schafer, “Falconry in T'ang times,” p.303, which seems to suggest that the anecdote can be found in the biography of Wei Zheng in the *Xin Tang shu*. (I could not, however, locate it in that source).

<sup>59</sup> The eunuch-controlled forces which had become the major military group at the imperial court in the late Tang. See Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China*, p.419.

<sup>60</sup> *Xin Tang shu*, *juan* 9, p.260.

<sup>61</sup> See Schafer, *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.292, n.83.

<sup>62</sup> A stress on the display of restraint expressed in the release of the hawks in the royal mews was a feature of Tang political rhetoric, usually constructed as a presentation of the emperor's virtue. See Zhang Ju's 張莒 rhapsody on the release of the imperial hawks by the emperor Dezong in the late 780s, “Fang long ying fu” 放籠鷹賦 [Rhapsody on releasing the caged hawks], *Quan Tang wen*, *juan* 446, p.2013. This can be compared with the assertions of probity and resistance to extravagance of the Latter Tang emperors, Zhuangzong 莊宗 and Mingzong, who refused gifts out of a stated intention to keep government modest (see *Cefu yuangui*, *juan* 168, p.2028). Of particular significance is Mingzong's prohibition on the importation of hawks and dogs (pp.2028–9). See also his specifically anti-hunting decree of 931, two years before the submission of the white falcon by the Ganzhou Uyghurs. “In galloping and chasing, the sagely man always represses his mind. Strange beasts and precious birds, these brilliant kings do not store in their realms. We wish to diminish [our wants] and serve the auspicious /OVER

<sup>58</sup> So named because they had *fei* 飛 [flying] branded on their right front leg, and *long* 龍 [dragon] branded on their necks. Bai Juyi's 白居易 poem “Celebrating the rain” runs: “Palace women are sent forth from the Court for the Proclamation of Excellence. Amongst the stabled horses, the flying dragons are made fewer.” Bai Juyi, “He yu” 賀雨, in *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 [Complete Tang verse], *juan* 424 (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), p.4653. The Court For the Proclamation of Excellence (*Xuanhui yuan* 宣徽院) was an

/office set up after the reign of Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–62) under eunuch supervision, responsible for keeping the registers of all palace personnel and keeping the accounts for the expenditure on banquets, court receptions, and suburban sacrifices. See Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China*, p.250. Wittfogel and Feng hold that in the Liao ‘flying dragon’ was a figurative way of referring to the best horses, separated from the rest of the imperial stables. See *History of Chinese society: Liao*, p.482, n.98.

/signs of the ancestors. In perusing the rise and fall of previous ages, and in thinking on what people of the past took and discarded ... and promoting the humaneness of loving life and hating killing, We command that the tribute of eagles, ospreys, goshawks and merlins shall cease. On the one hand, let us halt the increase of excursions, and on the other let us promote the sentiment of those that fly and run. In recent days people of all colours have not held to the provisions of the decree, and have frequently offered tribute of goshawks and falcons. This cannot be maintained. How can the recent decrees be shown to them? Later people will say that we have transgressed and violated the prohibitions. The goshawks and falcons presently in the royal mews should be taken to the mountains and forests and released. Henceforth, people of all colours must not send in offerings of this kind. If they meet this kind of tribute, officials at the gates should not accept it," p.2029.

<sup>63</sup> At the same time prisoner, woman, horse and hawk only earn good treatment if they can learn to judge the commands and wishes of their masters. The satisfactions of mastery rely on compliance, and this can never be guaranteed. The prisoner may not be recondite, the singing girl may not smile, the horse may not gallop, and the hawk may fly slowly, or miss its target.

<sup>64</sup> Schafer continues, "Moreover, the imperial pharmacists had to take account of the tastes of these reagents, as related to the Five Organs of the body, and other complex matters, such as the rule which determined that in maladies of the stomach and diaphragm, the royal patient should eat first and then take the medicine, while in diseases of the heart and belly, he should take the medicine first and eat afterwards. The compounding took place in the watchful presence of the highest councillors of state and the commander of the guard, and the finished product was tasted by the chief pharmacists, by the great Chamberlain (the pharmacists' superior), and by the crown prince (presumably lest he be too anxious to succeed) before going on to the sovereign's bedside." *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.179. Schafer's account is based on the sections on imperial physicians in the *Da Tang Liudian* 大唐六典 [Six Institutes of the Tang]. See *Song ben Da Tang Liudian* 宋本大唐六典 [The Song

and horses are in this respect constituted as a force of danger: they are dispensable, and acceptable in moderation, but their attractions may overwhelm the emperor and imperil the realm. Prisoners, women, horses and hawks share lives of confinement and restraint: they are the products of seizure. All are to be tamed, reduced to submission by techniques of subservience: in this way punishment and entertainment belong on a continuum.<sup>63</sup> At the same time hawks, criminals, women entertainers and horses are united in being objects of imperial mercy. He releases them, refusing to reproduce their subordination and the techniques of restraint which maintain it. These lives have all given themselves over to the ruler, placed themselves in the confined world of his household—his palace or his jails—unwillingly. Moreover, they are all received from the hands of others, sent up by delegates and subordinates. Yet each has a hold on the emperor; he is prisoner of their strange enticements. Perhaps in releasing them from bondage he expresses a wish to be liberated from the fetters of desire, fetters which these constrained and confined lives produce for him.

The illness of the sovereign is a central issue for the political system. Medicine produces and reproduces the order of the state and the world. "Each medicine should contain one 'superior' drug, monarchical and heavenly, to lengthen life, three 'middle' drugs, vassal and human, to strengthen the organism, and nine 'inferior' drugs, ministerial and earthly, to cure the disease."<sup>64</sup> Medicine is hierarchically structured, in a succession of positions and functions. The monarch, or heaven, serves to prolong life. The subordinate human, located in the centre, is engaged in a strengthening action, while the work of curing, ruling and punishing the disease (and thus of governance as a punitive cure) is the job of the delegated minister/servant located at the earthly level. Hawks traverse this structure—they are located directly with the monarch, and with heaven, the area of flight. Yet they are also vassals, secured from the periphery, from those who acknowledge the emperor's superiority. These vassals are local authorities, in a position of mediation between imperial heaven and the functionaries who work on the ground—where functions of security and tax collection are performed

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/copy of the Six Institutes of the Great Tang], *juan* 10 and *juan* 14 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1991), pp.221–3 and 329–31. Governmental order and cure are both the same thing (*zhi* 治). But the emperor and officialdom are not involved in a ceaseless war against political disease, through the establishment of a state of somatic equipoise in the territory of the empire. Governance was more than triumph over irregularity and disorder (rebellion or disease). Yet the health of the emperor was, especially in the ninth century, a central target of political action, and a focus of political struggles. The imperial

/quest for longevity set systems of knowledge and ethics and the institutions which produced them against each other. The death of the ruler was, moreover, a structuring force in the politics of the middle and late Tang. Xuanzong, who ascended the throne at the time of the overthrow of the Tibetans by Zhang Yichao, had the rectification of government in revenge for the murder of his father Xianzong 憲宗 (who reigned from 805–20) as one of his central pre-occupations. See Michael T. Dalby, "Court politics in late T'ang times," in Twitchett and Wright, *Cambridge history of China*, vol. 3, *Sui and T'ang China*, pt 1, p.670.

through recruitment from amongst the common people. The exercise of the lowest level of government functions is literally part of the life of the soil. Hawks perform the work of seizure on the ground, capturing the humble lives of hares and pheasants as a delegated ministerial servant, procuring meat which may, through the virtue of its qualities, aid the health of the imperial body, defined by the expanse of heaven and empire. Meat too was governed by these medical regularities. It was something through which directional and temporal virtues could be ingested, incorporating the things of the world into the orderly, governed body of the monarch.<sup>65</sup>

### *White Birds and Post-Imperial Histories, 884–911*

Deep in the winter of 884, Suo Hanjun 索漢君, the Guiyi jun's Defence Garrison Chief<sup>66</sup> in the town of Suzhou 肅州,<sup>67</sup> reported to his superiors<sup>68</sup>—undoubtedly the Guiyi jun leaders in Dunhuang—that a white goshawk had been taken east by a party of twenty people led by Suo Ren'an 索仁安, the deputy Defence Commissioner<sup>69</sup> of Suzhou. The goshawk made its journey in company with a chestnut stallion. Both were intended as gifts for the khan<sup>70</sup> of the Uyghurs. The report of the goshawk's journey is embedded in

<sup>65</sup> The claims that this health made on the plants and animals of the empire were enormous: it generated and relied upon practical relations of command over territory. Medicines included “aconite from Chekiang and Szechwan, cassia bark and buds from northern Kwangsi and southern Kiangsi, rhubarb from the northwest, ginseng from the north and Manchuria, lotus root from the mouth of the Yangtze, fritillary from Hupeh and Szechwan, sweet flag from southern Szechwan, liquorice from the north and Mongolia . . . , goral horns from the mountains of Szechwan and the Tibetan foothills into north China, Mongolia and Manchuria, ox bezoars from Szechwan and Shantung, rhinoceros horn from southern Hunan, python bile from Lingnan, wild boar bezoars from the Ordos, arsenic from T'ai-yüan in Shansi . . .” Schafer, *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.180.

<sup>66</sup> *Fangshu du* 郝成都, chief of a unit of 500 soldiers. See Feng Peihong, “Wan Tang-Wudai-Song chu Guiyi jun wuzhi junjiang yanjiu” [A study of the military officers of the Guiyi jun in the Late Tang, Five Dynasties and Early Song], in *Dunhuang Guiyi jun shi zhuanti yanjiu* [Specialised studies in the history of the Guiyi jun in Dunhuang], ed. Zheng Binglin (Lanzhou: Lanzhou Daxue Chubanshe, 1997), p.146. I thank both Colin Jeffcott and Paul Clark for giving me copies of this book.

<sup>67</sup> Modern Jiuquan 酒泉, located in the desert between Dunhuang and modern Zhangye (Ganzhou). Jiuquan is close to Jiayuguan 嘉峪關, the western terminus of the Ming 明-dynasty Great Wall.

<sup>68</sup> The report is the document now held in the British Museum as S.389. The transcriptions used here come from Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.304–5. Only the title of Defence Garrison Chief is given in this report: the name of Suo Hanjun appears in a report sent a month earlier by the same office. This is now numbered S.2589. The connection between the two documents has been made by Rong Xinjiang (who transcribes S.2589 in *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu* on pp.303–4). The report has come to have a key place in modern scholarly reconstructions of the history of the Gansu

/corridor. The first major study was in Tang Changru, “Guanyu Guiyi jun de jizhong ziliao ba” [Notes on several materials relating to the Guiyi jun], originally in *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 1 (1962) reprinted in Lanzhou Daxue lishixi Dunhuang xue yanjiu shi and Lanzhou Daxue Tushuguan, eds, *Dunhuangxue wenxuan* [Selected writings on Dunhuang studies] (Lanzhou: Lanzhou Daxue, 1983), pp.185–6. It is mentioned by Nicholas Sims-Williams and James Hamilton in their discussion of the Turco-Sogdian letter from Tāmār Quš to a priest called George in Dunhuang. The Turco-Sogdian document is Or. 8212 (89); a photographic reproduction of the Chinese text of Suo Hanjun's report is found in the appendix to their volume, *Documents turco-sogdiens du IXe-Xe siècle de Touen-bouang* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1990). A Chinese transcription and English translation of part of the text appears on pp.283–4 of Rong Xinjiang's article “mThong-khyab or Tongjia: a tribe in the Sino-Tibetan frontiers in the seventh to tenth centuries” (translated by Wilhelm K. Müller), *Monumenta Serica* 39 (1990–91): 247–99.

<sup>69</sup> *Fangyusbi* 防禦使. See Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China*, p.210: “Defense Commissioner: A delegate from the central government on ad hoc duty assignment

/supervising a Prefecture (*chou*), or a designation conferred on certain Prefects (*tz'u-shih*); after 762 displaced by the more prestigious title Military Commissioner (*chieh-tu shih*).” The Defence Commissioner post in Suzhou is not of course a central appointment, but part of the defense administration of the Guiyi jun. The presence of this rank in Suzhou coheres with the logic that Hucker identifies: it is granted in a prefecture where defence is a special priority. The first use of this rank is said to be in 698 in Xiazhou 夏州 (see Feng Peihong, “Wan Tang-Wudai-Song chu Guiyi jun wuzhi junjiang yanjiu,” p.156). (Xiazhou is located in what is now uninhabited land in the Ordos desert on the border between Shaanxi and Inner Mongolia.) Significantly, the business of defence is targeted at specific peoples: for instance, a Senior Defence Commissioner was appointed in 714 in Youzhou 幽州 (modern Beijing) to resist the Khitan and the Xi 奚, and a Longyou 隴右 Defence Commissioner was appointed in the area of Eastern Gansu to resist the Tibetans (see Feng Peihong, id., pp.156–7). The post was generally in places where a risk of military rebellion was held to exist. Following the An Lushan rebellion the post spread throughout the country; every major prefecture and important /OVER



Figure 3

*Suo Hanjun's report detailing the journey of the white goshawk to the Uyghur khan. S.389/1. By permission of the British Library*

/post, pass and ford had one. At the first stage of Zhang Yichao's rebellion against the Tibetans, the Tang appointed him as Defence Commissioner for Shazhou and Guazhou 瓜州 (modern Dunhuang and Anxi 安西 respectively), but after the conquest of the rest of the Gansu corridor he was promoted to the rank of Military Commissioner. There was henceforth no Shazhou Defense Commissioner, but the post was established in Liangzhou and Guazhou, and of course Suzhou (Feng Peihong, id., p.157).

an account of recent events in Suzhou; its appearance in writing is part of the enterprise of border defence. The long-distance operations of the hand of power require a regular submission of intelligence from those charged with military control at the periphery: the report—and the journey of the goshawk itself—is part of the mechanics of delegated power, the licensing to act autonomously and strategically in response to a fluid and moving political

<sup>70</sup> The word used in Chinese is *wang* 王, “king.” Khan (*xan* or *qan*) seems an appropriate translation here since it appears in numerous old Uyghur documents from Dunhuang. See for example *ta'iri uyyur xan* “heavenly Uyghur khan” in P.2988 (transcribed in Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours du IXe-Xe siècle de Touen-bouang*, p.84). The more elevated term *qaghan*, approximately

/equivalent to “emperor,” is often used in secondary scholarship for the ruler of the Ganzhou Uyghurs, but as this has a precise Chinese equivalent, *keban* 可汗, which appears at another point in Suo Hanjun's report, the term *khan* is preferred, except in the period when Uyghur power has been firmly established in Ganzhou, when *qaghan* seems more appropriate.

field. The defence garrison chief informs his superiors about an intricate series of politically charged comings and goings from Suzhou, of which the bird's journey is but one. Suo Hanjun recounts to his superior that the day after the bird left Suzhou, a party came from Ganzhou (the homeland of the Ganjun shan goshawks). This party reported that a group of several hundred Tibetans and Tuyuhun 吐谷渾 (one of the major ethno-political groups of the Gansu corridor and the Qinghai 青海 plateau from before the period of Tang domination, and, like the Chinese-speaking peoples of the Guiyi jun, former subjects of the Tibetan empire, in which they were known as 'A-zha)<sup>71</sup> had left Ganzhou to return to their own country.<sup>72</sup> The Tuyuhun king and queen, along with their retainers, travelled in miserable circumstances, and left their slaves and other commoners behind in Ganzhou. These journeys are part of a complex set of political manoeuvres: an earlier report<sup>73</sup> sent by Suo Hanjun from Suzhou told of the obstruction of the movements of Guiyi jun emissaries to the east by disorders in Liangzhou (the oasis for which Zhang Yichao had been seeking formal ratification of his *de facto* powers of control, providing the background for the journey of the Ganjun shan goshawks to Chang'an).

Suo Hanjun's report also informed its recipient of ongoing raids by a party of two hundred Uyghurs in the area around Ganzhou. In the communication of late 884 recounting the journey of the white goshawk, Suo told his superiors that the departure of the Tibetans and Tuyuhun from Ganzhou occurred after the failure of peace negotiations with the Uyghurs. At the time the Tibetans and Tuyuhun left the oasis, the Longjia 龍家 or Dūm (Indo-European speakers originally from the Tarim basin, known in Tibetan as 'Brug),<sup>74</sup> the dominant force in Ganzhou, were engaged in ongoing discussions with the Uyghurs. Demands from the Uyghurs that the Dūm/Longjia send their king's younger brother and fourteen others to the Uyghur court as hostages were vehemently refused. The king's younger brother said he would rather die than submit to the Uyghurs as a hostage. The Dūm/Longjia had to demur by telling the Uyghurs that the younger brother was mad, and other hostages were offered in his stead. While the Uyghur khan was left to deliberate on these terms, the Dūm/Longjia ruler of Ganzhou surreptitiously sent an emissary to the Womo 唃末 or 'Od-bar/gYog-po (a post-colonial creole population of former slaves of the Tibetans)<sup>75</sup> who now controlled Liangzhou. The Dūm/Longjia ruler's emissary offered the Womo the chance

/is not mentioned in Rong's mThong-khyab article, which is concerned chiefly with issues relating to ethnicity and politics.

<sup>73</sup> S.2589, transcribed in Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.303–4.

<sup>74</sup> The statement that the Longjia originated in the Tarim basin is found in the gazetteer of Yizhou 伊州 (modern Qumul—Hami 哈密) produced in the Guiyi jun in 887. S.367; for a reasonably accessible transcription see Zheng Binglin, *Dunhuang dili wenshu buiji jiaozhu* [Dunhuang geographical documents, collected and annotated] (Lanzhou: Gansu Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1989), p.68. The identification of the Longjia with the Dūm of Khotanese writings was made by Harold Bailey. See Rong Xinjiang, "Longjia kao" [A study of the Longjia], *Zhongya xuekan* 4 (1987): 144–60. Other recent discussions include Lu Qingfu, "Cong Yanqi Long wang dao Hexi Longjia" [From the Long (Dragon) king of Yanqi (Karashahr) to the Longjia of Hexi], in Zheng Binglin, *Dunhuang Guiyi jun shi zhuanti yanjiu*, pp.486–503, and Lu Qingfu, "Lüelun Sute ren yu Longjia de guanxi" [A brief discussion of the relationship between the Sogdians and the Longjia], in Zheng Binglin, id., pp.504–13.

<sup>75</sup> See the description of the Womo mission to the court of Yizong (which arrived three years before the Ganjun shan goshawks) in the *Zizhi tongjian* entry for 863. It states that whenever the Tibetans sent out troops, the rich families were often accompanied by slaves, as many as a dozen or so per family, and as a result of this the Tibetan masses were many in number. After the rebellion of Lun Kongre (whose name is reconstructed as blon Khong-bzher by Rolf Stein in *Les tribus anciennes des marches Sino-Tibétaines: légendes, classifications et histoire* [Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1961], p.67), a Tibetan official in the Gansu–Qinghai region at around the time of the uprising of Zhang Yichao, these slaves had no masters. They united into tribes, and were scattered through the Gansu corridor and Eastern Gansu. Weak groups amongst the Tibetans gave their allegiance to them. *Zizhi tongjian*, juan 250, pp.8101–2. There are also sources on the Womo in the *Wudai buiyao* 五代會要 [Collected essentials of the Five Dynasties], juan 30 (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1978), p.468. See the translation and notes in Hamilton, *Les Ouïgours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties d'après les documents* /OVER

<sup>71</sup> See Gabriella Molè, *The T'u-yü-hun from the Northern Wei to the time of the Five Dynasties* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970). See also the materials on the 'A-zha in F.W. Thomas, "The Ḥa-ža," in *Tibetan literary texts and documents concerning Chinese Turkestan, Part II: Documents* (Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1951), pp.1–38, and Geza Uray, "Annals of the 'A-ža principality," in *Proceed-*

*ings of the Csoma de Kőrös Memorial Symposium, held at Mátrafüred, Hungary, 24–30 September 1976*, ed. Louis Ligeti (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978), pp.541–78.

<sup>72</sup> This section of Suo Hanjun's report (S.389) is reprinted in Chinese and translated into English in Rong Xinjiang's "mThong-khyab or Tongjia: a tribe in the Sino-Tibetan frontiers in the seventh to tenth centuries," *Monumenta Serica* 39 (1990–91): 283–4. The white goshawk

/chinois, pp.30–1. Discussion of the Womo from a Tibetan perspective is found in Stein, *Les tribus anciennes des marches Sino-Tibétaines*, pp.67–8. The name 'Od-bar is given as the Tibetan equivalent of the name Womo in Hamilton and Sims-Williams, *Documents turco-sogdiens du IXe-Xe siècle de Touen-bouang*, p.63. A modern Chinese-language study collecting together the various Chinese sources is Zhou Weizhou, "Womo kao" [A study of the Womo], *Xibei lishi ziliao* (1980.2): 1–8. Zhou gives various suggestions about the Tibetan original of the name, suggesting that it is related to gYog-po for a slave (see p.1). Note that Zhou's article uses 嚙末 for Womo, presumably for typographical reasons. In the notes on the name Womo in his 1955 book, Hamilton rejects the suggestion of F. W. Thomas that Womo is linked to the Tibetan word *Mun-dmag* found in medieval Tibetan documents, on the grounds that *mun* is merely a Tibetan transcription of the Chinese *wen* 文 ('civil' or 'literary') so that *Mun-dmag* means the civil officials attached to military units mentioned in the *Xin Tang shu*. See Hamilton, *Les Ouïgours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties*, p.31.

<sup>76</sup> A grouping which had emerged as part of the military apparatus of the Tibetan empire. See Rong Xinjiang's article in *Monumenta Serica* cited above for a detailed treatment of the subject.

<sup>77</sup> See Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.306–7.

<sup>78</sup> Huang Chao, whose rebellion was the most serious challenge to Tang authority since the An Lushan revolt, had committed suicide earlier in 884. The emperor did not return to his capital until the following year. *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 256, p.8320. See Somers, "The end of the T'ang," in Twitchett and Wright, *Cambridge History of China*, vol.3, *Sui and T'ang times*, pt 1, pp.756–66.

to form an anti-Uyghur alliance with Ganzhou, with the threat that if they did not assent, they would face the danger of a coalition between Uyghurs and the Dūm/Longjia. But after the departure of the Tibetans from Ganzhou and several more days of internal discussions amongst the Dūm/Longjia, the latter, seeing their grain exhausted, abandoned the oasis. They retreated in company with their dependants and retainers (and several other ethnic groups including the Qiang 羌 and Tongjia 通頰 or mThong-khyab)<sup>76</sup> to Suzhou. They arrived hungry in Suzhou—three days after the white goshawk, the chestnut stallion and the party of Suo Ren'an had departed on their mission to the Uyghur khan. The report ends with the fate of Ganzhou uncertain, but not long after it other official communications indicate that a Uyghur qaghanate had been established at Ganzhou.<sup>77</sup>

The white goshawk's journey is part and parcel of the constitution of a new order of territorial power. The political forces involved in the life of this bird were radically different from those that had affected the Ganjun shan birds almost twenty years before. Like Zhang Yichao, the Tang emperor Yizong was dead. At the time when the white goshawk left Suzhou on its journey, his successor Xizong 僖宗 was in exile from the Tang capital, which was in the process of being retaken from the troops of the rebel Huang Chao 黃巢.<sup>78</sup> Imperial sovereignty claims in the old territory of the Tang were corroded, as the emperor and the eunuch-dominated court had now become a minor regional player amongst an array of rival warlords who had emerged in the course of the rebellion. The gravitational force which the Tang imperial centre exerted on the Gansu corridor was radically diminished: its actions and desires had little direct bearing on the movements and struggles of Tuyuhun, Longjia, Womo and Uyghurs, even though it continued to hold the Guiyi jun in its field of symbolic force, remaining the fount of its systems of culture and prestige.

In the Guiyi jun the continued evocation of the Tang order in the local systems of rank and rhetoric was juxtaposed with a severely curtailed territorial reach. As the report recounting the white goshawk's departure from Suzhou makes clear, the powers over the lives and spaces of the Gansu corridor that Zhang Yichao had seemed to exercise with the gift of the Ganjun shan goshawks were no longer in effect. The Guiyi jun was not a coordinating or dominant force: its political projects and acts of seizure and control co-existed and competed with those of the Longjia, the Uyghurs, the Tibetans, the Tuyuhun and the Womo. It had no effective authority in Ganzhou, and little in Liangzhou. Ganjun shan, the source of the goshawks sent to Yizong, was no longer a fault line between Tang imperial claims to Liangzhou and the *de facto* powers of control exercised by Zhang Yichao. It was now the area through which furtive exchanges between the Dūm/Longjia rulers of Ganzhou and the Womo/Od-bar/gYog-po of Liangzhou over responses to the incoming Uyghurs were carried on. Henceforth, the Ganzhou area and its birds of prey would be dominated by the Uyghur qaghan.

