

# Dashi 大食 reconsidered

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## 1 Introduction

The Chinese term Dashi 大食, commonly understood in the Song dynasty to refer to Arabs or Arab Muslims, is an important argument in discussions of a maritime network that linked western Asia to southern China from the tenth until the twelfth centuries. This article will show that the narrow definition of Dashi as Arab or Western Asian is inaccurate, that interpretations of the available Chinese source material are sometimes flawed, and that the resulting narrative is questionable. Confronting the existing Chinese texts with their modern interpretations by contemporary scholars demonstrates that repeated claims to long-distance Arab trade are exaggerated, and that there is a high probability of continued South Asian and Southeast Asian involvement in a trade that is said to have ceased in the eighth century, with the arrival of Arabs in China. Several conclusions can be drawn from the textual evidence under scrutiny: Dashi by no means referred to Muslims from western Asia; Dashi as an inclusive term at different times and in different contexts designated a) Central Asian (as far as overland relations were concerned) and b) Southeast Asian people (as far as maritime relations), and possibly, c) Southeast Asian people, from the tenth to the twelfth century and, lastly, while maritime trade with the western parts of the Indian Ocean existed in the time under consideration, it was not conducted by long-distance cross-ocean journeys in vessels manned with Arab or Persian crews. In the following, I will survey western interpretations of Dashi from the last 150 years as well as modern opinions regarding shipwrecks, and then continue to (non-)existing pictorial evidence and the original textual material from the Song dynasty.

## 2 Dashi as Arabs in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

Contemporary scholars often base their views on the scholarship of Dashi<sup>1</sup> in the Song that had begun in the nineteenth century. German-Russian physician, sinologist, and geographer Emile Bretschneider (1833-1901) is indicative of the handling of the source material:

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<sup>1</sup> A similarly disputed concept is that of Bosi that many scholars understand as a name for 'Persians' or 'Iranians' who were not Muslims; but once they converted to Islam they were categorized as Dashi. See, for instance, Wang Gungwu, 'The Nanhai Trade: A Study of the Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 31: 2, 1958, 79; Mark Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, 221. For a detailed refutation of such claims see Stephen G. Haw, "The Chinese Term *Bosi* 波斯", *Journal of Asian History*, forthcoming.

The history of the Sung dynasty 960-1280, (Cf. 宋史 Shung [sic] shi, chap. 490) has a long article on the Ta shi (Arabs), yet I have found but little of interest in it. Mention is made of twenty Embassies from Ta shi having come to China in ships during this past period. But it seems that most of them bore no official character and have to be reduced to mercantile expeditions. It is also frequently said that Arabian captains of ships (Ch'uan chu 船主) had landed with tribute at Canton or in Fukien.<sup>2</sup>

Bretschneider set the tone for all later treatments of Dashi by identifying them as Arabs and that they had sailed to China. He wrongly addressed those that arrived in southern China to submit 'tribute' as 'ch'uan-chu' when the term used in the text was *bozhu* 舶主 (see below). He did not find further engagement with the *Songshi* 宋史 (1345; Official History of the Song) worth his while and thus missed that Dashi missions had also come overland.

Bretschneider's French contemporary Chinese studies scholar Marie-Jean-Léon Lecoq d'Hervey de Saint-Denys (1822-1892) in his translation of the section on foreigners of the *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (General Examination of Official Documents) added that Dashi throughout Chinese history referred to Muslims ('les mahométans en général' (Muslims in general)).<sup>3</sup>

Friedrich Hirth (1845-1927), a proponent of the reading in Cantonese of pre-modern Chinese terms, concurred with Saint-Denys when he defined Dashi:

Mit diesem Ausdruck, der im Cantonesischen Tai-shik gelesen wird, bezeichneten die Chinesen seit dem Erscheinen Mahomed's die Länder des Islam, bis unter den Mongolen der Ausdruck Hui-hui an seine Stelle trat. (The Chinese designated with this expression which is read Tai-shik in Cantonese the countries of Islam since the appearance of Mohammed, until it was replaced under the Mongols with the expression Hui-hui).<sup>4</sup>

The identification of Dashi with Muslim thus became unvaryingly exclusive for a long period from the mid-Tang to the start of the Yuan.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Emile Bretschneider, *On the Knowledge Possessed by The Ancient Chinese of the Arabs and Arabian Colonies, and Other Western Countries, Mentioned in Chinese Books*, London: Trübner, 1871, 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> Marie-Jean-Léon Lecoq Marquis d'Hervey de Saint-Denys, *Ethnographie des peuples étrangers à la Chine: Ouvrage composé au XIIe siècle de notre ère par Ma-tuan-lin*, Geneva: Georg and Mueller, 1883, 528.

<sup>4</sup> See Friedrich Hirth and M. J. de Goeje, 'Die Länder des Islam nach chinesischen Quellen', *T'oung Pao*, 5 supplément, 1894, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Sometimes this idea was further modified as for instance by Kevin Caffrey for whom Dashi as Muslims was a designation for the Hui, or Chinese Muslims/Muslim Chinese, use of which was preceded by the term *fanke* 蕃客, and followed by *huihui* 回回. This appears far-fetched as the Dashi in the time under consideration here were clearly foreigners. See Caffrey, 'Who is 'Who', and Other Local Poetics of National Policy: Yunnan Minzu Shibia and Hui in the Process', *China Information*, 18:2, 2004, 247. He adds in a footnote and somewhat out of context, that the term 'often included Persians, who were also sometimes differentiated as "bosi"'.

Another statement from Hirth's and William W. Rockhill's (1854-1914) translation of the *Zhufan zhi* 諸蕃志 (1225; Record of Foreign Countries) has equally become a standard argument in contemporary discourse (see below): 'The name Ta-shih applied by the Chinese to the Arabs, and, as in the present work, to the Mohammedan world, is the name Tazi or Tay of western Arabic writers.'<sup>6</sup>

French orientalist Gabriel Ferrand (1864-1935) viewed the role attributed to the Arabs in the maritime relations between the Persian Gulf and eastern Asia as 'exaggerated', and traced the Chinese term Dashi to a Persian transcription:

Enfin, les Chinois connaissent les Arabes sous le nom de Ta-che, qui n'est autre que la transcription du persan تازی Tāzī ou تاجک Tadjīk; ce sont donc les Persans qui ont fait connaître en Chine les Arabes sous le nom par lequel ils les désignaient autrefois eux-mêmes. (After all, the Chinese knew the Arabs under the name Ta-che, which is but a transcription of the Persian Tāzī or Tadjīk; it was thus the Persians who made known the Arabs in China under the name that they themselves employed for them.)<sup>7</sup>

### 3 Interpretations of archaeological evidence

To date only remnants of two vessels allegedly built according to Indian and/or west Asian ship-building techniques have been found. The famous Belitung shipwreck of the ninth century has been the focus of those scholars who propose long-distance maritime Arab trade to China and therefore regard it as an Arab vessel or dhow.<sup>8</sup> That the remains of the boat can be interpreted differently has been argued

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Raphael Israeli followed Hirth's lead when he proposed that 'The Chinese, the Mongols, and the Muslims ... set aside the outworn Da-shih and adopted the new term Hui and its derivatives.' See Israeli, *Islam in China: Religion, Ethnicity, Culture, and Politics*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002, 119.

Angela Schottenhammer refers to 'Huihui' who 'as early as the times of the Tang and the Song (seventh/eighth [sic] to thirteenth centuries)' had 'both by land but increasingly also by sea routes' introduced 'medicinal drugs and medical knowledge' from 'Persia and Arabia to China'. This narrative replaces the Dashi with Huihui who, according to Schottenhammer, had contact with China since the Tang dynasty (618-907). See Schottenhammer, 'Huihui Medicine and Medicinal Drugs in Yuan China', in Morris Rossabi, ed., *Eurasian Influences on Yuan China*, Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2015, 75. The term Huihui, according to Dilnoza Duturaeva, first appears in the Liao dynasty as a designation for Khwarazm, and even in the Yuan dynasty did not necessarily denote Muslims. See Duturaeva, *Qarakhanid Roads to China: A History of Sino-Turkic Relations*, Leiden: Brill, 2022, 136. For an older perception of Huihui as a substitution for Dashi ('Muslims') in the Yuan, see, for instance, Raphael Israeli, 'Muslims in China: The Incompatibility between Islam and the Chinese Order', *T'oung Pao*, 63: 4-5, 1977, 305.

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Hirth and William W. Rockhill (transl.), *Chau Ju-kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, Entitled Chu-fan-chi*, St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911, 119.

<sup>7</sup> Gabriel Ferrand, *Relations des voyages et textes géographiques Arabes, Persans et Turks relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient du VIII au XVIII siècles, Vol. 1*, Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1913, 2-3.

<sup>8</sup> See Regina Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, eds, *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, Washington: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2011; and Alan

by Stephen G. Haw, who advocated a Southeast Asian origin of the vessel by a careful analysis of some of its component parts.<sup>9</sup> The second wreck (called Phanom-Surin after the names of the two owners of the shrimp farm where it was found) that some scholars believe to have been destined for West Asia, has been found in the Gulf of Thailand.<sup>10</sup> Since the Phanom-Surin shipwreck, tentatively dated to the eighth century, is very often compared to the Belitung shipwreck, by association it has been classified as an 'Arab style dhow' as well.<sup>11</sup> The bias towards a specific region is understandable for the maintenance of Arab long-distance trade, when in reality the construction of the boat is of an Arabo-Indian style,<sup>12</sup> which permits us to regard both wrecks as of South Asian or Southeast Asian in origin for lack of other surviving and comparable examples of similar vessels.

A third wreck named after the village in central coastal Vietnam where it was found, the Chau Tan wreck, of the eighth or ninth century provides a glimpse

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Chong and Stephen A. Murphy, eds, *The Tang Shipwreck: Art and Exchange in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century*, Singapore: National Heritage Board, 2017. The arguments rest in part on the identification of the cargo that largely consisted of Changsha export ware that at least one scholar assumed to have been 'explicitly designed ... for exportation to ... especially Middle Eastern and Islamic markets'. See Angela Schottenhammer, 'China's Increasing Integration into the Indian Ocean World Until Song 宋 Times: Sea Routes, Connections, Trades', in Angela Schottenhammer, ed., *Early Interconnectivity Across the Indian Ocean World, Vol. I: Commercial Structures and Exchanges*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 46. For Alain George the vessel 'appears to have set sail for a port in the Kingdom of Srivijaya, perhaps in Java or Sumatra, and sunk before it could head back to the Gulf.' See Alain George, 'Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China: from the Exchange of Goods to the Transmission of Ideas', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 25: 4, 2015, 583.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen G. Haw, 'The Genus *Afzelia* and the Belitung Ship', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 29: 3, 2019, 505-518.

<sup>10</sup> Preeyanuch Jomprum, 'The Phanom Surin Shipwreck: New Discovery of an Arab-style Shipwreck in Central Thailand', *Southeast Asia Ceramics Museum Newsletter*, 8: 1, 2014, 1-4; John Guy, 'The Phanom Surin Shipwreck, a Pahlavi Inscription, and Their Significance for the History of Early Lower Central Thailand', *Journal of the Siam Society*, 105, 2017, 179-196. John Guy further suggested that the Southeast Asian materials discovered present on the Phanom-Surin shipwreck merely indicate 'on journey maintenance and repairs' to an otherwise Arab boat. See Guy, 'Long Distance Arab Shipping in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century Indian Ocean: Recent Shipwreck Evidence from Southeast Asia', *Current Science*, 117: 10, 2019, 1649.

<sup>11</sup> See for instance Jun Kimura who dates the Phanom-Surin shipwreck to the seventh century and finds it to 'represent [...] the early form of an Arab dhow'. He explains that the 'sewn-construction technique is endemic to the western part of the Indian Ocean', while the timbers used for the construction of the boat are Southeast Asian in origin. See Kimura, 'Archaeological Evidence for Shipping and Shipbuilding Along the Maritime Silk Road', in Franck Billé, Sanjot Mehendale, and James W. Lankton, eds, *The Maritime Silk Road: Global Connectivities, Regional Nodes, Localities*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022, 108-110. Kimura obviously added the Arab element of the boat by mere association of its style with the Belitung wreck.

<sup>12</sup> Pierre-Yves Manguin, 'Asian Ship-Building Traditions in the Indian Ocean at the Dawn of European Expansion', in Om Prakash, ed., *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization Vol. III, part 7: The Trading World of the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, Delhi: Pearson, 2012, 597-629.

into how evidence is interpreted in support of a long-distance maritime trade. The researchers working with the archaeological remains regarded the ship as Southeast Asian in origin, even though the ship building techniques show similarities with the Belitung ship which they referred to as ‘an ancestral type of Indian Ocean dhow’.<sup>13</sup> On some shards that are believed to have been part of the cargo of the vessel, ‘pseudo-Arabic’<sup>14</sup> scripts have been discovered that one author has taken as ‘evidence of the presence of Arab merchants/travellers on board of the ship’.<sup>15</sup> One designation in a Brahmanic script tentatively identified as representative of the ‘archaic phase of the Early Kawi script (ca. 750-850 CE) and the standard form of the Early Kawi script (ca. 850-925 CE)’ has been interpreted as a geographical designation pointing at two places in modern Iran. This assumption consequently has been a contributing factor ‘to our understanding of long-distance maritime trade between the Tang and the Indian Ocean world in the ninth century’. The authors of the text then suggest that other Indic script words on shards discovered at the wreck site might be place names, too.<sup>16</sup>

All three wrecks – the Belitung, Phanom-Surin and Chau Tan wrecks – date from before the period under review here.<sup>17</sup> There has not been any discovery of ‘Arab’ wrecks in maritime Southeast Asia nor southern China dating from the tenth to the twelfth centuries that would corroborate the presence of long-distance Arab Muslim seafarers.

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<sup>13</sup> Nishino Noriko, Aoyama Toru et al., ‘Nishimura Masanari’s Study of the Earliest Known Shipwreck Found in Vietnam’, *Asian Review of World Histories*, 5, 2017, 110.

<sup>14</sup> Nishino, Aoyama et al., ‘Nishimura Masanari’s Study’, 118-119. The authors point out that the material remains such as ceramics may have been mixed with cargoes from other sunken ships in the area.

<sup>15</sup> Do Truong Giang, ‘Diplomacy, Trade and Networks: Champa in the Asian Commercial Context (7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Centuries)’, *Moussons*, 27, 2016,

<https://journals.openedition.org/moussons/3521?lang=en>, accessed October 7, 2022.

