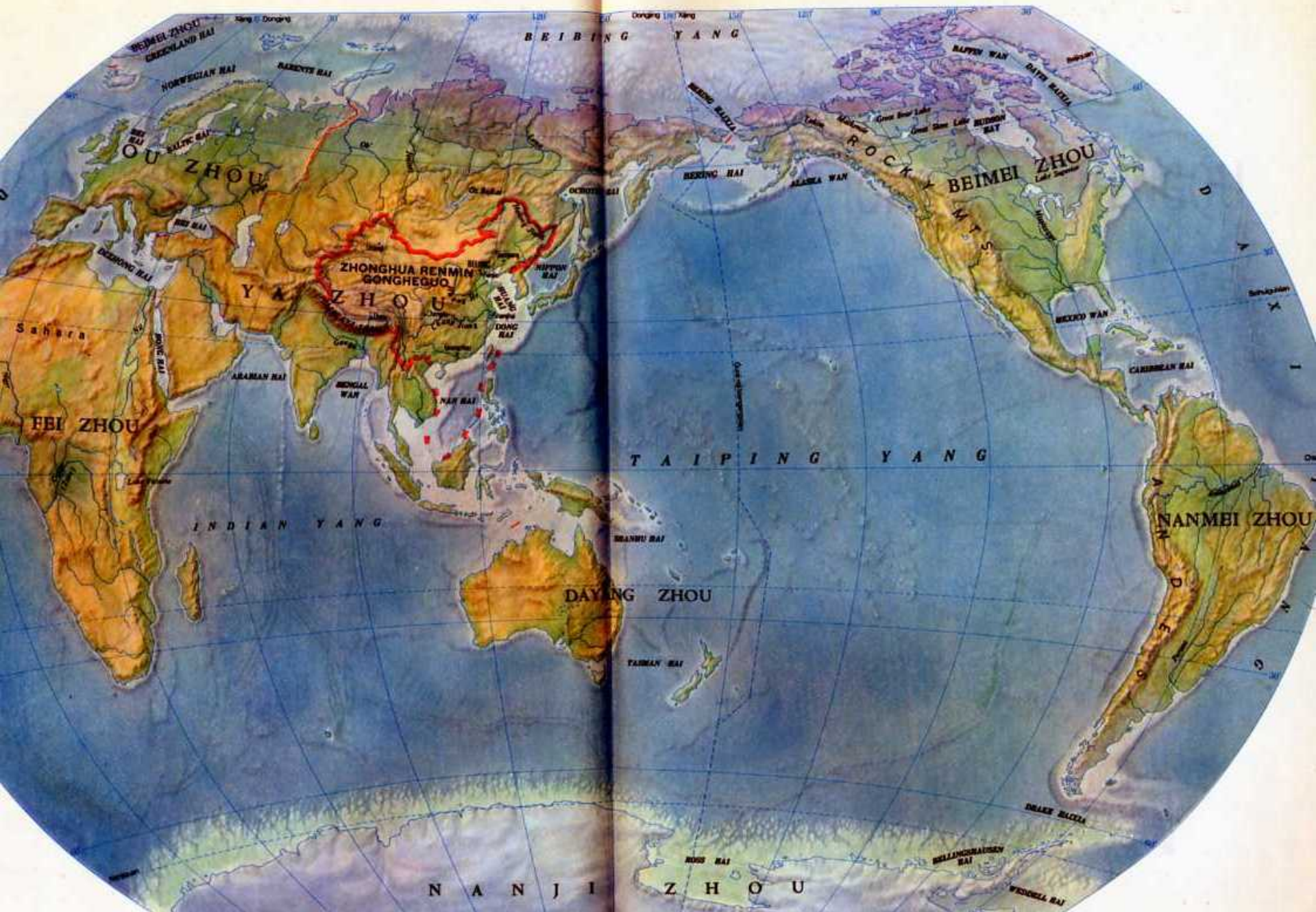


# Silk as Money on the Silk Road

Helen Wang

The British Museum

# ZHONGGUO ZAI SHIJI SHANG DE WEIZHI





# China's immediate neighbours

- and why “Western Regions”









A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely of Ferdinand von Richthofen, positioned below the portrait.

“Silk Road(s)”  
coined by  
Ferdinand von  
Richthofen,  
1877

As Tamara Chin points out, the singular  
“Silk Road” is closely linked with the  
development of a China-Germany  
railway

The “New Silk Road” – 21<sup>st</sup> century

# 渝新欧国际铁路

Chongqing – Xinjiang – Europe International Railway

“感知中国·穿越新丝路”

渝新欧国际铁路特别媒体行动

时间：2013年7月30日——9月14日 主办：国务院新闻办公室、重庆市人民政府



感知中国

“感知中国”是我国对外文化交流的著名品牌，由国务院新闻办于1999年创办。“感知中国”以论坛、展览、文艺演出、电影展演等文化活动为载体，已在20多个国家和地区举办，每次活动都得到举办国政府的高度重视。在当地民众中引起强烈反响，已成为世界各国了解中国，感知中国的重要平台。



# “Latest Eurasian Land Bridge rail link pushes good between China and Europe”



Sources: Ministry of Commerce, Chongqing municipal government

GUILLEMO NUNO / CHINA DAILY

(USA China Daily map, 2013)



# Logistics...

**Oxford English Dictionary:** (from French *logistique*, < *loge-r* to quarter, [lodge n.](#), or *logis* [logis n.](#))

The organization of supplies, stores, quarters, etc., necessary for the support of troop movements, expeditions, etc.

**Wikipedia:** Logistics is the [management](#) of the flow of goods between the point of origin and the point of consumption in order to meet some requirements, for example, of customers or corporations. ... The logistics of physical items usually involves the integration of information flow, [material handling](#), [production](#), [packaging](#), [inventory](#), [transportation](#), [warehousing](#), and often [security](#). The complexity of logistics can be modeled, analyzed, visualized, and optimized by dedicated simulation software. The minimization of the use of resources is a common motivation in logistics for import and export.



# Logistics of the “New Silk Road”

With **shorter transport times and lower costs for freight**, international rail lines linking central and western China with Central Asia have helped to improve connectivity and trade between the regions.

Starting in Chongqing, the **Chongqing-Xinjiang-Europe International Railway** passes through Xi'an, Lanzhou, Urumqi and the Alataw Pass, where it enters Kazakhstan, before continuing through Russia, Belarus and Poland, finally ending in Duisburg, Germany.

**Stretching 11,179 kilometers, it takes just 16 days on average to transport goods from China to Europe by rail, 20 days fewer than by sea from China's eastern ports**, making rail ideal for goods with a shorter shelf life.

**The cost is one-fifth that of transporting cargo by air**, and there is just one customs inspection along the whole route between Chongqing and Central Asia. Since it began operating in 2011, the cost of transporting goods on the line has also fallen, from 80 cents per 22 metric tons of cargo for every kilometer, to 70 cents.

It has been compared with the **second Eurasian Continental Bridge**, a train line that **starts at Lianyungang in East China's** Jiangsu province and passes through the Alataw Pass in Xinjiang before **ending at Rotterdam** in the Netherlands.