Yet the leader of the Guiyi jun, Zhang Huaishen 張淮深, the nephew of the now deceased Zhang Yichao, devoted much effort to extolling the moral force and political achievements of the polity which his uncle had established. Within the Guiyi jun, Zhang Huaishen continued to assert an overall power in the Gansu corridor and a supremacy over its peoples, invoking the conquering legacies of his uncle, and presenting a consistent affiliation to the authority of the Tang dynasty. Two years prior to the goshawk's journey he had commissioned a memorial which recalled the history of Zhang Yichao's life and conquests and his own achievements, inscribing in the medium of stone (relatively immune to the forces of organic decay and thus able to survive corporeal dissolution and the destruction of the plant and animal order which was the order of the state) a record of the greatness of the Zhang family, annotated to explicate all the references and allusions.<sup>79</sup> This panegyric asserted that Zhang Huaishen, following the legacy of this uncle, had taken the mixed Tibetans and Tuyuhun of the Gansu corridor, the Qiang, Longjia and Womo and "frightened them into submission with thunderous awe, instructing them with the Florissant Wind of Chinese Civilization, so that they all became tame and good, bringing their customs on to the correct track with a single transformation."<sup>80</sup> Huaishen had continued Yichao's achievements: once ruling in his own right, it was said he had brought peace throughout the region. "The four quarters have harsh and fierce people, but they came to connect in accord and to seek peace. The lupine Uyghurs of the North brought the swift hooves of young steeds and the Tibetans and Tuyuhun of the south brought the white jades of Kunlun 崑崙."<sup>81</sup> The peoples of the region are shown thus in humble submission to his authority, something that radiates in all directions, replicating the victories at all points of the compass achieved by both Zhang Yichao and his successor at the head of the Guiyi jun. In the wording of the monument, the moral force of Zhang Huaishen's governance secures order both within the Guiyi jun and outside it. The energies of his rule meant that "the common people did not desist from winter ploughing. The seven domains of governance were all harmoniously regulated and the autumn reaping had richness and abundance in the year's crop."<sup>82</sup> But this depiction of a magnificent stability stands in profound contrast to the billiard-ball movements of peoples and the complex diplomatic manoeuvres which the Suzhou garrison commander reported in his communiqué about the journey of the white goshawk.

The goshawk's journey was one element in a geo-political reordering wrought by the emergence of a strong Uyghur presence in the environs of Ganzhou.<sup>83</sup> The establishment of a Uyghur political claim on the middle of the Gansu corridor involves a claim on distinguished lives from the region which are brought to it in a state of submission. The white goshawk is an offering made in company with a chestnut stallion that is given in the context of a Uyghur demand that Longjia princes be sent as hostages. The new Uyghur state establishes its presence by drawing into its own orbit beings of noble pedigree that will in some sense join its retinue—hawks, stallions and

<sup>79</sup> *Zhang Huaishen bei* (P.2762, S.3329, S.6161, S.6973 and S.11564); transcription in Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.403.

<sup>80</sup> See text of *Zhang Huaishen bei* in Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.403.

<sup>81</sup> *Zhang Huaishen bei*, in *ibid.*, p.404.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> For an overall account of this process see Rong Xinjiang, "Ganzhou Huihu chengli shi lun" [A discussion of the history of the establishment of the Ganzhou Uyghur qaghanate], *Lishi yanjiu* 225 (1993.5): 32–9.

<sup>84</sup> The Turco-Sogdian letter from Tāmār Quš to the priest George in Shazhou appears to refer to this agreement between the Longjia and the Uyghurs; see the annotated translation by Hamilton and Sims-Williams in their *Documents turco-sogdiens du IXe-Xe siècle de Touen-houang*, pp.63–77. The identification of Tāmār Quš as the king of the Longjia is made in note G5–6, p.69. As a sign of the close relationship between political power and birds, it is notable that the Quš in Tāmār Quš's name is the Turkic word for "bird." A derogatory drawing of a man with an erection appears next to the letter. Hamilton and Sims-Williams suggest that this is meant to be an insulting depiction of Tāmār Quš. They note the pervasive connection between phallic references and birds in many Eurasian languages. It is significant the English falconry term "yarak," a young hawk in its prime (a loanword from Turkish), means "penis" and "weapon" in modern Uyghur and Turkish. I thank Dilber Thwaites for explaining to me that yarak had this non-falconry connotation. The arguments of this paper make the general political correspondences between male power—of which kings and generals are pre-eminent incarnations—and avian life quite apparent.

<sup>85</sup> See the Khotanese account of the tensions in the Gansu corridor between the Uyghur and the Longjia/Dūm (P.2741), translated by Harold Bailey. H. W. Bailey, "A Khotanese text concerning the Turks in Kanṭṣou," *Asia Major New Series* 1.1 (1949): 35. See also the comments on the dating of the events in question in Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang, *Yutian shi congkao* [Collected studies on the history of Khotan] (Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian, 1993), pp.128–9.

princes. It seems that the negotiations which demanded hostages from the Longjia were ultimately successful<sup>84</sup> and the latter became a constituent, albeit a fractious one, of the Ganzhou Uyghur qaghanate.<sup>85</sup>

If the establishment of the Uyghur qaghanate in Ganzhou provides the ultimate resolution of the conflicts which the report of Suo Hanjun recounts, the goshawk's passage into the hands of the khan occurs in the midst of war and rumours of war. It is a peace offering. The tamed violence of hunting birds was enlisted in the production of order where this order was most radically in question. Like the Ganjun shan goshawks the white goshawk is moved by diplomatic forces. Like the birds of two decades before, it passes out of Guiyi jun control along with a horse as a gift to a neighbouring ruler—the Uyghur khan. But it is not the product of a stable and formalised sovereignty constituted by established protocols. The complex networks of relations that structured the white goshawk's fate were not those of formal deference to an imperial suzerain, organised in a chain of command with clearly structured hierarchies. Instead there is a bewildering simultaneity of criss-crossing trajectories: the advances and retreats of Tibetans and Tuyuhun, the arrival and departure of emissaries and officials, all of whom are negotiating this landscape of ceaseless political realignment. There is no imperial gravitational centre drawing the bird forth, but a constantly shifting constellation of nodes of attraction and repulsion.

The white goshawk is thus an element in the consolidation of a new topography of power—one in which Uyghur khan and Guiyi jun border officials, as well as the Longjia, Womo, Tuyuhun and Tibetans, were all struggling to take positions. The cession of powers over the hawk occurs as part of an ensemble of transactions and agreements which seek to establish a permanent structure in the midst of geo-political flux, negotiations carried out simultaneously on different fronts, in which the gift of the bird is a strategic intervention.

The political imperatives affecting the bird were in a real sense post-imperial. The rivalry between those who were inheritors of the earlier empires (Uyghurs, Tibetans, Chinese, Tuyuhun) and those who, in the wake of imperial collapse, had discovered an opportunity for independent action (such as the Longjia and the Womo) meant that there was no single structure of political authority under which birds were subsumed. At the same time, imperial legacies exerted a powerful effect on the political environment which the white goshawk inhabited. The recipients of the bird identified themselves as inheritors of the Uyghur imperial mantle. The goshawk was a device which mediated the relationship between those who had emerged from the collapse of the Central Asian imperial order in the 840s. The transfigured rivalries of eighth-century empire projected themselves in the movement of a bird between ruling hands, now the leaders of local polities.

But the white goshawk had a Tang history:

White goshawks, like white falcons, were particularly valued, but there is no



species of goshawk whose ordinary color is white, as is the case with the gerfalcon. But a white color variation does occur in northeast Asia; this white phase of the common goshawk has been styled *Accipiter gentilis albidus*.<sup>86</sup> The Manchurian nations were known to the T'ang Chinese as the best source of white goshawks, especially the country of the Mo-ho which abounded in them.<sup>87</sup>

The height of early Tang power under Taizong saw special privilege granted to the emperor's gyrfalcon "Army Commander" (*jiangjun* 將軍) which entered the history of political anecdote.<sup>88</sup> Manchurian and Korean gyrfalcons and white goshawks were a major element in the diplomatic exchange between their home regions and their neighbours.<sup>89</sup> White hunting birds involved with the political process became an object of poetic paeans by Tang court panegyrists: the distinction of their bodies and talents overlapped with the distinction of the sovereign who possessed them.<sup>90</sup>

If this Tang history invests the life of the Suzhou white goshawk and helps to create its distinction, in moving out of Guiyi jun hands it is translated (carried across) from a Chinese to a Turkic history and language of avian power. The crossing of boundaries is one of the essential characteristics of the political life of white goshawks in Central and East Asian polities in the medieval era. The birds are pre-eminently translatable, in the sense of being easy to move from one political-linguistic structure to another. Nonetheless, in each context white

<sup>86</sup> A recent ornithological list gives Northeast Siberia (near to Manchuria) as the modern area in which *Accipiter gentilis albidus* (known to some as the Russian Goshawk) occurs. See Richard Howard and Alick Moore, *A complete checklist of the birds of the world*, 2nd ed. (London: Academic Press, 1991), p.32. *Accipiter gentilis albidus* is the largest and whitest of the various races of the Northern Goshawk. Another race of Northern Goshawk distinguished for whiteness is *Accipiter gentilis buteoides*, which is the principal type of white goshawk used in hawking in central Asia. Its homeland is in Western Siberia, but it migrates southwards towards Central Asia in winter, although it is not common there. It is esteemed by modern Khirgiz and Kazakh hawkers, for whom the bird has three distinguished features: it is rare, it is white, and it is the best. White goshawks were either captured in Central Asia during their winter migrations, or else procured from peoples (such as, in more recent times, the Bashkirs) living closer to the birds' main habitat in Western Siberia. *Accipiter gentilis buteoides* has been recorded in the modern People's Republic of China, in Xinjiang 新疆 where it winters in the Tianshan 天山 range.

(See MacKinnon and Phillipps, *A field guide to the birds of China*, p.213.) It is probable that the white goshawks in the Guiyi jun were what would now be classified as *Accipiter gentilis buteoides*, obtained in Central Asia. For information about white goshawks in central Asian hunting, see the marvellous work by Svetlana Jacquesson, "La chasse au vol en Asie Centrale: des oiseaux et des hommes" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, France, 2000). Ornithological information on *Accipiter gentilis buteoides* and *Accipiter gentilis albidus* (drawn from the 1966 work by G. P. Dement'ev et al., *Birds of the Soviet Union*) is found in section IV.1. and section IV.5.4 of this thesis, while the attitudes of modern Khirgiz and Kazakh practitioners of hawking to white goshawks are discussed in section IV.5.4.1. References to the export of these birds by the Bashkirs to their southern neighbours appear in section IV.5.4.2. I am deeply grateful to the author for sending me the relevant sections of her study, which explicates a great many complex issues relating to white goshawks in Central Asia.

<sup>87</sup> Schafer, "Falconry in T'ang times," p.311.

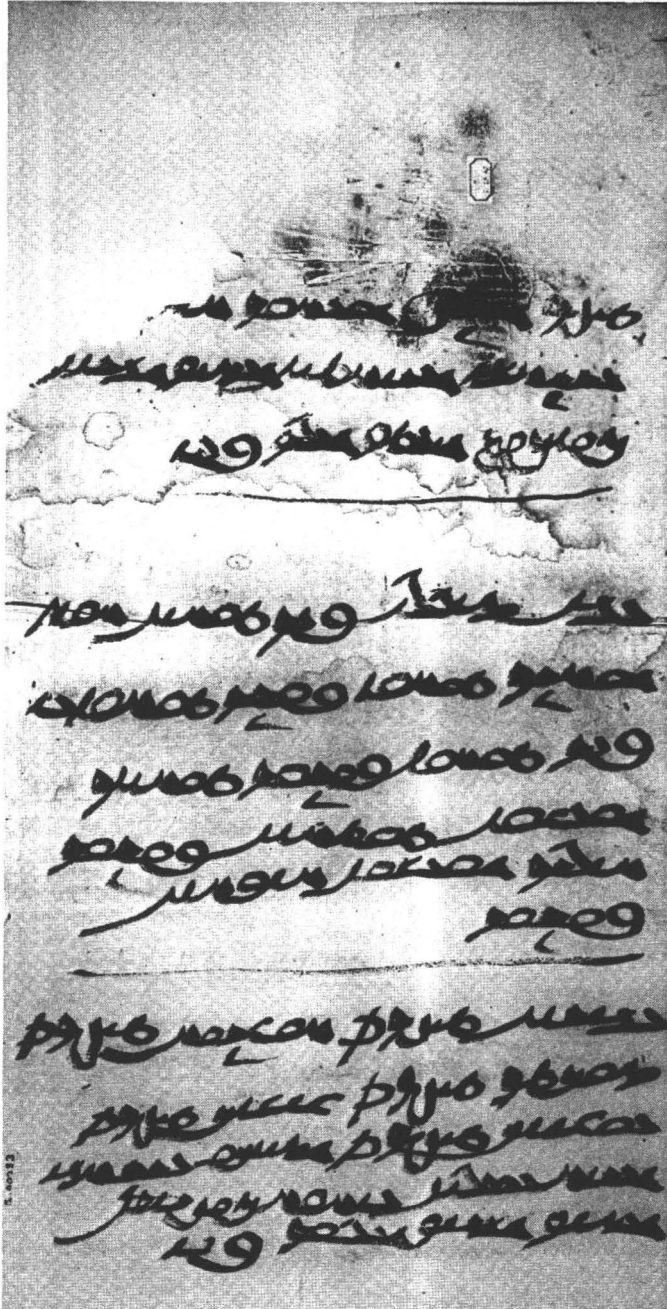
<sup>88</sup> It appears in *juan* 5 of Zhang Zhuo's 張鷟 collection *Chaoye qianzai* 朝野僉載 [A complete record of the court and the wilds of demotion], in Liu Su 劉 蘇 and Zhang Zhuo, *Sui Tang jia hua* 隋唐嘉話 [Splendid discourses of the Sui and Tang], *Chaoye qianzai* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1979), p.123.

<sup>89</sup> Schafer, *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.94. See the following note on white goshawks from Manchuria. The qualities of a white goshawk sent from the Korean kingdom of Silla is lauded in a poem of Dou Gong 竇鞏, "Xinluo jin baiying" 新羅進白鷹 [The white goshawk sent by Silla] in *Quan Tang shi, juan* 271 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), p.3051. See the translation by Schafer in *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.94. White goshawks sent to the emperor were not all from foreign powers or from northeast of Tang territory. As mentioned, the eighth-century writer Zhang Wei sent a white goshawk to the capital when serving as an official in the Tarim basin. See Zhang Wei, "Jin bai ying zhuang," *Quan Tang wen, juan* 375, p.1684. The text refers to "si zhen" 四鎮, the four garrisons of Anxi (the Tang-established protectorate in the Tarim basin and Tianshan 天山, based in Kucha) and states that the birds were found on Saul Tree Mountain (Suoluo shan 娑羅山). Schafer's entry on saul trees in *The golden peaches of Samarkand* cites the formal letter by Zhang Wei relating to the sending of a gift of saul trees from the Tang garrisons in Central Asia to the emperor. See Schafer, *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, pp.124 and 308, n.51. In the collection of Zhang Wei's writings in the *Quan Tang wen* this memorial about the gift of saul trees appears alongside the goshawk letter, so they are certain to be of the same provenance. Zhang Wei's white goshawk was thus procured in the Tang territories in Central Asia near modern Kyrgyzstan where *Accipiter gentilis buteoides* has been recorded. (See Jacquesson, "La chasse au vol en Asie Centrale," section IV.1.)

<sup>90</sup> See Su Ting, "Shuang baiying zan," *Quan Tang wen, juan* 256, p.1146, which salutes Xuanzong for honouring the faithfulness of foreign tribute donors while not indulging a taste for exotica. The birds were given to the emperor in 715 by Manchurian peoples.

## Figure 4

Old Uyghur text from Dunhuang containing the proverb about the tuyghun/white goshawk. Or.8212 (116). By permission of the British Library



goshawks are subject to different systems of power and sense.

The white goshawk had the following linguistic and political organisation in Uyghur:

Moreover amongst proverbs there is: the bird of prey (falcon) (*toyan* or *toqan*).

Its offspring (*oyli*) are nine in number; of these nine, one is the white goshawk (*tuyun*). Because it is a bird of prey it is rapacious; because it is fierce it is predatory.<sup>91</sup>

The white goshawk<sup>92</sup>—*tuyun* or *tuyyun*<sup>93</sup> (or in more convenient romanised form, *tuyghun*)—

<sup>91</sup> There are two instances of the proverb amongst the old Uyghur documents from Dunhuang, Or.8212 (116) and P.2969. These are probably repetitions on the same piece of paper which has subsequently been divided. A transcription and French translation is found in Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours du IXe-Xe siècle de Touen-bouang*, vol.1, Ms. no.17, pp.98–9. A translation also appears with slight amendments in L. Bazin and J. Hamilton, “L’Origine du nom Tibet,” in *Tibetan history and language: studies dedicated to Uray Géza on his seventieth birthday*, ed. Ernst Steinkellner (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1991), p.24. I thank Igor de Rachewitz for bringing the work of Hamilton and Bazin to my attention, and for kindly lending me a copy of the Hamilton volumes of Uyghur documents. A transcription and Chinese translation of the texts appears in Yang Fuxue and Niu Ruiji, *Shazhou Huibu ji qi wenxian* [The Shazhou Uyghurs and their documents] (Lanzhou: Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, 1995), pp.108–10 and pp.126–7, also pp.57–8. My thanks to Yang Fuxue 杨富学 for presenting me with a copy of this book.

<sup>92</sup> In Khirgiz and kazakh cognates of the word *tuyghun* denote white goshawks (see Svetlana Jacquesson, “La chasse au vol en Asie Centrale,” IV.5.4.2). In the 1986 transcription, Hamilton translates the name of the bird as “white falcon,” but p.21 of the Hamilton and Bazin article gives various reasons in support of the suggestion that the bird in question is the white goshawk. Their identification of the bird with a white goshawk comes from Von Le Coq in “Bemerkungen über türkische Falkenrei,” *Baessler-Archiv*, vol.4, fasc.1 (1913), citing D. C. Phillot’s translation of the Persian falconry classic *Baznama* as their source for identifying it as a goshawk, pp.10–11. The *tuyyun* is identified as a white falcon in Wilhelm Radloff, *Versuch eines Wörterbuches der Türk-dialecte* (s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1960), vol.3, p.1423. An accompanying entry states that the word *tuyyun* means “hero” as well as “white falcon.” On the presence of the word in New Persian, see the entry in Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersische Band II, Türkische Elemente im Neupersische, alif bis ta* (Wiesbaden: Franz

is a bird of distinction. This distinction is the result of a causal chain: it is rapacious because it is a bird of prey, a descendant of the progenitor falcon, and because it is rapacious—fierce—it is predatory. Its distinguishing features, the qualities it derives from the lineage in which it belongs, are rapacity and predatoriness—*tutyran* and *qapyan*, nouns formed from verbal roots which denote taking and seizing. But it is also a subordinate. It is one of the nine offspring of the falcon progenitor: it is given a position in a structure of genealogy which situates its distinction in relation to an ancestor. The status of offspring is a political one: it is that of son/child (*oyul*), a status that is not simply or necessarily the position of a literal descendant, but that of one who acknowledges the suzerainty of a father-progenitor, the position occupied by the qaghan. Political relations are ordered in familial terms (which means that familial relations are also political relations). In the Turkic political rhetoric from the days of steppe empire, the construction of the imperial state, the *el*, is deeply bound up with the construction of clan affiliation. This is narrated constantly in the monuments erected by Turk and Uyghur powerholders in the great imperial age of the seventh and eighth centuries to commemorate their achievements and to admonish their descendants and people.<sup>94</sup> To position the white goshawk as one of the nine offspring of the progenitor bird of prey is to structure its life using the central models of Uyghur politics—the lineage of the nine clans which were the political core of the eighth- and ninth-century Uyghur empire.<sup>95</sup>

The capturing power of the *tuyghun* and all its heroic attributes are transferred to the khan through the constitution of relations of son-like subordination and affiliation. With the demand that Longjia princes send themselves as hostages to the khan that was made at the same time as the white goshawk was sent as a gift, the linkage between power over distinguished fierce birds and power over princes, who would henceforth be established as subordinate clients within the Uyghur political order, is direct. The establishment of Uyghur power in the Gansu corridor was simultaneously the constitution of a political ordering of hunting-bird hostages and a political ordering of princely hostages. The articulation of the *tuyghun* proverbially as a fierce and predatory descendant-prince in a ninefold order of other subordinate-descendants is not simply a legendary or “totemic” set of correspondences with the ordering of the clans in the Uyghur imperial state.<sup>96</sup> By taking princely hostages from the Longjia and in receiving the fierce capturing talents of the *tuyghun*/white goshawk, the khan could potentially

/is an alternative spelling). (I thank Igor de Rachewiltz for additional advice on this.) Jacquesson notes that in Kalmyk Mongolian, however, *tuyghun* refers not to a gyrfalcon but to a white goshawk. She suggests that these examples show that *tuyghun* is not strictly linked to a family of birds, either goshawks or falcons, but was rather a syntagm originally denoting a white bird (presumably a white raptor). (See Jacquesson, “La chasse au vol en Asie Centrale,” IV.5.4.2.)

<sup>93</sup> In both the manuscripts Or.8212 (116) and P.2969 the bird name is *tuyun* (*tuyyun*). Hamilton argues that this is a scribal mistake for *tuyun* (*tuyyun*)—the first syllable should be written *tuy*—which would be *tuy*, rather than *tu* for *tu*. One effect of this is to make the “kinship” between *tuyun* (white goshawk) and *toyun* (falcon—the word for the ancestral bird in the text) more emphatic, because it increases the graphic similarity (the words appear as *tuyun* and *toyun* respectively).

<sup>94</sup> For the runic inscriptions of the Turk empire in the eighth century, see the transcriptions and English translations in Talat Tekin, *A grammar of Orkhon Turkic* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1968). For inscriptions of the Uyghur empire, see G. J. Ramstedt, “Zwei uigurische Runeninschriften in der Nord Mongolei,” *Journal de la Société Finno-ougrienne* 30 (1913): 1–63; S. G. Klyashtorny, “The Terkhin Inscription,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 36 (1982): 335–6; and S. G. Klyashtorny, “The Tes Inscription of the Uyghur Bögü Qaghan,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 39 (1985): 137–56.

<sup>95</sup> On the clan/tribal structures of the Uyghur empire, see James Hamilton, “Toquz-o‘yuz et on-uy‘ur,” *Journal Asiatique* 250 (1962): 22–63, and Denis Sinor, “The Uyghur empire of Mongolia,” in Denis Sinor, *Studies in medieval Inner Asia*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 1997), pp. 1–29.

<sup>96</sup> Hamilton has suggested that the nine descendants of the bird of prey refer to the nine clans of the Uyghurs dominated by the ruling clan, which is here the progenitor ancestor-falcon. See Hamilton and Bazin, “L’Origine du nom Tibet,” p. 24.

/Steiner Verlag, 1965), p. 657–8. Notes on the word *tuyghun*, its cognates and its relationship to other categories of hunting bird in modern Kirghiz and Kazakh are found in G. N. Simakov, *Sokolimaya okhota i kul't kbisbchykh ptits v srednei azii* [Falconry and the cult of birds of prey in Central Asia] (St Petersburg: Ethnographica Petropolitana, 1998), pp. 207–8. I

/thank Andrei Lan'kov for generously giving me a copy of this book. Svetlana Jacquesson points out that in Bashkir *tuyghun* is used as a modifier in the name for a variety of gyrfalcon, a usage analogous to, (and probably derived from), its presence in Mongolian in the word *toyiyon songqor*, which is the white gyrfalcon, also called *çayan songqor* (*şingqor*

<sup>97</sup> The account of the wedding ceremonies of the Tang princess Taihe 太和 to the Uyghur qaghan in the *Xin Tangshu* describes how the nine ministers of the qaghan's court carried the sedan chair nine times to the right: these ministers represented the nine clans. See *Xin Tangshu*, *juan* 217b, p.6130, and the English translation by Colin Mackerras, *The Uyghur empire according to the Tang dynastic histories*, p.121.

<sup>98</sup> See the reference to the “*Yaylaqar el*” or “Yaghlaqar state,” identifying what is presumably the Ganzhou qaghanate with the ruling clan of the Uyghur steppe empire in the Dunhuang Uyghur text P.2988v. This text refers to a grey falcon replacing a black falcon in allusion to one political unit displacing another. Hamilton discusses whether or not the black and grey falcons in the document (which deals with the journey of a party of Uyghurs through the territory of Shazhou, and speaks of Uyghur and “Chinese” (Taḅyač) relations, presumably a reference to the Guiyi jun) might correspond to the male ancestor of the Chinese emperor and the Uyghur khan respectively. He concludes that there are few grounds for reading the text as saying that the Chinese emperor was descended from the black falcon. Drawing attention to the Uyghur request for the Tang court to change the rendering of the name of the Uyghurs to the character *bu* for falcon (which occurred when a Chinese princess was married into the ruling clan of the Yaylaqar), Hamilton suggests that the black Chinese falcon refers to the Yaylaqar and the grey one to the Ediz clan which replaced them. He notes: “One thus has the very distinct impression that the falcon was considered by the Uyghurs as their totem. I therefore wonder if it was not only to the Uyghurs that the two falcons of different pedigree would be relevant; the first, the blackish one, would represent the first royal clan of the Yaylaqar and the second, the greyish one, the second dynasty of the clan of the Ediz.” Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours du IXe-Xesiècle de Touen-bouang*, vol.1, p.88. In 795, Alp Uluy Qutluy Bilgä Qayan ascended the throne and the Ediz clan replaced the Yaghlaqar. With the collapse of the Uyghur empire the Yaghlaqar was established in Ganzhou, while the Ediz were based in Turpan. The claim that the Yaghlaqar were the ruling family of the Ganzhou Uyghurs is based on Chinese trans-

recreate the numerically structured system of descent relations that his ancestors the steppe qaghans had insisted upon in their rhetoric and in their ceremonies: when a Tang princess went to marry the Uyghur ruler in the early ninth century, the wedding ritual involved participation from representatives of each of the nine families of the Uyghur state.<sup>97</sup> The reproduction of the descent line of the Uyghur ruling family through the acquisition of the fertility of a member of the Tang royal lineage thus directly involved the participation of the nine clans. Politics had a genealogical order and symmetry. This continued to be invoked in Uyghur rhetoric produced in the Gansu corridor<sup>98</sup>. In bringing hostages and white goshawks to this ruling hand, the forces of conquest reproduced a form of politics in which capturing work was integrated into the numerical organization of affiliated descent lines (and vice versa). The central activity of a qaghan was the production and reproduction of a state formed by conquest of groups and alliance between them, a history of conquest and alliance recalled in the structure of the nine or ten clans that made up the state.