Similarly, John Guy, on the strength of one ‘Persian Gulf stoneware vessel’ with an inscription in Pahlavi found in the Phanom Surin site, proposed ‘a wider pattern of engagement of Iranian merchants in Southeast Asian trade’ and a ‘trade route that extended from the Persian Gulf to Southeast Asia and southern China’. See ‘The Phanom Surin Shipwreck’, 191. In another article, Guy still regarded the single stoneware vessel as a starting point for a ‘discussion of the role of foreign merchants in 9th century CE maritime Southeast Asia’. See Guy, ‘Long Distance Arab Shipping’, 1651.

<sup>16</sup> Nishino, Aoyama et al., ‘Nishimura Masanari’s Study’, 119-120. One wonders if the word in question may have been a personal name.

<sup>17</sup> It is for this reason, namely the archaeological discoveries of shipwrecks, that Kimura Jun observes two periods of maritime trade between the seventh and eighth centuries dominated by Southeast Asian vessels, and the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that saw the appearance of Chinese vessels. See Kimura, ‘Maritime Archaeological Perspectives on Seaborne Trade in the South China Sea and East China Sea between the Seventh and Thirteenth Centuries’, *Crossroads*, 11, 2015, 47.

#### 4 Faceless Dashi: The absence of Dashi depictions on *zhigongtu* (Illustrations of tribute missions)

Chinese artists since the Liang dynasty (502-557) created scrolls showing foreign ambassadors, and very often these scrolls were accompanied by texts that gave further information on the countries of origin of the men who had come to pay tribute at court.<sup>18</sup> Two copies attributed to Li Gonglin 李公麟 (ca. 1049-1106) present paintings of envoys none of which were identified with Dashi which may be due to parts of the original art work missing, but there still remain some doubts whether Dashi people were ever painted during the Song. The earlier and shorter scroll portrays people from Boni 淳泥 (western Borneo), Sanfoqi 三佛齊 (southeastern Sumatra), Fusang 扶桑 (Japan)<sup>19</sup>, Kunlun Cengqi 崑崙層期<sup>20</sup>, Nüwang guo 女王國<sup>21</sup>, Huihu 回鶻 (Uighurs), Dada 韃靼 (Tatars), and Nüsong 女送.<sup>22</sup> Apart from Boni, Sanfoqi, and Huihu, the relevant Song sources are silent about tribute missions from the other regions.

The emissaries depicted in the second scroll (entitled *Wanfang zhigongtu* 萬方職貢圖 (Illustrations of the Tributary States of the Myriad Regions))<sup>23</sup> are from ten

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<sup>18</sup> Yu Taishan, 'The Relationship between the "Memoir on the North-western Barbarians" of *Liangshu* and *Illustration of Envoys Presenting Tribute at the Liang Court*, and a Discussion of the Extant Fragment of *Envoys Presenting Tribute at the Liang Court* and Pei Ziyue's *Portraits of Envoys from Remote States*', *Eurasian Studies*, 6, 2018, 68-122. For a recent study and translation of a Qing dynasty *zhigong tu* produced by Xie Sui 謝遂 in the 1790s see Laura Hostetler and Wu Xuemei, eds and transls, *Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples (Huang Qing zhigong tu): A Cultural Cartography of Empire*, Leiden: Brill, 2022. Note that there is a mistake in the translation of the entry on Sula (Sumatra): 'During the Han dynasty it was Tiaozi, and during the Tang dynasty it was part of the territory of both Persia (*bosi*) and Arabia (*dashi*).' See Hostetler and Wu, *Qing Imperial Illustrations*, 101. The original phrase reads *Tang Bosi Dashi er guo di* 唐波斯大食二國地, that is, 'in the Tang (Sumatra) was the territory of the two countries of the Bosi and the Dashi'. The text on the scroll probably is copied from the entry on Sumatra in the section on southeastern barbarians (*dongnan yi* 東南夷) of the *Mingshan cang* 名山藏 (printed 1640) by He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠 (1558-1632) which reads *Tang zhi Bosi Dashi jie qi di ye* 唐之波斯大食皆其地也, which translates 'in the Tang (Sumatra) was the territory of both the Bosi and Dashi'. See <https://zh.m.wikisource.org/wiki/名山藏/卷之一百七>, accessed 30 December 2022. Dashi is not Arabia, nor is Bosi referring to Persia, but clearly both terms are regions in Sumatra.

<sup>19</sup> Edward H. Schafer identified Fusang with Japan. See his 'Fusang and Beyond: The Haunted Seas to Japan', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 109: 3, 1989, 379-399.

<sup>20</sup> Hirth and Rockhill regarded this designation as a term for the islands of 'Pemba and Madagascar'. See Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, 149. This is by no means a definitive identification as with so many other locations that the two writers dealt with.

<sup>21</sup> The *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (1013; Outstanding models from the storehouse of literature) includes a description of the country with female kings. See Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962-1065) et al., *Cefu yuangui*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960, 956.13a (11243).

<sup>22</sup> 'The Tributors', <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/44697>, accessed 28 November 2022. The scroll, missing a title and a date, was purchased by the Art Museum Princeton University, in 1968. See Alfreda J. Murck, 'Acquisitions 1968', *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University*, 27: 2, 1968, 94.

<sup>23</sup> The scroll is accessible at <https://asia.si.edu/object/F1911.180/>, accessed December 14, 2022.

countries which are: Champa (Zhancheng 占城), western Borneo (Boni 淳泥)<sup>24</sup>, Korea (Chaoxian 朝鮮), Jurchen (Nüzhi 女直), western Central Asia (?) (Fulin 扶林), southeastern Sumatra (Sanfoqi 三佛齊), Kingdom of Women (Nüren 女人), Handong 罕東 (?), the western regions (Xiyu 西域), and Tibet (Tubo 吐蕃).<sup>25</sup> This list is not surprising if we consult a text from the early thirteenth century. The *Yanyi yimoulu* 燕翼詒謀錄 (1227, Secret writings on the politics of monarchs) by Wang Yong 王詠 explains that as early as emperor Zhenzong's 真宗 (r. 997-1022) reign efforts were made to record both the physical appearance of foreign envoys in paintings as well as to add textual information:

In the Tang there existed the Gatherings of Foreigners at the King's Court (*wang huitu* 王繪圖)<sup>26</sup>, and under our dynasty we also had Depictions of the Barbarians of the Four Quarters Reporting (at Court) (*siyi shuzhitu* 四夷述職圖). In the ninth month of the eighth year of the Dazhong xiangfu era (October/November 1015), Zhang Fu 張復, who was provisionally attached to the Historiography Office, submitted a memorial to the throne: "I am asking that clothes and headdresses of all the countries that submitted tribute shall be compiled, that their form and outline be sketched, and their style and customs be recorded, to provide historiographers with extensive

<sup>24</sup> The physical appearances of the envoys follow an iconographic program that includes large noses, bald heads, and beards, the distinguishing features being either mentioned in the text or being identified with the geographical region. Thus, in the depictions of the Boni envoys, one sees a man carried in a very simple litter (built with a long pole and piece of cloth that carries the passenger) that follows the description in the text and is there referred to as *ruannang* 阮囊 while in the later version two such litters are used. The earliest mention of the *ruannang* is found in *Taiping huanyuji* 太平寰宇記 (late 10<sup>th</sup> cent.; Gazetteer of the World during the Taiping (xingguo) Era): 'When (the king) goes out he uses a *ruannang* (commentary: this is a large plain piece of cloth) which he sits upon and is carried in.' See Yue Shi 樂史 (*jinshi* of 980), *Taiping huanyuji*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007, 179.3436. In addition, in the early scene, the man in the litter plays a flute, an instrument that Yue Shi said was used for entertainment in Boni ('The utmost joy for the people is to beat drums, blow flutes, sound cymbals, and clap the hands, and they sing and dance for their entertainment.'). See *Taiping huanyuji* 179.3437. In the Champa scene of the latter scroll the viewer is presented with men riding elephants, a means of transport reported in the *Wudai huiyao* 五代會要 (961, Essential Documents and Regulations of the Five Dynasties) as well. See Wang Pu 王溥 (922-982), *Wudai huiyao*, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978, 30.479.

<sup>25</sup> Ge Zhaoguang addresses some of these places differently. See Ge Zhaoguang, 'Imagining a Universal Empire: A Study of the *Illustrations of the Tributary States of the Myriad Regions* Attributed to Li Gonglin', *Journal of Chinese Humanities*, 5, 2019, 131-132.

<sup>26</sup> Attributed to Yan Liben 閻立本 (c. 600-673) the original scroll has been lost and only a Song dynasty copy survives that is held by the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan. The museum also possesses a painting (Liang Yuandi fanke ruchao tu 梁元帝番客入朝圖 (Liang Emperor Yuandi's "Foreigners coming to court") by Gu Deqian 顧德謙, a painter active during the Southern Tang (937-976), that was inspired by the original painting from the Liang dynasty. The title of the painting refers to the Liang zhigongtu 梁職貢圖 (Illustrations (of envoys) presenting tribute at the Liang court) allegedly produced by Xiao Yi 蕭繹 (508-555) who was canonized as emperor Yuandi 元帝 (r. 552-555).

records.” This was approved. The foreigner barbarians that came to court at that time merely consisted of those from Gaoli 高麗 (Korea), Xixia 西夏, Zhunian 注輦 (India), Zhancheng 占城 (Champa), Sanfoqi 三佛齊 (southeastern Sumatra), Mengguo 蒙國 (Monggols), Dada 達靺, and Nüzhen 女真 (Jurchen), and were not as numerous as those in the Tang.<sup>27</sup>

This statement benefitted from hindsight as the *Song huiyao* 宋會要 (Essential Documents and Regulations of the Song) has the following information to offer:

On the second day of the fourth month (June 3, 1016) the Court of Ceremonial Propriety (Liyi yuan 禮儀院) was ordered to produce Reports on and Depictions of the Four Barbarians. At that time envoys from Zhunian had submitted tribute and Zhang Fu 張復, director of the Court of State Ceremonial (Honglu si 鴻臚寺) had sketched (*hui* 繪) their style and manner (*fengsu* 風俗), and their clothes and headdress (*yiguan* 衣冠) in a drawing (*tu* 圖) which he submitted. The emperor said: “Since the times of the two Sages has there ever been a year in which the barbarians from the four quarters (*siyi* 四夷) have not come to submit tribute?” This being the case, the order was given to compile the Reports on and Depictions of the Four Barbarians.<sup>28</sup>

The countries arriving at court are not mentioned in this paragraph, so one would have to consult individual entries of tribute missions to guess which countries are referred to. Apparently, Zhang Fu already had made preliminary drawings that then would serve as the basic material for the official work. Li Tao’s 李燾 (1115-1184) depiction reads as follows:

(Dazhong xiangfu 8, 9<sup>th</sup> month) On the *gengshen* 庚申 day (October 28, 1015) Zhang Fu, provisional director of the Court of State Ceremonial, director in the Ministry of Justice, and provisionally attached to the Historiography Office, made a memorial asking to compile a *Da Song siyi shuzhitu* 大宋四裔述職圖 (Depictions of the Barbarians of the Four Quarters Reporting (at the Court of the Great Song) that consisted of sketches (圖) of the headdresses and dresses as well as records (*cailu* 采錄) of the customs and manners of all the countries that had submitted tribute until the eighth year of the Dazhong xiangfu era, in order to show the conciliatory virtue (*huairou* 懷柔) of the sage ruler above, and to provide historiographers with extensive records below. This was permitted. When Fu submitted the sketches, the emperor said: “Since the times of the two Sages there has never been a year without the barbarians from the four quarters submitting tribute, and when was it ever different.” Thereupon he ordered the Court of Ceremonial Propriety (Liyi yuan 禮儀院) to further compile 增修 (material). (Commentary: The additionally compiled text was finished consequently on the *jihai* 己亥 day of

<sup>27</sup> Wang Yong, *Yanyi yimou lu* in *Moji Yanyi yimou lu* 默記 燕翼詒謀錄, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981, 4.41.

<sup>28</sup> Xu Song 徐松 (1781-1848), *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (Draft Recovered Edition of the *Song huiyao*), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957, 199, “fanyi” 蕃夷 (barbarians) 7.20b (7849).



the fourth month of the next year (June 3, 1016), and this is now merged with the (original) text.)<sup>29</sup>

What all these statements have in common is that the countries referred to are mainly in Southeast Asia (Champa, southeastern Sumatra, western Borneo), Central Asia, or are direct neighbours of the Song empire such as Korea, Japan, the Mongols, and the Jurchen. In none of the sources quoted above do Dashi feature even though by 1015 nine missions from Dashi had arrived (see below). Either these were irrelevant in the eyes of the relevant authorities or they may have been subsumed under the categories listed above, that is South Asia, Southeast Asia, or Central Asia. After all, several Song dynasty texts, such as the *Wudai huiyao* (961, Essential Documents and Regulations of the Five Dynasties), *Taiping huanyuji* (late 10<sup>th</sup> cent.; Gazetteer of the World during the Taiping (xingguo) Era), *Song huiyao* (Essential Documents and Regulations of the Song), *Cefu yuangui*, and *Songshi*, explain that the Dashi customs and clothes were similar to those of the Cham<sup>30</sup>, and therefore may have been indistinguishable. Another possibility is that only envoys from regions with hierarchical government systems were recorded such as Gaoli or Koryo, Zhunian or the Chola state, Champa, southeastern Sumatra, and the Jurchen, which all had arrived prior to or in 1015 with the Zhunian emissaries being the last to arrive in that year.<sup>31</sup>

## 5 The sources

The main texts used in this study of the term Dashi are the *Cefu yuangui*, the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑒長編 (1183; Long Draft for a Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government), and the *Songshi* which are representative of three categories of texts further defined below. Evidence from these texts will contribute to a better understanding of Dashi in the Song dynasty.

Three groups of texts fall under the category of Song dynasty sources. The first group consists of texts compiled at the start of the Song period and includes the imperial encyclopedia *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Perused by the Emperor in the Taiping (xingguo) Era; 983), the privately compiled geographical work *Taiping huanyuji* of the late tenth century, and another imperial encyclopaedia and study guide, the *Cefu yuangui*, which all include and cite Tang dynasty material on Dashi.<sup>32</sup> Dashi in the Tang did refer to 'Arabs' as the Tang clashed with Arabs on the river

<sup>29</sup> Li Tao, *Xu Zhizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑒長編 (1183; Long Draft for a Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992, 85.1951.

<sup>30</sup> *Wudai huiyao*, 30.479; *Taiping huanyuji* 179.3435; *Song huiyao jigao*, 197, "fanyi" 4.61b (7744); *Cefu yuangui* 960.4b (11292); Tuotuo 脫脫 (Toghto, 1314-1356) et al., *Songshi*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977, 489.14078.