**Central Asian countries are all inland states, so railways are especially important for them, because the railway offers them better connectivity with the outside world.”**

SUN ZHUANGZHI  
RESEARCHER OF CENTRAL ASIAN  
STUDIES WITH THE CHINESE ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

---

# Think about logistics of money on the Silk Road in history...

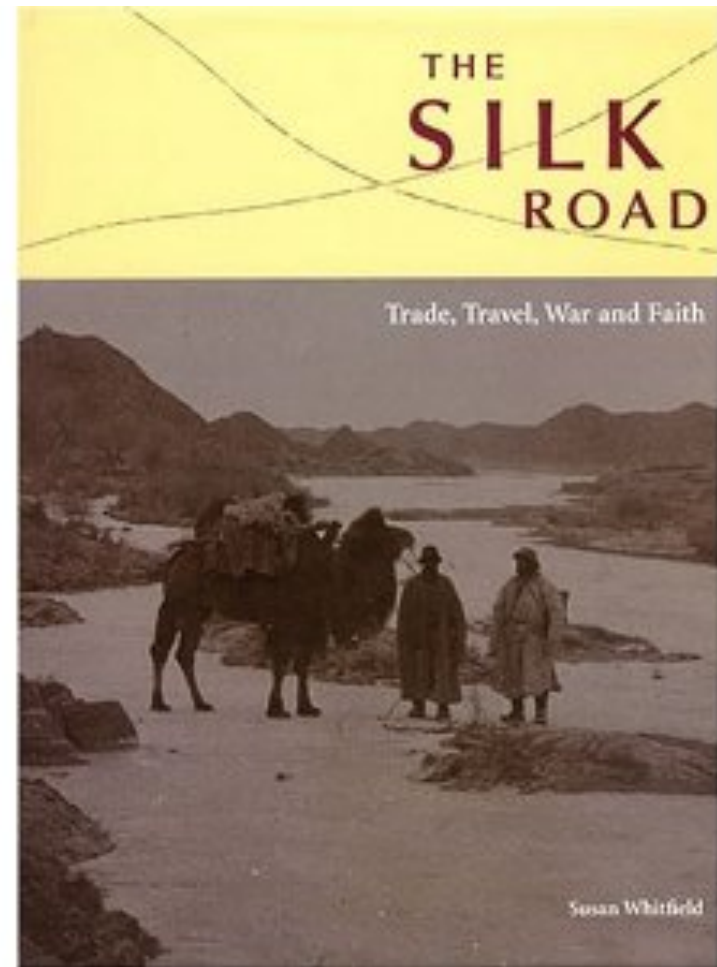
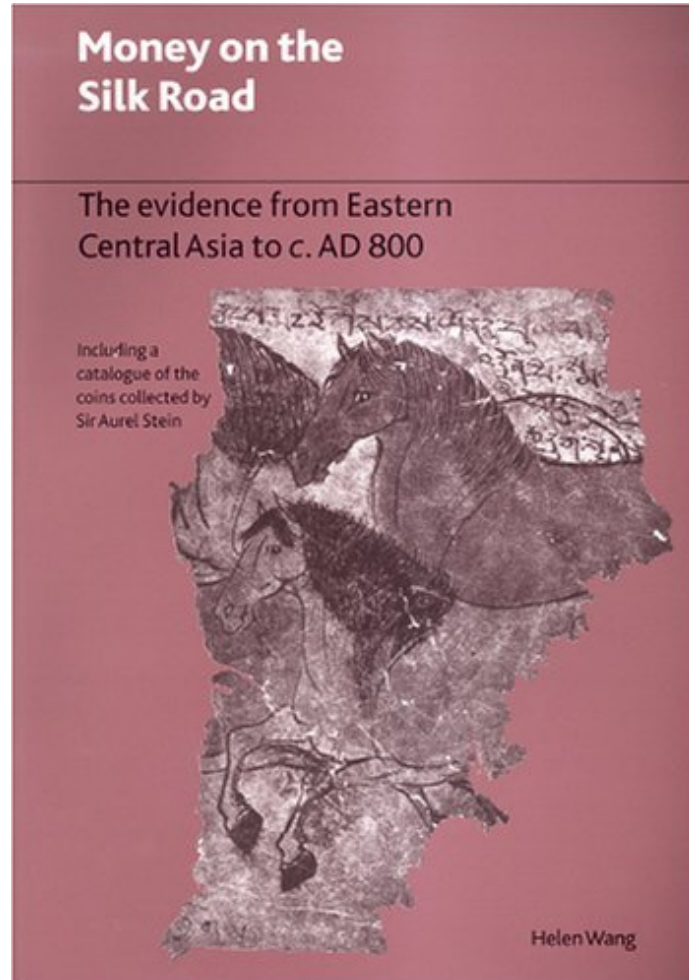
- Materials
- Production
- Technology
- Transport
- Desirability
- Ideas and beliefs

Do these come in any particular order?

(cf burial goods and burial lists)



# Money on the Silk Road (2004)



- 1) Material evidence  
coins and textiles
- 2) Contemporary documentary evidence  
found through archaeological excavation
- 3) Historical / textual evidence  
the official version of what happened

Three broad groups of coins:  
(1) Coins of the Chinese tradition



Han dynasty



Tang dynasty





These 3 coins are from a group found corroded together on a string.



The inscription on the coin wuzhu 五铢 translates as “5 grain”



In the documents, coins are reckoned in qian 钱 or quan 泉.

1 钱 = 1 coin

Three broad groups of coins:  
(2) of the Western tradition



Byzantine



Sasanian





Three broad groups of coins:  
(3) of local creation in  
Xinjiang

Sino-Kharoshthi  
coins of Khotan

(2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD)





Sino-Kuchan,

Kucha  
6<sup>th</sup> c. AD?



