

## **Crossroads**

**Studies on the History of Exchange Relations in the East Asian World**

**縦横**

東亞世界交流史研究

**クロスロード**

東アジア世界の交流史研究

**크로스로드**

東아시아世界の交流史研究

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All inscriptions from the Turfan region shown on the cover page can be found on the website “Xibu bianchui de qipa: Tulufan (Gaochang) muzhuan shufa” 西部边陲的奇葩—吐鲁番(高昌)墓砖书法 [www.sohu.com/a/237616750\_100140832]. Black-and-White photos of these inscriptions are published in the monograph *Tulufan chutu zhuanzhi jizhu* 吐鲁番出土砖誌集註, ed. by Hou Can 侯燦 and Wu Meilin 吳美琳, Chengdu: Bashu, 2004. [Top left:] Tang Kaiyuan 26 nian (738) Zhang Yungan ji qi mubiao 唐開元廿六年張運感及妻墓表 (p. 640, fig. 315); [left centre:] Gaochang Yanhe 11 nian (612) Zhang Zhongqing qi Jiaoshi mubiao 高昌延和十一年張仲慶妻焦氏墓表 (p. 284, fig. 138); [bottom left:] Gaochang Yanchang 26 nian (586) zhongbing canjun Xinshi mubiao 高昌延昌廿六年中兵參軍辛氏墓表 (p. 176, fig. 81); [Top right:] Tang Yongchun 2 nian (683) Zhang Huan furen Qu Lian muzhiming 唐永淳二年張歡夫人鞠連墓誌銘 (p. 575, fig. 292); [bottom right:] Gaochang Chongguang 1 nian (620) Zhang Azhi zi mubiao 高昌重光元年張阿質兒墓表 (p.323, fig. 157).

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# Some Aspects of the Relations between the Chile 敕勒 and the Northern Dynasties (Fifth to Seventh Century)

Maddalena BARENGHI

Several nomadic and seminomadic groups dwelled in the Mongolian steppe during the early medieval period. The Chinese traditional sources differentiate these groups in terms that define them as biologically related and sharing a common ancestry with the various “barbarian” nomadic confederacies that dwelled in the steppe in earlier times. Indeed, the use of the designations “Gaoju” 高車 and “Chile” 敕勒/勅勒/“Tiele” 鐵勒 in the Chinese medieval sources exemplifies the blurred boundaries between political and biological/cultural bonds.<sup>1</sup> The variants arguably all relate to the original Turkic term, either semantically or phonetically. Chile/Tiele may be a phonetic rendering of the term for “cart” (*\*tegreg*), and the form Gaoju (High Carts) may also be related to the meaning of the original Turkic term.<sup>2</sup> The designations coexist in the sources and, according to scholars, loosely define the same confederation of tribes that dwelled in the Mongolian steppe from the late fourth century onwards. Indeed, the composition of the confederation and its allegiances changed

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- 1 Though the traditional sources do not clearly distinguish political entities from biological/cultural affiliations, tribal allegiances in Inner Asia were in fact a matter of political allegiances. By comparing Inner Asia to the Germanic tribal world, Peter Golden (2008/2009, 74-75) states that “belonging to a ‘people’ could be more political than biological – although political loyalty in ‘imagined communities’ of tribal society was invariably expressed as bonds of kinship, i.e. in biological terms. Genealogies could, when necessity demanded, be created or manipulated. There was much fluidity in tribal loyalties and hence in ethnic and political designations.”
- 2 Other earlier forms used to identify the nomadic confederacy are Dili 狄歷, Dingling 丁零, and Tele 特勒. An anonymous reader has brought to my attention a study by KJšaštornyj and Savinov (2005, 59) in which the authors argue that *\*tegreg* might be an Old Mongolic (Xianbei or Rouran) term which entered Turkic initially in the meaning of “rim, wheel” and also “cart, carter”. For a reconstruction of the early medieval Chinese pronunciation and meaning of the term see also Pulleyblank 1990, 22. On the Tiele see also: Hamilton 1962, 25-26. Scholars have identified the Tiele with the Toquz-Oghuz of the Orkhon inscriptions. See Pulleyblank 1956, 35-39; Golden 1972. For a general study on the Tiele see also Golden 1992, 132ff.

consistently over the centuries. The names of the clans and ruling elites associated with the confederacy also changed significantly over time.

This paper presents a preliminary survey of the early relations between this nomadic confederacy and the empire of the Central Plains from the late fourth to the early early seventh century as narrated in the early medieval sources, with a focus on the accounts in the *Weishu* 魏書 (Book of Wei) and *Beishi* 北史 (History of the North).

The earliest accounts on the Chile/Gaoju confederacy can be found in Wei Shou's 魏收 (506–572) *Weishu* 魏書 and in Li Yanshou's 李延壽 (fl. 650) *Beishi*. The *Weishu*'s chapter on the Ruru 蠕蠕 (Rouran 柔然) and the Gaoju, chapter 103, was lost before the Song era and may have been substituted by the homonymous chapter of the *Beishi*, chapter 98: the two chapters are practically identical.<sup>3</sup> However, scattered references in the *Weishu* offer information concerning the relations between the tribal confederacy and the Northern Wei that we do not find in the *Beishi*.