<sup>31</sup> See Hans Bielenstein for the relevant dates of arrival of the embassies from Champa (Zhancheng), 'Srivijaya' (Sanfoqi), Borneo (Boni), the Chola state (Zhunian), Koryo (Gaoli), the Tanguts (Xixia), and the Jurchen (Nüzhen), in *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World, 589-1276*, Leiden: Brill, 2005, 41-45, 59-60, 66-67, 77, 149-154, 479-486, and 618-620, respectively.

<sup>32</sup> See Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) et al., *Taiping yulan*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960, 795.8a-9b (3531-3532); *Taiping huanyuji* 186.3574-3575; *Cefu yuangui* 956.22a (11247).

Talas in 751 and thus the Chinese had gained first-hand knowledge. The *Tongdian* 通典 (Encyclopaedic History of the Institutions of Government), compiled in the Tang dynasty, includes a description of Dashi, that has consequently been cited in the dynastic histories of the Tang, the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (945; Old History of the Tang) and the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (1060; New History of the Tang), compiled during the Five Dynasties and the Northern Song, respectively.<sup>33</sup>

The second set of texts consists of reports by Song officials and their encounters with Dashi. They are found in the *Song huiyao*, the collected documents of the Song dynasty, and the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*, a chronological history of the Northern Song. These works are supplemented by privately compiled works such as the *Pingzhou ketan* 萍洲可談 (Chats at Pingzhou), a *biji* 筆記 or 'notebook', as well as the *Lingwai daida* 嶺外代答 (1178; Information on Lands South of the Wuling Mountains) and the *Zhufan zhi* that contain descriptions of foreign places.

The last category consists of the *Wenxian tongkao* (early 14<sup>th</sup> cent.) and the *Songshi* that synthesized material on Dashi culled mostly from the earlier texts.

In addition to Chinese source material, researchers often consulted works by Arab and Persian writers. These texts since the eighteenth century have been translated into a variety of European languages, and they have been employed generally to attest to the presence of Arabs /Muslims in Tang China, such as the works attributed to Ibn Khordadbheh, Abu Zayd, and Mas'udi, among others.<sup>34</sup> At this point, it is necessary to highlight a potential issue with the Arabic texts. Many scholars working in Southeast Asian and southern Chinese history are not competent in Arabic and are therefore employing translations such as that of the *Kitab al-Masalik wa'l-Mamalik* by Ibn Khordadbheh. The most widely used translations of this text are those by Charles Barbier de Meynard (1826-1908) and by Michael Jan de Goeje (1836-1909).<sup>35</sup> Barbier de Meynard had translated the then only known copy of the text held by the Bodleian Library in Oxford, which de Goeje identified as a summary of the original text. The Oxford manuscript bore the date AH 630 (AD 1232). De Goeje for his part was able to get hold of a manuscript that he regarded as the original text dating from the ninth century on the basis of textual evidence. His manuscript (addressed as manuscript A, to distinguish it from manuscript B in Oxford) had the date AH 756 (AD 1353) attached by a previous collector, and a note in the margin that referred to AH 560 (1164/1165). There is therefore a chance that the text has been subjected to some changes from its origins in the late ninth century to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and therefore

<sup>33</sup> Du You 杜佑 (735-812), *Tongdian*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988, 193.5278-5281; *Jiu Tangshu*, compiled by Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946) et. al., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975, 198.5315-5316; Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), *Xin Tangshu*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974, 222C.626-6265. In addition, see Wang Pu 王溥 (922-982), *Tang huiyao* 唐會要, Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1989, 100.1789-1790.

<sup>34</sup> For references to relevant translations see the bibliography in Gerald R. Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia*, Leiden: Brill, 1979, 258-260.

<sup>35</sup> See Barbier de Meynard, 'Le Livre des Routes et Des Provinces par Ibn-Khordadbheh', in *Journal Asiatique*, Jan-Feb 1865, 5-126, and de Goeje, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik: Liber Viarum et Regnorum*, Leiden: Brill, 1889.

does not represent original ninth or tenth century knowledge, yet scholars take – or must take – the information provided at face value, just like many scholars are relying on outdated translations of Chinese texts like, for instance, the *Zhufan zhi* in the English rendering by Friedrich Hirth and William W. Rockhill that are fraught with problems of understanding and biased interpretations.

### 5.1 Dashi in the *Cefu yuangui* (1013; Outstanding models from the storehouse of literature)

The *Cefu yuangui* reports that ‘Dashi is located in the Southern Ocean (*Nanhai* 南海).’<sup>36</sup> This statement appears after entries of Southeast Asian places like Poli 婆利 (Bali), Gantuoli 干陀利 (southeastern Sumatra?), Chitu 赤土 (on the Malay Peninsula), Sidiao 斯調 (Java) and others.<sup>37</sup> Chinese historiographers employed these designations up to the Tang which hints at the possibility that Dashi was such a Southeast Asian designation as well. Indeed, in a story about Ximo 悉莫, a female ruler of Heling 訶陵 (in Java) between 674 and 676, that is usually quoted from the *Xin Tangshu*, a Dashi leader (*Dashi jun* 大食君) appears who may have been a neighbour of Heling in central Java.<sup>38</sup> Dashi in the *Cefu yuangui* is located to the south of southern China because: a) the description of Zhancheng (Champa) in central Vietnam comes after that of Dashi, b) Champa’s ‘clothes and customs are largely identical with those of Dashi’,<sup>39</sup> and c) entries on ethnic groups on the extreme southern borders of the Chinese empire follow the Dashi description.

The compilers of the *Cefu yuangui* very likely located Dashi in Java, its vicinity, or in Sumatra, taking their cue from the Ximo story. The latter may have been based on the *Bai Kong liu tie* 白孔六帖 by Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846), which included the story, too,<sup>40</sup> though it could have been supplemented in the Song.

Since the Dashi in the *Cefu yuangui* differed from the Dashi accounts in the *Jiu Tangshu* and the *Tongdian*, French sinologist, orientalist and archaeologist Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) proposed that Dashi described two separate locations, namely

<sup>36</sup> *Cefu yuangui* 960.4 (11292).

<sup>37</sup> For Poli see Yao Silian 姚思廉 (564-637), *Liangshu* 梁書 (Official history of the Liang dynasty), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973, 54.796-797 and Wei Zheng 魏徵 et al., *Suishu* 隋書 (Official history of the Sui dynasty), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973, 82.1838; for Gantuoli see *Liangshu* 54.794-795 and *Taiping huanyu ji* 176.3363; for Chitu see *Suishu* 82.1833-1835; for Sidiao see *Taiping yulan* 787.4a (3485) that quotes from both the *Funan tusu zhuan* 扶南土俗傳 (Native customs of Funan; also *Wushi waiguo zhuan* 吳時外國傳 (Accounts of foreign countries during the Wu kingdom) and *Funan zhuan* 扶南傳 (A record of Funan) by Kang Tai 康泰 and Zhu Ying 朱應 (3<sup>rd</sup> cent.) as well as the *Nanfang yiwu zhi* 南方異物志 (A record of curious matters from the southern regions) by Wan Zhen 萬震 (3<sup>rd</sup> cent.).

<sup>38</sup> *Xin Tangshu* 222C.6302. In Geoff Wade’s reading of the story, there were Arab residents in Sumatra in the seventh century already. See Wade, ‘Early Muslim Expansion in Southeast Asia Eighth to Fifteenth Centuries’, in David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid, eds, *The New Cambridge History of Islam Volume 3: The Eastern Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 367.

<sup>39</sup> *Cefu yuangui* 960.4 (11292).

<sup>40</sup> Bai Juyi, *Bai Kong liu tie* (Six tablets of masters Bai and Kong; *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書), 41.3b-4a.

Dashi in or of Arabia, and Dashi in or of Sumatra ('... il faudrait donc distinguer entre les Tazi d'Arabie et des Tazi de Sumatra ...').<sup>41</sup> In this regard, he was open to a flexible understanding of Dashi according to context, that Willem Pieter Groeneveldt (1841-1915) had been unwilling to concede earlier. Sticking to Dashi as Arabs, he placed these on 'the western coast of Sumatra' and explained that 'some Chinese writers confound this country with Arabia'.<sup>42</sup> The idea that Chinese record-keepers committed mistakes in reports on places in Southeast Asia, is echoed by Momoki Shiro who identified the statement that Zhancheng (Champa) had similar clothes and customs as Dashi as 'a frequent misperception among imperial officials that Dashi was located in the South Seas'.<sup>43</sup> To underline his point he brought up statements on Zhancheng and Dashi from the *Wudai huiyao*, the *Song huiyao* and the *Songshi* which according to him were inaccurate as well.<sup>44</sup> Chinese officially compiled sources are far from being completely factual and accurate records, but in this case it would appear strange that the compilers of the *Wudai huiyao* and the *Songshi*, as well as the author of the relevant entry in the *Song huiyao* (that is probably almost contemporary to the event depicted) would have followed an incorrect lead, although doubts remain in the absence of more details.

## 5.2 Dashi in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* (1183; Long Draft for a Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government)

A short report on a mission to the western regions (*xiyu* 西域) precedes the first entry on Dashi in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*:

The Buddhist monk Xingqin 行勤 and 150 others asked for permission to travel to the western regions. An imperial order granted permission, and consequently 30,000 cash strings were conferred (on them) as they were sent on their way.<sup>45</sup>

As a result of Xingqin's efforts a ruler of Dashi in the western regions responded with a mission that arrived in early 969:

Before these events, the monk Xingqin had travelled to the western regions, and therefore the emperor had conferred a letter on the king of Dashi guo 大食國 to encourage him to become a vassal. On the *yichou* 乙丑 day of the twelfth month (January 7, 969) envoys dispatched (from Dashi) arrived and submitted local products as tribute.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Paul Pelliot, 'Deux itinéraires de Chine en Inde à la fin du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 4, 1904, 296.

<sup>42</sup> W. P. Groeneveldt, 'Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca, Compiled from Chinese Sources', *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, 39: 1, 1877, 14.

<sup>43</sup> Momoki Shiro, "'Mandala Champa" Seen from Chinese Sources', in Tran Ky Phuong and Bruce Lockhart, eds, *The Cham of Vietnam: History, Society, Art*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2011, 127.

<sup>44</sup> Momoki Shiro, 'Mandala Champa', 135, note 26.

<sup>45</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 7.168.

<sup>46</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 9.213.

*Xiyu*, the western regions, is a term used in the Tang for Central Asia, so Dashi in this text could have been a place within that region. Xingqin's objective had been to collect Buddhist scriptures and his destination had been northern India.<sup>47</sup> His itinerary from western China to India included Gan 甘 (in modern Gansu province), Sha 沙 (Dunhuang), Yi 伊 (Hami), Su 肅 (modern Jiuquan in Gansu?), Yanqi 焉耆 (Karashar), Qiuci 龜茲 (Kucha), Yutian 于闐 (Khotan), Gelu 割祿 (?), Bulusha 布路沙 (Peshawar?), Jiashimiluo 加濕彌羅 (Kashmir).<sup>48</sup> Although Dashi does not appear here, it is highly likely that it was near or adjacent to the areas Xingqin passed through. The *Song huiyao* complements Xingqin's itinerary in its description of the journey from India to China:

Travelling (from India) eastwards for six months one arrives in Dashi, after another two months of travelling one arrives in Xizhou 西州 (Gaochang 高昌), and after yet another two months in Xiazhou 夏州 (western Shaanxi).<sup>49</sup>

In late 971 or early 972, Li Yu 李煜 (r. 961-976), the ruler of Jiangnan 江南 (in Jiangxi and Jiangsu) was visited by envoys from Zhancheng (Champa), Shepo (Java) and Dashi who had probably mistaken him for the emperor of China.<sup>50</sup> Since the *Cefu yuangui* of the early eleventh century addressed Dashi as a place in Southeast Asia that shared cultural characteristics with Champa, it makes sense that in this narrative its envoys travelled with those of Champa and Java.

It is possible that the date in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* is incorrect. The *Song huiyao* preserves a memorial by Li Yu dated to 966 (seventh month of the fourth year of the Qiande era) informing the court in Kaifeng about tribute items with detailed descriptions received from Zhancheng (Champa), Shepo (Java), and Dashi.<sup>51</sup> Either this memorial is incorrectly dated, or the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* and the *Songshi* are wrong.<sup>52</sup>

Guangzhou, capital of the state of the Southern Han 南漢 had been conquered by the Song armies in 971, so the envoys would have learnt about the emperor of the Song dynasty and not taken a detour to meet the Song vassal Li Yu

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<sup>47</sup> *Songshi* 490.14104. Xingqin is also referred to in the annals as well as in the Dashi entry in the foreign countries section. See *Songshi* 2.23 and 490.14118. The aim of Xingqin's mission is identified as *qu jing* 取經 in *Song huiyao jigao*, 200, "dao shi" 道釋 2, 5a (7891); *fang jing* 訪經 in Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296), *Yuhai* 玉海 (Ocean of Jade), Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992, 168.11a; and as *qiu fo shu* 求佛書 in *Songshi* 490.14104.

<sup>48</sup> For this journey see also *Song huiyao jigao* 197, "fanyi" 4.4b (7757). Gelu was under the administration of Gaochang 高昌 in eastern Xinjiang. See *Songshi* 490.14112. For a translation of entries from the *Tang huiyao* – and thus Tang and early Song dynasty knowledge of Central Asia on Transoxania – see Sören Stark, *Transoxanien nach dem Tang Huiyao des Wang Pu*, Norderstedt: Books on Demand GmbH, 2009. Stark identifies Cao 曹國 as Ishtikhan, Ustrushana, and Kabudhanjakath; Shi 石國 as Chach, Tuhuoluo 吐火羅國 as Tokharistan; Kang 康國 as Samarqand; and Shi 史國 as Kesh and Nakhshab. See also *Tang huiyao* 98.1753, 99.1771-1772, 99.1772-1773, 99.1774-1775, and 99.1777-1778, respectively.

<sup>49</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 197, "fanyi" 4. 5b (7758).

<sup>50</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 12.275.

<sup>51</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 197, "fanyi" 4.63 (7745).

<sup>52</sup> *Songshi* 478.13858 and 490.14118.

in Jiangsu. Similarly, if they had arrived in southern Fujian which at the time was under the control of Chen Hongjin 陳洪進 (r. 962-978), with the port cities of Zhangzhou and Quanzhou), or in northern Fujian (with Fuzhou) controlled by the kingdom of Wuyue 吳越 (submitted to the Song in 978), they would have been advised where to travel and submit their tribute. Furthermore, a Dashi mission arrived in Kaifeng in early January 969<sup>53</sup>, so it would be strange that in 971/972 the Dashi envoys had not known about the Song capital, unless they hailed from a different Dashi.

Considering the evidence, I would suggest that the *Song huiyao* date of 966 is the correct date for the arrival of the men from Dashi, Champa, and Java.