Something more than analogy is thus involved in the rhetorical construction of the white goshawk in Uyghur politics and writing. The proverb records and reproduces a history. The Uyghur political project which impelled the white goshawk's journey from Suzhou in 884 was one founded on the production of political order through the articulation (in the sense of conjoining and in the sense of speaking about) of relationships between subordinated groups united in real or fictive relations of descent. The proverb about the *tuyghun* and its relationship to the progenitor falcon is not simply a metaphor or riddle: the incorporation of a white goshawk into Uyghur political structures was quite literally about the establishment of the bird within a framework of subordination in which lines of princely sons undertook the distinguished work of capturing on behalf of an illustrious sovereign, scion of distinguished ancestors. The *tuyghun* is a hero, marked not simply by extraordinary powers of predation, ferocity and rapacity but by the strength of perception: the word *tuyghun* is affiliated with the verb *tuy*, to see or perceive.<sup>99</sup> What distinguishes a heroic, noble prince is the power to see and seize, to be gifted with powers of sight and foresight and to be predatory and rapacious—*qapyan* and *tuyan*. The record of politics—carved in runes on stone in the days of the steppe qaghans—is a record of these qualities, an endless recounting of acts of seeing and seizing. But they are qualities which must be articulated: seizure

/criptions of the titles of the qaghans of Ganzhou in the late tenth century that appear in the *Song shi* 宋史 [History of the Song dynasty]. See *Song shi*, *juan* 490 (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1977), p.14114. See also Hamilton, *Les Ouïgours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties*, p.160.

<sup>99</sup> See Hamilton and Bazin, “L'Origine du nom Tibet,” p.21. Svetlana Jacquesson quotes

/a different etymology for the word, given by a scholar named Biyaliev, which derives *tuyghun* from the reconstructed words \**tor-yan* and \**tor-yil*, with the meaning “chestnut-coloured bird,” with *yan* being a synonym for *yil*, an old Turkic word meaning “bird,” and *tor* being the word for “chestnut-coloured.” See Jacquesson, “La chasse au vol en Asie Centrale,” IV.1.

is not a matter of some primeval predatory force. It is something which has to be spelt out in words and which must obey the formal order of the lineage structure and its hierarchies of subordination. Heroic, rapacious princes must remain as hostages. These hostages are not slaves; by affiliation as a clan they become part of the descent structure of the Uyghur family-state, the *el*. The techniques which the hand of power must use to control exceptional birds and distinguished princes consist in a constant mediation between license and constraint; hawking and the management of alliances with clans are linked political acts. When this power over hostage-subordinates—the princes whose capturing powers are secured by the khan through the proper ordering of lineages—has been correctly exercised, then distinguished birds will come forth, offered as gifts. The political rhetoric about the capturing skills of *tuyghun* princes is necessary to the reproduction of political order. Without the constant extolling of distinguished qualities, the charisma of rulers, and thus their claims to pre-eminence, would dissolve.

The white goshawk is situated within the opaque structure of proverbial wisdom. Like the hunting bird itself, the proverb is mobile, capable of multiple applications. It is not fixed with precision in any period—it belongs to the category of general statements about the order of things, and can thus be deployed in whatever strategic context is appropriate. The bird is thus infused with the timeless and ubiquitous powers of the proverb, and with its ambiguity: the seizing and rapacious quality of the *tuyghun* might be a threat to those who wish to apprehend it. Moreover, the qualities of the white goshawk map onto the proverbial attributes of political leaders.<sup>100</sup> This construction of the bird makes it capable of augmenting and classifying the political forces which control it. The gift of the bird is thus an acquisition of powers of predation, ferocity and rapacity by the khan—his own strength, fortune and luck are registered in being able to handle such a fierce being. The white goshawk has literally come into Uyghur hands because of raiding. It is the booty of raids, secured from those who wish to placate the khan, frightened by his might. The transfer of avian ferocity, predation and rapacity is aimed at reducing these qualities in the Uyghur ruler. This politically inflected articulation of bird violence contributes in this context to stemming political violence against humans: the Guiyi jun's representatives seek to pacify the Uyghurs by offering the bird as a gift. Paradoxically, the rapacious bird is an instrument of pacification.

As noted above, the white goshawk leaving Suzhou in 884 was embedded in a history of the displacement and subordination of groups. Among those whom the report of Suo Hanjun recounts as leaving Ganzhou were the Tuyuhun, one of the major rivals to the power of the Guiyi jun and a group with a long history of subordination and affiliation to imperial projects in the Chinese-Inner Asian border lands. Turkic,<sup>101</sup> Tibetan and various dynastic states from the Chinese hinterland from the post-Han era through to the Tang had all been engaged with the Tuyuhun. Zhang Yichao had risen to power both in co-operation with the Tuyuhun and in rivalry to them: the Tuyuhun

<sup>100</sup> In particular the word *qapqan* (qapghan), “predatory,” which appears in the name Qapghan qaghan on the East face of the Turkic inscription of the minister Tonyukuk from the Orkhon in Mongolia. “Qap(a)ghan” was “qaghan” between 691 and 716. *Qapqan* has become an object of contest in the modern scholarly struggles of philologists, especially over its affiliations with the controversial word “*qapqan*.” See D. Sinor, “Qapqan,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1954), pp. 174–85, and Gerard Clauson, “A note on Qapqan” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1956): 73–7. Sinor argues that *qapqan* is a verbal adjective meaning to attack (181), unrelated to *qapqan* or qaghan, which he takes as an intensifier for qan or “king” (p. 183). Clauson rejects the idea that *qapqan* and qaghan are related, stressing that the Qapghan in the runic inscriptions is the personal name of the qaghan. Talat Tekin provides sources on *qapqan* in the Tonyukuk inscription in *A grammar of Orkhon Turkic*, pp. 112–13. James Hamilton advised me that the Qapqan qayan in the Tonyukuk monument might mean “the qaghan who seized power” (personal communication, August 2002). This carries the interesting implication that the quality of *qapqan* entails usurpation, or the seizure of control.

<sup>101</sup> Hamilton and Bazin, “L’Origine du nom Tibet,” p. 21. See the transcription of the inscription on the northeastern face of the Kul Tegin monument dating from 731, in Talat Tekin, *A grammar of Orkhon Turkic*: “The Governor Tuyut brought all of these sculptors and painters” [*el-tābār* is taken to mean “governor,” “leader of the people”]. Tekin gives an English translation on p. 272; the original text is transcribed on p. 237. Hamilton and Bazin explicate this passage as meaning that the leader of the Tuyut (a pluralised form of Tuyun), that is, the Tuyuhun, who were then residing in the Ordos desert, led the sculptors and painters from China to the court of the Turkic qaghan on the Orkhon (p. 20). The Tuyuhun, they suggest, were responsible for transmitting the word for ‘Tibet’ into both Chinese (Tufan) and into Turkic, from whence it comes into English and other European languages. The word, they suggest, is a Turkic-Mongol plural, meaning “the high ones” (p. 17).

<sup>102</sup> See the *Zhang Yichao bianwen* 張義(議)潮變文 [The transformation text of Zhang Yichao] (P.2962), the most recent authoritative transcription of which is in Zhou Shaoliang, Zhang Yongquan and Huang Zheng, *Dunbang bianwen jiangjingwen yinyuan jijiao* [Collected collations of the Transformation Texts, Sūtra Lecture Texts and Nidānas from Dunhuang] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe, 1999), pp.134–8. A translation of this text is found in Victor Mair, *Tun-buang popular narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) pp.161–71. A foundational study of the text is Sun Kaidi, “Dunhuang xieben ‘Zhang Yichao bianwen’ ba” [Notes on the Dunhuang manuscript ‘The Transformation Text of Zhang Yichao’], originally in *Tushu jikan* 3.3 (1936) and reprinted in Zhou Shaoliang and Bai Huawen, eds, *Dunhuang bianwen lunwen lu* [Reproductions of articles on Dunhuang transformation texts], vol.2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1982), pp.713–22.

<sup>103</sup> See the above discussion of the 882 monument erected by Zhang Huaishen, where the Tuyuhun of the south are shown bringing jade from the Kunlun mountains (referring to the areas to the south of Dunhuang which had long been Tuyuhun territory).

<sup>104</sup> See the mention of the Tuyūṭ going to serve the Turk qaghan in the Kul Tegin inscription cited above. Tibetan writings from Dunhuang show the ‘A-zha (Tuyuhun) as subordinates of other groups within the Tibetan empire in the eighth and ninth centuries, including the ‘Brug, who can be identified with the Longjia. See the material on the ‘A-zha as subjects of the ‘Brug/Longjia in F. W. Thomas, *Tibetan literary texts and documents from Chinese Turkestan*, vol.2, pp.17–19.

<sup>105</sup> Hamilton and Bazin, “L’Origine du nom Tibet,” pp.23–4.

<sup>106</sup> For foundational information about Tuyuhun and his descendants, see the section on the Tuyuhun in the *Jin shu* 晉書 [History of the Jin] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1974), *juan* 97, pp.2537–42. See also Molè, *The Tu-yü-bun bun from the Northern Wei to the time of the Five Dynasties*, pp.1–3 and the notes on pp.66–75.

<sup>107</sup> The two white goshawks given to Xuanzong in 714 that were the subject of the pean cited above came from this area.

were among the mosaic of peoples living under the authority of the Tibetan emperors in the Northern periphery of their empire—indeed they shared an intimate relationship with the Tibetan imperial house. But they too were in a subordinated position in the Tibetan empire, and used the collapse of its authority to assert their independence once again, competing with the other beneficiaries of the post-Tibetan reordering of power. An epic which extols the deeds of Zhang Yichao recounts his defeat of an attack by the Tuyuhun king in the lands to the south of Dunhuang.<sup>102</sup> Other rhetoric cites the submission of the Tuyuhun to the Guiyi jun as a mark of the stable order produced in the Gansu corridor by Zhang Yichao and his nephew.<sup>103</sup> In historical writing (Turkic, Tibetan or Chinese), which is overwhelmingly written by their rivals, the Tuyuhun are invariably positioned as autonomous actors who are at some level subordinated or tamed.<sup>104</sup> They have the power to capture and to move, but this power is repeatedly co-opted by and affiliated to the political projects of others. They are distinguished for their ferocity, and are known for bravery and intelligence, offering these talents to extend the reach of the hand of power. But where they can evade this power, as in times of weakness, they will depart to lead a life serving themselves. The forces that act on them are the same ones that act on the lives of captured hunting birds brought within the field of political power. Uyghur incursions at Ganzhou produce a flight of the Tuyuhun from the oasis at the same time that they produce control over the white goshawk (control over its powers of flight). This linkage of histories unfolding at the same time, histories of birds and histories of peoples, involves journeys in opposite directions. The white goshawk goes as hostage to the khan while the Tuyuhun escape him. But there is perhaps a deeper kinship between these histories and journeys. The word Tuyuhun resonates with *tuyghun*: white goshawk and hero.<sup>105</sup> The original name ‘Tuyuhun’ was that of a fourth-century leader<sup>106</sup> (and thus a man whose claim to found a group or lineage that would bear his name rested on distinguishing himself through heroism, perspicacity and rapacity, the qualities proverbially condensed in the attributes and names of the white goshawk in Uyghur) who led his subordinates from their homeland in Manchuria famed for their production of white goshawks and falcons.<sup>107</sup> The migration of this name through the people who bore it into the Gansu corridor and the Qinghai plateau in the

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/Hamilton and Bazin quote a ninth-century Arabic text which stresses the abundance of white falcons in this region, and the *Mobe zhuan* 靺鞨傳 [Monograph on the Mohe “tartars”] of the *Xin Tang shu* states that the territory of the Mohe (in what we would now call Manchuria) was noted for its white goshawks (*Xin Tang shu*, *juan* 219, p.6178). Significantly, the source of the white goshawks was the territory of the White Mountain Mohe [*Baishan Mobe* 白山靺鞨], defined by con-

/trast with the Black Water Mohe [*Heishui Mobe* 黑水靺鞨] found to its west. The structural opposition between an eastern white mountain and western black water resonates with directional and colour contrasts that will be discussed later in the paper. The Mohe were Tungusic people who were the progenitors of the Jurchen 女真. See *Jin shi* 金史 [History of the Jin], *juan* 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), p.1, who were in turn the supposed progenitors of the Manchus.

centuries up to the founding of the great Central Asian imperial projects whose collapse would herald the foundation of the Guiyi jun is a migration that parallels the migrating reputation of white goshawks as hunting birds of exceptional distinction.

As noted, the documentary record of Tuyuhun history is the work of their rivals: they are made historically visible (and thus are remembered) through processes of subordination and conquest. The Tuyuhun had in the 730s gone as subordinates to the Turkic rulers of the Ötükän mountains, to whose mantle the Uyghurs would lay claim.<sup>108</sup> The process through which Uyghurs secured control of a *tuyghun* (white goshawk) sent by the border outpost of the Guiyi jun was one in which a claim on the peoples of Ganzhou was asserted and enacted. The Tuyuhun may have resisted this in the beginning, but in the Ganzhou region at least, they, like the white birds whose name they appear to share, would be positioned within the noble lineage of subordinates which was the rhetorical, if not the real, foundation of Uyghur political order.<sup>109</sup> Heroism, independence and powers of predation were what this political structure sought to appropriate from these subordinate lineages, whether they were lines of supplicant princes ready to fight and seize for the *qaghan* or lineages of noble white birds who would capture game for him. To constitute this order there had to be constant rhetorical attention to asserting the permanence of the affiliation between lineages and the ancestral structure which laid claim to predatory powers. Hunting birds, proverbial rhetoric and subordinated clans formed an interlocking and self-reproducing structure. The Tuyuhun and the white goshawk are both thus subjected to the effects of the Uyghur hand of power, but that hand of power is itself constituted by the subordination of those it had conquered and the white birds it controlled.<sup>110</sup> The imagistic opposition between white goshawk and black falcon—and Tuyuhun and ruling Uyghur Yaghlaqar clan—is not just the product of a totemistic ordering of the world which positioned groups and birds in numerically structured lineages expressed through proverbs and metaphors. Rather, the protocols of seizure and the political institutions and relations which governed them governed the order of captured and capturing birds and peoples. These protocols and institutions were historical structures articulated through writing and speech which marked the presence of the hand of power.

/the regular subjects of the Guiyi jun resided. A formal memorial sent in the 920s from the Guiyi jun to the emperor is presented as being on behalf of the ten thousand people from the Guiyi jun's "monks and laity, clerks and officials of the prefectures and counties, the elders of the six garrisons and two prefectures, the ten tribes of the Tongjia (mThong-khyab) and Tuyuhun, the three armies and the common people of the Han and the Fan 蕃 (barbarians). (The memorial is S.4276.) Thus the Tuyuhun are included as one of the constituents of the Guiyi jun, classified as a tribe (*buluo* 部落). (For a transcription of this memorial, see Tang Geng'ou and Lu Hongji, *Dunhuang shebui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu* [Annotated transcriptions of original examples of the social and economic documents from Dunhuang], vol.4 [Beijing: Quanguo Tushuguan Wenxian Suowei Fuwu Zhongxin, 1990], p.386.) The memorial is dated to the Latter Tang by Tang Changru in "Guanyu Guiyi jun de jizhong ziliao ba" (reprinted by Lanzhou University Library in *Dunhuang xue wenxuan*, pp.177-8). Rong Xinjiang comments on the continued use of the tribe structure, originally developed by the Tibetans, for administering the Guiyi jun's non-Han subjects; see *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.151, and "Guiyi jun ji qi yu zhoubian minzu de guanxi chutan," p.27. A number of the points made in the latter source refer specifically to the Tuyuhun tribal group in the Guiyi jun, arguing that the fundamental purpose of the tribal system was military. Later writings of the Guiyi jun from the tenth century include people specifically identified as Tuyuhun, such as the two people whose identity is given as Tuyuhun (Tuihun 退浑, the commonest name for Tuyuhun in Guiyi jun writings) in the grain loan register of 964-5 (P.2932). For a transcription, see Tang Geng'ou, *Dunhuang shebui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu*, vol.2, p.232. In the tenth century, Tuyuhun populations were spread through the territory of the North China regimes of the Five Dynasties, and were also affiliated to the Khitan. See Gabriella Molè, *The Tu-yü-hun from the Northern Wei to the time of the Five Dynasties*, pp.63-65, and notes pp.190-220. They thus retained an independent political identity through this period, even though their fate was structured by the polities to which they were affiliated.

<sup>108</sup> Invocations of the Ötükän state, whose sacredness was central to the political rhetoric of the runic inscriptions of the eighth century, are found in the Uyghur letter preserved at Dunhuang which refers to the black and grey falcons. See P.2988v, transcribed and translated by James Hamilton in *Manuscrits Ouïgours du IXe-Xe siècle de Touen-houang*, vol.1, p.88.

<sup>109</sup> His argument is made most strongly by James Hamilton and Louis Bazin, who suggest that the Tuyuhun could have become the ninth clan of the Uyghurs in Ganzhou. See "L'Origine du nom Tibet," p.24.

<sup>110</sup> At least part of the Tuyuhun population was administratively affiliated to the Guiyi jun into the tenth century. It seems that the Tuyuhun had their own administrative unit equivalent to the hamlets (*xiang* 祥) in which

<sup>111</sup> *Baiquege* 白雀哥, P.2594v and P.2864v. There are several transcriptions, but the translation given here is based on that by Lu Xiangqian in his *Dunhuang Tulufan wenshu lungao*, pp.172–4. There is some controversy about the dating of the text. I accept the arguments put forward by Rong Xinjiang in *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.219, which put it at 910. The date of 905 has been advanced by Li Zhengyu in “Guanyu Jinshan guo he Dunhuangguo jianguo de jige wenti” [Several questions regarding the establishment of the Jinshan kingdom and the Dunhuang kingdom] in Li Zhengyu, *Dunhuang shidi xinlun* [New discussions on Dunhuang historical geography] (Taipei: Hsin-wen-feng, 1996), pp.193–222. Li’s date is endorsed in Zheng Binglin, “Tang Wudai Dunhuang Jinshan guo zhengfa Loulan shikao” [An examination of the campaign against Loulan by the Jinshan kingdom of Dunhuang in the Tang and Five Dynasties], in Zheng Binglin, ed., *Dunhuang Guiyi jun shi zhuantianyanjiu*, pp.1–24.

<sup>112</sup> The word *jin* means primarily ‘metal’ in many of the contexts discussed here. However, because of the strong non-Chinese (especially Turkic) rhetoric around golden mountains (discussed below), gold seems not inappropriate as a translation.

<sup>113</sup> The Jinshan Guo was established in Autumn (7th/8th month) of 910, to take greatest advantage of the signs of autumn: the gold or metal element, the colour white, the direction west (which all correspond with each other in Five Elements theory), and the killing energies of an approaching winter, capable of striking down enemies (Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.219). Rong regards Five Elements divinatorial science as the foundational ideology of the Jinshan Guo. See *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.274.

<sup>114</sup> Zhang Yichao’s successor, Zhang Huaishen, was murdered in 890. In the early 890s, power passed briefly out of the hands of the Zhang family, and was only restored by the actions of Zhang Yichao’s daughter and her husband’s family, after which Zhang Chengfeng became head of the Guiyi jun. On these events see Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.197–213. For a transcription of Zhang Huaishen’s epitaph (P.2913), see Zheng Binglin, *Dunhuang beimingzan jisbi* [Dunhuang inscriptions and epitaphs, edited and annotated] (Lan-

## The White Sparrow

More than a quarter of a century after the white goshawk passed into the hands of the new Uyghur ruler of Ganzhou, a song about the auspicious omen of a white sparrow announced that a new order of sovereignty had come to pass in the former territory of the Guiyi jun.<sup>111</sup> This song marks the founding of the Xi Han Jinshan Guo 西漢金山國, “The Kingdom of the Golden<sup>112</sup> Mountains of the Western Han,”<sup>113</sup> of which Zhang Chengfeng 張承奉, the grandson of Zhang Yichao,<sup>114</sup> was an imperial sovereign—“the White-Robed Son of Heaven” (*Baiyi tianzi* 白衣天子).<sup>115</sup> This break in the history of Dunhuang was registered poetically in a blinding field of whiteness, The “Song of the White Sparrow”:

The white sparrow comes flying, passing the White Pagoda [*Bai ting* 白亭]<sup>116</sup>;

With beating wings and turning body it enters the Imperial City [*Dicheng* 帝城],

Deep towards the Rear Palace to make manifest jewelled auspiciousness. From a high place in the jade hall<sup>117</sup> it sends forth a sound of praise.

White robes, white leather, a scarf of white gauze,

A white horse and a silver saddle bedecked with white tassels.

Since ancient times it has never been heard, and books record it not,

That one sword can wipe out a million troops.<sup>118</sup>

The Queen Mother’s original residence was in the Kunlun;

To give a white bracelet as tribute she entered into Qin 秦.

Han Wu 漢武 pointed far off and said to Dongfang Shuo 東方朔,

/zhou: Gansu Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1992), p.301. I am indebted to Zheng Binglin 郑炳林 for giving me a copy of this work, which has been of enormous help to me. There is a vast quantity of writing on the circumstances of Zhang Huaishen’s death, much of which is listed in Zheng, id., p.302.

<sup>115</sup> According to records of presages associated with the foundation of the Tang, popular songs foretold the appearance of a White-Robed Son of Heaven at the time when the founding emperor of the Tang was beginning his rise to power in Taiyuan. See Wechsler, *Offerings of jade and silk*, p.62. Evidently much of the imagery of this tradition was in circulation at Dunhuang in the early tenth century. The author of the song, Zhang Yongjin 張永進, signs himself as “the fisherman of the three divisions of Chu” (*San Chu yu ren* 三楚漁人), so it is not impossible that he had strong links to central China.

<sup>116</sup> In all likelihood the place that was known as White Pagoda [Postal] Relay Station (*Baiting*

/yi 白亭驛), located to the northeast of Dunhuang. See the eighth-century Dunhuang gazetteer P.2005, transcription in Zheng Binglin, *Dunhuang dili wenshu buji jiaozhu*, p.10.

<sup>117</sup> The “imperial city,” “rear palace” and “jade hall” all refer to the buildings that had hitherto been the house and offices of the head of the Guiyi jun. Lu Xiangqian connects them with “up in the hall” (*loushang* 樓上), a term used in many Guiyi jun documents to refer to the governor’s residence. See Lu, “Guanyu Guiyi jun shiqi yi fen buzhi poyong li de yanjiu,” p.152.

<sup>118</sup> This refers to the “dragon spring” (*longquan* 龍泉, a common metaphor for a sword) whose powers are celebrated in another poetic paean to the “White-Robed Emperor,” the *Longquan shenjian ge* 龍泉神劍歌 [Song of the divine sword of the dragon spring], P.3633v. See the transcription in Lu Xiangqian, *Dunhuang Tulufan wenshu lungao*, pp.189–91.



“We sense a person from the white cloud heaven above.”<sup>119</sup>  
 In the peaks south of the Purple Pagoda [*Ziting* 紫亭]<sup>120</sup> a white wolf  
 roams;  
 To offer omens of auspicious fortune it comes to this prefecture.  
 In past days the King of Zhou [Zhou wang 周王] brought forth the Nine-  
 Tailed Fox [*Jiuwei* 九尾].<sup>121</sup>  
 How can this compare with the present radiance of the Dipper and the  
 Herdboy Star [*Dou niu* 斗牛]?<sup>122</sup>  
 A white flag, white sashes, a white yak-tail pennant,  
 A white jade carved saddle and a white auspicious dove.  
 After building an altar to perform the Suburban Sacrifices [*jiao* 郊]<sup>123</sup> to  
 heaven,  
 The Golden Star was spontaneously there, to assist the royal regalia ... .”