The chapter on the Gaoju begins by tracing their cultural and biological origins back to the northern “barbarians”:

高車，蓋古赤狄之餘種也，初號為狄歷，北方以為勒勒，諸夏以為高車、丁零。其語略與匈奴同而時有小異。或云：其先匈奴甥也。<sup>4</sup>

As for the Gaoju, they are descendant tribes of the ancient Red Di,<sup>5</sup> and initially were called Dili. In the north they are called Chile; within China they were called Gaoju, Dingling. Their language is roughly similar to the Xiongnu's and at times has small differences. Some say: “Their ancestors were descendants of the Xiongnu's marital clans.”<sup>6</sup>

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- 3 *Weishu* 103.2289. The surviving text of the *Weishu* is attributed to Wei Shou, yet during the Tang period different versions of the Wei dynastic history were produced. See Yu Jiayi 1980, 157-177. Chapter 101 of the *Weishu* (which included accounts on Gaochang 高昌 and the Tuyuhun 吐谷渾) was substituted with chapter 96 of the *Beishi*; chapter 102 of the *Weishu* (“Xiyu liezhuan” 西域列傳 [Memoir on the Western Regions]) was substituted with chapter 97 of the *Beishi*.
  - 4 *Weishu* 103.2307; *Beishi* 98.3270. “In the north” may mean that in the Mongolian steppe they called themselves Chile (*tegrek*), and within the Chinese Empire they were called Gaoju. It is plausible that the officials of the Northern Wei Empire used both terms in their official documents, as these two designations coexist in the early medieval Chinese sources.
  - 5 The Red Di appear in several pre-imperial and Han texts; Sima Qian 司馬遷 uses the term Chi Di 赤翟 and identifies them with the Rong Di 戎翟 that were pushed to an area within the Ordos region by King Wen of Jin 晉文公 (see Giele 2011, 249-250).
  - 6 Pulleyblank (1990, 21) notes that the genealogical and linguistic connection with the Red Di and the Xiongnu “is probably based on nothing more than the fact that they played the same kind of role on the Chinese frontier during the Sui and Tang dynasties that the Xiongnu had

The terms Gaoju and Chile are used to refer to a confederacy of tribes from the early period until the Sui 隋 dynasty (581–618) period. The term Tiele is later used to refer to the tribal confederacy from the early seventh century onwards. Indeed, *Beishi* has both an account of the Gaoju/Chile (chapter 98)<sup>7</sup> and one on the Tiele (chapter 99), the latter of which also includes an account of the Tujue 突厥 (Türks) and the First Türk Empire.<sup>8</sup> The two chapters do not overlap in content: chapter 98 covers the events from the fifth century to the end of the first half of the sixth century, while chapter 99 covers the events of the early seventh century, i.e., the relations with the Türks and the early Tang dynasty.<sup>9</sup>

In later scholarship, the tribal confederacy is generally lumped together with the Türks or the Uighurs. The tenth-century official history of the Tang, known as *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Old History of the Tang), has an account of the Tiele in the “Beidi liezhuan” 北狄列傳 (Memoir on the Northern Barbarians), chapter 199. By contrast, the eleventh-century recompilation of the Tang history known as the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 has no separate section for the Tiele. Instead, the beginning and most of the second part of chapter 217, “Huihu liezhuan” 回鶻列傳 (that is, the account preceding the Uighur Empire and following its collapse, from 840 to the end of the dynasty), contain accounts of different Tiele groupings.<sup>10</sup> The eleventh-century compilers begin the chapter on the Uighurs by saying:

回紇，其先匈奴也，俗多乘高輪車，元魏時亦號高車部，或曰敕勒，訛為鐵勒。<sup>11</sup>

As for the Huihe, their ancestors were the Xiongnu; because it was their custom to ride carts with high wheels, in the Yuan Wei period they were called the ‘tribe of the high carts’, and some called them Chile, which was wrongly rendered with Tiele.

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played in Han.” However, if we consider the *Weishu* statement in the quote above to be true, it is plausible to think that there were indeed linguistic similarities.

7 *Beishi* 98.3270-3277. Pulleyblank (1990, 24-25) has translated an excerpt of the beginning of chapter 98.

8 *Beishi* 99.3303-3305.

9 The content of chapter 99 also appears in almost identical form in chapter 84 of the *Suishu* 隋書, the “Beidi liezhuan” 北狄列傳 (Memoir on the Northern Barbarians). *Suishu* 84.1863-1882 also has an account of the Tujue, Qidan 契丹, Xi 奚 (Qay) and Shiwei 室韋.

10 For the variants of Huihu (Huihe, etc.) see below in the footnotes. See also Nishida Yuko 2011.

11 *Xin Tangshu* 217A.6111.

During the fifth and sixth centuries, units of this nomadic confederacy established patron-client relations with the Rouran 柔然 khanate (402–552)<sup>12</sup> and the Tuoba 拓跋 northern dynasties: the Northern Wei 北魏 (386–535), Eastern Wei 東魏 (534–550), Northern Qi 北齊 (550–77), and Northern Zhou 北周 (557–581). By the late sixth century, Tiele groupings had fallen under the dominion of the First Türk Empire (552–630). Tiele units revolted against the Türks in the second decade of the seventh century and established an independent regime under the leadership of the Sir-Yantuo (Xue Yantuo 薛延陀) Zhenzhu Bilgä Qaghan 真珠苾伽 (r. 628–645).<sup>13</sup> They subsequently established patron-client relations with Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (r. 626–649). In later periods, the Tiele were at times under the patronage of the Tibetans and then of the Uighurs (Huihe 回紇) of the First Uighur Empire (646–48), the latter group being the strongest among the Tiele.