As to Li Yu, he did not dare accept the 'gifts' brought by the envoys, but forwarded them to the Song capital in Kaifeng.<sup>54</sup>

Masaki Mukai explained the appearance of the 'Arabs' together with the Champa and Java envoys with Arab and Persian sailing routes that led via Champa and Java to China.<sup>55</sup> This argument leans on the idea that Arabs and Persians resided or at least sojourned in both regions which in turn rests entirely on the understanding of the family name Pu 蒲, part of the names of envoys and traders from the tenth to the twelfth centuries appearing in Chinese texts, as a marker of the Muslim identity of its bearer.<sup>56</sup> Other scholars disputed (and dispute) this proposition and instead understood Pu as an honorific title (*mPu*, *pu*, *po*) used in indigenous societies of mainland and insular Southeast Asia.<sup>57</sup> The latter point of view at the present stage of the discussion has not gained traction, as a majority of writers prefer Hirth's definition of Pu rather than challenge its validity, for there is a

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<sup>53</sup> *Songshi* 2.28.

<sup>54</sup> See Xu Zizhi *tongjian changbian* 12.275.

<sup>55</sup> Masaki Mukai, 'Regenerating Trade Diaspora: Supra-Regional Contacts and the Role of 'Hybrid Muslims' in the South China Sea since Late 10<sup>th</sup> to mid-13<sup>th</sup> Century', Global History and Maritime Asia Working and Discussion Paper Series No. 19, Osaka University, 2010, 67.

<sup>56</sup> The first scholar to suggest this was Friedrich Hirth in his 'Die Insel Hainan nach Chao Jukua', in *Festschrift für Adolf Bastian zu seinem 70. Geburtstage*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1896, 487. Contemporary advocates of the assumption that has acquired the status of a fact by general refutation of alternative interpretations are, for instance, Pierre-Yves Manguin, 'IX. Études cam II. L'Introduction de l'Islam au Campa', *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 66, 1979, 258-259; Geoff Wade, 'The Li (李) and Pu (蒲) "Surnames" in East Asia-Middle East Maritime Silkroad Interactions during the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Centuries', in Ralph Kauz, ed., *Aspects of the Maritime Silk Road: From the Persian Gulf to the East China Sea*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010, 181-193; and John W. Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China: The History of a Maritime Asian Trade Diaspora*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 60-61.

<sup>57</sup> See, for instance, Gerald R. Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders in South-East Asia', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 30: 1, 1957, 30; for a more rigorous treatment of Pu see Stephen G. Haw, 'Islam in Champa and the Making of Factitious History', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 28: 3, 2018, 724-727.

high likelihood that Pu at least in the Champa case transcribed a Cham respectful form of address, *pô*, meaning ‘sir’ or ‘lord’.<sup>58</sup>

They find support for Hirth’s assumption, who interpreted Chinese texts, by references to Arabic texts. Epigraphic evidence for the presence of Islam in both northern Sumatra and northern Java does not extend to the tenth and eleventh centuries, the period under examination in this essay, but to the late thirteenth century.<sup>59</sup>

Only basic information on four embassies coming from Dashi between 974 to 977 exists, the routine information being: ‘Envoys dispatched from Dashi arrived and submitted local products as tribute.’<sup>60</sup> The following mission of March 1000 is only slightly better documented with the name of the Dashi envoy given as Mujibi 穆吉鼻.<sup>61</sup>

The *Wenxian tongkao* calls Mujibi a subordinate of a ship owner or captain (*bozhu* 舶主) named Tuoluoli 陀羅離<sup>62</sup>, and the *Songshi* addresses him as a subordinate of ship owner Tuopoli 陀婆離.<sup>63</sup> Hence Mujibi possibly arrived at a port in southern China.

Tuoluoli could indicate the place of origin of the shipowner or captain rather than a personal name. The *Wenchang zalu* 文昌雜錄 (Various records from the Department of State Affairs, 1085) places Tuoluoli in ‘the southern wasteland’ (*nan huang zhi guo ye* 南荒之國也), a statement also taken up in the *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄 (The Eastern Capital: A dream of splendours past).<sup>64</sup> Both texts position Shepo (Java) to the north of Dashi, and if one accepts Shepo to designate a northern location, Dashi could denominate a southern location on the island.

Some writers have identified *bozhu* as a defining feature of Arab and Persian and/or Muslim traders.<sup>65</sup> For Masaki Mukai *bozhu* was a ‘a direct translation of the

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<sup>58</sup> See Étienne Aymonier and Antoine Cabaton, *Dictionnaire cam-français*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1906, 309.

<sup>59</sup> For a thorough study of the material see Elizabeth Lambourn, ‘Tombstones, Texts, and Typologies: Seeing Sources for the Early History of Islam in Southeast Asia’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 51, 2008, 252-286.

<sup>60</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 14.298, 15.328, 17.371, 18.402.

<sup>61</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 46.991. See also *Song huiyao jigao* 197, “fanyi” 4.91a (7759).

<sup>62</sup> Ma Duanlin 馬端 (1245-1322), *Wenxian tongkao*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986, 339.2664.

<sup>63</sup> *Songshi* 490.14120.

<sup>64</sup> Pang Yuanying 龐元英 (1020?-1085), *Wenchang zalu*, *Siku quanshu*, 1.4a; Meng Yuanlao 孟元老 (c. 1090-1150), *Dongjing menghua lu*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982, 6.161.

<sup>65</sup> See, for instance, John Chaffee, ‘Diasporic Identities in the Historical Development of Muslim Communities of Song-Yuan China’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 49: 4, 2006, 401; Angela Schottenhammer, ‘China’s Gate to the South: Iranian and Arab Merchant Networks in Guangzhou during the Tang-Song Transition (c. 750-1050)’, part II: 900-c. 1050’, *AAS Working Papers in Social Anthropology/ÖAW Arbeitspapiere zur Sozialanthropologie*, 29, 2015, 21; Tansen Sen, ‘The Military Campaigns of Rajendra Chola and the Chola-Srivijaya-China Triangle’, in Hermann Kulke et al., eds, *Nagapattanam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009, 64-65.

Persian word, *nākhudā*, meaning head of ship, which was commonly used around the Indian Ocean'.<sup>66</sup> Ranabir Chakravarti explains that *nākhudā* designates ship-owning merchants with various ethnic and religious backgrounds on the western coast of India.<sup>67</sup> Angela Schottenhammer maintains that 'many of the envoys from the Arab lands were simultaneously identified as 'ship owners' (*bozhu*)'. The *Songshi* includes altogether six references to *bozhu*: four in the entry on Dashi, one in the entry on Sanfoqi 三佛齊 (southeastern Sumatra), and one for Shepo (Java).<sup>68</sup> The *Song huiyao* adds two more men, one from Sanmalan 三麻蘭 and one from Wuxun 勿巡.<sup>69</sup>

French Southeast Asian studies scholar Louis-Charles Damais (1911-1966) suggested that *bozhu* was a transcription of a Javanese term, *puhawan*, ship master or ship captain.<sup>70</sup> A variant transcription of the latter word in Chinese is *bohe* 勃荷 (for Damais *bohewang* 勃荷王, based on a peculiar reading of the phrase in question) found in the *Songshi* as well.<sup>71</sup> Accepting *bohe* as a short form of *puhawan* (as Damais had proposed), the ship masters reaching China from the tenth century onwards may well have been Javanese. If the southeastern Sumatran and Javanese captains were *bozhu*, one can envision Dashi in a southeast Asian setting, too.

In the entry on a Dashi mission from 1003 not only were red parakeets (*hong yingwu* 紅鸚鵡) given as tribute, but Dashi was, again, located in the vicinity of Champa: 'This country is situated in the ocean and borders on Zhancheng, and from then on it began communicating.'<sup>72</sup> This is the only mention of such a mission from Dashi in a Song dynasty source, while others refer to Puduan 蒲端 (commonly thought to designate Butuan in the Philippines) as the place that submitted red parakeets.<sup>73</sup> There is a discrepancy in the correct date as well which permits us to treat the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* information on this Dashi mission as reliable. The date of the submission of tribute is inserted between the days under the cyclical characters *renchen* 壬辰 and *wuxu* 戊戌, a period covering October 3-9, 1003. There is

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<sup>66</sup> Masaki Mukai, 'Regenerating Trade Diaspora', 67. Note that Tomas Petru defines the high time of trade in Southeast Asia involving 'Iranians and Perso-Indian seafaring merchants' to begin in the thirteenth century, that is, several centuries after the use of *bozhu* in Chinese sources. See Petru, "'Lands Below the Winds" as Part of the Persian Cosmopolis: An Inquiry into Linguistic and Cultural Borrowings from the Persianate Societies in the Malay World', *Moussons*, 27, 2016, 154. *Nakhoda* may have entered Malay usage at that time.

<sup>67</sup> Chakravarti, 'Nakhudas and Nauvittakas: Ship-Owning Merchants in the West Coast of India (c. AD 1000-1500)', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 43: 1, 2000, 34-64.

<sup>68</sup> *Songshi* 490.14118-20; 489.14089; and 489.14092.

<sup>69</sup> See *Song huiyao jigao*, "fanyi" 7.18b (7848). Roderich Ptak regards Sanmalan as a designation for Basilan in the Philippines. See Roderich Ptak, 'From Quanzhou to the Sulu Zone and Beyond: Questions Related to the Early Fourteenth Century', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 29: 2, 1998, 279.

<sup>70</sup> Louis-Charles Damais, 'Études sino-indonésiennes', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 50: 1, 1960, 28.

<sup>71</sup> *Songshi* 489.14092. See also *Wenxian tongkao* 332.2606.

<sup>72</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 55.1212.

<sup>73</sup> See for instance *Song huiyao jigao* 197, "fanyi" 4.5a (7761).



therefore room for a Puduan mission recorded for the *jichou* 己丑 day (October 1) in the *Songshi*, and a Dashi mission for the period in question recorded in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*. The first Puduan mission encountered in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* appears only in the following year.<sup>74</sup>

Linguistic studies undertaken since the late nineteenth century suggest a close relationship between the Cham languages and Acehnese, the latter having developed after Cham people moved to Sumatra.<sup>75</sup> One may, therefore, infer that one meaning of Dashi in the early eleventh century was a region in northern Sumatra and that because of their related languages, customs and geographical vicinity the Cham and Dashi would appear sometimes together at the Chinese capital. These Dashi could serve as an alternative explanation for the Dashi in the Ximo story referred to above, being Sumatran visitors to Java in the latter half of the seventh century.

This proposition is confirmed by the arrival of a joint mission dispatched by Dashi and Zhancheng (Champa) in Kaifeng in June 1007.<sup>76</sup> An idea that since its inception has become popularly accepted, Pierre-Yves Manguin explained the simultaneous appearance of Dashi and Cam by suggesting that Middle Eastern Muslim merchant colonies existed in southern China.<sup>77</sup> He also referred to a similar community of foreign Muslim merchants in Champa that were in contact with those in Guangzhou. Consequently,

On pourrait ainsi fort bien penser que le roi cam, connaissant la position de force des colonies musulmanes en Chine, se soit fait représenter auprès de la cour impériale par des marchands arabes résidant au Campā, ayant d'utiles contacts en Chine et dont la langue, contrairement au cam, devait être facilement comprise dans les milieux chinois liés au commerce extérieur. (One could therefore very well imagine that the cam king, knowing the strong position of Muslim colonies in China, would have himself represented at the imperial court by Arab merchants residing in Campa who had useful contacts in China, and whose language, in contrast to cam, was easily understood in Chinese foreign circles.)<sup>78</sup>

Manguin relied on Arab sources from the ninth and tenth centuries (about which see my reservations above), the name Pu as a reference to the Muslim name Abu in

<sup>74</sup> See *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 56.1236.

<sup>75</sup> One of the first to refer to such a close linguistic relationship was George Karel Niemann, 'Bijdrage tot de Kennis der Verhouding van het Tjam to de Talen van Indonesië', *Bidragen van de taal-, land- en volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 40, 1891, 27-44. For more recent research on the topic see Graham Thurgood, *From Ancient Cham to Modern Dialects: Two Thousand Years of Language Contact and Change with an Appendix of Chamic Reconstruction and Loanwords*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.

<sup>76</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 65.1456.

<sup>77</sup> One piece of evidence is the raid of Guangzhou by 'Arabs and Persians' in 758. These Dashi and Bosi were probably Southeast Asians as well. See Johannes L. Kurz, 'Philology Lost: Variable Interpretations of the Raid of Guangzhou in 758 from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries', *Journal of Asian History* (forthcoming).

<sup>78</sup> Manguin, 'L'introduction de l'Islam au Campā', 260-261.

Chinese sources, the acceptance of Dashi as ‘Arab’, and a reference to refugee groups of alleged Cam Muslims in the late tenth century who were settled around Guangzhou.<sup>79</sup> If the supposition was true then it would be very difficult to distinguish between Arabs/Middle Easterners from the Middle East and those settling in Southeast Asia. If they were residents acting as intermediaries for regional rulers, they would be involved in regional trade only. If the Chinese were aware of Middle Eastern Muslims, they surely would have had resources to deal with them directly through interpreters rather than relying on other foreigners. As the next entry shows, Dashi people usually had to use local agencies in Guangzhou to communicate their requests to the court in Kaifeng.

In August/September 1008 Tuopoli 陀婆黎, a Dashi *bozhu*, appealed through the authorities in Guangzhou to submit tribute at the abode of emperor Zhenzong then engaged in performing sacrifices at Mt. Tai, and Tuopoli’s request was approved.<sup>80</sup> This entry is important, for it is the only instance in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* that combines the geographical identification, Dashi, with the professional designation, *bozhu*.

Geoff Wade addressed Tuopoli as ‘Pu Ma-wu Tuo-po-li 陀婆離 Abu Mahmud Tabriz’.<sup>81</sup> The relevant entry only records Tuopoli. ‘Pumawu’ does not appear in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* until 1086 when the Ministry of Rites informed the throne that the Zhancheng (Champa) envoys Bulingxichiqin 布靈息弛琴 and Pumawu 蒲麻勿 asked permission to continue with tribute submissions.<sup>82</sup> The reading of Tuopoli as the geographical origin of Pumawu as indicated by Wade’s rendition is inaccurate. The *Song huiyao*, also consulted by Wade, indeed has an entry on a Dashi mission in 1019: ‘On the second day of the fifth month the Dashi envoys Pumawu 蒲麻勿, Tuopoli 陀婆離 and deputy envoy Pujiaxin 蒲加心<sup>83</sup> submitted tribute.’<sup>84</sup>

For Tuopoli to be the place of origin for Pumawu<sup>85</sup>, it would have to precede his name, and not follow it. To be read together as Wade does – Abu Mahmud Tabriz – is odd.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>79</sup> *Song huiyao jigao*, “fanyi” 4.65a (7746). Geoff Wade recognized the refugees as Muslims. See his ‘The “Account of Champa” in the *Song Huiyao Jigao*’, in Tran Ky Phuong and Bruce M. Lockhart, eds, *The Cham of Vietnam: History, Society and Art*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2011, 143.