Gaochang jili

Turfan  
620-640s

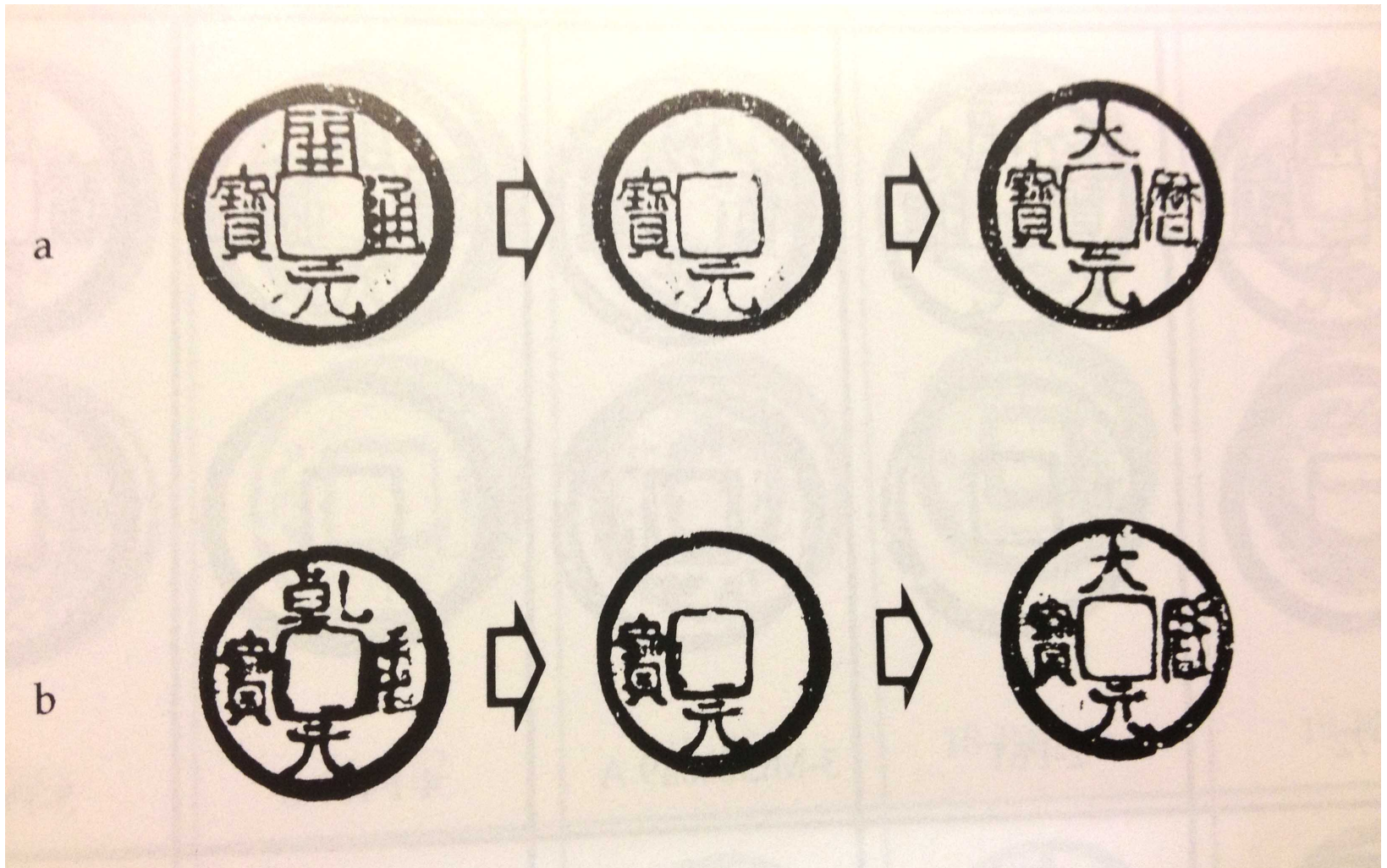


Dali yuanbao,

Kucha  
Dali reign period  
766-79

These coins were produced north of the Taklamakan Desert

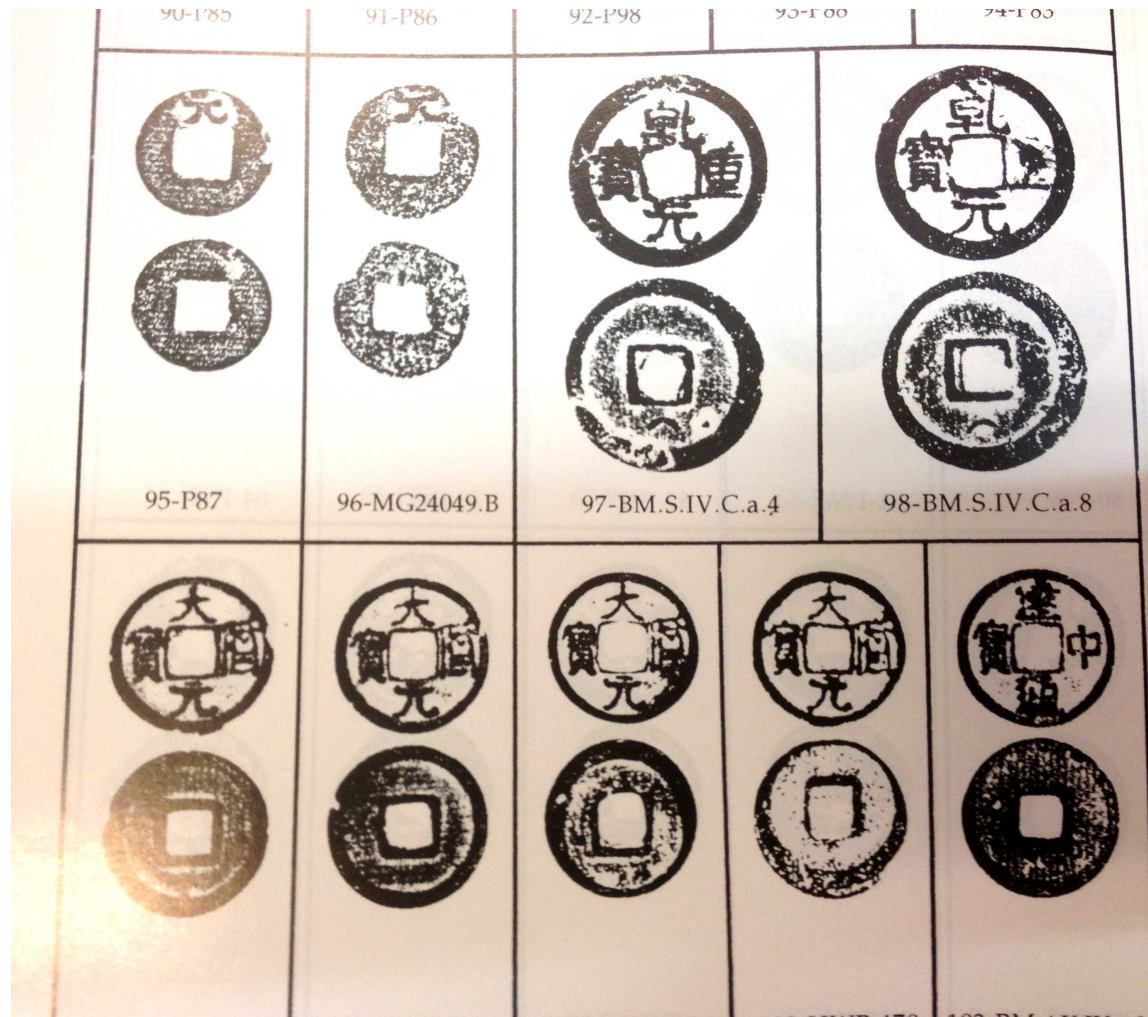
# Making local coins in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Turfan)



(from François Thierry)