The late medieval sources also introduce the term “Jiu xing” 九姓 (Nine surnames) or “Jiu xing buluo” 九姓部落.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, the term “Jiuxing Huihe” 九姓回紇, used to refer to the Uighurs, also indicates the Tiele, the confederacy ruled by the Uighurs.<sup>15</sup>

## Relations with the early medieval courts

Sometime in the late fourth century, the Chile/Gaoju tribal confederacy moved to the northwestern territory of Luhun Lake 鹿潭海, in the eastern area of the Orkhon Valley, where its members became stronger and grew in number.<sup>16</sup> The early Northern Wei had frequent contact with the tribes. In particular, Tuoba Gui 拓跋珪 (Daowu 道武, r. 386–409, temple title Taizu 太祖) launched several military campaigns against them and relocated entire units to the military garrisons for defensive purposes. The six northern garrisons (*beizhen* 北鎮) had been built to reinforce the Wei defensive line when the capital was moved from Shengle 盛樂 to Pingcheng 平城 in 398.<sup>17</sup> The practice of

12 The sources also refer to the Rouran as Ruanruan 蠕蠕, Ruirui 芮芮, or Ruru 茹茹. On the variants see Xue Zongzheng 1995. The Rouran khanate is a confederacy of tribes present in the Mongolian steppe from the fifth to the first half of the sixth century.

13 *Suisbu* 84.1880; Chavannes 1900, 94 ff. See also Golden 2018, 330.

14 Skaff 2012, 40 n.12, 343 n.

15 Pulleyblank 1956, 38–39.

16 *Beishi* 98.3270; *Weishu* 103.2308.

17 The six garrisons are Woye 沃野, Huaishuo 懷朔, Wuchuan 武川, Wumin 撫冥, Rouxuan 柔玄, and Huaihuang 懷荒. The garrisons were located just north of the Great Wall. The gar-

forced relocation was carried on by subsequent rulers until the Wei capital was moved further south to Luoyang 洛陽, in 493.<sup>18</sup> Daowu's unorthodox methods of relocating large segments of the population to the new capital included plans for a large hunt in the territory where a Gaoju tribe had settled:

道武自牛川南引，大校獵，以高車為圍，騎徒遮列，周七百餘里，聚雜獸於其中，因驅至平城，即以高車眾起鹿苑，南因臺陰，北距長城，東包白登，屬之西山。<sup>19</sup>

Daowu from Ox River<sup>20</sup> led [the people] south; he organized a large hunt and used the Gaoju [territory] as hunting grounds: on horseback he moved them in ordered ranks, surrounded a territory of more than seven hundred *li*, gathered various types of animals at its center, and in this manner forced them forward and reached Pingcheng. Then by means of the Gaoju troops [the emperor] created a deer park [that extended] south to Taiyin, north to the Great Wall, and embraced Baideng<sup>21</sup> to the east, and connected it to the western mountains.

Several Gaoju chieftains subsequently established patron-client relations with the Wei court and were endowed with official titles and gifts.<sup>22</sup> Under the reign of Tuoba Tao 拓拔燾 (Taiwu 太武帝, r. 424–52, temple title Shizu 世祖), several other units were again relocated “south of the Gobi desert,” and pre-

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rises extended roughly from present day Bayannur city in Inner Mongolia to present day Zhangbei prefecture in Hebei; see Wei Jian 2019, 151. For a study of the archaeological evidence of the six towns see Zhou Yang 2017. See also Sagawa Eiji 2016. The practice of building towns in order to settle nomadic tribes would also be adhered to by the Sui dynasty, which built walled towns in the northeastern region of the Ordos for the Eastern Türks. See Pan Yihong 1997, 105; *Suishu* 84.1873.

- 18 The early Tuoba emperors relocated portions of their population to the capital in Pingcheng. For instance, in 440 Daowu relocated thirty thousand commoners from Liang Prefecture to Pingcheng. See *Weishu* 4.90: 冬十月辛酉，車駕東還，徙涼州民三萬餘家于京師。Migration and forced relocation are major features of the Tuoba dynasties, and in particular of the Northern Wei. See the recent doctoral thesis by Wen-yi Huang (2017). See also Kang Le 1990, 896.
- 19 *Beishi* 98.3271. See also *Beishi* 1.19.
- 20 “Ox River” was located north of the Great Wall, in present-day Inner Mongolia. It is in this location that in 386 Tuoba Gui organized a big summit and established himself as King of Dai. See *Weishu* 2.20: 登國元年春正月戊申，帝即代王位，郊天，建元，大會於牛川。The place continued to be an important defensive post in later times, and the early Northern Wei rulers paid regular visits to it. See Wei Jian 2019.
- 21 According to *Zizhi tongjian* 11.3768, Baideng was located at roughly ten *li* southeast of Pingcheng.
- 22 *Beishi* 98.3271; *Weishu* 103.2308: 高車姪利曷莫弗敕力捷率其九百餘落內附，拜敕力捷為揚威將軍置司馬、參軍，賜穀二萬斛。後高車解批莫弗幡豆建復率其部三十餘落內附，亦拜為威遠將軍，置司馬、參軍，賜衣服，歲給廩食。