<sup>80</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 69.1552.

<sup>81</sup> Wade, ‘Early Muslim Expansion’, 406.

<sup>82</sup> See *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 390.9476 and 392.9551 where only Pumawu is addressed by name as Zhancheng envoy.

<sup>83</sup> Pujiaxin 蒲加心, envoy in 1004, is addressed as a *fanke* 蕃客 or foreigner both in *Wenxian tongkao* and *Songshi*. See *Wenxian tongkao* 339.2664 and *Songshi* 490.14120. See Wade, ‘Early Muslim Expansion’, 407.

<sup>84</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 199, “fanyi” 7.21b (7850).

<sup>85</sup> Pumawu 蒲麻勿/蒲摩勿 appears as the name of an envoy from Champa in *Song huiyao jigao* 197, “fanyi” 4.71a (7749); *Song huiyao jigao* 199 “fanyi” 7.31b (7855); and *Song huiyao jigao* 199, “fanyi” 7.39a (7859).

<sup>86</sup> Perhaps Wade was influenced by Arab naming conventions that link people to certain places like Abu Zayd, author of the *Akhbar al-Sin wa-l’Hind* (916) whose cognomen was al-

John W. Chaffee addressed the individual as Pu Mawu Tuopoli 蒲麻勿陀婆離, identified him tentatively as ‘Abu Mahmud Dawal’, and had Li Mawu 李麻勿, ‘a member of the mission’, submit a jade tablet to emperor Zhenzong.<sup>87</sup> The text records Tuopoli’s submission of tribute at Mt. Tai, as well as the envoy Liyawu 李亞勿 dispatching a subordinate called Mawu 麻勿.<sup>88</sup> Contrary to Chaffee’s suggestion, no familial relationship exists between Liyawu and Mawu. The *Songshi* also clearly distinguishes between Tuopoli and Liyawu.

The king of Dashi, in Central Asia, had requested several presents which were sent to him in 1009,<sup>89</sup> and it is evident that this king of Dashi and Tuopoli were not from the same region. For lack of more information, we cannot be sure that the king of Dashi was a successor to the ruler of Dashi that Xingqin had visited thirty years earlier.

In 1011 envoys from the Huihu 回鶻 (Uighurs) of Gansu 甘州, Puduan, Sanmalan, Wuxun, Pupoluo 蒲婆羅, of Dashi, and Tubo 吐蕃 (Tibet)) arrived at court.<sup>90</sup> Wuxun in the *Yuhai* (Sea of Jade) is a small country in the ocean that until 1011 had had no contact with China.<sup>91</sup> Writers agree that Wuxun was in West Asia, such as Robert Hartwell who identified Wuxun with Muscat, and Dilnoza Duturaeva for whom Wuxun designated ‘Mezoeen’ or Sohar in Oman.<sup>92</sup> The *Songshi* description of Zhancheng addresses Puduan, Sanmalan, Wuxun and Pupozhong 蒲婆眾 (most likely a variant of Pupoluo) as countries in the ocean (*haishang* 海上)<sup>93</sup>, and thus as places Zhancheng had contact with. As they appear together with Puduan, they were probably in Puduan’s vicinity, and not on the Arabian Peninsula. Otherwise, Puduan’s geographical location would have to be reassigned from the Philippines to Arabia.

In August 1012 Guangzhou reported on an unusual man who claimed to be 130 years old and to have come from Dashi on a ship from Gulo 古羅國 to see for himself the transformations that emperor Zhenzong had brought to China.

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Sirafi, (from Siraf). A certain degree of randomness in approaching the name is obvious, as further down in his list of envoys, Wade refers to the man simply as ‘Abu Tabriz’. See Wade, ‘Early Muslim Expansion’, 407. Wade’s reference to the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* as the work of Bi Yuan 畢沅 (1730-1797) is incorrect, too. Bi Yuan was the compiler of the *Xu Zizhi tongjian* 續資治通鑒 and not the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*. The *Xu Zizhi tongjian* does not mention Tuopoli nor Pumawu.

<sup>87</sup> Chaffee gives as reference for Pu Mawu Tuopoli ‘SHY, Fanyi 7, p. 19b’ which is incorrect as the name is not found there nor is any mention made there of the sacrifices at Mt. Tai. Li Mawu similarly is not recorded in Chaffee’s second reference ‘SS 249, p. 14120’. See Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants*, 73.

<sup>88</sup> *Songshi* 490.14120.

<sup>89</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 71.1594.

<sup>90</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 75.1712.

<sup>91</sup> *Yuhai*, 154.37a.

<sup>92</sup> Robert M. Hartwell, ‘Tribute Missions to China 960-1126’, self-published manuscript, Philadelphia, 1983, 206; Dilnoza Duturaeva, ‘Cengtan and Fulin: The Saljuqs in Chinese Sources’, *Crossroads*, 15, 2017, 32.

<sup>93</sup> *Songshi* 489.14084.

Wuxihuluhua's 無西忽盧華 statement includes some information on his itinerary. He did not say where he boarded the ship, which could have been either in Guluo, or in Dashi. In the latter case Guluo perhaps had trading links with Dashi. In the *Songshi* description of the journey from Shepo (Java) to Guangzhou, the distance from Sanfoqi (in southeastern Sumatra) to Guluo is given as seven days of sailing which supports the assumption that Guluo designated a location on the journey from Sumatra to Guangzhou.<sup>94</sup> In the same entry the sailing time from Java to Dashi is five days.

In Jia Dan's 賈耽 (730-805) famous, but incomplete, itinerary, the voyage from Heling (Java) is calculated as four to five days from Foshi 佛逝 which Pelliot located on the eastern coast of Sumatra.<sup>95</sup> The distances indicated prompted Feng Chengjun 馮承鈞 (1887-1946) to identify Dashi with Tumasik. He explained that the Malay word for 'sea' was 'tajik' which consequently transformed into Tumasik, the appellation for Singapore and Johore, and this Tumasik finally was represented by Danmaxi 單馬錫 in Wang Dayuan's 汪大淵 *Daoyi zhiliu* 島夷誌略 (1349; Brief Record of the Island Barbarians) that contained information on his maritime voyages in the early fourteenth century.<sup>96</sup> Stephen G. Haw proposed on the basis of the term 'tasik' (sea, ocean, lake) that Dashi may have referred to a place in western Java.<sup>97</sup>

The following entry represents an important part of the argumentation in favor of Dashi as Arabia<sup>98</sup>:

(Eleventh month of the first year of the Tiansheng era (December 1023/January 1024) Whenever Dashi submitted tribute, it sent it on the road that began at the western boundary of Shazhou 沙洲 and ended in Qinting 秦亭. At the start of the Qianxing era (February 1022-January 1023) Zhao

<sup>94</sup> *Songshi* 489.14091. For Geoff Wade Guluo was the Chinese designation for '[I]likely "Kra"' and referred to a 'polity' with a 'centre ... near Takuapa'. See Wade, 'Early Muslim Expansion', 377. A few years later Wade located Guluo 'near Takuapa and Kedah'. See Wade, 'Islam Across the Indian Ocean to 1500 CE', in Angela Schottenhammer, ed., *Early Interconnectivity across the Indian Ocean World, Vol. II: Exchange of Ideas, Religions, and Technologies*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 103. Takuapa is in Phang Nga province, southern Thailand; Kedah, a northwestern Malaysian state, is bordering Thailand. Both identifications rest on a place called Kalāh in Arab texts that has been widely, and often inconclusively, discussed previously. See, for instance, Hsü Yün-ts'iao, 'Notes on Tan-tan', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 20: 1, 1947, 49; S.Q. Fatimi, 'In Quest of Kalah', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 1: 2, 1960, 62-101; Paul Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula Before A.D. 1500*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malay Press, 1961, 216-220. Wheatley located Kalah on the 'Tenasserim coast' in southern Burma (224). Tibbetts arrived through his perusal of the Arab texts at Kedah. See Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 71.

<sup>95</sup> Pelliot, 'Deux itinéraires', 264-265.

<sup>96</sup> See Feng Chengjun, *Xiyu diming* 西域地名, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980, 91. Feng's view has been adopted by Chen Jiarong 陳佳榮, Xie Fang 謝方 and Lu Junling 陸峻嶺, *Gudai Nanhai diming huishi* 古代南海地名彙釋, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986, 136.

<sup>97</sup> Haw, 'Islam in Champa', 727.

<sup>98</sup> See for instance Hans Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World, 589-1276*, Leiden: Brill, 2005, 365.

Deming 趙德明 had asked for permission to return on this road to his country, but permission was denied. Thereupon, the Eunuch Deputy Office Manager (*runei fu duzhi* 入內副都知) Zhou Wenzhi 周文質 opined that one had to consider to be murdered by the people in the west and he asked that an order be given to use the maritime route from Guangzhou to reach the capital (of Dashi), and an imperial order confirmed this.<sup>99</sup>

Shazhou refers to Dunhuang while Qinting was a place in eastern Gansu. Dashi here denotes a location to the west of Dunhuang. Zhao Deming refers to Li Deming 李德明 (r. 1004-1032) the second of the Tangut rulers of the Xia state.<sup>100</sup> Neither the annals of emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1022-1063) nor Zhao Deming's biography in the *Songshi*<sup>101</sup> provide any context for his request. Zhou Wenzhi previously had held the position of Detached Director-in-chief (*zhubo dujian* 駐泊都監) in Guangzhou in 1007<sup>102</sup> where he supervised the construction of the city-wall and moat.<sup>103</sup> He then assumed a post on the western borders of the empire as Detached Director-in-chief of Jingyuan lu 涇原路 being responsible for controlling the borders in 1015<sup>104</sup>. Suspicious of Zhao Deming and his intentions, he submitted a report in 1020 in which he complained about Zhao Deming's riders harassing people in the area.<sup>105</sup> Zhou's suggestion for future Dashi missions to change to the maritime route because of the uncertainties of the overland route is strange. While in Guangzhou he may have witnessed the arrival of two Dashi ships and/or embassies, namely those of 1007 and 1008.<sup>106</sup> While in the west, he may have heard about the Dashi mission of 1019 (recorded in the *Song huiyao*, mentioned above). Zhou possibly mistook the Southeast Asian Dashi arriving in Guangzhou with the Central Asian Dashi which he may have only known through hearsay. This would explain his suggestion and why the throne accepted it, being as ignorant of the different identities subsumed under Dashi as Zhou Wenzhi. Emperor Renzong, or rather empress Liu 劉, the regent from 1022-1033, probably had not seen any Dashi embassy either.

The description of the Xia state records states and people to the west of the Song empire that include Tianzhu 天竺 (northern India), Yutian 于闐 (Khotan), Huihu 回鶻 (Uighurs), Dashi 大食, Gaochang 高昌 (Gaochang in Turfan), Qiuci 龜茲

<sup>99</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 101.2342.

<sup>100</sup> One of the ancestors of Zhao Deming, Tuoba Chici 拓跋赤辭, had been conferred the imperial family name by emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 626-649) of the Tang at the start of the Zhenguan era (627-649). See *Songshi* 485.13982. Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997) of the Song for services rendered by Li Jipeng 李繼捧, a cousin of Zhao Deming's father Li Jiqian 李繼遷, and disputed leader of the Tanguts, presented him with the family name Zhao during the Duangong era (988-989). See *Songshi* 485.13984. For this reason, all the following Tangut rulers in the *Songshi* are addressed with the family name Zhao.

<sup>101</sup> *Songshi* 485.13992. Zhao Deming received the title of King of the Great Xia (*Da Xia guowang* 大夏國王) from the Liao in 1021.

<sup>102</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 66.1473.

<sup>103</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 66.1485.

<sup>104</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 85.1946.

<sup>105</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 95.2199.

<sup>106</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 65.1456 and 69.1552.

(Kucha) and Fulin 拂林<sup>107</sup>. Dashi being included in the list of predominantly Central Asian places suggests that it was located there as well. Michal Biran proposed, like Karl Wittfogel (1896-1988) and Feng Chia-sheng (1904-1970) as well as Hans Bielenstein (1920-2015) before her, that from the eleventh century onwards Dashi specifically referred to the Muslim Qarakhanid empire (9<sup>th</sup> to early 13<sup>th</sup> cent).<sup>108</sup> Dilnoza Duturaeva treated Dashi as a reference to Muslim Turks, and more specifically, the Saljuq Turks and their empire (late 10<sup>th</sup>-late 12<sup>th</sup> centuries).<sup>109</sup> People in Central Asia, such as the Uighurs at this time still followed religions other than Islam.<sup>110</sup>

References to Dashi as one of several Central Asian places therefore are plentiful and in the context of the overland route illustrate that at that time Dashi did not always designate Arabs nor Arab lands, but lands to the west of the Chinese empire. This is corroborated by the Dashi missions recorded in the *Liaoshi* 遼史 (1344; History of the Liao (916-1125)).<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Given its appearance in a list of places that can be located on the eastern point of the land route to the west and before Kucha, I would therefore suggest a location in modern northwestern Xinjiang for Fulin. Fulin in scholarly writings is very often identified as Byzantium or Eastern Rome, since the publication of Friedrich Hirth's article on Fulin. See Hirth, 'The Mystery of Fu-lin', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 30, 1909, 1-31, and 33, 1913, 193-208. In contrast, Sören Stark proposes a viable location of Fulin in 'the lands east of Iran, perhaps Tokhāristān'. See Domenico Agostini and Sören Stark, 'Zāwulistān, Kāwulistān and the Land Bosī 波斯: On the Question of a Sasanian Court-in-Exile in the Southern Hindukush', *Studia Iranica*, 45, 2016, 20.

<sup>108</sup> Michal Biran, 'Unearthing the Liao Dynasty's Relation with the Muslim World: Migrations, Diplomacy, Commerce, and Mutual Perceptions', *Journal of Song Yuan Studies*, 43, 2013, 223; Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade*, 362 note 25; Karl A. Wittfogel and Feng Chia-sheng, *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907-1125)*, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1949, 51 and 108.

<sup>109</sup> Duturaeva, 'Cengtān and Fulin', 30.

<sup>110</sup> On the religious diversity of the region see for instance Jens Wilkens, 'Buddhism in the West Uyghur Kingdom and Beyond', in Carmen Meinert, *Central Asian Networks (7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, Leiden: Brill, 2016, 191-246; and Li Tang, 'Turkic Christians in Central Asia and China (5<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries)', in Zhang Dingjing and Abdurashid Yakup, eds, *Tujue yuwenxue yanjiu – Geng Shimin jiaoshou 80 huadan jinian wenji 突厥语文学研究 耿世民教授 80 华诞纪念集/Studies in Turkic philology – Festschrift in honour of the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Professor Geng Shimin*, Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2009, 435-448.