This sparrow initiates a new phase in the history of independent Dunhuang: the ultimately short-lived Kingdom of the Golden Mountains of the Western Han.<sup>124</sup> A radical transformation is effected in the structure of sovereignty, which is also a new order of colour. A new state is consecrated, and the white sparrow has pride of place in establishing that newness. But recognising the sign is not enough. There must be publicity. The “Song of the

<sup>119</sup> A reference to the famous encounter between the Emperor Han Wudi 漢武帝, Emperor Wu of the Han, and the goddess Xi Wang Mu 西王母, the Queen Mother of the West, where the minister (and later Daoist saint) Dongfang Shuo is seen spying on the couple. See Suzanne E. Cahill, *Transcendence and divine passion—the Queen Mother of the West in medieval China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp.54–7. See Zhang Hua 張華, *Bowu zhi jiaozheng* 博物志校證 [The Monograph on Broad Learning, corrected and verified], *juan* 8 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1980), p.97.

<sup>120</sup> A key site located to the southwest of Dunhuang, generally thought to be in the modern Su'nan Mongol Autonomous County 肅南蒙古自治縣. It is mentioned in several geographical manuscripts from Dunhuang, including *Shazhou dizhi* 沙州地志 [Geographical monograph on Shazhou] (P.5034), *Shazhou tujing* 沙州圖經 [Scripture with maps on Shazhou] (S.788), and the *Shouchang xian dijing* 壽昌縣地境 [Gazetteer of Shouchang county]. This last document was copied by Xiang Da 向達 in Dunhuang in the 1940s and is not held in any of the major collections. See “Ji Dunhuang shishi chu Jin Tianfu shi nian xieben Shouchang xian dijing” [A record of the manuscript of the gazetteer of Shouchang county

/from the 10th year of the Tianfu reign of the [Latter] Jin (*Hou Jin* 後晉) (945) found in the Dunhuang stone chamber], in Xiang Da, *Tangdai Chang'an yu Xi yu wenming* [Tang dynasty Chang'an and the civilization of the Western Regions] (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 1957), pp.429–42. A useful collection of these texts (with some errors in transcription due to poor microfilms) is found in Zheng Binglin, *Dunhuang dili wenshu huiji jiaozhu*, which has references to *Ziting* from the three texts mentioned above on pages 44, 57, and 60, respectively. See also the discussion of *Ziting* in Chen Guocan, “Tang Wudai Gua-Sha Guiyi jun junzhen de yanbian” [The evolution of the military garrisons of the Guiyi jun in Guazhou and Shazhou in the Tang and the Five Dynasties], in *Dunhuang Tulufan wenshu chutan—er bian* [Preliminary explorations in the Dunhuang and Turfan documents—pt 2], ed. Wuhan Daxue Lishixi Wei Jin Nan-Bei Chao Sui-Tang Shi Yanjiu Shi (Wuhan: Wuhan Daxue Chubanshe, 1990), pp.559–60. Chen Guocan discusses the modern location of *Ziting* on p.559 of this work.

<sup>121</sup> Refers to the transformative powers of King Wen of the Zhou dynasty, whose virtue was able to tame the mythic nine-tailed fox: this is often meant to connote the power to bring foreign peoples to heel. As the following line shows, it also has stellar associations.

<sup>122</sup> Stellar auspices were associated with the rise of the Tang as well. The Dipper in particular is stressed as a star with strong links to the position of emperor. See Wechsler, *Offerings of jade and silk*, p.62. The statement that the Dipper is the star of the emperor is made explicitly in the *Tianguan shu* 天官書 [Book of the Astronomy Official] section in the *Shiji* 史記 [Records of the Grand Historian]. See *Xinjian Shiji sanjia zhu bing fubian erzhong* [The newly corrected Records of the Historian, with notes by three commentators and two appended sections], *juan* 27, *Tianguan shu* (Taipei: Dingwen Shuju, 1980), p.1330.

<sup>123</sup> These sacrifices to heaven were the most important annual imperial rituals in the Tang era, the key part of the expanding imperial cult of heaven in the period. They were performed at sites outside the formal walled perimeters of the capital, hence the translated term “suburban sacrifices.” See Wechsler, *Offerings of jade and silk*, ch.5. By building an altar to perform these sacrifices, the Kingdom of the Golden Mountains of the Western Han was making a bold claim to the dynastic legacy.

<sup>124</sup> There are numerous studies of the Jinshan Guo, beginning with that of Wang Zhongmin 王重民, “Jinshan guo zhushi lingshi” [Various matters relating to the Jinshan kingdom], originally in *The Bulletin of the National Library of Peiping* 9.6 (1935), reprinted in Wang Zhongmin, *Dunhuang yishu lunwen ji* [Collected articles on Dunhuang documents] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), pp.85–115. Other studies include Tang Changru, “Baiyi tianzhi shishi” [An attempted explication of the White-Robed Son of Heaven], in *Yanjing xuebao* 35 (Dec. 1937): 227–38; Lu Xiangqian, “Jinshan guo liguozhi wojian” [My view on the establishment of the Jinshan kingdom], in Lu Xiangqian, *Dunhuang Tulufan wenshu lungao*, pp.171–200; Wang Jiqing, “Youguan Jinshan guo de jige wenti” [Several issues related to the Jinshan kingdom], *Dunhuang xue jikan* 3 (1982): 44–50; and Li Zhengyu, “Guanyu Jinshan guo he Dunhuang guo jianguo de jige wenti,” pp.193–222. Rong Xinjiang has given a good summary of the relevant materials in *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.361–4.

<sup>125</sup> “Song of the White Sparrow,” lines 15–16. See translation in the main text.

<sup>126</sup> “Song of the White Sparrow,” lines 20–21: “On top of the Gold Saddle Mountains is a white yak; it shakes its frosty hair and raises its head.”

<sup>127</sup> *Han shu* 漢書 [History of the Han dynasty], *juan* 28, *xia* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), p.1614.

<sup>128</sup> “Song of the White Sparrow,” lines 18–19: “After the altar was built to prepare for the suburban rites for Heaven, of its own volition the Gold Star came to assist the crown and its beaded adornments.” The Golden Star is the same as “*taibai*” or Venus. For discussion of “*taibai*” see the following footnote.

<sup>129</sup> “Song of the White Sparrow,” line 57: “On the white silver spear hung the flag of the Great White.” The Great White was the planet Venus. In the Han it was held that states under its force would be able to conquer the empire-world by military force. See *Shiji*, *juan* 27, p.1325. As is exemplified with the statement that the Gold Star assists the regalia of the emperor, Venus is said to be a great minister. See *Shiji*, *juan* 27, p.1327.

<sup>130</sup> “Song of the White Sparrow,” line 57: “The twin pennants of the White Tiger and three halberd staves.” The White Tiger constellation was associated with military action, and in the Han was worshipped in the autumn at the altar in the southern outskirts of the city. See *Shiji*, *juan* 27, p.1306.

<sup>131</sup> “Song of the White Sparrow,” line 38: “In the thousand ages since the White Emperor was transformed on high.” The White Emperor was one of the stellar deities of the Zhou period, who presided over the western quarter. See the commentary in the *Zhouli zhusbu* 周禮注疏 [The Rites of Zhou with notes and commentaries] *juan* 2, *tianguan* 天官, *zhongzai* 塚宰, *dazai* 大宰 [Officials for heaven—tomb minister—great minister], *Sbisanjing zhusbu* [The Thirteen classics with notes and commentaries] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1980), p.649.

White Sparrow” disseminates knowledge of this auspicious bird. The authoritative effect of the bird is registered in and produced by the song written in its name.

In other words, the entire apparatus of a state goes into generating this sparrow’s distinctiveness. The new epoch produces the exalted status of the bird, infusing it with the political energies of foundation, of power beginning anew. The bird is set apart, made special, by the ruler whose specialness it conveys: Zhang Chengfeng’s transformation into an emperor is the force that renders the sparrow distinctive and memorable, and situates it in history. The argument of the song is of course the opposite: it is the white sparrow which marks the specialness of Zhang, and is a sign of his transformation into a new being, the White-Robed Emperor of the Kingdom of the Golden Mountains of the Western Han. The moment of its flight, a temporary arc in the movement of political time, is poetically frozen in the song. The most elusive of things, flight itself, is thus politically (and poetically) appropriated. The hand of power does not grasp the white bird; it is the autonomy of its flight, by which it actually eludes the control of the emperor, that gives it its political force. Not only is it not a predator (it is thus removed from all suggestion of violence and force, and thus separated from any wilful act of coercion), it is not actually physically possessed. The assemblage of white creatures, the wolves<sup>125</sup> and yaks<sup>126</sup> that wander in the mountains, and the torrents of rivers and clouds, all partake of this unforced movement, this spontaneous convergence of which the white sparrow is the most perfect manifestation. The ferocity of wolves and yaks puts these creatures on a lesser plain: they are violent beings becoming submissive, threatening forces brought to heel. The white sparrow is beyond the normal order of power because it is beyond conflict. The powers that are brought to hand with the possession of hunting birds are thus surpassed by this being which is outside of control and violence.

The white sparrow constitutes a point of convergence for multiple histories and multiple geographies. The name of the Western Han kingdom and the reference to the story of the encounter between Emperor Wu of the Han and the goddess Xi Wang Mu (the Queen Mother of the West) summons up not only some of the most renowned mythic and dynastic figures from the central Chinese tradition, but also the location of Dunhuang, physically and historically. It was in the reign of Emperor Wu that the first formal Chinese imperial colonies were established at Dunhuang<sup>127</sup> and the allusion to the fabled mountains of Kunlun and the Queen Mother goddess who dwelt in these holy places of the far west gave the seat of the new Kingdom of the Golden Mountains a special distinction by identifying it with spaces, forces and people to which the central tradition granted privilege. The same is true of the Golden Metallic Star<sup>128</sup> (Venus or *taibai* “Great White,” 太白)<sup>129</sup> and of the stellar constellation of the White Tiger (*baibu* 白虎)<sup>130</sup> and of the star deity “the White Emperor” (*baidi* 白帝),<sup>131</sup> one of the five directional gods in the Zhou-dynasty system, who presided over the ascendancy of the metallic or gold phase and over the direction west in the Five Elements

(*wuxing* 五行) system. All of these appear in the song. This combination of powers presides over the movement of history: in the theory of the Five Elements, the transition from one sovereign force to another—that is from one dynastic ruling house to another—is governed by the succession of elements in the fivefold order. It is a transition registered ceremonially in the adoption of new banners and robes which mark the new colour now in control.<sup>132</sup> The white metallic principle associated with autumn and the west would displace the power which had ruled before it: metallic/golden and white autumn succeeded both the red fiery energies of summer<sup>133</sup> and the south and the yellow earth power of the centre, the sign under which the Tang dynasty had ruled.

Thus the white sparrow flies into Dunhuang from the north-east (the location of the White Pagoda postal relay station), the direction of the old source of sovereign power, the Tang dynasty. It marks the geographical and historical movement of the principle of legitimate governance from the old dynasty, the Tang (ruling at the centre—east of Dunhuang—and identified with the colour yellow and the earth) to the Gold Mountain found in a direction southwest of Dunhuang.<sup>134</sup> This geographical realignment is joined with other elements: the song celebrates the conquest of Loulan 樓蘭,<sup>135</sup> which was one of the sources and signs of the new authority and legitimacy of the rule of Zhang Chengfeng, justifying his ascent to the status of White-Robed Emperor. The newly-conquered Loulan territory is located to the south and west of Dunhuang, which was also the location of the Golden Mountains, and of Khotan, the land of jade and gold, relations with which had been of central importance to Dunhuang for a long time (and apparently became even more so in the tenth century, perhaps because of the strong demand for Khotanese jade in central China, witnessed in the references to jade being given as a tribute product to the rulers of central dynasties by emissaries from the Dunhuang region in the early tenth century).<sup>136</sup> The southwest is also the direction from which the life force of Dunhuang originates: the water which provides for the irrigation of the oasis comes from the river which enters the town from that direction. It is water, moreover, which derives from the white snows of the mountains. The song's references to the powers of dragons, white life-giving clouds, and snow-capped peaks, as well as to springs and jade maidens which are found in the heart of these Golden Mountains, thus draw together forces associated with the waters on which the locality depended.<sup>137</sup> (The forces of numinous mountains and watercourses are significantly related to the imperial cult of the Queen

/huang and Turfan documents] [Lanzhou: Lanzhou Daxue Chubanshe, 1995], pp.595–608. There are strong grounds for connecting them to the present-day Altun tagh ('Golden Mountains' in Uyghur), located to the southwest of Dunhuang. The deity in these mountains was considered especially potent, with people not daring to approach its shrine. This deity was said to be the object of an annual sacrifice of a horse in pre-Guiyi jun times. It had power over hail and thunder. See the *Dunbuang lu* 敦煌錄 [Record of Dunhuang] (S.5448), transcription in Zheng Binglin, *Dunbuang dili wenshu huiji jiaozhu*, p.87. Sacrifice to this mountain deity was still going on in the period just prior to the establishment of the Jinshan guo, evidenced by the coarse paper distributed for use in rituals to this god in the inventory of paper and cloth offerings from the time of Zhang Chengfeng—P.4640v, line 81. A transcription can be found in Lu Xiangqian, "Guanyu Guiyi jun shiqi yi fen buzhi poyong li de yanjiu," in Lu, *Dunbuang Tulufan wenshu lungao*, p.102.

<sup>135</sup> See Zheng Binglin, "Tang Wudai Dunhuang Jinshan guo zhengfa Loulan shikao," pp.2–3.

<sup>136</sup> See the listing of jade in the products submitted to the Latter Liang (*Hou Liang* 後梁) by Cao Rengui 曹仁貴 (Cao Yijin 曹議金)—P.4638 (1); for a transcription, see Li Zhengyu, "Cao Rengui ming shi lun—Cao shi Guiyi jun chuanshi ji guifeng Hou Liang shi tan" [A discussion of the name and reality of Cao Rengui—an exploration of the history of the founding of the Cao family Guiyi jun and their giving of allegiance to the Latter Liang], *Dunbuang sbidi xinlun*, p.308. Li Zhengyu dates this text to 918 (id. p.322). Jade products, including a jade bracelet like the one given by the Queen Mother of the West to Emperor Wu of the Han in the "Song of the White Sparrow," are also listed amongst the products given by a mission from the Guiyi jun to the Latter Tang (the successor of the Latter Liang) in 926. See *Cefu yuangui*, *juan* 169, p.2036. The record of the mission of Gao Juhui 高居誨 sent by the Latter Jin to Khotan in the late 930s details the production of jade in the area. In the wake of Gao's mission the Khotanese ruler Viśa' Saṃbhava (Li Shengtian 李聖天) sent 1000 *jin* 斤 of jade to the Latter Jin. See *Xin Wudai shi*, *juan* 74, p.918.

<sup>137</sup> "Song of the White Sparrow," lines 19–20: "The Jade Maiden sends down her /OVER

<sup>132</sup> "Song of the White Sparrow," line 17. See translation in the main text for description of costumes and banners.

<sup>133</sup> This echoes lines in Wei Yanshen's rhapsody on the goshawk about how the goshawk "assists the fierce energies of the metallic direction to shake the heat of the fire element." See *Chuxue ji*, *juan* 30, p.731.

<sup>134</sup> See the reference to the White Yak of the Gold Saddle Mountains given in footnote 126 above. For discussion of these mountains see Zheng Binglin, "Tang Wudai Dunhuang Jin'an shan yiming kao" [An examination of the divergent names for the Jin'an (Gold saddle) mountains in Tang and Five Dynasties Dunhuang], in Zheng Binglin, ed., *Dunbuang Tulufan wenxian yanjiu* [Research on Dun-

/numinous spirit and calmsthe five lakes. On the summit of the broad white mountains, clouds swirl and encircle.” The Jade Maiden (*Yunü* 玉女) was a key deity of the Dunhuang region with power over the local waters. Her shrine was located to the west of the city at the Jade Maiden Spring (*Yu nü quan* 玉女泉), the site of the legendary confrontation between the local deity and the prefect Zhang Xiaosong 張孝嵩 who had cut out the tongue of the dragon spirit which was demanding an annual sacrifice of a local boy and a local girl. The tongue was sent to the emperor Xuanzong, so the story went, and the name Dragon Tongue Zhang (Longshe Zhang 龍舌張) was bestowed in commemoration. See S.5448, *Dunbuanglu*, reproduced in Zheng Binglin, *Dunbuang dili wenshu huiji jiaozhu*, p.87. See also “Song of the White Sparrow,” lines 27–31: “Towering for 10,000 *li* the massed Golden Mountains. White clouds congeal the frost on the ancient holy altar; on the Golden Saddle the south-of-the-tarn tree hangs long. The deity-communing White-Robed One assists the king’s pleasure. The mountain comes forth in the southwest, alone in its beauty and height; white clouds as a cover circle round and again. In the belly of the mountain is a spring 10,000 yards deep. The White Dragon frequently quakes, bringing forth waves and billows.”

<sup>138</sup> See Cahill, *Transcendence and divine passion*, p.54.

<sup>139</sup> It was also the time when hawkers let out their birds for hunting (following closely on the time when hawks from Mongolia migrated south through Hebei and Shanxi). See Duan Chengshi, *Yuyang zazu, qianji, juan* 20, p.193 (translation in Schafer, “Falconry in T’ang times,” p.323).

<sup>140</sup> “Song of the White Sparrow,” lines 22–3: “Beneath the White Mountain Dyke, the White Ford is clear / A single long river is squeezed between banks of spring.”

<sup>141</sup> “Song of the White Sparrow,” lines 37–9: “The white-robed ministers and white-haired officials abundantly send forth plans and advice to aid the One Man . . . . The white-robed gentlemen in retirement write golden scriptures / They swear to serve the king of the people and not go out from the court.”

<sup>142</sup> Lines 51 and 52 of “Song of the White Sparrow” refer to these conquests.

Mother of the West and her relationship with Emperor Wu of the Han).<sup>138</sup>

Autumn, in addition to being the golden time of harvest, the fulfilment of riches, marks at Dunhuang the period when the snows on which the following year’s crops depend begin to accumulate in the mountains. In addition to being a force of death, associated with the metallic westerly winds—so often linked to the hawk-like force of barbarian attack in central Chinese rhetoric<sup>139</sup>—autumn and snow are thus associated in the Dunhuang area with future growth and with the stability of the agricultural cycle based on irrigation from the melting of snow. The “Song of the White Sparrow” is full of references to the cooling moisture of snow-fed irrigation canals.<sup>140</sup> These resemble jade, another product of the mountains to the south, which is pure and durable like the ideal political authority, but also smooth, cool and moist, a product of the feminine earth. As with the white hair of the old hermits whom the song cites as serving the White-Robed Emperor,<sup>141</sup> the colour white is not here a force of killing and death, but a sign of longevity and growth. The killing powers of golden autumn are used against enemies, and to slay the scorching fiery red heat of summer with the cooling moisture of snowy whiteness, subduing opponents in the crucial lands to the southwest.<sup>142</sup> The Golden Mountains (joined with the Kunlun mountains, which were as noted the abode of the goddess Queen Mother of the West—and from which, according to the 882 monument erected by Zhang Huaishen, docile Tuyuhun brought jade as a sign of obeisance) and the season of autumn (time of growth and of the collecting of wealth, as well as of the defeat of enemies) therefore have a distinctive significance in terms of the geography of power in the Dunhuang region. Through them this region is identified not as a periphery of an empire located to the east, but as a site of power in its own right, a legitimate place for heavenly forces to confer the divine registers granted to a new emperor.<sup>143</sup>

The white sparrow, in addition to summoning up and drawing together all of these elements in the local geography, and linking other religiously-charged elements in the surrounding region, replays a history of auspicious events from which new sovereignties—new hands of power—have been constituted at Dunhuang. White sparrows had been seen in the area during the Tang; more significantly, they had appeared in 403, the last time that a dynasty had been founded at Dunhuang (the Western Liang (Xi Liang 西涼) state, set up by Li Song 李嵩).<sup>144</sup> The “Song of the White Sparrow” states in its preamble that the rule of the White-Robed Emperor is succeeding to the glories of the Five Liang (Wu Liang 五涼), the states which had ruled in the Gansu region prior to the expansion of central Chinese regimes beginning

<sup>143</sup> See preamble to the “Song of the White Sparrow.” These are the registers offered by divine beings as signs of legitimate investiture, especially with political office.

<sup>144</sup> See P.2005, *Shazhou dudufu tujing* 沙州都督府圖經 [Illustrated scripture for the Shazhou Area Command]. Transcription in Zheng Binglin, *Dunbuang dili wenshu huiji jiaozhu*, p.17.

with the Northern Wei and ending with the Tang.<sup>145</sup> It is thus part of the restoration of a local dynastic tradition. White sparrows had also been present in central China when the first emperor of the Tang had set up his new dynasty<sup>146</sup> and, like the white sparrow visiting the palace of the White-Robed Emperor, they pointed to a political and geographical axis that ran from North-east to South-west (from the Taiyuan 太原 homeland of the Tang dynasty's founder to the Sui imperial capital of Daxing cheng 大興城, later to become the Tang capital Chang'an). There was a long history of white sparrow auspices in central China from the pre-Tang era,<sup>147</sup> and Daoist-affiliated material collected in the mid-9th century by Duan Chengshi (whose falconry treatise was compiled shortly before the arrival of the Ganjun shan birds in Chang'an) granted the bird a distinguished place in the shifting celestial hierarchy of the Daoist pantheon, where it was again associated with the change of dynastic fortune, albeit in the divine realm.<sup>148</sup>

White birds were ruled by—and were emanations of—historical and geographical forces. They marked the movement of history through the oscillation of powers (directions, colours, elements, seasons) in which one order of sovereignty, one hand of power, displaced another. History, as a succession of legitimate imperial bodies produced by the descent lines of dynastic families, was ruled by these elements. Geography, as a structure of numinous spaces organised by directional principles (which involved the movements of the seasons and stars and the shifting signs of auspicious favour) was both the object of sovereign control and the source of it. The geographical gazetteers from Dunhuang recorded auspices and miraculous appearances of animals manifesting themselves around the oases at various historical periods. The lives of birds, like the lives of other beings in this area, from people to wolves, were historically and geographically ordered—which means that they were politically ordered. If white sparrows had the capacity to constitute a new sovereign order, a new moment in history and a new political geography, it was because they were themselves constituted by political forces. Birds existed not outside the movements of history and political force but within them. There was a political order of birds in which white sparrows had a privileged position.<sup>149</sup> They were associated with the radical transformation of status: amongst the everyday mob of ordinary dun-coloured sparrows, the albino bird is a miraculous inversion of expectation. When a person moves from subordinate or delegate to the status of emperor, a similar inversion of the everyday takes place.

For such powers to transform the order of sovereignty, to be able to remake history, geography, ceremonies and politics, in short to operate, there must be a linguistic apparatus: these signs have their meaning because they are already recorded. As noted, the accounts of Dunhuang geography found in the treatises that were compiled to show the region's place in the overall system of Tang imperial territory list the previous appearances of white sparrows. The white sparrow in the song thus fulfils a destiny which the written record affirms to have been previously present in the local

<sup>145</sup> See "Song of the White Sparrow," line 3. For a study of the history of the Five Liang dynasties see Qi Chenjun, *Wu Liang shi hui* [A brief history of the Five Liang] (Lanzhou: Gansu Renmin Chubanshe, 1988). I thank Qi Chenjun 齐陈骏 for giving me a copy of his book.

<sup>146</sup> See Wechsler, *Offerings of jade and silk*, pp.64 and 67. Wechsler notes that white birds were symbols of the west (p.64).

<sup>147</sup> Some indication of the centrality of the cataloguing of these auspices at this period is given by the large number of references to sightings of white sparrows collected in the official history of the Liu Song (劉宋) dynasty, extending back as far as the Han. See *Song shu* 宋書 [Song History], *juan* 29 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1974), pp.843–8.

<sup>148</sup> See Duan Chengshi, *Youyang zazu*, *qianji*, *juan* 12, p.128.

<sup>149</sup> See Schafer, "The auspices of T'ang," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 83 (1963): 198–9.

<sup>150</sup> See *Shazhou dudu fu tujing*, (P.2005, transcribed in Zheng Binglin, *Dunhuang dili wenshu huiji jiaozhu*, p.19), which details the auspicious songs and the auspicious white wolf appearing in Dunhuang at the time of Wu Zetian 武则天. As noted, popular songs full of auspicious omens were also said to have been in circulation in central China at the time of the Tang founder's revolt against the Sui. See Wechsler, *Offerings of jade and silk*, p.62.

<sup>151</sup> "Song of the White Sparrow," lines 59–60. "Ever since the emperor Tang ascended to the clouds, there has been no cause for a white sparrow to lodge in an imperial palace." Emperor Tang was the sagely founder of the Shang 尚 dynasty.

<sup>152</sup> Most notable were the struggles of Zhang Huaishen to secure formal investiture from the Tang as military governor of the Shazhou region in the period just after the white goshawk was given to the Uyghur khan. See S.1156, which is the report of his emissaries' failures to secure a positive outcome on a mission to Chang'an. There is a transcription of this document in Rong, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.167–9. See also Rong Xinjiang's broader discussion of this issue, *id.*, pp.163–92.

<sup>153</sup> See Tang Changru, "Baiyi tianzi shishi," pp.227–38.

<sup>154</sup> *Baifu tujue* 白服突厥. They are present in association with Qarluqs in the struggle between the Uyghurs and the Tibetans over Beiting (Beshbaliq) in the 790s, mentioned *Jiu Tang shu*, *juan* 195, p.5209. For a translation see Mackerras, *The Uighur empire*, p.102.