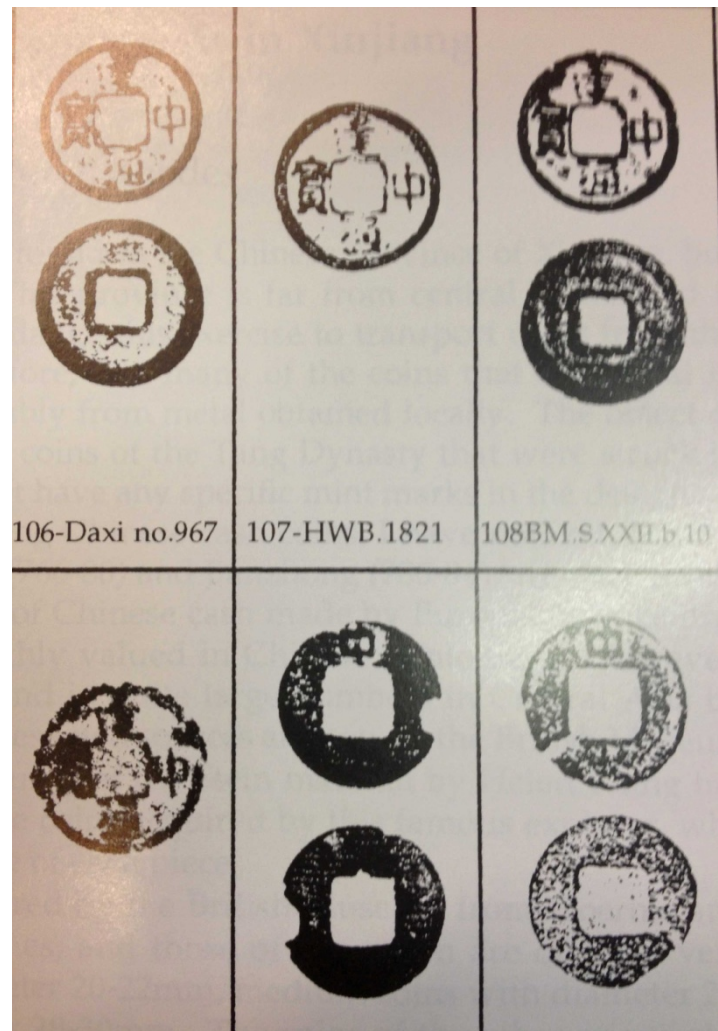


# Making local coins in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Turfan)



(from François Thierry)

## Making local coins in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Turfan)



(from François Thierry)





The coin evidence tells us  
only part of the story about  
money on the Silk Road



# 敦煌丝绸艺术全集

TEXTILES FROM DUNHUANG IN UK COLLECTIONS

主编 赵丰

英藏卷



东华大学出版社

**Authors / 作者**

Zhao Feng, China National Silk Museum  
赵丰: 中国丝绸博物馆

Wang Le, Donghua University  
王乐: 东华大学

Xu Zheng, China National Silk Museum  
徐铮: 中国丝绸博物馆

Frances Wood, British Library  
吴芳思: 英国图书馆

Helen Persson, V&A Museum  
白海伦 : 维多利亚博物馆

Helen Wang, British Museum  
汪海岚 : 大英博物馆

Donghua University Press, 2007  
东华大学出版社, 2007年



MAS.860 (Ch.i.0011)  
长: 131.0cm; 宽: 29.5cm  
晚唐-五代 (9-10世纪)

此幡保存完整, 其上钉有悬祥, 幡面呈三角形, 由两块不同的辽式缂纹纬锦织物拼接而成, 一块为深蓝地上显飞鹰纹样, 黄体红边, 飞鹰可能为团窠中四只飞鹰, 另一块为粉红地上的团窠花卉纹样, 织物较残而无法复原纹样。幡面两侧包缝有以不同面料制成的幡头斜边, 分别为绿色菱格纹缂及紫色绢, 幡面两侧各缝有一条幡带; 幡身部分由三块不同的绢织物拼接制成, 从上到下分别为蓝色绢、白色绢和红色绢; 幡足共3条, 以同块蓝色绢切成, 但其上下端仍相连, 其上端与幡身缝合, 下端则缝入梯形的木制悬板。

这是藏经洞所出最为完好的彩幡之一, 幡面上有织锦面料, 显示这是较为高档的彩幡。由于辽式缂纹纬锦的组织结构流行于辽代早期, 织锦鹰纹的造型与辽代的花绕双鹰纹锦中的鹰非常相似<sup>①</sup>, 而团窠四飞鸟的排列在辽代也非常常见, 可知此幡的年代较晚, 应该在唐末至五代时期。(2F)

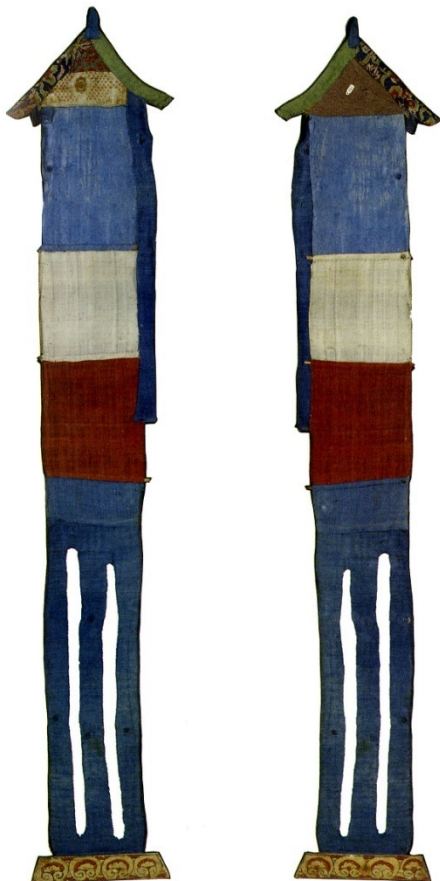
① 赵丰, 2004: 150页



正面

背面

MAS.861 (Ch.i.0020)  
长: 130.0cm;  
宽: 25.4cm  
晚唐-五代 (9-10世纪)



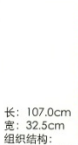
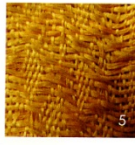
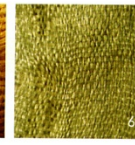
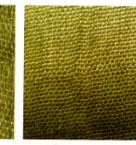
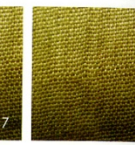
正面

背面

幡形狭长, 保存较为完整。其幡头上方钉缝一蓝色绢制悬祥, 两条幡头斜边以不同的面料制成, 左边为蓝地花卉纹样的辽式斜纹纬锦, 右边则由绿色素绢制成; 双层幡面, 正面由一块三角形蓝绿色地卷草纹纬锦和一块呈梯形的方格纹朵花纹缂锦拼接而成, 反面则由两块褐色暗花缂锦而成, 均为同心菱格纹样; 幡头两侧各缝有一条幡手, 以蓝色素绢制成, 右侧幡手保存较为完整, 左侧基本不存; 幡身由三块长方形面料拼接而成, 从上到下分别为蓝色绢、白色菱格纹缂和红色素绢; 共有3条宽约3.6cm的幡足, 其上下两端仍相互连在一起, 在制作时由一块蓝色绢切割而成, 上端拼接一块蓝色绢面料, 下端置于一梯形悬板中, 悬板上绘有花卉纹装饰图案, 幡足两侧卷边, 以同色丝线缉边。(2F)




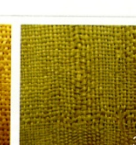
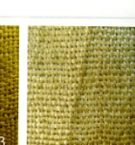




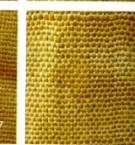


LS.424.b Ch.00516.b 绢幡 晚唐-五代


长: 107.0cm  
宽: 32.5cm  
组织结构:  
1.黄绿色绢幡身  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 黄绿色, 密度不可测; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 黄绿色, 密度不可测; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
2.橙色几何纹绢幡头斜边  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 橙色, 34根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 橙色, 21根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹地上以4-2并丝组织显花。  
3.灰绿色绢幡面  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 灰绿色, 54根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 灰绿色, 38根/cm; 组织:  
1/1平纹。  
4.深绿色绢幡身  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 深绿色, 48根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 深绿色, 22根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
5.橙色几何纹绢幡身(同2)  
6.灰绿色绢幡身(同3)  
7.深绿色绢幡身(同4)  
8.深绿色绢幡带(同4)