<sup>111</sup> In 924 Dashi submitted tribute to the Liao. See Tuotuo 脱脱 et al., *Liaoshi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 2.21. In 1006 a ruler of Dunhuang forwarded horses and jade from Dashi to the throne. See *Liaoshi* 14.162. In 1021, as the Dashi king again asked for a Liao princess to marry, the daughter of a lowly official was chosen to act as princess and sent off in response to the request. See *Liaoshi* 16.188. The tribute mission of 924 appeared almost at the same time as those from the Bosī and the Huihu. See *Liaoshi* 70.1127.

The next Dashi mission mentioned in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* dates from 1055<sup>112</sup>, while Zhou Wenzhi most likely only remained in the west until 1025.<sup>113</sup> Angela Schottenhammer views this mission as follows:

Due to military and political problems with the Tangut Xixia 西夏 state (1038–1227), after a mission from the Arabs (Dashi) arrived in China (on 7/1/1024)<sup>114</sup> via the land route through the territory of the Tanguts, it was decreed that future Arab missions should come by sea and use Guangzhou as their port of entry.<sup>115</sup>

The *Song huiyao* entries that Schottenhammer cites are largely corresponding with the contents in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*. The second of the *Song huiyao* entries quoted by Schottenhammer strengthens the argument for Dashi in Central Asia as Dashi is referred to as Shazhou Dashi guo 沙州大食國, that is Dashi in or of Shazhou.<sup>116</sup> The chronology remains the same, however, for Zhou Wenzhi in this narrative still had not seen any Dashi people from the west.

In 1060 Pushayi 蒲沙乙 arrived with tribute. Addressed as a chieftain of Dashi (*Dashi guo shouling* 大食國首領), for his efforts he was conferred the title Guard of the Wuning Staircase (Wuning sijie 武寧司階).<sup>117</sup> As is the case with several entries in the text, no information is provided how and where Pushayi arrived or disembarked. Similarly, the title he is addressed with, does not make it clear whether he was one of many chieftains of Dashi, or the only such leader. In the *Song huiyao* the appellation *Dashi guo shouling* prior to the arrival of Pushayi appears twice for the heads of mission in 1055 and in 1056.<sup>118</sup>

The information provided in the commentary to a Wuxun Dashi 勿巡大食 mission led by one Xinyatuoluo 辛押陁羅 in 1072 sheds some light on the understanding Song officials had of Dashi. The entry reads:

Xinyatuoluo, envoy of Wuxun Dashi, offered money and provisions to support the renovation of the city-wall of Guangzhou, and then asked to be given (in return) the position of Controller-Investigator of the Office of Foreign Headman (*tongcha fanzhang si* 統察番長司). On imperial order his

<sup>112</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 181.4382.

<sup>113</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 103.2389. The last mention of Zhou Wenzhi is in *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 104.2403. For an unknown offense he was penalized with a fine in 1026.

<sup>114</sup> There is no mention of a Dashi/Arab mission at the date given by Schottenhammer, January 7, 1024 (twenty-third day of the eleventh month of the first year of the Tiansheng era); the date is that of Zhou Wenzhi's memorial to the throne.

<sup>115</sup> Schottenhammer, 'China's Increasing Integration', 36.

<sup>116</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 199, "fanyi" 7.22b (7850).

<sup>117</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 191.4611.

<sup>118</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 199, "fanyi" 7.29 (7854), gives the date November 17, 1055 (Zhihe second year, tenth month, twenty-sixth day) and *Song huiyao jigao* 199, "fanyi" 7.29b (7854) provides the date May/June 1056 (Jiayou 1, fourth month). The mission headed by Pushayi is recorded in *Song huiyao jigao*, "fanyi" 7.30b (7854). The 1056 mission is not recorded in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* nor in the *Songshi*. The reference SHY "FY 7" that Wade gives for Pushayi as head of 1055 mission is erroneous. See Wade, 'Early Muslim Expansion', 407. The relevant information comes from *Song huiyao jigao* 197, "fanyi" 4.92a (7759).

suggestion was not accepted and (authorities in) Guangzhou were ordered to investigate what he had asked for and make it known (to the throne).<sup>119</sup>

The imperial order to examine Xinyatuoluo's request probably referred to the title Controller-Investigator of the Office of Foreign Headman since it did not exist, although foreign headmen (*fanzhang* 番長) already had a long history in Guangzhou by this point. The commentary to this entry reads:

In the ... month of this year Wuxun had submitted tribute,<sup>120</sup> but no Dashi (envoys) had come with those of Wuxun. Xinyatuoluo thus was the Wuxun envoy, and there is no known reason why he also is addressed (as envoy of) Wuxun and Dashi. The *huiyao* in its Dashi guo entry also records this, and so do the *shizhengji* 時政記. This must be examined.

Li Tao regarded Xinyatuoluo as an emissary from Wuxun, and not from Dashi. The *shizhengji* (Records of Current Government) for Renzong's reign are no longer extant, but the *Song huiyao* indeed contains a version of the anecdote; however, it reads slightly different compared to the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*. In the *Song huiyao* account Xinyatuoluo, also as envoy of Dashi Wuxun, was given presents by imperial order as he bid farewell on July 9, 1072 (twenty-first day of the sixth month of the fifth year of the Xining era). He then asked to be made Controlling and Investigating Supervisor of the Office of Foreign Headman (*tongcha fanzhang si gongshi* 統察番長司公事) which would have made him superior to the headman. After the Guangzhou authorities had examined the amount of gold and silver he offered, his request was denied.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 234.5683.

<sup>120</sup> Under the fourth month of the fifth year of the Xining era the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* reports on tribute bearing embassies from Wuxun and Zhancheng (Champa). See *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 232.5642. The name of the envoy from Dashi Wuxun is given as Xinpituoluo 辛毗陁羅. See *Song huiyao jigao* 197, "fanyi" 7.32b (7855).

<sup>121</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 197, "fanyi" 4.92a (7759). Hyunhee Park, quoting an article by Zhang Junyan (that I had no access to), addressed Xinyatuoluo as an 'Arab merchant Xinya Tuoluo from Oman' and called the titles he was conferred 'high-ranking governmental posts'. See Hyunhee Park, *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 44. Xinyatuoluo morphed into Abu Obide Xinya Tuoluo Qasin in Victoria Almonte's reading of an article by Abdullah Saleh Al Saadi. See Almonte, *The Historical Value of the Work Lingwai daida by Zhou Qufei*, Rome: Aracne editrice, 2020, 19. This is evidently wrong, as Abdullah Saleh addresses with this name a 'famous navigator of Oman' who allegedly sailed to Guangzhou 'in the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD'. See Abdullah Saleh Al Saadi, 'The Origins of Omani-China Friendship: A Historical Review', *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (in Asia)*, 6: 2, 2012, 93. The other occurrence of Xinya Tuoluo in Al Saadi's text is to the Xinyatuoluo in question. Al Saadi refers to 'written records' of the voyage which I have not been able to identify. The same claim – 'Abu Obide Xinya Tuoluo Qasin ... the first Middle Easterner in written records' – is made by Nasser al Busaidi. See 'Keeping the Momentum of China-Oman Ties', [http://en.chinadiplomacy.org.cn/2021-07/12/content\\_77620890.shtml](http://en.chinadiplomacy.org.cn/2021-07/12/content_77620890.shtml), accessed 3 October 2022. For Chaffee Xinyatuoluo was a 'Muscat envoy'. See Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants*, 94 and 101.



The next Dashi mission is recorded for January 9, 1086.<sup>122</sup> The penultimate Dashi entry in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* reports that a very peculiar tissue called ‘fire-cleansing cloth’ (*huowan bu* 火浣布) from Dashi was submitted as tribute.<sup>123</sup> The ‘fire-cleansing cloth’ is a product from Southeast Asia, which Berthold Laufer translated as ‘cloth which can be cleansed by fire’ and addressed it as ‘fire-proof cloth’.<sup>124</sup> The Chinese were familiar with the ‘fire-proof cloth’ since at least the fourth century. Guo Pu 郭璞 (276-324) explains the origins of the cloth as follows:

Qibo (Qibo guo 耆薄國) lies 10,000 *li* to the east of Funan. A further 5,000 *li* from there is Fire Mountain country (*Huoshan guo*). The mountain, even though it is continuously raining, is constantly on fire. People catch the white rats that come from the mountain side in search of food and make garments from their fur. This is the cloth cleansed by fire (*huogan bu* 火幹布) and it comes from this mountain.<sup>125</sup>

For Pelliot Qibo represented an erroneous designation that correctly should read Zhebo 者薄 which either referred to Java or Sumatra.<sup>126</sup> If Dashi produced the ‘fire-cleansing cloth’, Dashi would have to be situated in the western Indonesian archipelago on account of the earlier Chinese sources on the topic.

The last mission from Dashi recorded in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* is dated to March 15, 1099 (*jiawu* day of the second month of the second year of the Yuanfu era).<sup>127</sup>

### 5.3 The *Songshi* record

In the annals of emperor Taizong in the *Songshi* we find under the year 976 (ninth year of the Kaibao era) the name of the envoy Puximi 蒲希密 of Kelifu 珂黎拂, the king of Dashi guo.<sup>128</sup> Hartwell read the envoy’s name as a transcription of the Arabic name Abu Hamid, and the ruler’s name as a title, ‘caliph’, which he identified as the then ruling caliph of Baghdad, Al-Muti.<sup>129</sup> He also referred to a previous mission from a Dashi king called Helifu 訶黎拂 led by an envoy called Buluohai 不囉海.<sup>130</sup> For Hirth and Rockhill Puximi and Buluohai were transcriptions of two names for one and the same person, they addressed as ‘Abu-Hamid’.<sup>131</sup> The *Songshi* lists a Dashi mission without any names in the annals section, and so does the *Wenxian*

<sup>122</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 348.8356.

<sup>123</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 473.11287.

<sup>124</sup> Berthold Laufer, ‘Asbestos and Salamander: An Essay in Chinese and Hellenistic Folklore’, *T’oung Pao*, 16: 3, 1915, 309-310.

<sup>125</sup> Guo Pu, *Shanhai jing jianzhu* 山海經箋疏 (Commentary to Excursion through Mountains and Seas), ed. Hao Yixing 郝懿行, Jinan: Qi-Lu shushe, 2010, 16.5000.

<sup>126</sup> Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo Vol. 1*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1959, 448.

<sup>127</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 506.12062.

<sup>128</sup> *Songshi* 3.47. This mission is included in the description of Dashi in *Songshi* 490.14118. See also *Song huiyao jigao* 199, “fanyi” 7.5b (7842).

<sup>129</sup> Hartwell, ‘Tribute Missions’, 196.

<sup>130</sup> Hartwell, ‘Tribute Missions’, 195.

<sup>131</sup> Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, 122.

*tongkao* that Hartwell consulted.<sup>132</sup> The *Shantang kaosuo* 山堂攷索 (1210, Critical Compilation from Shantang; also referred to as *Qunshu kaosuo* 群書攷索 (Critical Compilation of All Books)) by Zhang Ruyi 章如愚 (*jinsi* of 1196), Hartwell's third reference for this, does not contain these names either.<sup>133</sup> The *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 (1728, Comprehensive Corpus of Illustrations and Books, from Ancient Times to the Present) has the names Helifu and Buluohai and indicates a 'Dashi zhuan' 大食傳 as the source.<sup>134</sup> This must be the description of Dashi in the *Songshi* that records the mission by Buluohai for the seventh year of the Kaibao era (974/975), and the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* enters it under the *renyin* 壬寅 day of the eleventh month of the seventh year of the Kaibao era (January 13, 975).<sup>135</sup> Puximi's second appearance in 993 (fourth year of the Chunhua era) is recorded in the *Songshi* which includes the text of a letter sent by the ailing Puximi to the throne via his deputy Liyawu 李亞勿.<sup>136</sup>

During the Yongxi era (984-987) the Song court had dispatched eight eunuch-officials (*neishi* 内侍) on a mission to seek out countries in the ocean to the south (*hainan* 海南) and to encourage merchants to come to China for trade. Those who eventually responded were requested to disembark at the Maritime Trade Office (*shibosi* 市舶司) in Liang Zhe, that was located in Mingzhou 明州 (modern Ningbo, Zhejiang).<sup>137</sup> The eunuchs, apart from gold and silk, were also carrying imperial edicts (*chishu* 敕書) to present to their eventual hosts. This initiative to encourage foreign traders to come to Guangzhou fits well with the letter given to Puximi earlier in 976.

Puximi explained that when he had been to Guangzhou before, the headman of the foreigners had given him a letter encouraging him to submit tribute. Schottenhammer and Chaffee assume that the letter was sent to Puximi's abode taking their cue from the phrase *zuo zai benguo* 昨在本国 which Chaffee translated 'formerly when I was in my home country'.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>132</sup> *Songshi* 2.28 and *Wenxian tongkao* 339.2663.

<sup>133</sup> I examined both the Ming edition of the *Qunshu kaosuo qianji* 前集 and *houji* 後集.

<sup>134</sup> Chen Menglei 陳夢雷 et al., *Gujin tushu jicheng*, Yongzheng-edition, 78.7a.

<sup>135</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 15.328. The section of the *Song huiyao* ("fanyi" 7) that according to Wade provides the name Buluohai does not mention that name. See Wade, 'Early Muslim Expansion', 405.

<sup>136</sup> *Songshi* 490.14118-14119. The *Songshi* is the only text that has a complete version of the letter, the *Wenxian tongkao* only mentions it generally. See *Wenxian tongkao* 339.2663.

<sup>137</sup> *Songshi* 186.4559.

<sup>138</sup> Schottenhammer, 'China's Gate to the South, part II', 21. She quotes Chaffee ('Diasporic Identities', 401) and from Chaffee's manuscript which is found in the published text of Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants*, 70-71. The rendering of the phrase is with certainty based on Kuwabara Jitsuzo's translation. See Kuwabara Jitsuzo, 'On P'u Shou-keng 蒲壽庚, a Man of the Western Regions, who was the Superintendent of the Trading Ships' Office in Ch'üan-chou 泉州 towards the End of the Sung dynasty, together with a General Sketch of Trade of the Arabs in China during the T'ang and Sung Eras, part 1', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, 2, 1928, 40. Chaffee confused Kuwabara with Friedrich Hirth in the footnote accompanying his translation. See Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants*, 70 note 63.