<sup>155</sup> For example the White Orchid Qiang (*Bailan qiang* 白蘭羌) and White Dog Qiang (*Baigou qiang* 白狗羌). References to the former appear in Du You 杜佑, *Tong dian* 通典 [Comprehensive Institutes], *juan* 190 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), p.1022, and to the latter in *Xin Tang shu*, *juan* 201a, p.6216. I thank the anonymous reviewer of this article for drawing my attention to the importance of whiteness in Qiang cultural and political traditions.

geography. The song itself constitutes an auspicious sign: official gazetteers record the songs being sung spontaneously by the people when a new order is constituted. The songs are listed along with the presence of white sparrows and white wolves as auspicious or miraculous events.<sup>150</sup> Like the sparrow itself, the song has this quality because it seems to come from outside, as the product of forces bigger than itself. The song is fuelled by the ethers of the time and place in which it is produced. Its author may deprecate his own talents, but he is shown as moved by greater forces, the energies of history and landscape, governed by the principles of whiteness, gold/metal, the west, autumn, and the powers of sacred mountains. The song preserves on the page the arc of the sparrow in flight: it has never been known since the days of the sage emperor Tang 湯 (who ruled under the metal element) for a white sparrow to come and reside in the palace of an emperor.<sup>151</sup> The White-Robed Emperor, whom Zhang Chengfeng has become, is constituted as a new hand of power by this bird sign from outside. For symbolic force to operate, it cannot be seen to be self-consecrating: the tremendous struggle that Zhang Chengfeng's predecessors had undertaken to be officially invested with ranks that they held *de facto* through force of arms<sup>152</sup> comes from the fact that the local order of rank in the Guiyi jun (of which they were at the top) could not appear to be self-constituted. Their stated reverence for the Tang state was a reverence for the legitimacy that its seals of approval gave to an arbitrary order of power. With the Tang dynasty gone, there was no source to grant this. The white sparrow, by bringing a new order of sovereignty from the very direction from which legitimacy had previously entered the oasis, allowed the system of legitimate rank to be constituted anew. The force of words literally created the bird in song. It was a sign that fulfilled a pre-existing textual logic, playing out what was known from the written record. But it did this because it played out a political logic in which birds and writing helped to constitute the hand of power at the apex of a system of rank, a hand of power in relation to which the order of writing and of birds was constituted.

The rhetoric of the "Song of the White Sparrow" places the White-Robed Emperor and the Golden Mountains unquestionably in the field of political resonances associated with imperial divinatory cosmologies, Five Elements theory and the Chinese literary tradition. But the white robes, the gold mountains and the west and south would also resonate with political and moral symbolism from other sources. The white robes have associations with both Manicheism and Maitreya worship,<sup>153</sup> and white-clad Turks were active at the time of the great steppe empires of the eighth century.<sup>154</sup> Amongst the Qiang peoples of the Tibet-Qinghai plateau (the areas inhabited by the Tuyuhun), whiteness had a key function in the classificatory practices which distinguished one ethno-political unit from another.<sup>155</sup> Whiteness thus had strong resonances with the political cultures of a great many of the peoples surrounding the territory of the Guiyi jun. Similarly, Golden mountains, and mountains more broadly, were of key importance in the

Turkic tradition. They appear in Turkish in the Orkhon runic inscription<sup>156</sup> (where they probably designated the Altai),<sup>157</sup> and, as noted, the sacred mountains of the Ötükän were the pre-eminent example of the association between imperial fortune and the power of mountains in the Turkic political tradition. In both Khotanese and Old Uyghur, the land of gold refers variously to the area of Dunhuang itself and to Khotan.<sup>158</sup> The field of associations which the consecrating signs of the Realm of the Golden Mountains conveyed thus had the capacity to span linguistic and political boundaries, much as the shared interest in white goshawks made them an object of strong symbolic investments across cultural/political borders.

With the “Song of the White Sparrow,” altered political circumstances created a new political formation of bird power in the “territories inherited from the conquering acts of Zhang Yichao, that of the consecrating flying omen, outside the reach of the hand of power but authorising its acts. But the spectacular reordering wrought by the white sparrow was short lived: war with the Ganzhou Uyghurs brought the Jinshan Guo to an end,<sup>159</sup> and the old political nomenclature of the Guiyi jun was restored. In the subsequent era the relationship of birds to the hand of power was more modest, but also more continuous and pervasive.

### *Ode to the White Goshawk*

In the wake of the collapse of the Kingdom of the Golden Mountains, a white goshawk was given to the Chamberlain<sup>160</sup> head of the Guiyi jun, and a poem<sup>161</sup> to commemorate this was submitted to him by an official who uses the given name of Taichu 太初. With the failure of Zhang Chengfeng to

*/wenxue yanjiu* [Research on Dunhuang vernacular literature] (Taipei: Dongwu Daxue Zhongguo Xueshu Zhuzuo Jiangzhu Weiyuanhui, 1984), p.242. Paul Kroll kindly drew my attention to the most recent and doubtless most authoritative transcription, that of Xu Jun 徐俊 in *Dunhuang shiji canjuan jikao* [Edited studies of the fragments of poetic collections from Dunhuang] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2000), p.860. As I only became aware of the last two transcriptions in the final stages of preparing this paper for publication, I have relied on comparing a photographic reproduction of the manuscript with the other transcriptions.

The poem is undated. It refers to the leader who received the goshawk as the *shangshu* (“Chamberlain”). The rank of *shangshu* was held by five different heads of the Guiyi jun: Zhang Yichao, Zhang Huaishen, Zhang Huaiding 張淮鼎, Suo Xun 索勳, Zhang Chengfeng and Cao Yijin (Cao Rengui). With the exception of Cao, all of these were in the period of the Zhang family’s dominance of the Guiyi jun. Rong Xinjiang argues that the poem originates from the period when Cao Yijin held the rank of *shangshu*. See *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.98. The author of the poem gives his name as Taichu, and is undoubtedly the Guiyi jun writer Du Taichu 杜太初 (as Rong Xinjiang argues). Du Taichu wrote a number of epitaphs in the Guiyi jun in the 910s and 920s—see for instance the epitaph for Zhang Xishou 張喜首, which Rong Xinjiang dates at 919, and the epitaph to Zhang Qingtong 張清通, which are both on the manuscript P.3718. Another epitaph by Du Taichu, dated by Rong to 926, is that for Chen Fayuan 陳法嚴 (P.3556). All of these are transcribed and dated by Rong Xinjiang in Rao Zongyi, ed., *Dunhuang miaozbenzan jiaolu bing yanjiu* [Dunhuang epitaph texts edited and transcribed with analysis] (Taipei: Hsinwen-feng, 1994) Transcriptions are on pp.233–5, 241–2; and 247–9. Dates are on pp.362–3. Zheng Binglin considers the ode to the white goshawk to be from the time of Zhang Yichao and Zhang Huaishen, assuming that its author is Zhang Qiu 張球 (Zhang Jingqiu 張景球) active in Dunhuang in the ninth century, but this contention is based on a faulty transcription of part of the manuscript. One of the numerous embarrassing errors in my PhD thesis (“A /OVER

<sup>156</sup> For example the Tonyukuk Inscription, East, line 3 (see the translation in Talat Tekin, *A grammar of Orkhon Turkic*, pp.250, 285).

<sup>157</sup> See *ibid*, p.301.

<sup>158</sup> See the various references to the land of gold in Khotanese texts quoted in Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang, *Yutian shi congkao*, pp.33–7.

<sup>159</sup> See the famous petition from the people of Shazhou acknowledging the superiority of the Uyghur qaghan of Ganzhou, bringing the Jinshan Guo to a close (P.3633). See Wang Zhongmin, “Jinshan guo zhuishi lingshi,” pp.99–102, for one of many transcriptions of this petition.

<sup>160</sup> *Shangshu* 尚書. The standard translation of *shangshu* given by Charles Hucker is “Minister” (See Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China*, p.410–11). Because “Minister” is potentially misleading for readers

/in this context, where it is not so much a function as an honour, I have used the more honorific-sounding term “Chamberlain,” despite any confusion it may produce. Please note that *shangshu* has been translated as Minister elsewhere in this paper where its meaning is less ambiguous.

<sup>161</sup> The poem is S.1655v. I am aware of six transcriptions: by Kanaoka Shokō 金岡照光, in *Tonkō shutsudo bungaku bunken bunrui mokuroku* [A catalogue of literary sources unearthed from Dunhuang] (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunko, 1971, p.168); by Ba Zhou 巴宙, in *Dunhuang yunwen ji* [Collected texts in rhyme from Dunhuang] (Kaohsiung: Fojiao Wenhua Fuwuchū, 1965), pp.30–1; by Zheng Binglin, in *Dunhuang beimingzan jishi*, p.296; and a partial transcription by Rong Xinjiang, in *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.98, which is drawn from Lin Congming 林聰明, *Dunhuang su*

Figure 5

Du Taichu's poem  
on the white  
goshawk. S.1655v.  
By permission of  
the British Library

蓋聞君臣道泰時感異郡呈祥  
 幽書重節新河舊膺數載多現理人安  
 遠之術萬法不盡言且觀目下靈通自古不  
 聞者余時當無射之日感得素潔白鷹  
 設禮俗中意音聲 賢之寶樣  
 自從三使世上相傳只是耳聞我堂書正  
 亞光賢現得白鷹眼見奇小走瑣劣不林  
 奉命馳驅倍傳戰汗 謹古鷹詩一首  
 奇哉白昌堂舉一而感呈祥世不同  
 尚書德備三邊靜 八方四海盡瑞使  
 白鷹翼後今來現 雲烈新成力更雄  
 年涼狡兔深藏影 爭藉踏去展其蹤  
 又一首  
 白鷹玉爪膺靈祐 筆畫靈犀成墨雨  
 遠眺碧霄鵬鳥動 攬羽掃落雪花飛

/political history of birds in independent Dunhuang, 848–1000.” Australian National University, 1999) is the statement that the poem is from the time of Zhang Chengfeng; I had overlooked the section in Rong Xinjiang’s book which dates it to 919 during the rule of Cao Yijin.

<sup>162</sup> This occurred in 914. See Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.15.

<sup>163</sup> See P.2945(3), transcribed and discussed in *ibid.*, p.239. For surrounding issues see Rong, “Guanyu Cao shi Guiyi jun shouren jiedushi de jige wenti” [Several questions related to the first appointed Military Commissioner in the Cao clan Guiyi jun], *Dunhuang yanjiu* 35 (1993.2): 46–53.

<sup>164</sup> See the votive text produced for the commencement of construction on the large commemorative grotto at Mogao 莫高 (no. 98), P.3262. A transcription can be found in Ma De, “Cao shi san da ku yingjian de shehui beijing” [The social background to the building of the three great grottoes of the Cao family], *Dunhuang yanjiu* 26 (1991.

establish himself as an emperor, control of the Guiyi jun passed to Cao Rengui, more widely known as Cao Yijin.<sup>162</sup> He sought ratification for his position from the Latter Liang dynasty, which had replaced the Tang as the main claimant to the imperial mantle in central China, and he received official investiture as Military Commissioner (*jiedu shi* 節度使) of Shazhou in 918, being granted the official ‘staff of command’ (*jie* 節) from the central dynasty.<sup>163</sup> The title of “Chamberlain” was one he ceased to use in 920. Therefore, the poem in honour of the goshawk, which refers to his reception of the staff of command from the Latter Liang, comes from the autumn of 919. The ode of praise to the white goshawk coincides with a powerful attempt to consolidate the Guiyi jun symbolically through representations of the solidarity and unity of its members, stressing the foundational importance of the ratification of Cao’s authority by the Latter Liang: Cao’s local political position had been consolidated by his marriage to the daughter of the qaghan of Ganzhou.<sup>164</sup> Great stress was laid on the symbolic sanction provided by the formal connection with the Latter Liang in the proclamations made to celebrate the building of a large commemorative grotto.<sup>165</sup> This grotto laid out the network of social linkages on which Cao Yijin’s rulership was founded, depicting as donor-worshippers not only Cao and his wives, but also Zhang Yichao, women from the various key Dunhuang families with whom the Cao



clan had familial relationships, the Buddhist clergy and the men who undertook the tasks of defence and of civil administration in the Guiyi jun, who were also by definition the personal retinue of the Cao family.<sup>166</sup>

As the object of a verse tribute, the bird is located in the field of poetic power as well as in the political field. The rarity of the white goshawk makes its discovery an event, something to be recorded. In this regard its status is to be distinguished from the position of other hawks in the structures of political life. The white goshawk pointed to the specificity of the rule of Cao Yijin, by showing the miraculous responsiveness of the world to his virtuous government, an order ratified by the central dynasty. The actual political relationships that have caused the white goshawk to be transmitted as a gift to Dunhuang are obscured in the poem; no account is given of how the bird was found or of who brought it to the Guiyi jun government. It is rather shown as the product of cosmological forces, much like those which impelled the flight of the white sparrow. Furthermore it is again connected with the magical power of mountains, spaces where the birds presumably bred (although goshawks normally nest in trees rather than on cliffs). The physical acquisition of the bird does of course involve the exertion of political authority over the no-man's land of the mountains: it is only through connections with humans who had contact with the areas where goshawks bred that such a bird could be acquired.<sup>167</sup>

蓋聞君臣道泰，所感異瑞呈祥。

*It has been heard that when the way of rulers and ministers is in harmony, marvels and wonders that are moved by it show forth auspiciousness.*

The appearance of auspicious things is a direct correlate of political order—that is, the order of subordination, the rightful relationship between ruler and minister, which here invokes the harmonious relationship with the centre

/1): 19–20. The text mentions the Celestial Princess (the Uyghur princess), who is also listed in the celebratory text produced for the construction of the roof of the same grotto, P.3781 (transcription in Ma De, id., p.20). Rong Xinjiang deduces that the marriage of Cao Yijin to the princess should have taken place in 916, two years before work on the grotto started in 918. See Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.15–16 (Rong explains on p.239 why he concludes 918 to be the date when work on the grotto began). The Uyghur princess was one of Cao's total of three wives, the others being a Dunhuang woman of the Song 宋 family (which affiliated itself to the distinguished Song family of Guangping 廣平 in central China), and a woman of the powerful Suo 索 family (which claimed a connection to Julu 緡鹿 in central China). See the inscriptions

/in Grotto 98 giving their names and titles, reproduced in Dunhuang Yanjiu Yuan, ed., *Dunhuang Mogao ku gongyang ren tiji* [Inscriptions of donors for the Mogao grottoes at Dunhuang] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1986), p.32. It seems that in 918 Cao had only two wives (one being the Ganzhou Uyghur princess); P.3781 refers only to the princess and one other *furen* 夫人, who is probably Madame Suo (marked 'deceased' in the inscriptions of Grotto 98; see previous reference). On Madame Song of Guangping, see the epitaph text for her, P.4638(5), transcribed in Rao Zongyi, ed., *Dunhuang miaozhenzan jiaoji bing yanjiu*, pp.292–3. A discussion of the status of the Song family of Guangping and the Suo family of Julu among the distinguished lineages of Dunhuang is found in Jiang Boqin, "Dunhuang miaozhenzan

/yu Dunhuang ming zu" [Dunhuang epitaphs and the renowned families of Dunhuang], in Rao Zongyi, id., pp.30–2. Powerful marriage alliances with leading local families allowed Cao to strengthen his relationships with the dominant groups in Dunhuang. Madame Suo was the daughter of Suo Xun who had ruled the Guiyi jun from 892–94 in the interregnum after the death of Zhang Huaishen. Suo is referred to as Cao Yijin's father-in-law in the inscriptions in Grotto 98; see Rong Xinjiang, id., p.242. Mme Song died in 936; see Zheng Binglin, *Dunhuang beimingzan jishi*, p.227, n.2. From the text of Mme Song's epitaph, it is clear that the Uyghur princess outlived her; the epitaph states that on her death-bed she entrusted the care of her child to the princess.

<sup>165</sup> See references to the texts for the founding of the new grotto noted in the previous footnote. P.3262 states: "The Ruler, the Great Liang Emperor, will forever rule heaven and earth. We desire that he will shine his light upon the border peripheries, and that he will add his grace without impediment" (Ma De, "Cao shi san da ku yingjian de shehui beijing," p.19). P.3781 also declares: "The Ruler, the Great Liang Emperor: May he dwell for ever in Penglai 蓬萊 [the paradise land of Daoist immortals found across the sea] the Ten Provinces compete in hastening to render service, swearing oaths in their hearts and offering gifts" (Ma De, id., p.20).

<sup>166</sup> See Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan, *Dunhuang Mogao ku gongyang ren tiji*, pp.32–49. See the discussion in Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.242–3. Alliances with the various groups listed would have been consolidated in the seven years that it took for the grotto to be completed (see Rong's comment on p.17 of his book relating to the completion of the grotto in 925).

<sup>167</sup> The Guiyi jun had its own falconers, and seemingly its own mews, evidently part of the apparatus of the official government. The inventory of paper distributions from the Guiyi jun government from the time of Zhang Chengfeng (P.4640v) lists the "hawker" (*ba ying ren* 把鷹人) Cheng Xiaoqian. See line 40 of the transcription in Lu Xiangqian, "Guanyu Guiyi jun shiqi yifen buzhi poyong li de yanjiu," p.100; also see the explanatory note on p.32. As pointed out above, Cheng Xiaoqian is referred to a "goshawk netter" in line 89 of the same text.

<sup>168</sup> The source for this is P.2954 (see Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.16).

<sup>169</sup> See the references in the *Shiji* section on the pitch pipes, which state that the 9th month is *wuyi* in the pitch pipe sequence, and that the *yin* ether is strongly dominant, with nothing left of the *yang* ether. *Shiji*, *juan* 25, p.1248.

marked in Cao Yijin's investiture by the Latter Liang. This echoes the presentation of political relationships in the rhetoric surrounding the consecration of the new grotto in the previous year. The goshawk is set apart from ordinary things, just as the harmonisation of the relationship of rulers and ministers (or rulers and subjects) is a special phase in history, and not a regularity that can be taken for granted. The distinctive historical moment constitutes the goshawk, and the goshawk constitutes the distinctive moment. The powers of seizure which have produced control of the hawk and brought it within the Chamberlain's grasp are thus rendered as a magical manifestation of auspiciousness (*xiang* 祥), wrought by things of an exceptional nature. They are also auspicious tokens (*ruì* 瑞), marks of virtue and authority bestowed by external power. The goshawk is invested with a technology of tokens of command which, like birds, are seen to come from the world outside the oasis.

尙書秉節龍沙。潛膺數彰，多現理人安邊之術，萬張卒不盡言。

*The Chamberlain holds the staff of governorship in the Dragon Sands [Dunhuang]. Hidden endowments are repeatedly manifested, constantly exhibiting the art of ruling the people and keeping the border at peace. Even with 10,000 reams of paper, this cannot be fully described.*

The goshawk's appearance is a direct result of Cao Yijin's investiture by the Latter Liang with staff of office of Dunhuang military governor.<sup>168</sup> His skill is both that of ruling those under his command and of pacifying the periphery. The goshawk is thus directly engaged in the business of border control. The networks of power into which the goshawk has been implanted are the product of other relations of dominance, such as diplomacy or military might, systems of authority of which it is an instrument of recognition. The brilliance of this achievement is constructed as a challenge to the skills of the panegyrist, and the rhetorical and physical resources at his disposal.

且說目下靈通自古不聞者矣。

*Moreover, it is said that the state of connection with spirit power now before our eyes has never been heard of before, even since the most ancient times.*

The goshawk is thus moved by a remarkable age and a remarkable set of political circumstances: possession of it is a matter of the convergence of proper moral forces. It is brought to the hand of power by the inexorable gravity of the Chamberlain's virtue. A special history produces it and it is marked by the specificity of a privileged historical moment.

時當無射之日，感得素潔白鷹。

*At the end of autumn an immaculate and pure white goshawk was obtained through the force of responsiveness.*

The time is *wuyi* 無射 in the temporal sequence of the 12 pitch pipes, that is the last month of autumn, also the last phase of the retreat of the masculine principle of *yang* 陽.<sup>169</sup> It also correlates with the west-north-westerly

direction.<sup>170</sup> The auspiciousness of the goshawk in the temporal order rests in its association with the residual powers of *yang* in the killing season of autumn. (As noted, this association is not arbitrary; hawkers commenced their season when summer was drawing to a close, and wild hawk migrations also took place at this time.) The bird is not a *yin* 陰 force, but it can survive and prosper on the cusp of winter, unthreatened by its dangerous energies. Through its purity the authority of the calendrical sequence is affirmed, and those who claim to rule in the name of temporal order are confirmed in their position. The bird is also a claim to synchronicity with the most profound forces in the world: ruling power is coterminous with the very order of things. What seems beyond its control, the rarest and most distinguished of hunting birds, arrives in precise accord with the times. The goshawk thus renders this sequence (produced institutionally by the authorities in charge of time) visible. The bird affirms its logic and the logic of the political project which claims to produce the order of the world through the order of political relations.

設僧俗中筵齊聲賀之，實祥。

*A banquet for monks and laity was held, uniting in voices of acclaim for this true auspiciousness.*<sup>171</sup>

The goshawk establishes a unified constituency of support, one which bridges both sides of the great division in society, that of clergy and laity. This is the unity which the government itself claims to constitute, being responsible for protecting both. It is the same unity which is projected in the pictures of donor-worshippers in the great grotto which Cao Yijin had begun building the year before, where monks, officials and the women of the key families are depicted together. Despite the obligation to preserve life (the taboo on killing which makes hunting with birds morally reprehensible), the goshawk is still an object of veneration by the clergy as an auspicious mark. The whole political and social structure has thus been invested in the goshawk. A bird of prey is venerated as a sign of ordered relations being at their zenith: governed subjects, a pacified border, and a unity of ruler and minister. The bird commands all these things, of which it is the summation. The complexities, discords and struggles of political life are conjured away in the miraculous event of its appearance. The bird is the vehicle of a powerful hegemony, one which places the peace of the world in the hands of the Chamberlain.

自從五俠，世上相傳，只是耳聞。我尙書 X 亞先賢，現得白鷹眼見。

*Since the days of the five knights,<sup>172</sup> stories have circulated in the world, but it has only been something that we have heard about; our Chamberlain is second only to the worthies of earlier times, and has made manifest a white goshawk before our very eyes.*

The goshawk is a (mythic) past made present; like political harmony, it is extolled in books but seldom witnessed in the here-and-now. The bird can

<sup>170</sup> See Feng Yu-lan, *A history of Chinese philosophy*, vol.2: *The period of classical learning*, trans. Derk Bodde (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp.27–30.

<sup>171</sup> Kanaoka's transcription is "monk and layman praised it like Qi and Chu." Based on the photograph of the text, I have followed the usage of Ba Zhou, with reference to the text of Rong Xinjiang.

<sup>172</sup> *Wuxia* 五俠. No explanation for this term is found in standard reference works. Kanaoka gives *wushi* 五使, "five legates," a term for which I have not found any explanations. Based on the reproduction of the original manuscript, I have followed Ba Zhou's transcription. I suspect it could be related to the "Five dragons of Dunhuang" (*Dunhuang wu long* 敦煌五龍), heroes of the oasis from the Western Jin period. See the biography of Suo Jing 索靖 in *jin shu*, *juan* 60, p.1648.

<sup>173</sup> The line echoes one in the letters for the submission of a sparrowhawk to the emperor in *Gantang ji*, which may have been a model for Du Taichu's own poem: "Its embroidered plumes are in their earliest strength; its flowered feathers are already complete; its martial bearing is not shamed before goshawks and merlins," P.4093, leaf 15. The text is reproduced in Chen Zuolong, *Dunbuang guchao wenxian huizui*, p.478. A similar reference is found in Zhang Wei's letter about the white goshawk sent from the Tarim basin garrisons to Xuanzong in the eighth century: "its flowery plumes are just complete." See Zhang Wei, "Jin baiying zhuang," *Quan Tang wen*, juan 375, p.1684.

<sup>174</sup> The "sly hares" also appear in a poem by Du Fu 杜甫 about a painted goshawk. Du Fu, "Hua ying" 畫鷹 [Painted goshawk], *Du shi xiang zhu* [Du Fu's poems, with detailed notes], juan 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1979), p.19. Paul Kroll kindly brought this poem to my attention while correcting errors in translation, which made clear the kinship between Du Fu's poem and many parts of Du Taichu's white goshawk ode.

<sup>175</sup> I thank Paul Kroll for providing guidance on this. Kanaoka has 'zheng long' 爭龍 "contesting dragons," whereas other transcriptions say 'zheng neng' 爭能 "contending in talent," that is, exhibiting skills. As Paul Kroll helpfully explained in his review of this paper, this line echoes a poem of Du Fu in praise of a white goshawk, found in "Jian Wang jian bingmashi shuo jin shan you baihei er ying shi" 見王監兵馬使說近山有白黑二鷹詩 [Two poems written on seeing the Infantry-and-Cavalry Supervisory Legate Wang, who said that there were a black and a white goshawk in the nearby mountains], in *Du shi xiang zhu*, juan 18, p.1587. The *Gantang ji* records that the sparrowhawk "manifests skills of striking and attacking" (see *Gantang ji* in Chen Zuolong, *Dunbuang guchao wenxian huizui*, p.479) The stress on talent as competitive display tallies with the presentation of skills forged in contest as the key qualities of the bird. The *Gantang ji* letters on the presentation of sparrowhawks also stress the element of exhibition in the enumeration of the bird's talents: "it displays the pleasure of whirling and soaring," id.

verify what has hitherto been only hearsay: its transforms language into a tangible presence, and thus its presence is structured by the legacies of hearsay, by all those things that have been said about such birds before, all the historical knowledge and all of the distinguished writing that has hitherto described the exceptional qualities of such beings. Relations of transmission, of memory, the things passed down through the ages, are thus engaged in the production of the bird's historical and political distinction.