sumably in the borderland.<sup>23</sup> The Tuoba court divided the newly relocated population into units according to their geographical location: “Western tribes” (*xibu* 西部), “Eastern tribes” (*dongbu* 東部), and “Northern tribes” (*beibu* 北部).<sup>24</sup> They occupied a territory that from east to west extended north of the six northern garrisons. The Chile people in this area are referred to as “new commoners” (*xinmin* 新民) in the *Weishu*.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the *Weishu* recounts that at the beginning of Xiaowen’s 孝文 (r. 471–499, temple title Gaozu 高祖) reign, the “rich and powerful of the Western tribal divisions of the Chile were employed as military guards in the [imperial] palace.”<sup>26</sup> The dynastic history affirms that the selection of the imperial guards among the Chile was not a peaceful process because the official in charge of the selection received generous bribes from the wealthiest among the Chile. The enraged soldiers mutinied and murdered the official, and the Chile tribal units rebelled.<sup>27</sup>

The “new commoners” established at the northern frontier would migrate north of the desert in the spring, returning south for the winter in search of pastureland for their herds. This was problematic for the local officials tasked with keeping them in the territory where they had been resettled. The sources say that on one occasion in 430, during the reign of Taiwu, the local officials issued a request to relocate Chile units from Yunzhong 雲中 (modern-day Datong 大同) to the White Salt Lake 白鹽池 in Hexi 河西,<sup>28</sup> in order to prevent the migrants from moving back northward again in the spring season. The *Weishu* reports:

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23 *Beishi* 98.3273.

24 *Zizhi tongjian* 133.4158: 自魏世祖破柔然，高車敕勒皆來降，其部落附塞下而居，自武周塞外以西謂之西部，以東謂之東部，依漢南而居者謂之北部。“When Wei Shizu defeated the Rouran, the Gaoju Chile all came to surrender, so their tribes were settled within the borders. From the area beyond the Great Wall in Wuzhou to the west they were called Western Tribes, to the east they were called Eastern Tribes, [and] those that were settled toward the south of the desert were called the Northern Tribes.”

25 *Weishu* 4A.75: 列置新民於漢南，東至濡源，西暨五原、陰山，竟三千里。“[The court] divided [the tribes] and established the new commoners south of the desert, extending east to Ruyuan, and west to Yuyuan and Yishan, in all [in a territory of] three thousand *li*”. On the use of the term *xinmin* in the early Northern Wei period see Zhang Weixun 1993.

26 *Weishu* 19.450: 西部敕勒豪富兼丁者為殿中武士。

27 *Ibid.*

28 There were four salt lakes located in an area just south of the Ordos region, in Wuyuan Garrison 五原郡 (in Tang times called Wuyuan Prefecture 五原縣) in present-day Shaanxi (*Yuanbe junxian tuzhi* 4.6). Hence Hexi in this case is not used for the area west of the Ordos, but it refers to an area west of the eastern arm of the Yellow River within Guannei.

敕勒新民以將吏侵奪，咸出怨言，期牛馬飽草，當赴漢北。潔與左僕射安原奏，欲及河冰未解，徙之河西，冰解之後，不得北遁。世祖曰：「不然。此等習俗，放散日久，有似園中之鹿，急則衝突，緩之則定。吾自處之有道，不煩徙也。」潔等固執，乃聽分徙三萬餘落於河西，西至白鹽池。新民驚駭，皆曰：「圖我於河西之中，是將殺我也」，欲西走涼州。潔與侍中古弼屯五原河北，左僕射安原屯悅拔城北，備之。既而新民數千騎北走，潔追討之。走者糧絕，相枕而死。<sup>29</sup>

As for the new Chile commoners, they all expressed enagement because of the encroachments of the officers, and said that it would be appropriate to hurry [back] to the north of the [Gobi] desert once cattle and horses were well fed with grass. [Liu] Ji and the chief administrator An Yuan memorialized to the court that they wished to move [the new Chile commoners] to Hexi before the ice of the [Yellow] River had melted, [so that] they could not go back to the north after the ice had melted. Shizu said: "This is not right. This is [their] custom; [if you] banish and scatter them for a long time, they will be like deer kept in captivity: if they are hard-pressed, then they will rush forth, but if you leave them at their ease they will settle. I think that to let them find their own location is the right way so we do not need to take trouble to relocate them." As [Liu] Ji and his colleague were determined, [the emperor] listened to them and moved more than thirty thousand separate tribes to Hexi, westward to the White Salt Lake. The new commoners were frightened, and all said: "You are confining us in the center of Hexi, this will kill us!" And so they wished to flee to Liang Prefecture. [Liu] Ji and the assistant Gu Bi stationed themselves north of the river in Wuyuan, the attendant archer An Yuan stationed himself north of the fortified city, in order to take precaution against this. After some time, several thousand horsemen of the new commoners fled north. [Liu] Ji pursued and punished them. The provisions of those who were able to get away were cut off, and so they died one taking the other as a cushion.

The early Northern Wei rulers, and Taiwu in particular, would regularly inspect the borderland south of the desert (*xing mo nan* 幸漠南) during the winter in order to control the Chile confederation and maintain peaceful relations with them.<sup>30</sup> In occasion of one of these official inspection tours, in winter 431,

29 *Weishu* 28.687; *Zizhi tongjian* 121.3815.