I understand this phrase to refer to Puximi's first stay in Guangzhou in 976 at which time he received the headman's letter and the phrase thus should read 'when I had been here the last time'. The headman of the foreigners (*fanzhang* 蕃長) does not have any attributes that would identify him as Arab, Muslim, or Arab Muslim, yet Schottenhammer proposes the existence of resident Arabs:

By early Song times, the Arab community had partly recovered. References to Iranians are gradually disappearing and sources only speak of "Dashi", i.e. Tājīk. *Yudi jisheng* states that "outside the borders of the [city] towers foreign merchants live together." *Song huiyao* speaks of a community of (rich) foreign merchants who came to Canton, either alone or with their families, with their wives from abroad or locally married. And from the description of the land of the Arabs in the *Songshi* it is clear that Arab merchants frequently called at Guangzhou in the early Song dynasty.<sup>139</sup>

The *Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝 (Records of Famous Places) by Wang Xiangzhi 王象之 (1163-1230) refers to and quotes from an earlier text contained in the *Wuxi ji* 武溪集 (Collected Works of Wuxi) of Yu Jing 余靖 (1000-1064), the 'Yu Jing zhi Guangzhou biao' 余靖知廣州表.<sup>140</sup> Yu Jing had been appointed to deal with the rebellion of Nong Zhigao 侬智高 (Vietnamese: Nùng Trí Cao, 1025–1055?)<sup>141</sup> as military commissioner for investigations in the western circuit of Guangnan (*Guangnan xilu tiliang anfushi* 廣南西路體量安撫使) and while handling this was concurrently serving as prefect (*zhi* 知) of Guangzhou in 1061.<sup>142</sup> The complete quotation from Yu's memorial reads: 'In the past there used to be no (habitable) land under the walls in the area of the Yuetai 越臺 where foreign merchants are living.'<sup>143</sup> *Yuetai* refers to a specific location in Guangzhou namely the Yuexiu shan 越秀山 (also 粵秀山) that used to be to the north of the walled city, and does not designate '[city] towers'.

The *Kangxi Guangdong tongzhi* 康熙廣東通志 (1697, Gazetteer of Guangdong of the Kangxi Reign) identifies the 'foreigners' (*hu* 胡) further, referring to the original text by Yu Jing: 'The area below the Yuetai, once called the living area of

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Careless referencing is rife in Chaffee's book. For a review of some of the errors and misconceptions contained in the book see Stephen G. Haw, [https://www.academia.edu/44571931/John\\_W\\_Chaffee\\_The\\_Muslim\\_Merchants\\_of\\_Premodern\\_China\\_Review](https://www.academia.edu/44571931/John_W_Chaffee_The_Muslim_Merchants_of_Premodern_China_Review), and [https://www.academia.edu/44731954/Chaffee\\_Muslim\\_Merchants\\_Review\\_addenda](https://www.academia.edu/44731954/Chaffee_Muslim_Merchants_Review_addenda), accessed 15 March 2022.

<sup>139</sup> Schottenhammer, 'China's Gate to the South, part II', 20.

<sup>140</sup> Wang Xiangzhi, *Yudi jisheng*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992, 89.9a (2835).

<sup>141</sup> James Anderson provides a study of the rebellion in his *The Rebel Den of Nùng Trí Cao: Loyalty and Identity Along the Sino-Vietnamese Frontier*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.

<sup>142</sup> *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 193.4668.

<sup>143</sup> Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji* (*Siku quanshu*), 15.16b.

foreign merchants, did not refer to (foreigners from Central Asia (*xiyu* 西域)), but to the sea Lao (*hailao* 海獠).<sup>144</sup>

Hu 胡, foreigners, in this case was used as a reference to an ethnic group called sea Lao, and not to Central Asians. One could argue that by the time of Yu Jing's memorial the area at Yuexiu shan had been vacated, and that the term was merely used as a geographical designation. The *Tingshi* 程史 (Pillar Histories) by Yue Ke 岳珂 (1183-1234) identified the sea Lao as immigrants from Champa.<sup>145</sup> Perhaps rather than 'Arabs', these were descendants of the refugees from Champa resettled in Guangzhou in late 987 or of another group from Champa that had arrived a year later.<sup>146</sup>

Schottenhammer presents the following explanation of *fanzhang*:

Important for us in this context is the fact of the mentioning of a foreign headman in Guangzhou, because this attests to the presence of Arabs in Guangzhou and also highlights his role in fostering communication with the Abbasid Caliphate and promoting diplomatic and commercial relations between China and the Arabs.<sup>147</sup>

The position of headman indeed attests to the presence of foreigners in Guangzhou which is documented in Chinese sources since the Tang dynasty.<sup>148</sup> The most prominent Song source for the foreign headman office is Zhu Yu's 朱彧 (fl. early 12<sup>th</sup> cent.) *Pingzhou ketan* (Chats at Pingzhou). Zhu Yu does not indicate the religious affiliation of the headman: 'People from all countries across the ocean live in the foreign quarter of Guangzhou and one among them acts as headman (*fanzhang* 蕃長) who serves as supervisor of the foreign quarter.<sup>149</sup> If Dashi at this time really denoted Arab Muslims one must wonder why Zhu Yu did not use it to address the headman. Chaffee's 'Arab headman (*fanzhang* 蕃長) in Guangzhou'<sup>150</sup> is an error which can be traced to Kuwabara who interpreted an Arabic source in connection to

<sup>144</sup> Jin Guangzu 金光祖 et al., *Kangxi Guangdong tongzhi*, Zhongguo fangzhiku 中國方志庫, 28.51a.

<sup>145</sup> Yue Ke, *Tingshi*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981, 11.125. John W. Chaffee translated *hailao* simply as 'sea-barbarians' and thus disregarded the term as an ethnonym. See John W. Chaffee, 'Han Chinese Representations of South Sea Merchants in Song China', in Angela Schottenhammer, ed., *Early Global Interconnectivity across the Indian Ocean World, Volume I: Commercial Structures and Exchanges*, Cham: Palgrave/McMillan, 2019, 304. For a refutation of the claim that Arab Muslims lived in Champa in the tenth century see Haw, 'Islam in Champa'.

<sup>146</sup> See *Song huiyao jigao* 197, "fanyi" 7.65a (7746) and *Songshi* 489.14080. For Geoff Wade these groups were Muslims. See Wade, 'Champa in the *Song hui-yao*: A Draft Translation', ARI working paper no. 53, December 2005, 10.

<sup>147</sup> Schottenhammer, 'China's Gate to the South, part II', 21.

<sup>148</sup> Li Zhao 李肇, *Tang guoshi bu* 唐國史補, in *Tang Wudai biji xiaoshuo daguan* 唐五代筆記小說大觀, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000, 3.199; *Tang huiyao* 100.1799.

<sup>149</sup> Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou ketan*, in *Song Yuan Wudai biji xiaoshuo daguan* 宋元筆記小說大觀, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001, 2.2310.

<sup>150</sup> Chaffee, *Muslim Merchants*, 71.

the headman in Guangzhou.<sup>151</sup> The text is attributed to a person named Sulayman the Merchant, most likely a Persian, and dated to 851, in the *Akhbar al-Sin wa-l'Hind* (Accounts of China and India) by Abu Zayd al-Sirafi (916).<sup>152</sup>

Kuwabara assumed that the man appointed by the ruler from among the Muslim merchants to serve as judge of their affairs was the foreign headman. The Chinese sources suggest that the headman of the foreigners was an ad hoc appointment by the local authorities. The man in charge of the position was responsible for all foreigners, not just selected religious and ethnic groups, and it is hard to imagine that several headmen were employed for various groups who most likely only seasonally sojourned in Guangzhou.

The trustworthiness of Arabic sources before the fourteenth century is not easily established, for, as Tibbetts explained, 'the first and only authentic travel account we have is the Voyage of Ibn Battuta which comes from the middle of the fourteenth century.'<sup>153</sup> Yet, even Ibn Battuta's record has come under scrutiny and it appears that he copied from various other sources, and thus the extent of his travels has to be doubted.<sup>154</sup> In addition, according to Ranabir Chakravarti, many of the early geographical Arabic texts are 'stereotypical accounts' by authors (including Ibn Battuta) who 'never visited India or parts thereof'.<sup>155</sup>

Further evidence that Kuwabara should be used with a healthy dose of scepticism is his depiction of Putuopolicı 蒲陀婆離慈. The *Songshi* reads:

In the sixth year (of the Xining era (1073)) Putuopolicı 蒲陀婆離慈, who had the title of chief barbarian protecting and yielding commandant (*dufanshou baoshun langjiang* 都蕃首保順郎將), submitted a memorial explaining that he had ordered his son Mawu 麻勿 to present tribute asking that he be recognized as his deputy, and requesting that he be made general (*jiangjun* 將軍). By imperial order Mawu was merely conferred the title commandant (*langjiang* 郎將).<sup>156</sup>

Kuwabara's translation reads: 'The following year when P'u-t'o-po-li-tz'u 蒲陀波離慈, the Arab headman (都蕃首) asked the government to appoint his son Ma-hu 麻

<sup>151</sup> Kuwabara, 'On P'u Shou-keng', 41.

<sup>152</sup> So far, I have not been able to find any study of the transmission of Sulayman's report and potential revisions of the text from its production until its arrival in France in the late seventeenth century. Tibbetts treats it as a compilation of travelers' tales that predate 851. The original manuscript held by the French National Library did not have an author nor title when it arrived in France in 1673. See Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 5-6.

<sup>153</sup> Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts*, 3.

<sup>154</sup> See Roxanne L. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006, 63-85.

<sup>155</sup> Chakravarti, 'Indic Mercantile Networks and the Indian Ocean World: A Millennial Overview (c. 500-1500)', in Angela Schottenhammer, ed., *Early Global Interconnectivity across the Indian Ocean World, Vol. I: Commercial Structures and Exchanges*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 191-224.

<sup>156</sup> *Songshi* 490.14121.

忽 as successor he was refused.<sup>157</sup> *Du fanshou* very likely does not refer to a headman, there not being any further mention of the title in the relevant sources. The case is presented in the *Song huiyao* as follows:

On the fifth day of the tenth month of the sixth year (of the Xining era (November 6, 1073)) Tuopolici 陀婆離慈 was conferred the title of chief barbarian protecting and yielding commandant. Putuopolici 蒲陀婆離慈 submitted a memorial saying that as his son Mawu was about to present tribute, he requested for him to be conferred the designation of general. And then he asked for Mawu to replace him. An imperial order conferred the title commandant on Pu Mawu, everything else was not followed through.<sup>158</sup>

‘Pu’ in this case could be either a family name or an honorary form of address. No connection to Guangzhou, that had a history of *fanzhang* since the Tang, is made in the two entries. The *Song huiyao* explains ‘chief barbarian’ as an attribute to the title conferred by the Song court on a person that was of prominent rank. The pertinent entry in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* establishes Tuopoli as a place subsumed under Dashi:

On the *bingwu* 丙午 day of the (seventh month of the sixth year of the Xining era (August 10, 1073))<sup>159</sup> Tuopoli of Dashi presented tribute. Putuopolici 蒲陀婆離慈, chief barbarian protecting and yielding commandant, said that as his son Mawu was about to bring tribute, he requested for him to be conferred the title of general. And then he asked for Mawu to replace him. An imperial order conferred the title commandant on Mawu.<sup>160</sup>

The *Songshi* describes Tuopoli as one of several places that are all Dashi, namely Wuxun 勿巡, Tuopoli 陀婆離, Yuluhedi 俞盧和地, Maluoba 麻囉跋. Chaffee refers to Putuopolici as Pu Tuopoli Ci, addresses him as ‘foreign headman’ (like Kuwabara), and makes him the superior of merchants from ‘Muscat, Oman’, ‘?’, ‘Al-Katif (a port in Bahrain)’ (for which no explanation is given), and ‘Merbat’.<sup>161</sup> Chaffee had provided the geographical identifications previously (together with the ‘Arab headman’) and an inaccurate citation that reads *guan Putuopolici* 冠蒲陀婆離慈 which is not found in the original text.<sup>162</sup> It is evident that the original statement (*ran jie guan yi Dashi* 然皆冠以大食) is an explanation of which countries were subsumed under Dashi rather than being ‘headed by the Arab kingdom’.

In the *Song huiyao* Puluoshen 蒲囉洗, envoy from Dashi Yuluhedi, submitted tribute on January 15, 1074 (the sixteenth day of the twelfth month of the sixth year

<sup>157</sup> Kuwabara, On P’u Shou-keng’, 41.

<sup>158</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 197, “fanyi” 4.92 (7759).

<sup>159</sup> The tenth month in the *Song huiyao* clearly is a xylographic error (十 for 六) as the corresponding days are both the fifth of the month.

<sup>160</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 246.5977. See also *Song huiyao jigao* 197, “fanyi” 4.92.a (7759).

<sup>161</sup> See Chaffee, *Muslim Merchants*, 95.

<sup>162</sup> Chaffee, ‘Diasporic Identities’, 405.

of the Xining era)<sup>163</sup>. The *Wenchang zalu* locates Yuluhedi in the southern ocean (*nanhai* 南海).<sup>164</sup>

Since Wuxun was likely located in Southeast Asia (see above), the others might have denominated regions and places in maritime Southeast Asia as well. The tribute items submitted by Wuxun – camphor (*longnao* 龍腦), silk cloth (*douluojin* 兜羅錦), feather fringed silk cloth (*qiuujinzhun* 毬錦襪) and mats made from foreign plants (*fanhua dian* 蕃花簞) – confirm this. Tuopo 陀婆 had presented gold ornamented fly catchers (*terpsiphone paradisi*; *jinshishoudai* 金飾壽帶)<sup>165</sup>, bangles (*lianhuan bigou* 連環臂鈎), as well as several kinds of pearls and such.<sup>166</sup>

Chen Yang 陳暘 (1064-1128), author of the *Yueshu* 樂書 (Book of Music), provides a short description of the music played in Dashi Maluoba 大食麻囉跋 in the chapter on southern barbarians (*nanman* 南蠻) which suggests a South or Southeast Asian setting for Maluoba.<sup>167</sup>

Towards the end of the Dashi description in the *Songshi* the following information is presented:

This country is to the northwest of Quanzhou. On a sailing ship it takes a journey of forty days and more to arrive in Lanli 藍里 (Lambri, northern Sumatra). The following year, taking advantage of the sailing wind, it takes sixty days and more and only then does one reach this country.<sup>168</sup>

This short paragraph explains that the one-way trip from southern China to Dashi took two years. Kenneth R. Hall suggested three years for the round trip, as the southwest monsoon in the western Indian ocean would permit ships to sail in one season from western Asia to Southeast Asia and on to China.<sup>169</sup> Hall also proposed that sailors would stopover in the Maldives from where they sailed to ‘Dafur or Aden’.<sup>170</sup> He does not specify the route the ships would take to reach their destination in his contemplation of the source material for which he relied on the Hirth and Rockhill translation of the *Zhufan zhi*.