太初小吏頑劣不材，奉命驅馳，培增戰汗，謹上白鷹詩一首。

*I, the petty clerk Taichu, am vulgar and untalented, but receiving orders I serve, and, with trembling and perspiration, I sincerely offer up an "Ode to the White Goshawk."*

The bird induces a posture of submission on the part of the poet who, seeking to master the system of rank and distinction, here deploys the arts of flattery and rhetoric to extol the talents of the bird (that is, the political energies infused in it as well as the political energies it is capable of reproducing). The bird commands the trembling body of the poet, whose rhetoric of self-deprecation and stated fear of his inability to fulfil his duties articulates the correct order of deference owed to Chamberlain and to white raptor.

The poetic part of the paean to the goshawk then commences:

奇哉白晶靈聖峰，所感呈祥世不同。  
尚書德備三邊靜，八方四海盡歸從。

*Wonderous, the crystal white spirit power of the holy peak;  
The auspiciousness it is moved to emit is not of this world.  
Complete is the Chamberlain's virtue and the three borders are at peace;  
The eight directions and four seas all return in obedience.*

Mountains, sainted and crystalline, resonate with the body of the goshawk. The invocation of the power of mountains echoes that in the "Song of the White Sparrow," but does not invoke their force to constitute a new order of sovereignty. The bird is situated in a sacred geography which joins directly to a political geography of pacification. The rupture with the ordinary is complete: the bird is an emanation of spirit power, an exceptional moment in politics, a guarantee of collective good fortune, and a miraculous event. The bird and the mountain both form part of a territorial command that is the product of a perfect and complete virtue which is geographical in its reach and effects. The bird is part of a submission of those outside the boundaries of the Guiyi jun—in other words, it marks the constitution of a political centre, a claim on submissive peoples.

白鷹異俊今來現，雪羽新成力更雄。

*The white goshawk's exceptional elegance is today made present.  
With white feathers newly formed, its strength is more heroic.*<sup>173</sup>

The white goshawk's presence constitutes a present, marking a break in the order of time by virtue of its special distinction. The bird's plumage emanates the qualities of a heroic masculinity (*xiong* 雄). A martial power invests the

body of the hawk, a perfect pairing to the magnificence of the Chamberlain. The distinction created in it by history (that is by the investment of historical attention) separates the bird in its prime from its peers, recognising its exceptional qualities. The goshawk is peerless.

平原狡兔深藏影，爭能路上出其蹤。

*On the plains the sly hares<sup>174</sup> hide their shadows deep.*

*Exhibiting talent,<sup>175</sup> its tracks come forth along the paths.<sup>176</sup>*

The bird has mastery over open space. Hares cower in its presence. This supremacy is offered to the Chamberlain, who thus becomes master of hares and of plains. Small lives flee or hide in the face of this command of air and land. Goshawk talent is a matter of competitive exhibition, manifested in its capacity to project its own traces on invisible pathways through the sky (the capacity to grasp the paths along which geese flew, and to make its own road through the sky being one of the bird's special powers), and in its capacity to detect the traces of its quarry on earthly routes. Avian skill, like that of the ruling hand who possesses it, is something observed and watched in displays of energy and movement.<sup>177</sup> It is admired above all for its capacity to outrun those beneath it, and to follow paths that others cannot detect. The rhetorical construction of the skills of the goshawk stresses not only the strength of its own vision, able to pick out the traces of hares on the ground far below, but its visibility. The ornamental power of the bird is something which helps to render visible the skills, talents and foresight of the ruler who possesses it.

白鷹玉爪膺靈祇，

*The jade claws<sup>178</sup> of the white goshawk hold spirit power's sacred force.*

The distinction of the goshawk rests in this remarkable body, which is part of the force of *ling* 靈, the force of spiritual responsiveness and magical efficacy. The instruments of killing, the claws, acquire the transcendent permanence of jade. But the energies of the bird mark a more profound energy which simultaneously brings the sacred force of *ling* to the Chamberlain, and themselves constitute an emanation of that force.

筆盡難成聖所稀。

*Even by exhausting the pen it is impossible to bring it to completion*

*—the saints think this rare!*

The powers of description are challenged by this goshawk. Even the saints, the holy sages, consider the bird to be rare, accenting the uniqueness of the historical moment with reference to those of distinguished judgment. The goshawk is an object of veneration by elevated beings, amplifying the qualities of magic that surround it. It is exalted above the ordinary domain of a fine hunting animal, and placed into a religious setting. The political distinction that is produced here moves the goshawk beyond the position of a gift. It is to be venerated, drawing on all the symbolic capital associated with religious power.

<sup>176</sup> The literal translation for the section is “on the road (path) its tracks/traces come forth.” The line may invoke bringing forth the hare from its burrow, which is a sign of the skill of the goshawk. Because Du Fu's white goshawk poem, which includes the lines “exhibiting talent,” also speaks of hares hiding in their burrows, this might be a way to interpret the line. The reference to paths or roads seems to mean either to roads on the ground or aerial pathways. A parallel may be found in one of the sparrowhawk letters in the *Gantang ji*: “on its own it knows the paths/roads of the skies and clouds.” (Reproduced in Chen Zuolong, *Dunhuang guchao wenxian huizui*, p.478.) In this case it is the skill of the goshawk in knowing aerial routes which will be brought forth as “traces.”

<sup>177</sup> This is very much the case in the Guiyi jun. Zhang Yichao and his wife Mme Song 宋氏 are depicted in Mogao Grotto 156 on excursion, accompanied by a large retinue of followers, including hunters chasing their quarry on horseback. There are similar pictures of Cao Yijin and the Uyghur princess in Grotto 100. See Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo, ed., *Dunhuang Mogao* [The Mogao grottoes at Dunhuang] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1987), vol.4, plates 131–8, and vol.5, plates 30–3.

<sup>178</sup> This term is found in Du Fu's poem about the white goshawk: “Jian Wang jian bingmashi shuo jin shan you bai-hei er ying,” in *Du shi xian zhu*, juan 18, p.1587.

<sup>179</sup> One can point to a parallel with the *Gantang ji*'s sparrowhawk letter: "its gaze goes to the limit of the clouds and skies" (*Gantang ji*, Chen Zuolong, *Dunbuang guchao wenxian huizui*, p.479).

<sup>180</sup> See Herbert A. Giles, trans., *Chuang Tzu* (London: Mandala/Unwin Paperbacks, 1980), p.27.

<sup>181</sup> These are Paul Kroll's suggestions for the meaning of the these words, based on their resemblance to lines by Du Fu in the poem about the painted goshawk.

<sup>182</sup> Paul Kroll has suggested that the words here, *nuoluo* 擗落, are an echoic binome, because *luo* is commonly found in such words, and that the words mean something like "unhindered and free." I am grateful for this advice, especially as I had not dealt with these words effectively in my original version. On reflection, however, there seems to be a case for treating the words here as two transitive verbs, because *nuo* can mean to seize or grasp, and *luo* can mean to fell, or bring down. It therefore seems to me that the words in question refer to the taking of flying prey.

<sup>183</sup> Paul Kroll helpfully suggested that "Flying like a snowflake" would be appropriate here. Also see the line in Schafer's translation of Dou Gong's poem about the white goshawk sent in by Silla (cited above): "Like a flurry of snow she strives to fly to the gauntlet on his brocaded arm," *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.94. Su Ting's preface to his paean to the white goshawk, describing the bird's plumage, states: "the gathered snows are fully reflective flecks like flying flowers" (that is, snowflakes). Du Fu's white goshawk poem in the paired black and white goshawk poems begins with the words "Snow flies," which seems very similar to the lines here.

<sup>184</sup> This is articulated particularly clearly in Zhang Wei's letter for the presentation of the white goshawk: "now the cold wind is frozen and brittle, the killing ethers are condensed in sternness." See Zhang Wei, "Jin bai ying zhuang," *Quan Tang wen, juan 375*, p.1684.

<sup>185</sup> As noted, this is a constant in hawking references. One of the *Gantang ji* sparrowhawk letters states: "the golden wind shakes the plain" (Chen Zuolong, *Dunbuang guchao wenxian huizui*, p.478).

遠眺碧霄鵬鳥動,

Gazing afar into the blue heavens<sup>179</sup> the Roc stirs.

The skies are critical to its positioning: this bird has the surveying command of space that is the dream of power. The goshawk is the great bird, the Roc, above all else and beyond constraint. The Roc is the archetypal bird of awe, appearing in the first verse of the Zhuangzi 莊子.<sup>180</sup> Its size and might are of mythic scale, constituting a force which is beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals. The goshawk is thus affiliated with avian powers of incomprehensible scale. It offers to its owner a soaring grandeur, a mastery which so completely transcends the lives of the humble ordinary birds (wrens and sparrows) that it does not even attempt to catch them, even though such beings are driven into submission by its shadow above. In this way, the aspirations of governing power for an unlimited expansion of its reach are rhetorically projected onto the goshawk. The bird in turn ornaments and makes visible the presence and abilities of governing power.

擗羽擗落雪花飛

Stretching forth its wings,<sup>181</sup> it seizes, striking down<sup>182</sup>—snowflakes in flight.<sup>183</sup>

Its body, an emanation of seasonal correspondences, and its killing energies, are both part of the movement of autumn. Possession of the goshawk is possession of the bleak white energies of the cold.<sup>184</sup> The bird is thus enlisted into a command of seasonal time and of those forces like snow which challenge political power and which are the hawk's likeness. The political field blankets all, covering the world with its authority: it is a power that descends from the sky because it overarches, like falling snow. The investment of interest in the white goshawk articulates the ambitions of those in the political field for territorial dominance: of course the ruling hand is literally given command of the sky through the bird. The Chamberlain's policing of the border, his compelling authority over all the peoples in the four directions and the eight sectors, is manifested in the command of the sky that the unique bird gives him: the bird is set apart from other goshawks by the project of individual exaltation in which the Chamberlain is engaged. Its distinction, in socio-political terms, comes from him and from the command he is able to exert over his clerk and rhapsodist. The killing winds of barbarian invasion, the deathly western force of autumnal attack (*jin feng* 金風), have not defeated him.<sup>185</sup> Rather the goshawk, token of the submission of subject peoples, brings those powers within his grasp. The hand of power grasps the bird's political and ornamental distinction, something that the poetic labour of the clerk Taichu has recorded and produced.

The white goshawk is thus subject to the technologies and politics of the omen and its observation, to those of falconry and local tribute, and to those of ornamental writing. The bird is a subject of the Chamberlain, a product of his political energies, but the thrust of the poem is to present it as an autonomous entity, moved not by the application of political force and the power of the state but a manifestation of auspiciousness, part of the operation

of *gan* 感 (responsiveness).

The bird is structured by the process of marking off a new political pre-eminence for Dunhuang. The achievements of the Chamberlain go beyond the proper fulfilment of duties to the imperial state of which he is an invested delegate. His investiture by the Latter Liang with the staff of command contributes to his local magnificence rather than to subordinating Dunhuang and the Guiyi jun to the imperial centre; the Guiyi jun's leader is himself now a recipient and sponsor of auspicious happenings and their commemoration. The ornamental and political structures deployed on the goshawk are still profoundly imperial in origin, but more and more of their authority is being co-opted into the locality, with its mountains of spiritual authority and efficacy. The bird is invested with all of the attributes of a magical distinction: it is no longer within the sovereignty structures of imperial transmission where it will be a faithful servant to the monarch. Instead it is consecrated by the powers of the Chamberlain, who can command it on his own, having been formally invested with the insignia of governance by the Tang's successor at the centre. The bird is not to be surrendered; it is not to be sent outside as a gift to emperor or khan. Historical and political transformations are registered in the fact of its having come in to the control of the head of the Guiyi jun. The direction of hawk transmission has changed. The network is unfolded in other configurations, and Guiyi jun birds are positioned in a new politics which involves neither attempts to found a new imperial state or struggles to negotiate a provincial identity within a larger empire.

### Signatures

Cao Yijin's descendants dominated the Guiyi jun until its eventual demise in the eleventh century. They presided over political relations of a much less dramatic character than did Zhang Yichao, Zhang Huaishen and the White-Robed Emperor of the Golden Mountains of the Western Han, or even Cao himself.<sup>186</sup> Cao Yijin's progeny did not engage in spectacular acts of conquest, or seek to restructure the order of sovereignty through signs, wonders and tokens. Guiyi jun authority was concentrated in the oases of Shazhou and Guazhou 瓜州 (modern Dunhuang and Anxi 安西). Border skirmishes occurred,<sup>187</sup> but political energies were largely devoted to the regular exchange of missions with neighbouring polities, the Ganzhou Uyghurs<sup>188</sup> and Khotan<sup>189</sup> (to whom the Cao family were related by blood and marriage),<sup>190</sup> and the Uyghurs of Qoço (Turpan/Turfan),<sup>191</sup> as well as with other peoples in the surrounding area, the dynasties of central China and the Khitan Liao 遼.<sup>192</sup> If ambitions to conquer were nourished, they have not come to the surface in any legible, documentary form. Internally, the business of government was a matter of the exercise of administrative control carried on within the regular cycles of calendar time: the consistency of this reproduction of authority relations amounts to what historians call 'political

<sup>186</sup> Cao was involved in a campaign against the Ganzhou Uyghurs in 925. Rong Xinjiang gives a detailed and carefully documented survey of these events in *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.313–27.

<sup>187</sup> Cao's immediate successor sent out an expedition against the Ganzhou Uyghurs in 937 (see Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.21). A raid by Ganzhou Uyghurs on livestock occurred in 962, an issue the qaghan swore to resolve in the following year (id., pp.27–8). Bandits were said to have entered Guiyi jun territory after disturbances at Turpan in 967 (id., p.29). A raid by Uyghurs occurred in 992 (id., p.33).

<sup>188</sup> On relations between the Ganzhou Uyghurs and the Guiyi jun in the tenth century, see Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.309–27, and Hamilton, *Les Ouïghours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties*, pp.115–26 and 128–38.

<sup>189</sup> On the exchange of emissaries between the two areas and emissaries passing through between Central China and Khotan, see Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang, *Yutian shi congkao*, pp.111–29.

<sup>190</sup> As noted, Cao Yijin married a daughter of the Ganzhou qaghan in 916, soon after taking over as head of the Guiyi jun (see P.3262 and P.3781, transcribed by Ma De, "Cao shi san da ku yingjian de shehui beijing," pp.19–20).

<sup>191</sup> On relations with the Turpan or Xizhou 西州 Uyghurs, see Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, pp.364–379.

<sup>192</sup> See Fujieda Akira 藤枝晃, "Shashū kigigun setsudoshi shimatsu—(4)" [The circumstances of the Guiyi jun Military Commissionership in Shazhou], *Tōhōgakubō* (Kyoto) 13, pt 2 (1943): 46–58. This is one of several works to build on the cataloguing of diplomatic missions from the Cao family to central dynasties by Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 in *Gua-Sha Cao shi nian biao* [Annals of the Cao family of Guazhou and Shazhou].

<sup>193</sup> See Danielle Eliasberg, “Les signatures en forme d’oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang,” in Michel Soymié, ed., *Contributions aux études sur Touen-houang* (Geneva and Paris: Librairie Droz, 1979), pp.29–44.

<sup>194</sup> See *ibid.*, p.30.

<sup>195</sup> Radical no.162 in the traditional sequence of 214 radicals for classifying Chinese characters. Eliasberg, “Les signatures en forme d’oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang,” p.33.

<sup>196</sup> *Yaya* (“Officer”) was one of the key ranks in the Guiyi jun administration. See Feng Peihong, “Wan Tang Wudai Song chu Guiyi jun wuzhi junjiang yanjiu,” in Zheng Binglin, *Dunbuang Guiyi jun shi zhuanti yanjiu*, pp.100–9. The post of *yaya* was associated with the administration of the official residences of the provincial military governors of the Tang era. See Yan Gengwang, “Tangdai fangzhen shifu liaozuo kao” [A study of the assistant officials in the offices of the provincial military governors of the Tang], in Yan Gengwang, *Tang shi yanjiu congkao* [Collected papers on the study of Tang history] (Hong Kong: Xinya Yanjiusuo, 1969), pp.228–32. In addition to being the personal guard for the residence (and thus the family within it), the office of *yaya* expanded to deal with the various domains relevant to the military governor’s administration, combining the functions of personal retinue with precise divisions of administrative responsibilities for separate domains relevant to the office of the military governor. According to the explanation of Lu Xiangqian, in addition to the *yaya* officers responsible for guarding the governor and his residence, there was a whole network of “Departments” (*si* 司) headed by people of *yaya* rank which dealt with various key spheres of activity relevant to the work of government, such as irrigation, banquets and granaries. All *yaya* came under the jurisdiction of four Superior Officers (*du yaya* 都押衙). Taken together, this group constituted the administrative stream of the military governor’s bureaucracy, one of the three basic streams making up the central government of the Guiyi jun, the other two being the supervisory or investigative stream and the military stream (distinguished from the personal guard for the military governor) respectively. See Lu Xiangqian, “Guanyu Guiyi jun shiqi yi fen buzhi poyong li de

stability’. It is registered in and produced by a constant output of documents of all kinds—from texts for the annual exorcism, to contracts for the sale of land, to circulars for meetings, to letters of thanks with accompanying gifts to local monks. The foundational violence of Zhang Yichao’s conquest was thus converted into the ‘common sense’ of ‘legitimate rule’, immune from obvious challenge. The micro-conflicts of everyday life become the primary form of politics: moments of extra-ordinary reinvention of the political and geographical order, like the avian historical ‘events’ of the ninth and early tenth centuries narrated above, were rare.

In this environment birds became literally one of the Guiyi jun’s signatures of power.<sup>193</sup> During the rule of the longest-serving of Cao Yijin’s successors, his son, Cao Yuanzhong 曹元忠 (head of the Guiyi jun from 944–74), and his grandson, Cao Yanlu 曹延祿 (Guiyi jun head from 976–1002), bird-shaped signatures appear as marks of endorsement on a range of official documents. In the 950s and 960s, during Cao Yuanzhong’s tenure as head of the Guiyi jun, the signature has the form of a slender, upright bird with a long beak.<sup>194</sup> From the 970s to the 990s, when Cao Yanlu was in charge, the authorising avian sign is a more rounded bird, nestled in the ‘foot radical’.<sup>195</sup> Two different birds denote two different ruling hands, each exerting the same power of authorization. These bird signatures conferred efficacy upon documents, endowing them with the power of recognised authority.

Administrative domination required such recognised and recognisable signs. These authorizing marks appear on official writings stretching over more than 40 years, the span of two governing lives. They cover a range of control relations between the central authority of the Guiyi jun and agents empowered to carry out tasks on its behalf: for the most part they are verificatory signatures placed on lists of expenditure submitted by functionaries charged with supervising the storage, collection or reproduction of things and lives of use to the government, which constitute ‘sources’ of its domination over the oasis and the beings inhabiting it.

In the summer of 951, during the rule of Cao Yuanzhong, the slender upright bird was appended to statements of account recording distributions of firewood submitted by the Officer (*yaya* 押衙)<sup>196</sup> Song Qiansi 宋遷嗣, of the Department of the Inner Household<sup>197</sup> of the Guiyi jun.<sup>198</sup> These

/yanjiu,” in Lu’s *Dunbuang Tuluhan wenshu lungao*, pp.156–8. Comments on the English translation of *yaya* can be found in my article “The order of birds in Guiyi Jun Dunhuang,” *East Asian History* 20 (Dec. 2000): 1–60, pp.11–12, n.21.

<sup>197</sup> *Neizhai si* 內宅司. This was the department responsible for the household affairs of the Guiyi jun’s ruling family. On the *neizhai si*, see the discussion by Lu Xiangqian, “Guanyu Guiyi jun shiqi yi fen buzhi poyong li de yanjiu,” pp.120–1, n.44, and p.126, n.77. In

/Lu’s analysis of the structure of the Guiyi jun government, the *neizhai si* is under the jurisdiction of the household guards for the military governor, rather than being one of the “Departments” with jurisdiction for various classified sectors (see Lu, *id.*, p.157).

<sup>198</sup> P.3160. Eliasberg, “Les signatures en forme d’oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang,” p.31. A transcription of the manuscript is found in Tang Geng’ou and Lu Hongji, *Dunbuang shebui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu*, vol.3, pp.614–15.

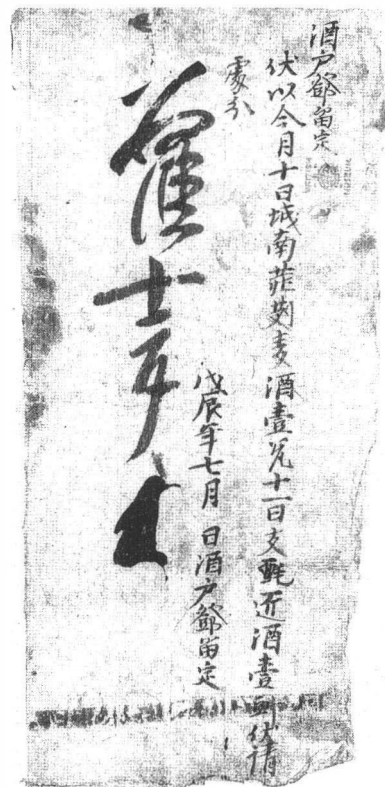


statements of account take the form of petitions to the head of the Guiyi jun, for which the petitioner requests a judgement. The avian signature is appended with words that indicate approval: the formulae used in this documentary form have a quasi-legal character. In the petition, Song lists the recipients of the distribution by name, and details the quantity of firewood they have received. The ornamental mark of the bird thus attaches itself to the interchange between a steward and his superior, in which the former must give precise account of how the things in his command that have been given to others have been deployed. The approving sign affirms that these deployments of wood have not been wasteful, but constitute legitimate outgoings, necessary for the smooth conduct of both government and the affairs of the ruling household. The ratification of expenditure is a necessity for the reproduction of domination. But so too is expenditure itself: the bird mark gives assent to the use of fuel for the entertainment of guests such as an emissary from Khotan who is a beneficiary of the hospitality of the Guiyi jun government, which is part of the household administration of the Cao family.<sup>199</sup> Such things are too important to be left to chance: statements of account are submitted for approval by the avian sign in orderly succession every few days, detailing what wood has been given to whom and for what purpose. If the signature suggests the transcendent ornamental power of birds—above mundane transactions like collecting and distributing firewood, or burning it to cook someone's food—it cannot detach itself from managing the material demands that underlie the symbolic work of providing diplomatic hospitality or supplying servants with what they need. Rather the bird must exert a constant surveillance over these things to keep its own house in order.

The collection and distribution of firewood in an ordered and consistent fashion is one of the central concerns of government in the oasis. In 955 the mark of the bird appears in like fashion on the accounts submitted by the Officer An Youcheng 安佑成, the person in charge of the Department of the Court of Firewood (*Chaichang si* 柴場司), a department of the Guiyi jun government with special responsibility for the collection of wood for fuel (which was supplied to the government by compulsory levy) and for its justified disbursement.<sup>200</sup> The long, upright bird confers its authority on a complex range of contributions and distributions, involving a large number of different individuals: a diverse group of people are tied into this network of firewood exchange, extending to troops stationed at the Guiyi jun's defensive outposts. In a context where the maintenance of border security involves signal fires, the accumulation and maintenance of combustible material is clearly a central political and military task, and subordinates must be delegated to carry out this work. But the interest of government in firewood is not limited to this dimension. The list of purposes for which firewood was given by the office in question extends from the smelting of tin to the cooking of food for sacrifice to local deities. Processing by fire is fundamental to symbolic relations: food must be cooked, and, as the bounded community formed around the shared hearth makes clear, physical

Figure 6

Avian signature from the era of Cao Yuanzhong. S. 5571. By permission of the British Library



<sup>199</sup> Emissaries from foreign places were thus considered to be recipients of the hospitality of the military governor and kept under the protection of his household, and thus protected by his own guard. See Lu Xiangqian, "Guanyu Guiyi jun shiqi yi fen buzhi poyong li de yanjiu," for analysis of the divisions of responsibility within the government.

<sup>200</sup> S.3728. Eliasberg, "Les signatures en forme d'oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang," p.31; also Tang and Lu, *Dunbuang shehui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu*, vol.3, pp.618–20.

<sup>201</sup> A document permitting safe and free passage through the territory of the Guiyi jun,

<sup>202</sup> P.3975. See Eliasberg, "Les signatures en forme d'oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang," p.32; a photographic reproduction of the document appears on pl.13 in the appendices to her article. Significantly, this "passport" system coincided with the strengthening of the defensive system of the Guiyi jun, particularly in the east in the early 950s, by the founding of two new garrisons, forming the system of the eight garrisons (*bazhen* 八鎮). See Rong Xinjiang, *Guiyi jun shi yanjiu*, p.25. On the formation of the eight garrisons, see Chen Guocan, "Tang Wudai Gua-Sha Guiyi jun junzhen de yanbian," pp.568–73. Chen argues that this phenomenon was the result of military necessity, caused by pressure from the Ganzhou Uyghurs.