30 The *Weishu* records two instances of rebellions by the Chile "new commoners" in the six northern garrisons, in 471 and 472. *Weishu* 7A.135: 冬十月丁亥，沃野、統萬二鎮敕勒叛。詔太尉、隴西王源賀追擊，至枹罕，滅之，斬首三萬餘級；徙其遺迸於冀、定、相三州為營戶。" [During the reign of emperor Xiaowen in 471] the Chile of the two garrisons of Woye and Tongwan rebelled in the tenth month on the *dinggai* day. An imperial edict was issued ordering the king of Taiwei and Longxi Wang Yuanhe to follow them and launch an attack against them. They [the attackers] reached Baohan and destroyed them. They cut off more than thirty thousand heads. They moved their remaining troops to the three prefectures of Ji, Ding, and Xiang as guarding households." *Weishu* 7a.136-137: 連川敕勒謀叛，徙配青、徐、齊、兗四州為營戶。" The Chile from Lianchuan plotted a rebel-

Taiwu organized a great hunt and celebrated the event by having a stone stele engraved.<sup>31</sup>

The Yuanhe 袁紇<sup>32</sup> and the Hulü 斛律<sup>33</sup> are identified as two of the leading clans of the Chile.<sup>34</sup> The Yuanhe clan would go on to resurface in Chinese medieval texts as the Huihe 回紇 at the beginning of the seventh century. The Hulü became a very powerful military clan at the Tuoba court. When the Rouran khan Shelun 社崙 (r. 402–410) was defeated by the Northern Wei and invaded Chile's territory, the chieftain of the Hulü clan, Beihouli 倍侯利, decided to take advantage of his weakness and launch a military attack against him. The Rouran defended themselves, driving Hulü Beihouli to seek refuge in the Northern Wei court, where he was granted honorific titles.<sup>35</sup> The Hulü family clan became a

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lion, [so] they were relocated to the four prefectures of Peiqing, Xu, Qi, and Yan as guarding households.” *Weishu* 4b.97: 六月，北部民殺立義將軍、衡陽公莫孤，率五千餘落北走。追擊于漠南，殺其渠帥，餘徙居冀、相、定三州為營戶。“In the sixth month [445 AD], the people of the Northern tribes killed the General Who Establishes Righteousness, Sir Hengyang Mo Gu, and they escaped north, leading more than five thousand tribes. [The court's army] followed them and attacked them south of the desert, killing their chiefs. The rest were relocated to the three prefectures of Yi, Xiang, and Ding as guarding households.” – The most famous among the rebellions in which Chile units were involved is the one of 523, occurring after the Wei capital was relocated to Luoyang 洛陽. For a general overview of the causes of the rebellion see Wang Xiaofu 2018.

- 31 *Weishu* 4.79: 行幸漠南。十一月丙辰，北部敕勒莫弗庫若干，率其部數萬騎，驅鹿數百萬，詣行在所，帝因而大狩以賜從者，勒石漠南，以記功德。“[In winter, during the tenth month of 431] The emperor paid a visit south of the desert. In the eleventh month, the northern Chile chieftain Kuruoyu led his unit of several hundred thousand horsemen and several hundred thousand galloping deer, moving to the place [where the emperor was]. The emperor took the opportunity to organize a great hunt in order to repay those who had followed him; he engraved a [text on a] stone to the south of the desert, and by means of it he recorded merits and virtues.” On this event see also *Weishu* 24.635; *Beishi* 2.47; *Zizhi tongjian* 122.3835. According to *Weishu* 4b.103, during another imperial visit in 450, the emperor organized a similar banquet for his hosts: 十年春正月戊辰朔，帝在漠南，大饗百僚，班賜有差。“In the tenth year, in spring in the first month, in *wuzhen*, the first day of the lunar month, the emperor was south of the desert, and greatly banqueted with the hundred officials, dividing the gifts according to rank.”
- 32 Later known as Huihe 回紇, with its variants 韋紇, 迴紇, 回鶻, etc. See Kasai Yukiyo 2014, 132.
- 33 According to Xue Zongzheng 1995, 37, Hulü is the Chinese phonetic transcription of the term *uluk*, and in the early Tang period they would be called Huluwu 胡祿屋, a tribal unit located in the area of Beiting Prefecture 北庭州, in Yanbo Commandery 鹽泊州都督府, in present-day eastern Xinjiang. See also *Xin Tangshu* 43B.1130.
- 34 Other names of clans are Di 狄, Jiepi 解批, Huogu 護骨, and Yiqijin 異奇斤 (*Beishi* 98.3270). According to Ma Chi 1999, 94, Jiepi 解批 is an early variant of Qibi 契苾.
- 35 *Beishi* 98.3272; *Bei Qi shu* 17.219–222; *Beishi* 17.219.

very influential clan at court, to the point that when Beihouli died, the emperor awarded him a posthumous title.<sup>36</sup> Hulü Beihouli's grandson, Hulü Jin 斛律金 (488–567),<sup>37</sup> became a dignitary and an important military general at the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi courts. Hulü Jin's renown stems mostly from the “Chile ge” 敕勒歌 (Chile Song),<sup>38</sup> a folk song that the general was allegedly ordered to sing in front of general Gao Huan and his troops after their defeat by the Eastern Wei army at Yubi 玉壁 (modern Shanxi).<sup>39</sup>