LS.424.a Ch.00516.a 绢幡 晚唐-五代


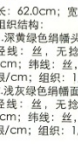











长: 110.0cm  
宽: 24.5cm  
组织结构:  
1.深褐色绢幡身  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 深褐色, 密度不可测; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 深褐色, 密度不可测; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
2.黄绿色绢幡头斜边  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 黄绿色, 34根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 黄绿色, 27根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
3.深绿色绢幡头斜边  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 深绿色, 35根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 深绿色, 39根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
4.浅灰绿色绢幡面  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 浅灰绿色, 37根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 浅灰绿色, 23根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
5.黄绿色绢幡身  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 黄绿色, 43根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 黄绿色, 31根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
6.橙红色绢幡身  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 橙红色, 45根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 橙红色, 26根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
7.黄绿色绢幡带(同5)  
8.橙红色绢幡带(同6)

LS.424.c Ch.00516.c 绢幡 晚唐-五代


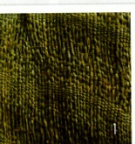

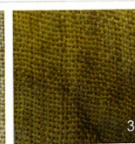
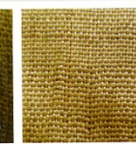
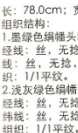

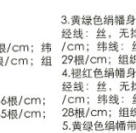
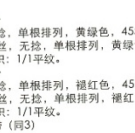
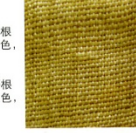





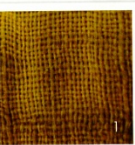


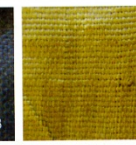


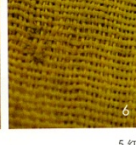
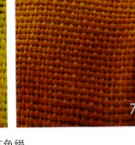
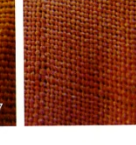
长: 62.0cm; 宽: 24.0cm  
组织结构:  
1.深黄绿色绢幡头斜边  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 深黄绿色, 45根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 深黄绿色, 35根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
2.浅灰绿色绢幡面  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 浅灰绿色, 35根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 浅灰绿色, 22根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
3.深黄绿色绢幡身  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 深黄绿色, 40根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 深黄绿色, 30根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
4.橙红色绢幡身  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 橙红色, 46根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 橙红色, 26根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
5.深黄绿色绢幡带(同1)

LS.424.d Ch.00516.d 绢幡 晚唐-五代



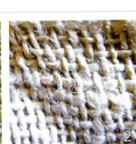
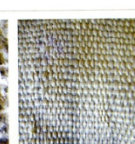
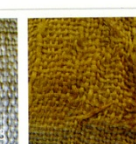
长: 78.0cm; 宽: 31.0cm  
组织结构:  
1.墨绿色绢幡头斜边  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 墨绿色, 40根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 墨绿色, 42根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
2.浅灰绿色绢幡面  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 浅灰绿色, 36根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 浅灰绿色, 35根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
3.黄绿色绢幡身  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 黄绿色, 45根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 黄绿色, 29根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
4.橙红色绢幡身  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 橙红色, 45根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 橙红色, 28根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
5.黄绿色绢幡带(同3)

LS.425 Ch.00447.b 鳞形垂带 唐-五代

长: 35.6cm  
宽: 12.9cm  
组织结构:  
1.红色绢  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 红色, 31根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 红色, 28根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
2.绿色绢  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 绿色, 42根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 绿色, 37根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
3.蓝色绢  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 蓝色, 33根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 蓝色, 34根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
4.奶白色绢  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 奶白色, 50根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 奶白色, 24根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
5.红色绢  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 红色, 31根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 红色, 30根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
6.黄地印花绢  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 黄色, 32根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 黄色, 18根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
7.橙红色绢  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 橙红色, 29根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 橙红色, 21根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
8.褐色绢  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 褐色, 29根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 褐色, 27根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。

LS.426 Ch.00514 绢幡 晚唐-五代

长: 145.0cm; 宽: 34.5cm  
组织结构:  
1.雪花纹绢幡面  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 浅褐色, 40根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 浅褐色, 23根/cm; 组织: 2/15斜纹地上以1/5S斜纹组织显花。  
2.本色麻布悬带  
经线: 麻, 5捻, 单根排列, 本色, 14根/cm; 纬线: 麻, 5捻, 单根排列, 本色, 10根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
3.绿色绢幡带  
经线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 浅褐色, 23根/cm; 纬线: 丝, 无捻, 单根排列, 浅褐色, 21根/cm; 组织: 1/1平纹。  
7.绿色绢幡身(同3)

# How to look at textiles as money?

Coins are man-made objects.

Their primary function is as money.

A coin found out of context probably represents money.

Textiles are man-made objects.

Money is just one of their functions.

Textiles found out of context probably do not represent money.

# The Textiles as Money on the Silk Road project

ARAKAWA Masaharu	Japan: Osaka University	History
DUAN Qing	China: Peking University	Khotanese
HANSEN Valerie	USA: Yale University	History
RONG Xinjiang	China: Peking University	History
SHENG Angela	Canada: McMaster University	Textiles
TROMBERT Eric	France: Collège de France	Sinology
WANG Binghua	China: Xinjiang Inst. Archaeology (retired)	Archaeology
WANG Helen	UK: British Museum	Money
WANG Le	China: Donghua University	Textiles
XU Chang	China: Peking University	History
ZHAO Feng	China: China National Silk Museum	Textiles

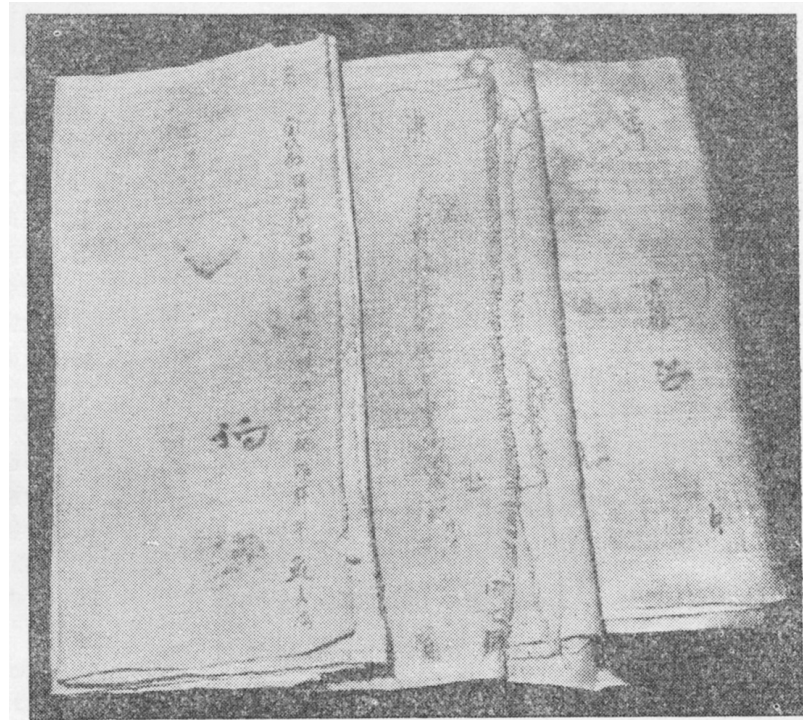
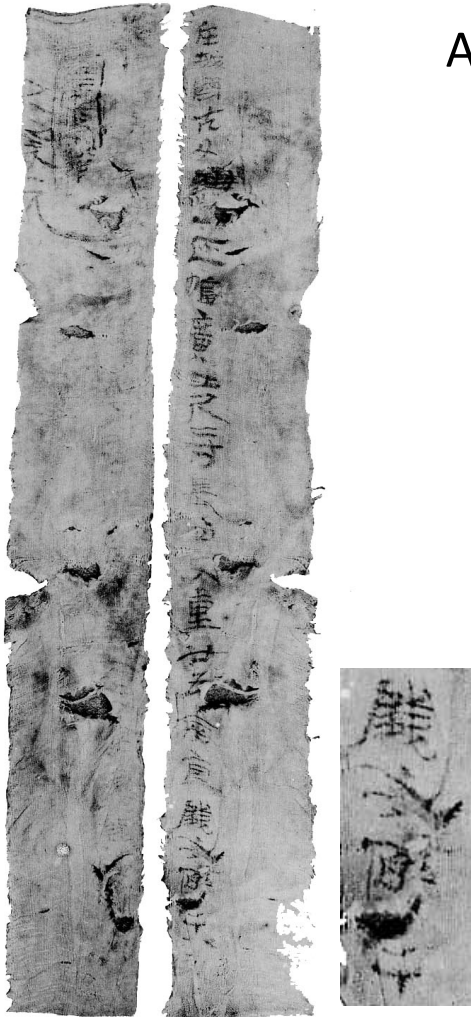