<sup>203</sup> See for example the two model manumission documents in S.343(10)v, which speak of the person released from bondage being like a bird released from the cage, flying high and free and at ease, or a bird that pierces through the cage, soaring and turning its wings. A transcription can be found in Tang Geng'ou and Lu Hongji, *Dunhuang shebui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu*, vol.4, p.160.

<sup>204</sup> P.3111. Eliasberg, "Les signatures en forme d'oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang," p.32. The princess in question is undoubtedly the daughter of the Khotan emperor Viśa' Sambhava *Li Shengtian*. For the dates of Viśa' Sambhava, see Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang, *Yutian shi congkao*, p.51. The empress of Khotan was a sister of Cao Yuanzhong, and she was the donor of the large Dunhuang grotto no. 98, which contains an image of herself and of Viśa' Sambhava. See Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang, *Yutian shi congkao*, p.48. The princess who was the donor of the artificial trees was thus the niece of Cao Yuanzhong, and the daughter of Cao Yijin.

<sup>205</sup> P.3272. See Eliasberg, "Les signatures en forme d'oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang," pp.31–2. Transcription in Tang and Lu, *Dunhuang shebui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu*, vol.3, pp.598–9.

warmth is integral to the constitution of the most elemental social solidarities. Burning, moreover, is one of major methods by which ritual transformation of matter is effected. The production and reproduction of social energy thus requires the constant replenishment of the supply of wood. An adequate balance has to be struck between hoarding and waste and the deputised official must acknowledge the boundaries of his office. The monitoring of what happens to firewood through the avian sign, as well as the force which ensures its continued replenishment by requisition or gift, thus constitutes work of considerable import for the regular re-creation of relations of order in the Guiyi jun.

The slender bird performs other licensing tasks. In the late summer of 959 it is affixed to the passport<sup>201</sup> of a monk, giving him unimpeded passage through all areas garrisoned by Guiyi jun forces (garrisons which, as noted, needed supplies of firewood for beacon fires).<sup>202</sup> The bird mark permits the crossing of Guiyi jun space without administrative obstacle. A signature-image which evokes powers of flight wields the power to determine who shall come and go freely within the territory under its command. Through its authorising signature, governing power affirms its dominion over space. Unlike its human subordinates, but like wild birds, the head of the Guiyi jun enjoys freedom of legitimate movement in the lands in which he has jurisdiction. The signed passport grants to a person, through the symbolic effect of authorised writing, the capacities to cross space that birds exercise 'by nature'. Writing confers powers analogous to those enjoyed by birds. It is an analogy made directly in model manumission contracts which state that the person released from bondage by the effect of an authorized document is like a bird released from a cage.<sup>203</sup>

One year after the signature was affixed to the monk's passport, the avian sign appears on an inventory of ornamental objects belonging to a Khotanese princess.<sup>204</sup> Including both vases and artificial trees, the listing of such items, and the signed verification of the list, doubtless indicates their value. Their preciousness merits the exalted signature of the bird, affirming that all items are present and correct. As the princess in question is related to the ruling Cao family, the items in the inventory are gifts to the Guiyi jun: they form part of the transmissions of goods essential to the conduct of a familial diplomacy between Khotan and Dunhuang. In such matters, care must be taken: an inventory requires official ratification, and the ornamental mark of the bird bestows its authority on this list of things of ornament.

In 966 the bird signed memoranda submitted by those with responsibility for sheep in the Guiyi jun flocks, detailing the granting of sheep and sheepskins to various people and agencies.<sup>205</sup> As with the firewood accounts, the signature comes after a formula which states that approval is being sought for distributions already made. As with firewood, sheep were of signal importance in the reproduction of symbolic power in the Guiyi jun. In addition to the social solidarities produced by the shared enjoyment of meat, the deaths of sheep have an important value in the ceremonial marking of

boundaries, particularly through rituals of sacrifice.<sup>206</sup> The death of sheep, and the disposal of skins, is thus a transaction of some social import. The authorising mark of the bird, a living being whose elevated status as a free, wild life contrasts with domestic animals whose reproduction and death is ordained by human power, stands in structural opposition to these lowlier creatures over whose fate it presides. Through this relationship a social division between birds and sheep is symbolically affirmed.

In the mid-tenth century Guiyi jun government power was derived in no small measure from its authority over objects which were vital to social/material processes: without timber for burning, or wethers that could be killed at symbolically charged times in the calendrical cycle, the relationships of symbolic authority which give an exalted position to the ruling hand cannot be reproduced. Another product embedded in the symbolic order of ritual relationships and essential for the ceremonial production of solidarities and hierarchies was wine. Wine was supplied by brewing households (*jiubu* 酒戶). Brewers, like shepherds, have specialised abilities in the management of processes of organic change (fermentation is like the births, lives and deaths of sheep in this regard). Brewing, like sheep-raising, is set apart from the process of growing and harvesting plant foods, and wine, like meat and wool, is contrasted with the stuff of everyday sustenance. Its production, therefore, is something to be tightly controlled, in part because the rituals in which it is used (we can include casual drunkenness as a ritual) render it desirable, and thus a source of power. Like any delegated authority, the production of wine must be monitored; thus in the same way as their contemporaries the shepherds, the brewers of the 960s had to submit an account of those to whom they had given their produce for verification by the bird sign.<sup>207</sup>

Brewing households and shepherds were administratively classified by their work, which defined them as a distinct social category. Both were charged with responsibility for a particular living thing (something which is not stored and dispersed, and replenished by compulsory exaction, like firewood)—and these were thus a strategically significant element in the overall structure of social power in the Guiyi jun. They were probably dependent households, in some sense bound to the organizations that owned the animals or the brewing apparatus, of which the most prominent in the Guiyi jun were the government and the Buddhist temples. Economic reasoning might see this in terms of monopolies. The mark of the bird, this kind of analysis would suggest, is like that of a company director, verifying the accounts of those under his authority, whose independence as economic actors is presumably constrained by the dominance of large institutions over the local economy.<sup>208</sup> The social elevation of the avian signature is secured by the domination of strategic resources. But it can just as well be argued that the co-ordination of wine supply and of sheep production is part of the co-ordination of and monopoly on symbolic activity by the ruling family of the Guiyi jun. In this regard the administration of religious affairs, the performance

<sup>206</sup> In addition to the specific mention of one of the sheep being used for the sacrifice in the 1st month of the new year, and it being winter (a season of slaughter), the sheep given are mostly wethers (in one instance a black ewe), and thus have no value for reproduction or milk; they are therefore the best candidates for slaughter for meat. One distribution of sheep to the Household Official Song (*Song zhaiguan* 宋宅官) refers to a “divine white lamb” (*shen bai yang gao* 神白羊羔); see Tang and Lu, *Dunhuang shehui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu*, vol.3, p.586. Here again the colour is significant: Guiyi jun sheep registers often note whether specific sheep in a flock are white or black. In the same document that lists the “divine white lamb” there is a black wether to be ritually killed by being shot with arrows. This is likely to be connected with exorcisms conducted at the New Year.

<sup>207</sup> S.5571 and S.5590. See Eliasberg, “Les signatures en forme d’oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang,” p.31. A transcription is found in Tang and Lu, *Dunhuang shehui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu*, vol.3, p.625.

<sup>208</sup> In addition to wine produced for the government under the Guiyi jun, the other major group with control of brewing in tenth-century Dunhuang was, as noted, the Buddhist church. See the discussion in Jiang Boqin, *Tang Wudai Dunhuang sibu zhidu* [The system of temple households in Dunhuang in the Tang and Five Dynasties] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1987), pp.298–309.

209 P.3835. Eliasberg, "Les signatures en forme d'oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang," p.33

210 According to Feng Peihong and Zheng Binglin, the Troop Commandant (*dutou*) was a rank which had different functions through the course of the Guiyi jun, covering civil and military functions. It could also be honorific. The rank was always held in conjunction with other positions, and it was given to people who were especially close to the Guiyi jun military governors and personally trusted by them. It was used for posts and responsibilities within the government (including the military governor's household guard), for district military posts, for diplomatic missions, and as an honorific title for people in Dunhuang's voluntary associations. It evolved from the military system. See "Wan-Tang Wudai Songchu Guiyi jun zhengquan zhong dutou yi zhi kaobian" [An examination and analysis of the rank of *dutou* (Troop Commandant) in the Guiyi jun regime in the Late Tang, Five Dynasties and Early Song], in Zheng Binglin, ed., *Dunhuang Guiyi jun shi zhuanti yanjiu*, pp.71-93. In the case of the orders in question, the recipient would appear to have been a trusted deputy serving at a key defensive point. Troop Commandant is the translation for *dutou* given by Hucker in *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China*, p.543.

211 A dependent county of Shazhou (Dunhuang) in Guiyijun times, situated at present-day Nanhu 南湖 to the southwest of Dunhuang. See the gazetteer of *Shouchang xian dijing*, Xiang Da, "Ji Dunhuang shishi chu Jin tianfu shi nian xieben Shouchang xian dijing," in *Tangdai Chang'an yu Xiyu wenming*, pp.429-42.

212 S.4453. See Eliasberg, "Les signatures en forme d'oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang," p.32, and the transcription in Tang and Lu, *Dunhuang shebiji jingji wenxian zhenji shilu*, vol.4, p.306.

of hospitality, the production and reproduction of ornamental systems, the granting of rank and the conducting of exorcism are fused with spheres that current social categories would assign to the material or economic domains. The mark of the bird, which can be transferred from passport to account to register, connotes the transcendent and ubiquitous character of this authority, an authority which, consciously or unconsciously, joins itself to the ubiquity of birds in the cultural, physical and political landscapes of the Guiyi jun.

From the 970s to the 990s, as noted, a different bird signature was affixed to the documents. Rounder and perhaps more raptorial, it rests in the foot radical. It is coeval with the authority of Cao Yanlu. In the early summer of 978, this bird signature was appended to the bottom of an order to soldiers regarding the strengthening of security at Ziting 紫亭 after a theft of sheep.<sup>209</sup> Rather than checking the work of others (and thus maintaining control over delegates and the objects and lives they were delegated to manage) or verifying and guaranteeing registers of valuable items or granting freedom of movement through a mark of license, the signature here takes the direct form of command to subordinates. The sign of the bird affixes its authority to the tasks of securing the perimeter, and thus enacts the relationship between

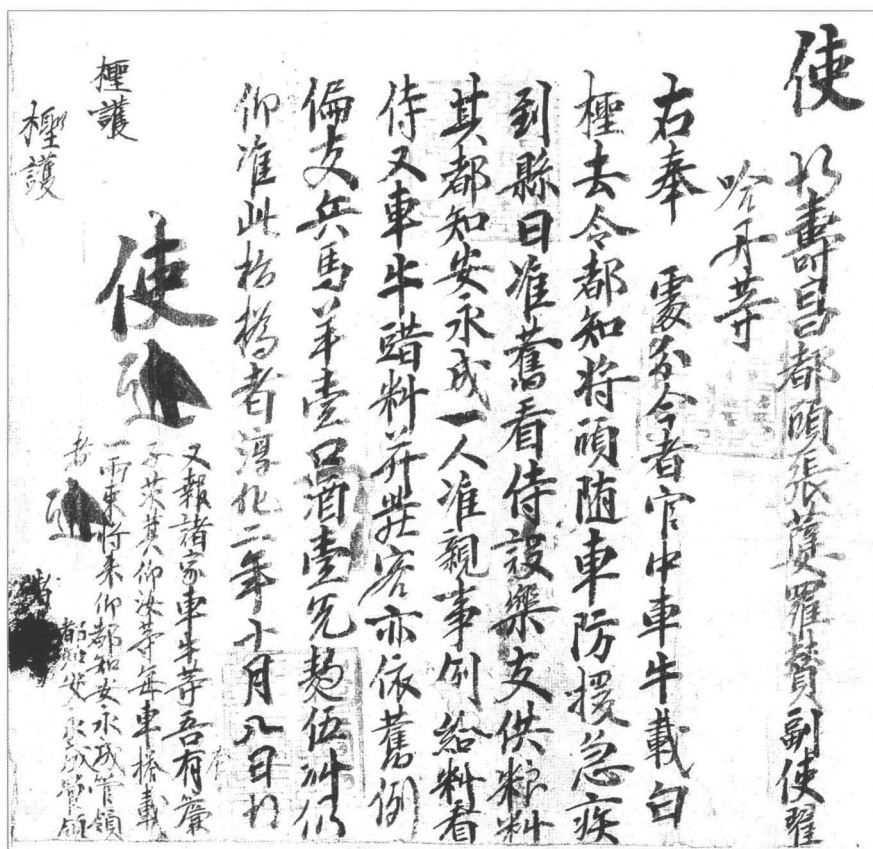


Figure 7

Avian signature from the time of Cao Yanlu (S.4453, reproduced by permission of the British Library)

birds and the defense of boundaries that was manifested in the political struggles of the ninth and early tenth centuries. It is an association reinforced in orders to the Troop Commandant (*dutou* 都頭)<sup>210</sup> of Shouchang 壽昌<sup>211</sup> more than a decade later, where the supply and training of troops is enjoined.<sup>212</sup> In a written depiction of birds as an avian government led by an Emperor-phoenix circulating in the Guiyi jun in the late tenth century,<sup>213</sup> goshawks and sparrowhawks performed a military function; the latter in particular held the rank of General of the Roving Scouts, in charge of mobile forces at the borderlands (in contrast to the placement of the goshawk among the armies at the palace). Significantly, the post of Legate of the Roving Scouts (*Yuyishi* 游奕使) was held by military officers located at Ziting, where the aforementioned raid on Guiyi jun flockstook place.<sup>214</sup> A linkage between the army, raiding, seizure and the actions of predatory birds would thus seem part of an ensemble of interlocking relationships.<sup>215</sup> The structural contrast between the phoenix emperor and his sparrowhawk roving scout general in the bird government is present in the contrast between the hand of power marked with the avian signature and the border officials who receive orders and do his bidding in relation to the fast-moving lives stealing into the territory of the Guiyi jun, against whom there must be vigilance. Built into the avian signature affixed to orders about border defence and the training of troops to guard against the predations of others, therefore, is this repertoire of associations and resemblances in which the structures of human political relationships and avian lives provide structuring templates for one another.

Guiyi jun power was founded in the first place on the military, and the business of war and the army remained central to its institutions, just as the defensive network was a central part of the structuring of political geography through the lines of connection between border posts, relay stations and forts (and the need to maintain communications between these—one of the pre-eminent factors in the production and circulation of government orders and other official documents). The army was one of the key sources of rank, and the power to requisition and to store was at a basic level an extension of the rationalities of defensive need. In the autumn and winter of 979–80, Zhang Fugao 張富高 of the Department of the Storehouse of Military Resources (*junziku si* 軍資庫司)<sup>216</sup> submitted its accounts for distributions of hemp (used for fibre, fuel and oil production) for official approval.<sup>217</sup> Petitions which detailed outgoings were submitted only a few days apart, and were signed with the bird mark. These distributions of hemp were often for non-military purposes, ranging from the use of hemp in the temples located within the Guiyi jun government offices to rope-making to—significantly—use in some type of hawking apparatus.<sup>218</sup> The concern with

<sup>213</sup> This is the “The Names of the Hundred Birds” (*Bai niao ming* 百鳥名) (S.3835 et al). Transcription in Xiang Chu, *Dunhuang bianwen xuanzhu* [Dunhuang transformation texts selected and annotated] (Chengdu: Bashu Shushe, 1990), pp.776–87. For an analysis of this document and the sections on sparrowhawks and goshawks, see my article “The order of birds in Guiyi jun Dunhuang,” pp.26–8.

<sup>214</sup> The Roving Scout Legate of Ziting is mentioned in Chen Guocan, “Tang Wudai Gua Sha Guiyi jun junzhen de yanbian,” p.560. Discussion of the rank of Roving Scout legate appears on p.27, n.63 of my article cited in footnote 196. Ziting was a key site for the flocks of the Guiyi jun; see the discussion of the pastoral conditions at Ziting in Zheng Binglin, “Tang Wudai Dunhuang xumu quyu yanjiu” [Studies of the animal husbandry regions in Dunhuang in the Tang and Five Dynasties], in Zheng Binglin, *Guiyi jun shi zhuanti yanjiu*, pp.206–12. The area is still a grazing region. The frequency of raids, along with the association of the region with wolves in the “Song of the White Sparrow,” suggests many elements characteristic of what is now called the ‘nomadic pastoral zone’.

<sup>215</sup> Danielle Eliasberg notes that this particular bird signature seems to be a raptor: “Les signatures en forme d’oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang,” p.33.

<sup>216</sup> Like the Department of the Court of Firewood, this too was part of the administrative stream under the control of *yaya* officers in the Guiyi jun military governor’s office. See diagram and comments in Lu Xiangqian, “Guanyu Guiyi jun shiqi yi fen buzhi poyong li de yanjiu,” p.157 and p.135 respectively. It is significant that Zhang Fugao has the rank of Troop Commandant (*dutou*) which, as has been noted, is an additional rank given to those in government service who were personally trusted by the head of the Guiyi jun. The presence of the avian signature on documents exchanged between the head of the Guiyi jun and Troop Commandants thus associates the use of the bird mark with the officials thought to have a particularly close relationships with those at the apex of government. The sign is fixed to household accounts (related to the personal sphere of the government) and to writings associated with other departments closely connected to it and to its most highly regarded delegates.

<sup>217</sup> p.3878. See Eliasberg, “Les signatures en forme d’oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang,” p.33. Transcription in Tang and Lu, *Dunhuang shehui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu*, vol.3, pp.605–8.

<sup>218</sup> The word used is transcribed by Tang Geng’ou as *ying ze* 鷹擇, which normally means to choose or select. It is possible that the hemp fibre was to be used for making a net, with *ze* having connotations of ‘selection’ in the sense of capturing.

**Figure 8**

White goshawk painted by Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining 郎世寧) for the Qing emperor Qianlong 乾隆, now held in the Palace Museum in Taipei. This picture is taken from p.81 of Zhou Zhen 周鎮, *Niao yu shiliao* [Birds and historical sources] (Nantou: Taiwan Shengli Fenghuang Gu Niaoyuan, 1992) and is reproduced with the kind permission of the author and the publishers. (I am grateful to Zhou Zhen and to Liou Chuen-Tyan 劉春田 of the National Niao-Feng-Ku Bird Park in Nan Tou for presenting me with a copy of this wonderful book, which has been of enormous help in my research.) According to the inscription on the painting, the bird depicted was a gift sent to Qianlong by the Khorchin Mongol Darma-datu 達爾馬達都, who held the rank of beise 貝子. (I thank Igor de Rachewiltz for advice about the Mongolian spelling of Darma-datu's name.) Darma-datu, who had served as a general in the Qing campaigns against the Oyiroid khan Galdantseren, was given the rank of beise in honour of his service in 1743. (For information about Darma-datu's ranks see Qing shigao 清史稿, juan 209, biao 表 49 (Beijing:Zhonghua Shuju, 1977), pp.8324–5.) (It is significant that the territories of the Khorchin Mongols were close to the lands where the Khitans emperors used to hunt with haidong qing, although the bird here is a white goshawk, not a gyrfalcon.) Qianlong wrote a poem to accompany the painting, which appears in his collected poetic works. See pp.130–1 of Chen Wannai, "Lang Shining huibhua niandai zhiyi [Questions about the dating of Castiglione's paintings], in Lang Shining zhi yishu—zongjiao yu yishu yantao hui wenji [The art of Castiglione—collected essays from the conference on religion and art], ed. Fu-jen Catholic University (Taipei: Youshi Wenhua Shiye Gongsi, 1991), pp.125–50. The painting was one of numerous works by Castiglione which depict white hunting birds from Qianlong's aviary. The bird on the painting is referred to as yuhua (jade flower), which Chen Wannai suggests is the name of a type of goshawk: other pictures of hunting birds in the collection include white goshawks, a white falcon and a bai haiqing gyrfalcon. See id., p.126.



monitoring these distributions and the regularity of the submissions indicates a control mechanism of great efficiency and consistency. Through hemp, a product of diverse uses made available to several constituencies, the military supply apparatus is tied into a diverse fabric of relations. The surveillance of these distributions by the bird signature secures knowledge of people's doings through this lattice of ties and exchanges. The bird-leader occupies a position of observing superiority, commanding the social landscape beneath it. Through control and knowledge of the circulation of firewood, wine, sheep and hemp, a comprehensive inventory of what was done (and who had done it) in the Guiyi jun could be prepared. Thus as much as a mechanism for controlling 'profitable resources', the process of signing expenditure lists is a device for the centralisation of information, and a way for authority to insert itself into relationships between people. The record of the dispersal provides a kind of social map. The tiresome obligation to report on the fate of governed objects and lives, and the need to sign these reports, affords a practical command of the territory under control. Petitions from the Guiyi jun Camel Officials<sup>219</sup> made in 979–80<sup>220</sup> and 993<sup>221</sup> that report loans of camels for long distance journeys and the fate of their skins after their death (approved with the avian signature, like all the other documents discussed above) confer on the supervisory power a control of long-distance movements. Camels were significant lives, crucial to the maintenance of communicative networks across the spaces of desert that separated the Guiyi jun from Khotan, Qumul, Turpan and Ganzhou. As such, the careful recording of their fates was, again, not simply a matter of keeping track of government property. Camel herds, like firewood, were part of the overall apparatus of domination. Through the study of where camels had gone, it was possible to have insight into those leaving the oasis: by this documentary exchange, action in the spaces beyond Guiyi jun territory could be made at least partly knowable. Power over camels was an intrinsic part of a broader spatial command.

Thus the network of inventories extends the reach of control from the inner spheres of household accounts to the open spaces of the desert, from the celebration of personal pleasures to the greatest public ceremonies, from the entertainment of visiting dignitaries to the protection of sheep from theft. At the apex of this pyramid of transmitted knowledge, signing and observing, hovers the ruling figure, aware, like the white goshawk soaring above the plain where frightened rabbits cower in holes, of the lives beneath it, aware of the small transactions and events carried on below, yet itself above them. In this sense the bird signature occupies the same elevated position in the control structures of the Guiyi jun that living birds have in physical space. Moreover, the control of all of these networks, the mastery of these asymmetric power relations between authority and delegate, and the ensemble of symbolic and material structures which elevate the hand of power and endow it with mastery, are the forces and networks which are brought to bear on all of the birds targeted by power in Guiyi jun history.

<sup>219</sup> The word used is *tuoguan* 駝官. The jurisdiction under which these officials fell is not clear, but it seems that they had direct responsibility for the camels in the government herds. A register of the herds and flocks of the Guiyi jun from 968 lists two camel officials and the beasts under their control. They appear in conjunction with the herds of horses and the flocks of sheep under Guiyi jun control and the officials responsible for them. This register is P.2484, transcribed in Ikeda On, *Chūgoku kodai sekichōkenkyū* [Research on ancient registers and accounts from China] (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo, 1979), pp.660–2.

<sup>220</sup> S.2474. Eliasberg, "Les signatures en forme d'oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang," p.34. Transcription in Tang and Lu, *Dunhuang shebui jingji wenxian zhenji sbilu*, vol.3, pp.600-1.

<sup>221</sup> P.2737. Eliasberg, "Les signatures en forme d'oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang." Transcription in Tang and Lu, *Dunhuang shebui jingji wenxian zhenji sbilu*, vol.3, p.602.

<sup>222</sup> “By definition, a written signature implies the actual or empirical non-presence of the signer. But, it will be said, it also marks and retains his having-been present in a past now, which will remain a future now, and therefore in a now in general, in the transcendental form of nowness (*maintenance*). This general *maintenance* is somehow inscribed, stapled to present punctuality, always evident and always singular, in the form of the signature.” Jacques Derrida “Signature event context,” *Margins of philosophy* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p.328.

<sup>223</sup> Eliasberg, “Les signatures en forme d’oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang,” p.39.

As a ‘pure’ mark of power—as opposed to a ‘living’ bird which in some sense exists outside the political field and must be brought within it—the bird signature seems completely obedient to the demands of authority. But it is part of a continuum of relationships between birds and the ceremonial and ornamental practices which are part and parcel of the relations of control over objects, lives and spaces which constitute a political geography. The construction of that political geography is inseparable from a transmission of authorized writing; signing acts are fundamental to the constitution of governed space.

Signature is an act which asserts its own presence, its own “nowness” (*maintenance* in French).<sup>222</sup> This attempt to create a permanent presence, and an acknowledgement of the absence of the signing power from the day-to-day governing acts which it supervises, is essential to the maintenance of power. It is a sign that authority is maintained—held in the hand (*main tenir* in French)—like the pen with which it makes the sign of the bird, or the hawk grasped in the ruling fist. The supervisory power is a detached presence: it was not present when the act of disbursement of the firewood was made, and it will not be present when the monk is travelling outside the oasis. Like all signatures, it implicitly acknowledges its own absence (whether from the act of parcelling out bundles of tamarisk branches recorded in the report submitted for approval—performed in the past—or from the journey across land which will occur in the future). But by signing, the authorising power asserts that it is present, that it has been present and will be present.