The Hulü clan's power and influence at the court lasted until the last Northern Qi ruler, Gao Wei 高緯 (r. 565–577), also known as the Late Ruler of Northern Qi 北齊後主; Hulü Jin's granddaughter was a consort of Gao Wei.<sup>40</sup> Empress Hulü 斛律皇后 was deposed after the invasion by the Northern Zhou in 557, when almost all members of the Hulü clan were killed. By the beginning of the Tang Dynasty, the family had all but disappeared from history.<sup>41</sup> The Hulü shrine 斛律寺 seems to have survived to at least the early tenth century and to have become the object of a popular cult.<sup>42</sup>

## Relations with the early Tang court

In the second half of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century, a number of the Tiele tribal units in the Mongolian steppe<sup>43</sup> were led by the Ashina

36 *Beishi* 98.3271: 及倍侯利卒，道武悼惜，葬以魏禮，諡曰忠壯王。“When Beihouli died, Daowu mourned, buried him with Wei rituals, and bestowed upon him the posthumous title of Loyal and Strong King.”

37 On Hulü Jin see also Pulleyblank 1990, 26.

38 In *Rongzhai suibi* 容齋隨筆 1.5–6 Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123–1202) reports that the song was sung in the Tuoba language. Wu Jie (2010) believes that the “Chile ge” is in all likelihood a Tuoba folksong. Hulü Jin was credited with disseminating it, however.

39 *Beishi* 6.230; *Zizhi tongjian* 159.4944; the song reminded Gao Huan that he was about to die. See Wu Jie 2010.

40 *Bei Qi shu* 7.94.

41 At least one member of the clan survived. According to the excavated funerary epitaph of Hulü Che 斛律徹, a grandson of Hulü Guang 光, Hulü Che survived the killing and died in 595, under the Sui dynasty. See Luo Xin and Ye Wei 2010, 434–436.

42 According to *Zizhi tongjian* 266.8675, a Hulü temple 斛律寺 still existed in the tenth century in Jinyang. Hulü Jin and the Western Wei general Gao Huan 高歡 (496–547) were both from Huaishuo garrison 懷朔鎮 (see Kang Le 1990). *Tang wen shiyi* 唐文拾遺 47.1093–1104 (edn. attached to *Quan Tang wen*) has a “Jian Hulü wang miao ji” 建斛律王廟記 (Memoir of the Building of the Temple of Hulü Prince).

43 *Suishu* 84.1879: 鐵勒之先，匈奴之苗裔也，種類最多。自西海之東，依據山谷，往往不絕。獨洛河北有僕骨、同羅、韋紇、拔也古、覆羅並號俟斤，蒙陳、吐如紇、

阿史那 clan, the family to which the qaghans of the First Türk Empire (552–630) belonged. In the second decade of the seventh century, some of the Tiele units struck an alliance with Yinan 夷男, the chief of one of the dominant Tiele tribes, the Xue Yantuo, and revolted against Illig Qaghan (r. 621–630). Taking advantage of the situation, Taizong secretly invested Yinan with the title of Zhenzhu Bilgä 真珠苾伽 Qaghan (r. 628–645).<sup>44</sup> Relying on the support of Taizong, Yinan moved his troops south and established a southern court in the strategic area north of the Ötükan Mountains range,<sup>45</sup> in the “old Xiongnu territory” 古匈奴之故地.<sup>46</sup> Taizong then requested that Ashina Simo 阿史那思摩 (Li Simo 李思摩) move his own militia units south of the desert in order to control Yinan, as Taizong was concerned about Yinan’s movement toward the Tang’s northern frontier. As a reward, Taizong bestowed upon Li Simo the title of qaghan.<sup>47</sup> After the death of Yinan, the Xue Yantuo who had escaped to the west bestowed the qaghan title on Duomozhi 咄摩支, a son of Yinan’s older brother. The Xue Yantuo subsequently moved back to their old territories to the west, but Duomozhi renounced the title and asked the Tang court for permission to settle north of the Ötükan Mountains range. Instead, the court sent the general Li Ji 李勣 (594–669) to attack the Xue Yantuo. Duomozhi surrendered

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斯結、渾、斛薛等諸姓，勝兵可二萬。伊吾以西，焉耆之北，傍白山，則有契弊、薄落職、乙啞、蘇婆、那曷、烏謹、紇骨、也啞、於尼謹等，勝兵可二萬。“As for the Tiele’s ancestors, they were descendants of the Xiongnu, [but] their different units were extremely numerous, from the eastern part of the Western Lake, following mountains and gorges across the territory without interruption. North of the Duluo [Tuul] River are the Pugu [Puqut], the Tongluo [Tongra], the Weihe, the Bayegu [Bayarqu], [and] the Fuluo. Altogether they have the appellation *tejin*; their surnames are Mengchen, Turuchi, Sijie, Hun, [and] Douxie, and their highest number of soldiers can reach twenty thousand men. West of Yiwu, and north of Yanqi, on the side of Mont Bai, there are instead the Qibi, the Puluochi, the Yidie, the Supo, the Nahe, the Wuhuan, the Chigu, the Yedie, [and] the Yuni; their highest number of soldiers can reach twenty thousand men.”

44 *Suishu* 84.1880; *Jiu Tangshu* 199.5344; Chavannes 1900, 94ff; Skaff 2012, 121.