# Thinking about money...

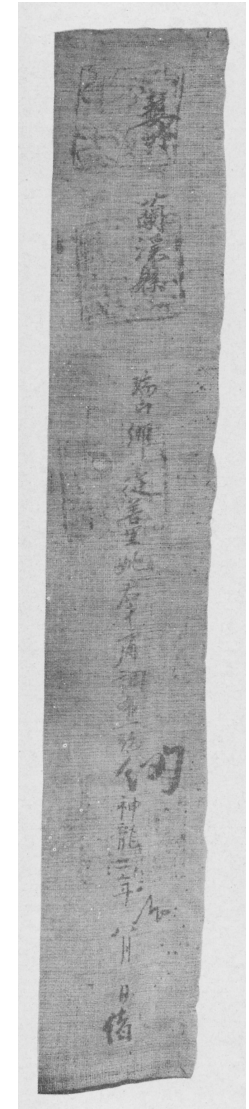
- I have money // I do not have money (money object)
- Money is not necessarily about trade. Money is about payment.
- Money – needs a system (needs authority / control)
- Money – needs trust (money object / system)

# Q: How can we know if excavated textiles functioned as money?

A: Study the inscriptions on the textiles!



图一 左：“吴德吴护共一端脚布” 中：“田元卿调布一端”  
右：“宣州溧阳县”布



Han dynasty silk  
fragments found by  
Aurel Stein near  
Dunhuang

汉代丝绸残品：  
被斯坦因发现，敦煌  
(T.XV.a.i.3)





# What does the inscription on the fragment say?

任城國古父\*綢一匹幅廣二尺二寸長四丈重廿五兩直錢六百一十八

Un rouleau de soie, de l'espèce *kou-fou* (?), du royaume de *Fen-tch'eng*; largeur, 2 pieds et 2 pouces; longueur, 40 pieds; poids, 25 onces; valeur, 618 pièces de monnaie.

The inscription describes the original roll of silk:

Width: 2 *chi* 2 *cun* (approx. 50 cm)

Length: 40 *chi* (approx. 880 cm)

Weight: 25 *liang*

Value: 618 *qian* (coins)

Place of origin: Kangfu, Rencheng

The Rencheng kingdom: established in AD 84 in modern-day Shandong

## A little bit of easy maths...

Standard rate: 600 coins per roll of silk (PLUS adjustment)

In this way,  $618 = 600 \times 103\%$  (standard rate + 3% adjustment)

40 *chi* (4 *zhang*) of silk = 600 coins → 1 *zhang* of silk = 150 coins

25 *liang* (weight) of silk = 600 coins → 1 *liang* of silk = 24 coins

# Han dynasty roll of silk found by Aurel Stein at Loulan

Loulan (L.A.I.002)



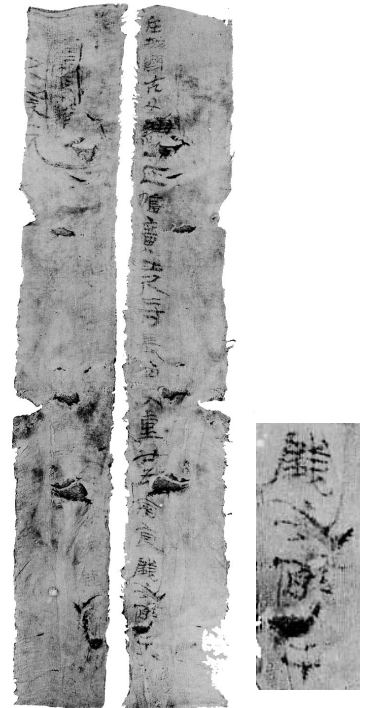


This roll of silk has the same dimensions given in the inscription on T.XV.a.i.3

Standard rate of exchange : 600 coins per roll of silk (plus adjustment)



Loulan (L.A.I.002)