The right to use an abbreviated sign such as this is a privilege of power, which no longer needs a name, but can display itself with the depiction of a bird, instantly recognizable.<sup>223</sup> The ornamental ceremonial mark of the bird signature denotes the intersection of symbolic and material power, not only in the construction of avian lives by social structures, but in the production of the forms of spatial domination that constitute political geography. Birds are historically embedded in the relations that exist between ruling hands and the territories and lives they rule, especially through the ceremonial relations which join spaces and people together. An avian signature may seem to be a bird only in the most abstract and symbolic way. But this mark is not simply arbitrary: it belongs to a continuum of spatial and political relationships which, taken together, map out a history of Guiyi jun birds and their engagement with the hand of power.

### *Birds and Imperial Rule in Medieval Eurasia*

In the lands surrounding the Guiyi jun, political conflicts continued to unfold around the bodies of birds through the tenth century and beyond. As noted, a white falcon was presented in 933 by the Ganzhou Uyghurs to the emperor Mingzong of the Latter Tang, a dynasty founded by Shatuo 沙陀 Turks. The bird was set free, an action designated with one of the most potent



political verbs in modern Chinese discourse: *jiefang* 解放, to liberate. Rather than serving as a permanent representative of the Uyghurs at Mingzong's court, a living bridge between two polities of Turkic background, the falcon is the object of a strategy of sovereignty which stresses the emperor's disengagement from the world of hunting and from the claims made by the peoples to the west of Latter Tang territory. The release of the falcon conforms with earlier public renunciations of hunting by Mingzong and official decrees against the submission of gifts of falcons and hawks that simultaneously invoked a rhetoric of care for the moral foundations of the state<sup>224</sup> and sought to erect and maintain boundaries between the Latter Tang and those on its western and northern frontiers. Four years earlier, the Tanguts of the Ordos had also defied the ban on the submission of hunting birds and had sent a white goshawk (a *tuyghun*) to Mingzong. His senior minister, An Zhonghui 安重誨, known for his rivalries with those who displayed affinities with the Inner Asian cultural and political realm,<sup>225</sup> informed the sovereign that the bird had been sent back. Mingzong formally assented to this, but is reported to have surreptitiously ordered his retainers to fetch the bird and to have gone out to sport with it, instructing his officials not to let An find out.<sup>226</sup>

As the object of this furtive pleasure, the white goshawk is at the centre of a charged political field, infused with the energies of competing projects and agendas. The bird is not something to which Mingzong is indifferent. His public rejection of the goshawk and falcon is part of the broader attempt to regulate parties of Uyghur, Tangut and Tuyuhun who brought their sheep and horses into Latter Tang territory with complete indifference to government attempts to dictate the terms of their entry.<sup>227</sup> The struggle over these white birds involves competition between the Latter Tang, Uyghurs and Tanguts to organise the field of political exchange. This is not reducible to a clash between "Chinese" and "Central Asian" politics, in which Mingzong can be portrayed as caught between public adherence to the world of grain and bureaucrats and the private temptations of an ancestral Turkic hunting culture. Rather, Mingzong's public refusal of these gifts of distinguished birds, gifts which had the potential to augment his own political distinction, asserts authority over the political field as a whole by decreeing what will and will not be the domain of engagement. Such an act conforms with a situation in which sovereignties are far from unequivocal, something registered in the intensity of violent and non-violent exchanges between the various centres of power in North China, the Ordos and the Gansu corridor at this time. It is far from coincidental that the Uyghur falcon arrived in Mingzong's capital in the same year as a delegation from Liangzhou made up of the descendants of the troops sent by Yizong from central China to block the eastward advance of Zhang Yichao in the 860s,<sup>228</sup> or that it was given in the wake of

<sup>225</sup> An was said to dislike Kang Fu 康福, the prefect of Cizhou (磁州, modern Cixian 磁县 in Hebei province), for speaking in an Inner Asian language to Mingzong in private audiences. See *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 276, p.9033. James Hamilton discusses Kang Fu in footnote 2 on p.105 of *Les Ouïghours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties*. The language is referred to as *buyu* 胡语 which means generically Inner Asian or 'Barbarian' speech; it is probably Turkic but could possibly be Sogdian, Sogdians having strong links with Turkic peoples at this time. Many people of Sogdian background had the surname Kang. An was also a common name amongst those with a Sogdian inheritance. On the linkage between Kang and An and Sogdiana, see *Tongdian*, *juan* 193, p.1039.

<sup>226</sup> See the biography of An Zhonghui in *Xin Wudai shi*, *juan* 24, p.252. In another version of the same incident, An Zhonghui informs the emperor that "Xiazhou 夏州 [the key Tangut centre in the Ordos] has violated an imperial order and sent in tribute; your servant has put a stop to it," to which Mingzong replies, "Good." Then, when the court audience has ended, the emperor secretly orders those around him to bring the bird back. See *Jiu Wudai shi*, *juan* 40, p.555. A French translation of the story is given by James Hamilton (who gives the date of 24 November 929 for this event) in *Les Ouïghours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties*, p.108. Hamilton translates the words which I have given as "put a stop to it" as "broken off the treaty": both readings are plausible. He also translates the bird as "eagle." Wittfogel and Feng translate *ying* as 'eagle' in their *The history of Chinese society: Liao*, e.g. p.236.

<sup>227</sup> See *Wudai huiyao*, *juan* 29, pp.462–3. French translation by James Hamilton, *Les Ouïghours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties*, p.107. See also *Xin Wudai shi*, *juan* 74, p.912, *Jiu Wudai shi*, *juan* 40, p.549. See also Ruth Dannel, "The Hsi Hsia," in Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett, eds, *The Cambridge history of China*, vol.6, p.165, and the French translation of the passage in the *Xin Wudai shi* by James Hamilton in *Les Ouïghours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties*, p.105.

<sup>228</sup> See *Xin Wudai shi*, *juan* 74, p.914.

<sup>224</sup> Mingzong is reported as explaining the banning of tribute in hunting birds as the result of watching hunters trample crops /standing in the field in pursuit of their quarry when he was young. See *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 277, pp.9061–2.

<sup>229</sup> On the 932 and 933 expeditions to punish the Tangut for their raids on Uyghur emissaries see *Xin Wudai shi*, *juan* 74, p.912, and Dunnel, “The Hsi Hsia,” p.165.

<sup>230</sup> See Ksenia Kepping, “The name of the Tangut empire,” *T'oung Pao* 80 (1994): 355–76. On p.370 she explains that in Tangut rhetoric whiteness was associated with the sun, the earth and the east, maternal power, and the Yellow River; paired with and opposed to Loftiness, which is associated with the west, the male principle, the Helan 賀蘭 mountains and heaven. She suggests that this is linked with the geography of the Tangut royal tombs situated on the right bank of the Yellow River and the Helan mountains to the west. The state is thus imagined as a unity of male and female principles. The sacred Tangut mountain was known in Tangut as “the White and Lofty Mother,” pp.370–3. This reverence for whiteness tallies with the privileged position given to whiteness amongst the Qiangic peoples of whom the Tanguts were an offshoot.

<sup>231</sup> *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 278, p.9078. The notes give an explanation of the expression “goshawk gaze.” The same phrase is found in the biography of Li Congrong in *Xin Wudai shi*, *juan* 15, p.163.

<sup>232</sup> The Latter Tang was destroyed when an internal rebellion supported by the Khitan overthrew the dynasty and established the regime of the Latter Jin, largely regarded as a puppet of the Liao. For an account of the Khitan involvement in the overthrow of the Latter Tang, see the Denis Twitchett and Klaus-Peter Tietze, “The Liao,” in Twitchett and Franke, *Cambridge history of China*, vol.6, pp.70–1.

<sup>233</sup> *Liao shi* 遼史 [History of the Liao], *juan* 3 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1974), p.27.

<sup>234</sup> Schafer argues that the *baidong qing* was a gyrfalcon. See “Falconry in Tang times,” p.309. However, Dou Gong’s poem refers to a white goshawk from the east of the sea. (See Schafer, *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p.94.) In the description of the spring hunts in the *Liao shi* (*juan* 40, *dili zhi* 4, p.496), *baidong qing* is used as an attributive for *bu* 鵠 falcon, as it is in most places in the *Liaosbi* and in other Liao sources. (See Fu Lehuan, “Liaodai sishi nabo kao wu pian,” pp.42–4.) Song sources such as the *Qidan guo zhi* 契丹國志 [Monograph on the Khitan state] by Ye Longli 葉

punitive raids on Tanguts who had been attacking emissaries from the west crossing the Ordos,<sup>229</sup> or that the Tangut white goshawk that so tempted Mingzong in 929 was offered in the same year that the Latter Tang forces were seeking to re-establish control of Tangut-dominated regions. This history of struggles to constitute sovereignty which structures the fate of the white goshawk and falcon was, like the birds themselves, colour-coded: the Xia 下 state that the Tanguts would later found in the Ordos desert, which would eventually conquer both the Ganzhou Uyghurs and the Guiyi jun, was known as the Great State of The White and The Lofty, succeeding to the long history of whiteness as a mark of political pre-eminence in these regions.<sup>230</sup> The rejection of white hunting birds as an assertion of sovereign powers is linked a wider series of anxieties in the Latter Tang about the usurping drives of raptorial subordinates and affiliates: the political ambitions of Mingzong’s son Li Congrong 李從榮, the prince of Qin 秦, are marked by his “goshawk gaze” (*yingsbi* 鷹視), glossed as the restless surveillance of a raptor seeking his quarry and waiting for the moment to seize it<sup>231</sup>—the predatory *qagghan* tendencies which distinguished the *tuyghun*-white goshawk in Uyghur rhetoric.

But the most spectacular engagement between birds and political force in this era occurred in the state which would ultimately bring about the downfall of the Latter Tang,<sup>232</sup> the Liao empire of the Khitan. Hunting birds distinguished for their whiteness had a central role in the constitution of Khitan imperium. A white goshawk captured by a hunter along with a white deer presaged the future political success of the Liao emperor Taizong, a contemporary and rival of Mingzong of the Latter Tang.<sup>233</sup> The domination of the Khitan ruling house over other Khitan clans and over the lands and peoples of the Mongolian steppelands, the southern fringes of Manchuria and

/ 陸禮 (frequently refer to the *baidong qing* as a goshawk. In the five-language Qing dictionary of c.1787, *baidong qing* is given as the Chinese for the Manchu word *songkoro*, for which the Mongolian is *toyiyon songqor*. (See *Sunja hacin-i bergen kamciha Manju gisun-i buleku bithe* or *Wuti Qing wen jian* 五體清文鑑 [Annotated translation of the *Mirror of the five types of language of the Qing*] [Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 1957], vol.1, p.4132.) The Japanese commentary on the entry states that *songkoro* is an alternative name for *shanyan songkon*, *bai haiqing* 白海青 in Chinese and *čayan songqor* in Mongolian; the Japanese commentary also states that this bird is bigger than the *songkon* (*baiqing* 海青, Mongolian *songqor*) and that the feathers on its back are white. See Tamura Jitsuzō, Imanishi Shunjū, and Satō Hisashi, *Gotai Shinbunkan yakukai* [Annotated translation of the *Mirror of the five types of lan-*

*/guage*] (Kyoto: Kyōto Daigaku Nairiku Aja Kenkyūjo, 1966), vol.1, p.883. The bird in question is a gyrfalcon. *Čayan songqor* (or *čayan šingqor* in Middle Mongolian) is the white gyrfalcon in the *Secret History of the Mongols* which appears carrying the sun and moon in its claws in the dream of Chingghis Khan’s father-in-law discussed below. (I am grateful for Igor de Rachewiltz’s advice on this, and on Mongolian spelling.) *Haidong qing* in Chinese, *toyiyon songqor* in Mongolian and *songkoro* in Manchu are thus names for a kind of white gyrfalcon. As pointed out in footnote 92 above, Svetlana Jacquesson suggests that the word *tuyghun* is not linked to a particular category of birds, either goshawks or gyrfalcons, but denotes raptors distinguished by whiteness. Thus in the Manchurian and Mongolian homelands of the Tuyuhun and the hunting grounds of the Khitan, *tuyghun* was a white gyrfalcon (*bai-*

the border of Korea, and the northern periphery of the North China plain made possible and was registered in Khitan royal claims on hunting birds, most significantly a variety of raptors distinguished for their whiteness, the *baidong qing* 海東青.<sup>234</sup>

Khitan political life was organised around an annual cycle of royal hunts, in which the emperor and his entourage progressed between four seasonal hunting grounds, located in different parts of Khitan territory. The sequence of hunts created a political ordering of both time and space and set forth a hierarchy of precedence in socio-political relationships. Divisions of power in the Khitan empire were articulated in the systematic ranking of the privileges and responsibilities of those participating in the hunt. Inclusion in or exclusion from various practices in the hunt enacted contrasts between Khitan and non-Khitan, royal clan and subordinates, noble and base. In the spring hunt, held in the wetlands in the Northeastern part of Khitan territory on the borders of Manchuria,<sup>235</sup> *baidong qing* were flown at the swans and wild geese who had arrived in the north at just the time when the snows began to thaw.<sup>236</sup> The birds, whose name, East of the Sea Green, links them to the oceans on the eastern border, and to greenness associated with spring and the east, the sacred direction for the Khitans,<sup>237</sup> were procured through levies on non-Khitan subjects,<sup>238</sup> most significantly the Jurchen tribes of Manchuria. Through a series of correspondences the *baidong qing* were part of the political appropriation the energies of the spring thaw, linked with the arrival of migratory birds from the south, as well as with water and grass (through the wetlands where they were hunted and in the maritime associations in their name), and with the symbolic energies of both whiteness

(*dong qing*), while in the Uyghur and Turkic realms of central Asia near the Guiyi jun it was a white goshawk (*baiying*). The five-language Qing dictionary marks the formidable continuity of Mongolian/Khitan, Chinese, Manchurian and Turkic interests in white goshawks and gyrfalcons, spreading from the time of Tuyuhun in the early middle ages to the Manchu–Qing empire of the eighteenth century. The Manchus were, as noted, successors to the Tungusic peoples—the Jurchen and before them the Mohe—who had supplied white goshawks and gyrfalcons to the Khitan and the Tang. The white goshawks and gyrfalcons collected at the Qing court were thus heirs to a powerful political history.

<sup>235</sup> See *Liao shi* *juan* 40, *dili zhi* 地理志 4, p.496, and Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese society: Liao*, p.134. These hunting grounds were located in the upper reaches of the Sungari river (Songhua jiang 松花江) at the confluence of the Nen jiang 嫩江 and Tao'er he 洮兒河. This is at the border of present-day Jilin 吉林 and Heilongjiang 黑

龍江. See the detailed discussion of the location of the spring hunting grounds in Fu Lehuan, “*Liaodai sishi nabo kao wu pian*,” pp.46–54.

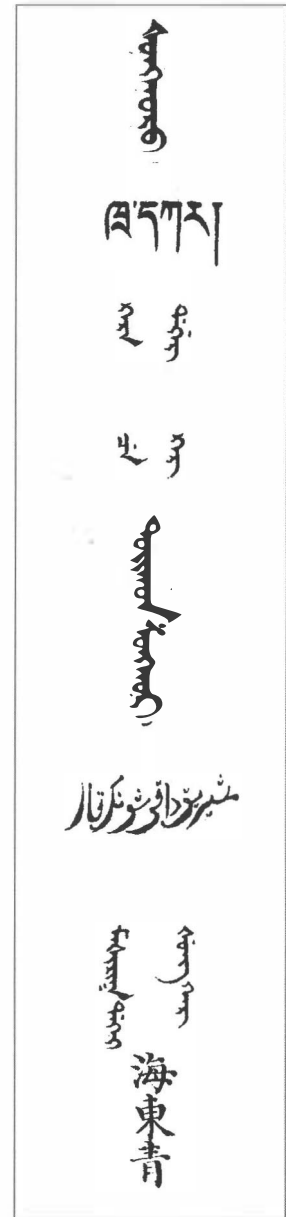
<sup>236</sup> *Liao shi*, *juan* 32, *yingwei zhi* 營衛志 2, pp.373–4, and Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese society: Liao*, p.132. See also *Qidan guo zhi*, *juan* 23, p.226.

<sup>237</sup> *Liao shi*, *juan* 45, *baiguan zhi* 1, p.712 and Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese society: Liao*, p.267.

<sup>238</sup> Concerning the tribute of 30 *baidong qing* from the Zubu 阻卜 (Tartars) in the 932 see *Liao shi*, *juan* 3, p.34, also *ibid.*, *juan* 70, p.1130. Exactions became more active in the eleventh century: in 1052 agents of the Liao were sent to the Five Nations (Wu guo 五國, a group of peoples living in the coastal littoral to the east of the Jurchen territories in Manchuria) to obtain *baidong qing*. Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese society: Liao*, p.360, and *Liao shi*, *juan* 69, pp.1108–9. On the Zubu, see Wittfogel and Feng, *id.*, pp.101–2, and on the Five Nations see *id.*, p.92.

Figure 9

Manchu, Tibetan, Mongolian, Turkic and Chinese names (with Manchu transcriptions following the Tibetan and Turkic) for the gyrfalcon *baidong qing*, from the Sunja hergen kamciha Manju gisun-i buleku bithe/Wu ti Qing wen jian



<sup>239</sup> *Liaoshi*, *juan* 32, *ying wei zhi* 2, pp. 373–4, and Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese society: Liao*, p. 132.

<sup>240</sup> Wittfogel and Feng, *ibid.*, p. 436.

<sup>241</sup> See *Liao shi*, *juan* 110, p. 1487, and Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese society: Liao*, p. 236, n. 66. Significantly this citation involves the granting of the right to hunt with *baidong qing* to a non-Khitan subject, Zhang Xiaojie 張孝傑, as a special favour.

<sup>242</sup> See Wittfogel and Feng, *ibid.*, pp. 450–3 on the hereditary claim of the Xiao to the office prime minister of the Northern Division.

<sup>243</sup> See Wittfogel and Feng, *ibid.*, pp. 93, 142, and esp. 237, n. 3.

<sup>244</sup> *Liao shi*, *juan* 21, p. 258, and Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese society: Liao*, p. 236.

<sup>245</sup> See the discussion of this idea by Fu Lehuan (who expresses reservations about it as an explanation) in “*Liandai sishi nabo kao wu pian*,” p. 159.

<sup>246</sup> “The Jurchen had been subjects of the Liao for more than 200 years; there had been hereditary succession to their military governorship, which passed from brother to brother . . . . In the northeast they had the Five Nations as neighbours. The east part of the territory of the Five States bordered on the great ocean and it produced a famous goshawk. Because it came from east of the sea, it was called East of the Sea Green. It was small and very brave and strong, and could catch geese and herons, the ones with white claws being especially valued. The Liao people deeply loved them, and year after year they sought it from the Jurchen. The Jurchen had to go to the Five Nations and could only get it after fighting. The Jurchen could not surmount this difficulty. When Tianzuo 天祚 [the last Liao emperor with any substantive power] came to the throne, the demand for tribute was especially onerous: whenever the celestial emissary arrived, he asked time and time again for things from the tribes and if they didn't obey even in the very smallest degree, he summoned their elders to beat them with the cane and in serious cases had them put to death—all the tribes were anxious and rebellious.” *Qidan guozhi* [Monograph on the Khitan state], *juan* 10 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1985), p. 102.

and greenness and to the reaffirmation of ties to the foundations of the Khitan state: the first wild goose or swan caught in the hunt was taken as an offering to the imperial ancestors.<sup>239</sup> The spring hunt was generally dominated by officials of the Northern Region (*Beimian* 北面), the Khitan, and more generally non-Han part of the government apparatus.<sup>240</sup> *Haidong qing* were thus part of the ceremonial consecration of Khitan pre-eminence in relation to other subject peoples and to the pre-eminence of the royal family in relation to the rest of the social and political order. The use of these birds facilitated the consolidation of internal relationships in the Khitan imperial elite, affirmed through the ritually charged solidarities of the hunt. They were also associated with the legal regulation of status divisions which structured the Khitan socio-political order: hunting with *baidong qing* was restricted to the emperor and to the prime minister,<sup>241</sup> who was normally a representative of the imperial family's consort clan, the Xiao 蕭,<sup>242</sup> a family with Uyghur heritage.<sup>243</sup> The birds were thus part of the transmission between the two great royal lineages of the Khitan state. In 1061 an imperial decree forbade the keeping of *baidong qing* by commoners.<sup>244</sup> Furthermore, both the location of the hunt and the source of the birds involved dominance of the Northeast and its peoples. It has been argued that a major purpose of the spring hunt was to receive tribute missions from the Jurchen and other Manchurian peoples who came to see the emperor in his camp.<sup>245</sup> The *baidong qing* was both a medium for this political interchange and the reason for its existence. As the cycle of hunts was formalised as the institutional structure at the heart of the Khitan ritual and political order, demand for the birds took the form of compulsory exaction rather than voluntary donation.

A lineage of hunting birds set apart for its whiteness was thus central to the constitution of a multi-ethnic state founded on the production and reproduction of codified status divisions within and between peoples. At the same time, the reproduction of this codified order of status divisions, endowed with specific obligations, functions and duties, was the mechanism by which the Khitan state secured control of privileged hunting birds. But the intense investment in both *baidong qing* and in the preservation of the political order which secured domination of them was ultimately linked to the political collapse of the Khitan imperial system. The imposition of mandatory tribute of *baidong qing* on the Jurchen tribes who were forced to fight in hostile territory to secure them, was one factor in the Jurchen rebellion against the Khitan which culminated in the overthrow of the Liao.<sup>246</sup> Loss of control over *baidong qing* thus coincided directly with the disintegration of a political order whose founders' fortunes had been foretold by the auspicious sign of a white goshawk. The story of *baidong qing* in the Liao state is part of the much longer history of political investments in the white goshawks and gyrfalcons in the Manchurian borderlands. It is not coincidental that *baidong qing* were procured from the same lands that had sent tribute in white goshawks to the Tang ruling house, and that this region was near the original homelands of the Tuyuhun prior to their westward migration where their history would be tied with that of white goshawks, white falcons

and *tuygbun*, Uyghurs, Tanguts and the Guiyi jun. The word for *baidongqing* in Mongolian—to which both the Tuyuhun language and that of the Khitans are thought to be related—contains the element *toyiyon*, phonetically related to and, in the Uyghur script in which Mongolian was written, graphically almost identical with *tuygbun*, the fierce, usurping member of the nine-fold lineage of descendant-princes known in the tenth-century Uyghur political rhetoric from the Gansu corridor.

A white hunting bird was involved in the constitution of the most famous hand of power in Inner Asian history and with its best known instance of imperial expansion—Chinggis khan and the Mongol empire. In the *Secret History of the Mongols*, Yisügei, the father of Chinggis khan, takes his son to the camp of Dei Sečen, father of Börte, Chinggis's future wife.

Dei Sečen tells Yisügei that he has had a dream that a white gyrfalcon carrying the sun and the moon in his claws alighted on his hands. He states that the gyrfalcon in the dream was Yisügei bringing the gift of an exceptional son to him whom he wishes to betroth to his daughter.<sup>247</sup> The exceptional white hunting bird is thus present in the formation of an alliance between distinguished lines. The energies and struggles fused in this meeting of lineages—energies and struggles simultaneously physical, symbolic and political—initiate an imperial project of alliance and capture, which would eventually expand to take over all the spaces whose avian and human political histories have been narrated in the preceding pages. This project, the Mongol empire, has become in the rhetoric of modern politics the archetype of a rapacious,

Figure 10

Section of the *Secret History of the Mongols* that details Dei Sečen's dream about the white gyrfalcon which presages the arrival of the future Chinggis khan. Mongolian text in Chinese characters, with interlinear Chinese translation

我的落了 米訥禿兀罷。 察罕 保兀罷。 黯巴兒 額列撒亦 兀者	今 額朶額 額控 升豁兒 阿惕忽周 阿卜赤刺周 合兒圖兒	說 鳴話列論 納關 撒刺 宜 合刺周 兀者克顛 不列額。	來着 亦列周 合兒 迭額列 米訥禿兀巴。 額控 沼兀敦 泥顏 古兀控	我白 必。察罕 升豁兒 納關撒刺 豁牙里 阿惕忽周 你思周	名 也速該 親家 忽答 必 額控 雪你 沼兀敦 沼兀都列罷
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<sup>247</sup> Paragraph 63 of Chapter 1 of the *Secret History of the Mongols*. For a translation see Igor de Rachewiltz, tr., "The Secret History of the Mongols," chs 1 and 2, *Papers on Far Eastern History* 4 (1971): 130. For a transcription of the original text, see Paul Pelliot, *Histoire secrète des Mongols: restitution de texte Mongol et traduction Fran-*

*çaise des chapitres I à VI* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique d'Orient, 1949), p.13. For the original Chinese character version, see *Menggu mishi jiao kan ben* [Corrected and edited text of the *Secret History of the Mongols*], *juan* 1 (Hohhot: Neimenggu Renmin Chubanshe, 1980) p.66, Modern Chinese translation on p.931. The bird in question is translated into Chinese as *bai baiqing*.