45 都尉捷山 is identified with the Ötükan Mountains Range (*Jiu Tangshu* 199.5344), the sacred mountain of the Türks located in the Khangai Mountains on the steppe. The official Chinese histories have different transliterations of the Turkic term: 都斤山, 烏德韃山, 都尉捷山 (*Jiu Tangshu*), 都斤山 (*Suishu*, *Xin Tangshu*), 大斤山 (*Suishu*), 鬱督軍山 (*Jiu Tangshu*, *Xin Tangshu*), 都督軍山 (*Xin Tangshu*). On the Ötükan Mountains see: Drompp 1999, 391; Golden 2013, 42; Barengi 2019, 80.

46 *Jiu Tangshu* 199.5344.

47 At about the same time, Taizong cancelled a gathering that had been set up for Yinan and other Xue Yantuo dignitaries in Ling Prefecture 靈州, at the western border of Guannei 關內. The gathering would have sealed Yinan’s patron-client relationship with Taizong through a marriage with a Chinese princess. On this event see Skaff 2012, 200.

to the Tang troops and was brought to the capital in Chang'an, where he was given an allotment of land and a residence. Duomozhi's followers were either killed or captured by the Tang troops.<sup>48</sup>

Tang Taizong was able to defeat the Xue Yantuo thanks to the military support of Huihe troops. As a result, the chief of the Huihe, Tumidu 吐迷度, moved his troops south, past the Helan Mountains 賀蘭山, to the western border of the Tang empire. Taizong then summoned several thousand Tiele dignitaries to Ling Prefecture 靈州, a strategic location and point of transit that connected the Ordos region to the central region of the capital,<sup>49</sup> and organized a large gathering for them.<sup>50</sup> The summit lasted a full month. According to the eleventh-century New History of the Tang, the Huihe dignitaries expressed a wish to become part of the Tang administrative system:

「延陀不事大國，以自取亡，其下鷹駭鳥散，不知所之。今各有分地，願歸命天子，請置唐官。」有詔張飲高會，引見渠長等，以唐官官之，凡數千人。<sup>51</sup>

“The [Xue] Yantuo did not serve the Great Kingdom. By this means they brought their own destruction. Their subordinates are as frightened as hornless deer and scatter as birds; they don't know where to go. Now each [tribal head] is assigned a piece of territory, so they are willing to turn [to the Tang court] and submit to the [emperor's] mandate, and request to be established as Tang officials.” An imperial decree ordered that a drinking banquet be set up for a great gathering in order to introduce the chieftains, several thousands in all and invest them with official Tang titles.

During the summit Taizong was proclaimed Heavenly Qaghan by the dignitaries.<sup>52</sup> One month later, the gathering was repeated at the capital in Chang'an 長安,<sup>53</sup> where the Huihe dignitaries were again entertained with banquets and music. The sovereign bestowed official titles upon them, and their tribal units

48 *Jiu Tangshu* 199.5348 speaks of thirty thousand slaves and more than five thousand people beheaded.

49 Ling Prefecture was located in present-day Guyuan 固原, Ningxia.

50 *Xin Tangshu* 217A.6112. On this event see also Skaff 2012, 121-122. Skaff (*ibid.* n.17) notes that “Tang sources describing gatherings of the tribal leadership of the Mongolian Plateau usually mention a total of several thousand chiefs. The number seems to be a convention but may approximately represent the total leadership of the khanate down to the level of camp headmen.”

51 *Xin Tangshu* 217A.6112.

52 *Zizhi tongjian* 198.6240.

53 *Jiu Tangshu* 195.5196; *Xin Tangshu* 217A:6111; *Zizhi tongjian* 198.6240, 6242-6243; *Cefu yuangui* 970.12b. On the two edicts that announced the gatherings in Ling Prefecture and Chang'an, as well as on Taizong political strategy in dealing with the surrendered Turkic tribes, see Eisenberg 2002–2003.

were settled into the “loose rein” (*jimi* 羈縻) system of protected prefectures and area commands.<sup>54</sup> The account of the gathering in *Xin Tangshu* goes as follows:

其都督、刺史給玄金魚符，黃金為文，天子方招寵遠夷，作絳黃瑞錦文袍、寶刀、珍器賜之。帝坐祕殿，陳十部樂，殿前設高坵，置朱提瓶其上，潛泉浮酒，自左閣通坵趾注之瓶，轉受百斛鐻盃，回紇數千人飲畢，尚不能半。又詔文武五品官以上祖飲尚書省中。渠領共言：「生荒陋地，歸身聖化，天至尊賜官爵，與為百姓，依唐若父母然。請於回紇、突厥部治大涂，號『參天至尊道』，世為唐臣。」<sup>55</sup>