Dunhuang T.XV.a.i.3

# Tax textiles



20 Tang dynasty silk/hemp textiles with inscriptions, indicating they were tax payments

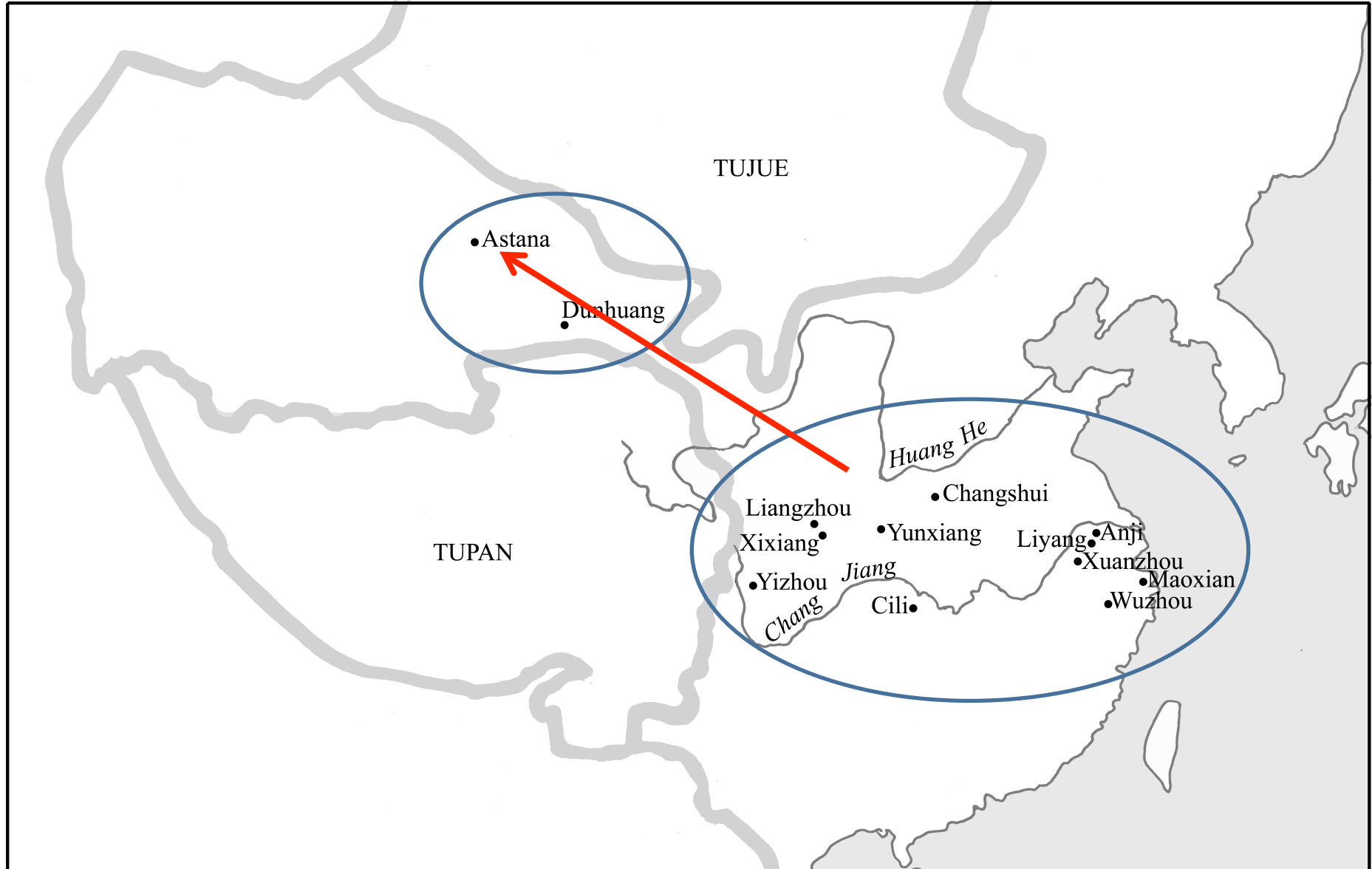
Five are dated: 680-721

They were found in tombs in Astana

(Wang Binghua, 'Tang dynasty tax-cloths unearthed in Turfan', *Wenwu* 1981.1.)

图一 左：“吴德吴护共一端脚布” 中：“田元卿调布一端”  
右：“宣州溧阳县”布

# The sources and findspots of the 20 tax textiles (Wang Binghua's study)





## Q: How did they get there?

These textiles were collected in as tax payments

- Specific measurements
- Specific amounts of tax required

They were checked, recorded and stamped on receipt

- Managed system
- Government authority

Then, the textiles were sent to Liangzhou

- Liangzhou was the redistribution centre for the Northwest

The textiles were used to pay the military and official salaries.

The military and officials used the textiles in payments.

The textiles entered the market.

Q: How long did it take to get there?

Fragments of tax textile

Part of a burial shroud  
found in a tomb (Ast.ix.2) at Astana  
by Aurel Stein in 1915



祖布一端光宅元年十一月日  
婺州

信安縣

顯德鄉梅山里祝伯亮

*Wuzhou*

*Xin'an xian*

*Xiande xiang*

*Meishan li*

*Zhu Boliang*

*zubu*

*yi duan*

*Guangzhai*

*1 nian*

*11 yue*

*ri*

English (英译):

1 *duan* of  
cloth-paid-in-place-of-the-grain-tax

from Zhu Boliang

of Meishan ward,  
Xuande canton,  
Xin'an county,  
Wuzhou.

[...]th day  
of the 11<sup>th</sup> month  
of the 1<sup>st</sup> year  
of the Guangzhai reign  
(AD 684-5)





君姓汜諱延仕高昌縣人也為人雅素  
 識性清高教闡前庭聲餘  
 後部無那年餘順耳疾疫諍  
 纏藥石無徵哲人斯逝粵以永  
 昌元年歲次己丑九月壬申朔廿  
 六日乙亥卒於私第春秋八十有  
 三卽以其年閏九月三日葬於城西  
 原禮也烏呼哀哉廼為銘曰

Ast.ix.2b.011  
(male)

Name: Fan Yanshi  
汜延仕

Important dates:

Tax-cloth dated AD 684/5

Date of death AD 689

祖布一端光宅元年十一月日

婺州

信安縣

顯德鄉梅山里祝伯亮

婺州

信安縣

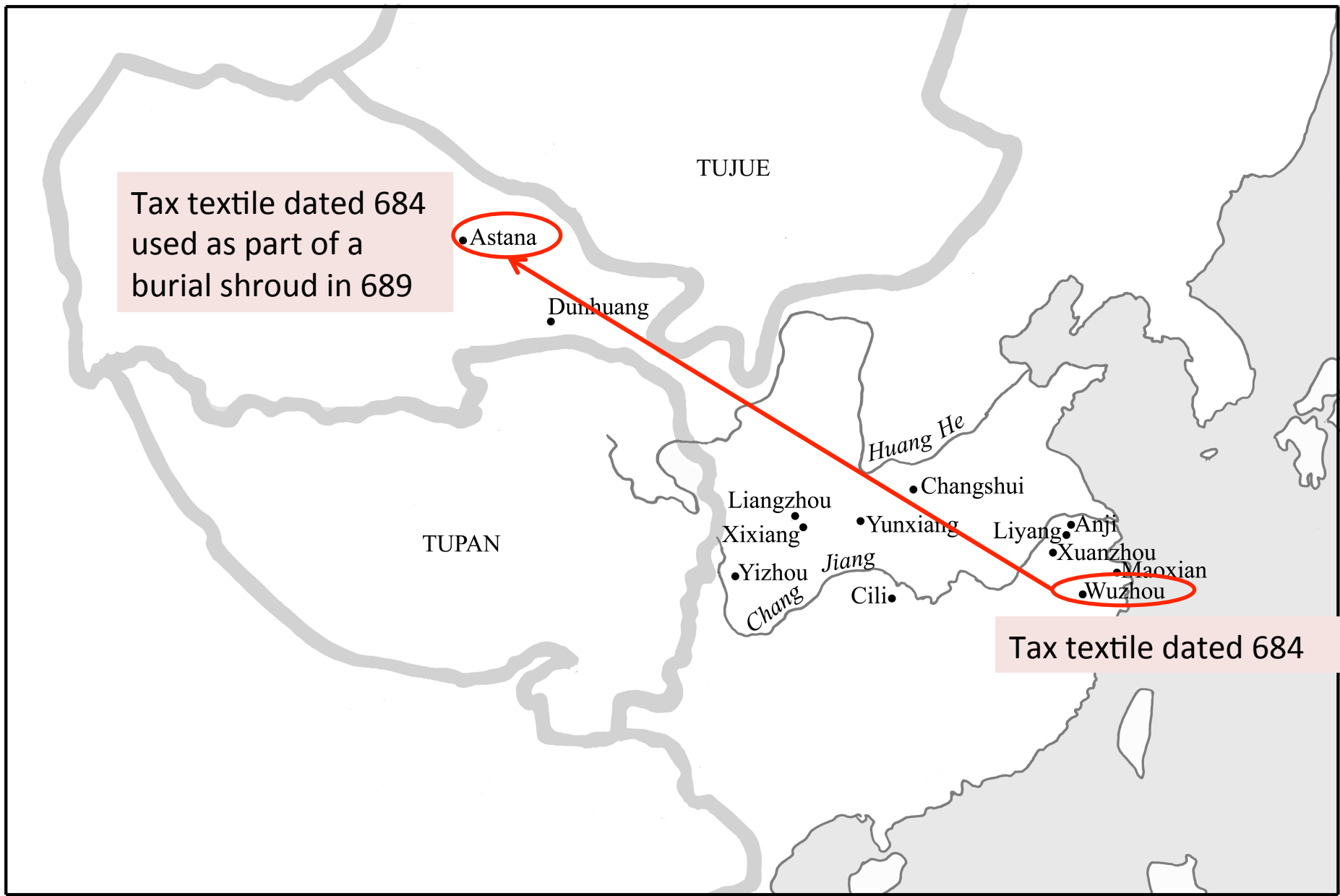
顯德鄉

梅山里

祝伯亮

Ast. ix. 2b. 011





Tax textile dated 684  
used as part of a  
burial shroud in 689

• Astana

Dunhuang

TUJUE

Huang He

• Changshui

Liangzhou

• Yunxiang

Liyang • Anji

Xixiang

• Xuanzhou

• Maoxian

• Yizhou

Jiang

Cili

• Wuzhou

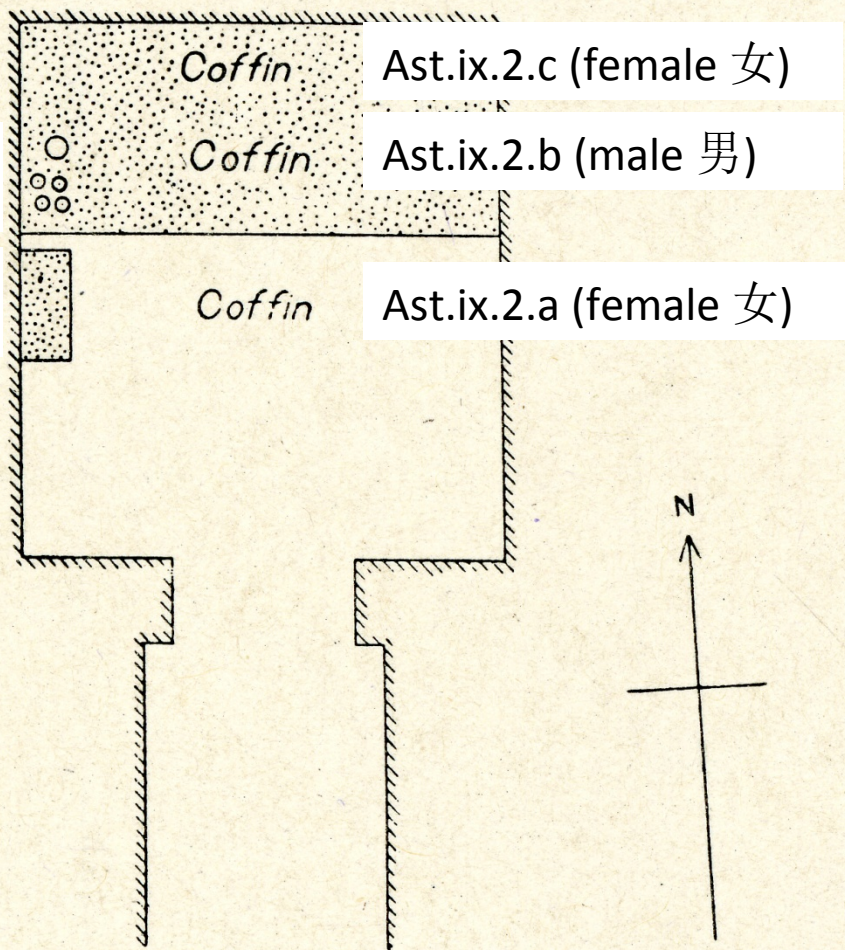
TUPAN

Chang

Tax textile dated 684



# Ast. ix. 2



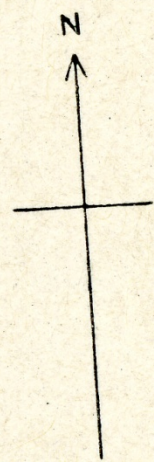
Low pedestal  
小木台

Low platform  
台

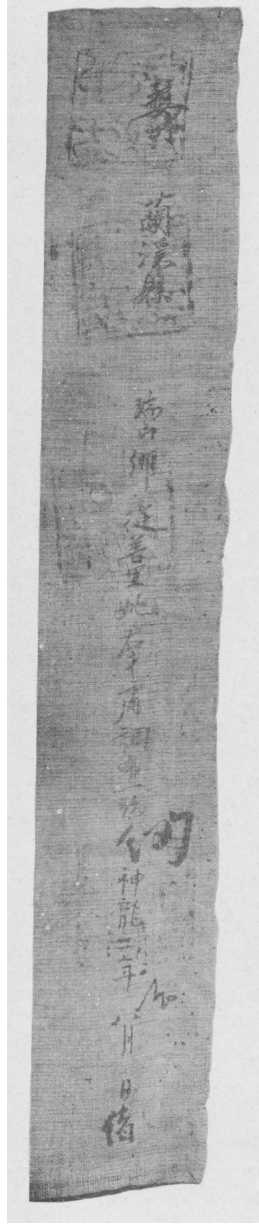
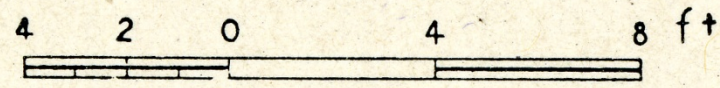
Coffin Ast.ix.2.c (female 女)

Coffin Ast.ix.2.b (male 男)

Coffin Ast.ix.2.a (female 女)



SCALE



Ast.ix.2a.07  
(female 女)



Ast.ix.2b.011  
(male 男)



## Q: How much silk/hemp was being taken to the Northwest?

Between 676 and 679,  
40,000 bolts of tax textiles were shipped annually from Liangzhou  
(Wuwei) to Yizhou (Hami) and Guazhou.

Between 725 and 741,  
1,000,000 bolts were shipped annually from Liangzhou to Beiting

By the 750s,  
2,700,000 bolts were shipped to Anxi, Beiting (XJ) and Hexi (Gansu)

## Q: How much was the silk worth?

In 692,

10 silver coins = 320 copper coins = 1 bolt silk

In 731

320 copper coins = 1 bolt of silk

NB: the stability of value of silk over time and distance

## So, what was the unit of account?

钱 *qian* – 1 coin  
贯 *guan* – string of 1000 coins

### The alternative measures...

匹 *pi* – bolt of silk  
端 *duan* – bolt of hemp  
屯 *tun* – hank of silk floss  
贯 *guan* – string of 1000 coins  
石 *shi* – picul of grain

### Historical records relating to revenue...

匹端 *pi-duan* – bolts of silk/hemp  
匹端屯贯石 *pi-duan-tun-guan-shi*



## Material evidence:

Resources, production, distribution, managed system

Patterns of use – intended and unintended

Q: context and reasons for survival

## Contemporary documentary evidence:

Mostly relate to the system(s) in operation

Accounts, tax collection, contracts, burial inventories, lawsuits

Q: context and reasons for survival

## Historical records:

Overview/interpretation from a spatial/temporal distance

Q: the perspective of the historian