Their commanders and inspectors were supplied with silver fish-shaped tallies with patterns of gold. The Son of Heaven invited and honored the distant barbarians from all over, made red and yellow jade, embroidered robes, precious knives, and jade vessels and offered them [as gifts]. The emperor sat in the secret palace and let the music of the ten tribes be performed. In the rear of the palace, a high platform was set up. A vessel for pouring wine was placed upon it that poured a fountain of floating wine, [and] from the side door on the left a stand was passed through on which drinking reversed cups were placed [by the guests]. Jars with hundreds of *hu* were circulated and offered; several thousand Huihe dignitaries drank [them] to the dregs, but had not even been able to drink half of it. In addition, [the emperor] ordered the military and civil officials from the fifth rank and above to give a farewell dinner in the Department of State Affairs. The great chieftains said as one: “We were born in the wild and uncultured land. We turned to sage reformation, Heaven Most Honorable granted us offices and ranks, we were given to become common people, and we rely on the Tang as father and mother. We request that in the [territory of] the Huihe and the Tujue tribes a great road may be built and called ‘The way to pay respect to Heaven Most Honorable’,<sup>56</sup> and for generations we will be subjects of the Tang.”<sup>57</sup>

With the summits in Ling Prefecture and Chang’an, the Tiele tribal units became clients of the Tang court and established a relationship that would last

54 Skaff 2012, 121, 163; *Jiu Tangshu* 195.5196, 199.5348; *Xin Tangshu* 217A.6112-6113; *Zizhi tongjian* 198.6144-6145; Eisenberg 2002-2003.

55 *Xin Tangshu* 217A.6113.

56 *Tang huiyao* 73.1314 and *Zizhi tongjian* 198.6245 have: 參天可汗道, “the way pay respect to the Heavenly Qaghan.”

57 *Jiu Tangshu* 195.5196 reports that the Huihe dignitaries “took the chance to request that at south of the Huihu [reign] post-stations are established, in order to connect and control the northern territories” (因請迴鶻已南置郵遞，通管北方). In 647 Taizong issued an edict to establish sixty-eight posts south of the desert, where envoys and guests coming in visit could be supplied with horses, milk and meat (*Xin Tangshu* 217A.6113; *Zizhi tongjian* 198.6245; Chavannes 1900, 90-91. According to Bao Hongbiao (2015, 90), the road followed the ancient Qin Direct Road (*zhidao* 直道) to Fengzhou 豐州, passing by the “Western Fortress to Receive the Surrendered” 西受降城, and it extended to Yizhou 伊州 and Gaochang 高昌.

until the units eventually fell under the dominion of the first and second Uighur empires (646–90 and 744–840).<sup>58</sup>

Prior to the gathering in Ling Prefecture, Taizong had already established patron-client relations with another of the Tiele clans, the Qibi 契苾. The Qibi, also called Qibixi 契苾羽, were one of the Tiele tribes in the western territories, settled on the Yingsuo Plain 鷹娑川 northwest of Yanqi 焉耆 and south of the Duolage 多覽葛.<sup>59</sup> According to the *Xin Tangshu*, in 633 Qibi Heli 契苾何力 (d. 677) and his mother led more than one thousand horsemen to Sha Prefecture 沙州 in search of Tang patronage. Instead of establishing him as a military commandant in the Mongolian steppe, Taizong moved Qibi Heli's units between Gan 甘 and Liang 涼 Prefectures, in the Gansu corridor, and made him the military commander of Yuxi Prefecture 榆溪州, renamed Helan Area Command 賀蘭都督 in 653.<sup>60</sup> By the time of Empress Wu's 武 reign (690–705), other groups of Tiele had moved to Hexi and settled in the bridle districts between Gan and Liang prefectures:

武后時，突厥默啜方疆，取鐵勒故地，故回紇與契苾、思結、渾三部度磧，徙甘、涼間，然唐常取其壯騎佐赤水軍云。<sup>61</sup>

At the time of Wu Zetian, the Tujue [Ashina] Mochuo had become stronger, and he had taken the old territories of the Tiele. The Huihe then relocated to the territories between Gan and Liang, together with the three tribes of Qibi, Sijie, and Hun. Consequently, the Tang often used their stronger soldiers to assist the Army of the Red River.

The family clans Huihe, Qibi, and Hun 渾, cemented relations by marriage, in this way establishing strong family networks. These networks became particularly powerful at a local level. Relations between the Tiele clans and the local officials could be difficult at times.<sup>62</sup> In the aftermath of the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion (755–763) and the conquest of Hexi by the Tibetans, members of

58 Mackerras 1972; Kamalov 2003.

59 Yanqi was located in the modern region of Yanqi, in Xinjiang.

60 *Jiu Tangshu* 109.3291: 十一月，辛巳，契苾酋長何力帥部落六千餘家詣沙州降，詔處之於甘、涼之間以何力為左領軍將軍。See also *Xin Tangshu* 110.4117.

61 *Xin Tangshu* 217A.6114. Skaff 2012, 190-191. See also *Jiu Tangshu* 199.5348. On the reliability of the *Xin Tangshu*'s account see Nishida Yuko 2014.

62 The relation between the court and the bridle districts of Gan and Liang is well described in the accounts of Wang Junchuo's 王君奭 (d. 727) incident (*Jiu Tangshu* 8.191; 103.3191-3193; 195.5198; *Xin Tangshu* 5.133, 133.4547-4548, 216.60873-60884, 217A.6114). See the English translation of the "Zhenzhong ji 枕中記 (Record Within a Pillow) by Shen Jiji 沈既濟, in which the story of Wang Junchuo is narrated, in Nienhauser 2010, 83-93.



these clans would eventually migrate east and relocate to the regions of Guannei 關內 and northern Hedong 河東, where they would go on to become part of the Tang provincial armies.<sup>63</sup>

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63 On the migration to Hedong see Nishimura Yoko 2016.

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