<sup>163</sup> *Song huiyao jigao* 197, “fanyi” 4.92.b (7759).

<sup>164</sup> *Wenchang zalu* 1.4b.

<sup>165</sup> This bird presently is found from Central to South Asia as well as in southwest Burma. See IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (2021), <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/103715992/155628184#geographic-range>, accessed 24 May 2022. It is also presently considered ‘extant and vagrant’ in the Maldives and the United Arab Emirates.

<sup>166</sup> *Songshi* 490.14121. I have translated *bigou* 臂鞞, bangles, instead of *bigou* 臂鈎 for which I could not come up with a reasonable meaning.

<sup>167</sup> *Yueshu* (*Siku quanshu*), 159.9a.

<sup>168</sup> *Songshi* 490.14121. See also Zhao Rukuo 趙汝适 (1170-1231), *Zhufan zhi jiaoshi* 諸蕃志校釋, in Yang Bowen 楊博文 and Xie Fang 謝方, eds, *Zhufan zhi jiaoshi Zhifang waiji jiaoshi* 諸蕃志校釋 職方外紀校釋, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000, 89.

<sup>169</sup> Kenneth R. Hall, ‘Ports-of-Trade, Maritime Diasporas, and Networks of Trade and Cultural Integration on the Bay of Bengal Region of the Indian Ocean: c. 1300-1500’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 53: 1-2, 2010, 110.

<sup>170</sup> Hall, ‘Ports-of-Trade’, 111.

The voyage from Quanzhou to northern Sumatra took forty days, and from there to the final destination another sixty days.<sup>171</sup> When it comes to sailing times and distances covered, some speculating is required. The distance from Quanzhou to the modern port of Belawan, Medan, in northeastern Sumatra (the closest to Lambri I could find), is ca. 2675 nautical miles (nm) (close to 5000 km).<sup>172</sup> Assuming a steady wind and an average speed of five knots the direct voyage would take about 22 days excluding stopovers to pick up provisions. A speed of three knots comes very close to the journey indicated in the *Songshi*, namely 37 days. If we therefore assume three knots to be the average speed and perfect wind, currents, and weather conditions to prevail, in sixty days a ship would cover 8100 km (~ 4374 nm). These calculations are based on modern shipping routes and continuous cross-ocean sailing without any stops which was unlikely during the time under review when most vessels would remain in sight of the coastline.

Hirth and Rockhill recognized the country of Maliba 麻離拔國, described under the heading Dashi zhuguo 大食諸國 in the *Lingwai daida*, as the ‘Hadramaut coast of Arabia’, that is modern day Yemen.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Note that Huei-Ying Kuo in her draft chapter ‘Charting China in the Thirteenth-Century World: The First English Translation of *Zhu fan zhi* and Its Recipients in China in the 1930s’, 7, translated this section incorrectly in that she had the foreign ships depart from Dashi instead of from Quanzhou. I do not know if the mistake has been corrected in the published version of the chapter to which I have had not had access. See Patrick Manning and Abigail Owen, *Knowledge in Translation: Global Patterns of Scientific Exchange, 1000-1800 CE*, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2018, 93-116. The draft chapter is available here: [https://www.academia.edu/40226531/Charting\\_China\\_in\\_the\\_Thirteenth\\_Century\\_World\\_The\\_First\\_English\\_Translation\\_of\\_Zhu\\_fan\\_zhi\\_and\\_Its\\_Recipients\\_in\\_China\\_in\\_the\\_1930s](https://www.academia.edu/40226531/Charting_China_in_the_Thirteenth_Century_World_The_First_English_Translation_of_Zhu_fan_zhi_and_Its_Recipients_in_China_in_the_1930s), accessed 10 March 2022. The translation of the *Zhufan zhi* she refers to in the title is that by Friedrich Hirth and William W. Rockhill both of whom were not trained in classical Chinese studies which explains some of the misconceptions found in their English translation. Their translation was based on previous partial translations into German by Hirth. See, for instance, the entry on the island of Hainan in Hirth and Rockhill which owes much to Hirth’s German translation in ‘Die Insel Hainan’. See Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ru-kua*, 175-190.

<sup>172</sup> See Ports.com, ‘Seaports: Info, Marketplace’, <http://ports.com/sea-route/port-of-tianjin,china/port-of-belawan,indonesia/#/?a=0&b=0&c=Port%20of%20Quanzhou,%20China&d=Port%20of%20Belawan,%20Indonesia>, accessed 2 January 2022.

<sup>173</sup> Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ru-kua*, 119-120. Almut Netolitzky in her German translation of the *Lingwai daida* followed suit, addressed Dashi as ‘Die arabischen Reiche’ (the Arab states), and consequently rendered Maliba as ‘das Reich Merbat’. See Almut Netolitzky, *Das Lingwai tai-ta von Chou Ch’ü-fei: Eine Landeskunde Südchinas aus dem 12. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977, 44. Victoria Almonte understood Dashi zhuguo 大食諸國 in the *Lingwai daida* more generally as the ‘Arabic-Islamic Empire’, and discussed the possible locations of Maliba at length. See Almonte, *The Historical Value*, 139-143. She found it noteworthy that the *Lingwai daida* employed a ‘different toponym, Maluoba, instead of Maliba’. See Zhou Qufei 周去非, *Lingwai daida jiaozhu* 嶺外代答校注, revised and with commentaries by Yang Wuquan 楊武泉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), 99; and Almonte, *The Historical Value*, 145. What the text does here is simply explain that the Maliba of Zhou Qufei’s time in the late



The main port in Yemen is Aden at a distance of 3573 nm (~6620 km) from northern Sumatra which a ship at a speed of three knots could reach in fifty days. If we apply the numbers provided in the *Songshi*, an arrival on the Arabian Peninsula is possible, but improbable. The Hirth and Rockhill identification of Maliba with Mirbat on the Hadramaut coast stems from their attitude to regard Dashi as 'Arabs'.<sup>174</sup> In an earlier paper Hirth had still been undecided between 'Marabut, Malabar, Mirbāt', that is between locations in the Philippines, southern India, and the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>175</sup>

Zhang Xinglang 張星烺, in contrast, viewed Maliba as a transliteration of Malabar on the southwestern Indian coast (modern Kerala)<sup>176</sup> and so did Lu Junling 陸峻嶺, editor of the *Yiyu zhi* 異域志 by Zhou Zhizhong 周致中 (fl. Yuan dynasty). Malabar as a region of economic activities from early times onwards is well documented and needs no further introduction.<sup>177</sup> As early as 1132 Malabar is attested to as an important commercial centre in a Geniza document.<sup>178</sup>

The *Songshi* entry on the voyage to Dashi shares a lot with the *Lingwai daida*:  
From Guangzhou one sets out on the journey on a boat after the middle of the winter with a northern wind and arrives after about forty days in a place called Lanli where sapan-wood, white tin and long white reeds are purchased. The journey continues in the next winter, and taking advantage of favorable northeasterly winds one arrives there after sixty days. ... In the eleventh month of the third year of the Yuanyou era of (emperor) Zhezong, men submitted tribute by Maluoba of Dashi, and this is Maliba.<sup>179</sup>

The *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* records the ever only arrival of an envoy from Dashi Maluoba with tribute for December 10, 1088 (*dingmao* 丁卯 day of the eleventh month of the third year of the Yuanyou era).<sup>180</sup> The conferral of the title protecting and yielding commandant (*baoshun langjiang* 保順郎將) on the envoy Jiali 加立 occurred on May 21, 1089, while the submission of various tribute items is noted for December 25, 1089.<sup>181</sup> The bestowal of the title protecting and yielding commandant that we have encountered above confirms the supposition that it was given to envoys and was not an attribute of an Arab headman as suggested by Chaffee.

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twelfth century was the same as Maluoba that had sent envoys during the reign of emperor Zhezong 哲宗 (r. 1085-1100). The Maluoba mission is recorded in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* as well as in the *Songshi* (see translation below).

<sup>174</sup> Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, 120 and 121.

<sup>175</sup> Hirth, 'Die Länder des Islam', 12.

<sup>176</sup> Zhang Xinglang (ed.), *Zhong Xi jiaotong shiliao huibian* 中西交通史料汇编 vol. 2, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996, 261.

<sup>177</sup> Zhou Zhizhong, *Yiyu zhi*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000, 39.

<sup>178</sup> Chakravarti, 'Indic Mercantile Networks', 204. Chaffee, while addressing Maluoba as Merbat, independently treats 'Malabar (Ma'bar)' for which he does not give a Chinese designation. See Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants*, 95 (for Maluoba), 58, 74, 98, 120, 124, 134-135 (for Ma'bar).

<sup>179</sup> *Lingwai daida jiaozhu*, 99.

<sup>180</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 417.10129.

<sup>181</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 417.10129 and 425.10270, respectively. See also *Songshi* 18.327.

Maluoba as Malabar makes it possible to view Dashi as settlements (of perhaps immigrant western Asian people without specific religious affiliations) in south India.<sup>182</sup>

The *Lingwai daida* in the section on sea routes explains that

People coming from Dashi sail south on small vessels, and when they reach Gulin transfer on to large vessels to travel east. When they reach Sanfoqi, they then follow the route that people from Sanfoqi are taking to reach China.<sup>183</sup>

This statement fits with the description above in reverse order, namely using Sumatra to sojourn and wait for the next monsoon. Dashi here probably means regions to the north of Malabar and includes the northwestern Indian coast line. The text shows that even if Dashi were Arabs (Muslims, West Asians etc.), the main means of transportation from southern India to Southeast Asia were South Asian in origin.<sup>184</sup> It makes sense that they would book room on foreign vessels rather than to risk the investment in a ship of their own in case of hazards.

In order to solve a dispute concerning abilities of Arab shipbuilders and sailors and cross-ocean sailing from Arabia to India and on to Southeast Asia in the first millennium AD, a vessel called Jewel of Muscat in 2010 undertook the voyage from Oman to Singapore. The reason why the Jewel of Muscat sailed to Singapore was that the Singaporean Government and a private company had bought the Belitung shipwreck remains in 2005. Consequently, the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore put selected pieces from the wreck on show. The rationale for the display was to support claims of a much older history of Singapore than previously thought possible: 'Southeast Asia lay at the heart of a global trading network in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Singapore's success as an exchange point of global shipping is thus rooted in ancient history.'<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> For a summary of resident Persian Christian and Jewish traders as well as later Arab and Muslim merchants see Pius Malekandathil, 'Winds of Change and Links of Continuity: A Study on the Merchant Groups of Kerala and the Channels of Their Trade', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 50: 2-3, 2007, 259-286. The foremost source on Jewish merchants in India are the Geniza papers. For a study of these see Shelomo Dov Goitein and Mordechai Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza 'India Book'*, Leiden: Brill, 2007. The list of possible locations for and identifications of Dashi by no means is complete, and may include the Ghaznavid empire (ruling over Pakistan and perhaps northern India). See Haw, 'Islam in Champa', 722.

<sup>183</sup> *Lingwai daida jiaozhu*, 126.

<sup>184</sup> Hyunhee Park variously addresses Dashi as Arabs or Muslims. See Park, *Mapping*, 23 and 48, respectively. She explains the countries subsumed under Dashi in the *Lingwai daida* with the decline of the 'Abbasid empire starting in the ninth century that resulted in the development of 'multiple centers'. This leads her to identify the places in the *Lingwai daida* entry as Mirbat, Mecca, Baghdad, Ghazni, 'Malay, Rūm, or Mulahhidun?', and Egypt. See Park, *Mapping*, 47.

<sup>185</sup> <https://www.nhb.gov.sg/acm/galleries/tang-shipwreck>, accessed 22 March 2022. An earlier version published in 2017 was more straightforward and affirmative: 'The Tang shipwreck reveals that Singapore's Southeast Asian region lay at the heart of a global trading

The reconstruction of the boat followed an interpretation of the ninth-century ship-wreck found near Belitung. Remains of the hull suggested that it had been a lashed-lug boat, its load was considered to be destined for the Middle East, and the rigging was reconstructed on the basis of guess-work.<sup>186</sup> Those involved in the project believed firmly that original materials to build the boat were non-South/Southeast Asian in provenance, which led them to conclude that the vessel had been an Arab dhow-style boat. Michael Flecker's publications on the shipwreck illustrate a change in point of view of the origins of the vessel from one that allowed for a potential Indian provenance to one that affirmed an Arabian provenance.<sup>187</sup>

Stephen G. Haw in a critical analysis of the material questioned the East African origin of the timber and instead proposed a Southeast Asian origin of the vessel.<sup>188</sup> He pointed out that the boat was flat-bottomed and thus not made for the open sea ('not ... designed to cross the Indian Ocean'), but for close to shore sailing, thus ruling out direct cross-ocean sailing. Furthermore, as the number of vessels discovered before the tenth century is extremely small, statements on their shape, form, and origins remain speculation.

Hailed as a success, the voyage of the Jewel of Muscat faced a number of challenges. Stuck in the doldrums, it had to be towed into Kochi, Kerala.<sup>189</sup> Barnacles and algae had to be removed in drydock.<sup>190</sup>, and the masts that had been damaged on the voyage from India to Sri Lanka had to be replaced after arrival in Sri Lanka.<sup>191</sup> Without modern means of communications the Jewel of Muscat's voyage may easily have ended in disaster.

The example shows that long distance sailing was a dangerous enterprise that could fail for any number of reasons. Given the risks, Schottenhammer's 'Iranian and Arab merchants' may have had a difficult time to dominate 'active

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network in the 9<sup>th</sup> century'. See

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170907075903/http://acm.org.sg/collections/galleries/tang-shipwreck>, accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>186</sup> On this last point see Tom Vosmer et al., 'The Jewel of Muscat Project: Reconstructing an Early Ninth-Century CE Shipwreck', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 41, 2011, 411-424.

<sup>187</sup> See his 'A 9<sup>th</sup>-century Arab or Indian Shipwreck in Indonesian Waters', *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 29: 2, 2000, 199-217; 'A Ninth-century Arab or Indian Shipwreck in Indonesia: First Evidence for Direct Trade with China', *World Archaeology*, 32: 3, 2001, 335-54; 'A Ninth-century Arab Shipwreck in Indonesia: The First Archaeological Evidence of Direct Trade with China', in Krahl et al., *Shipwrecked*, 101-119. Flecker was aware that at least some materials were native to Southeast Asia which he explained with a refitting of the original vessel after the voyage from the Middle East. See Flecker, 'A 9<sup>th</sup>-century Arab or Indian Shipwreck in Indonesian Waters: Addendum', *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 37: 2, 2008, 384-386.

<sup>188</sup> Haw, 'The Maritime Routes Between China and the Indian Ocean During the Second to Ninth Centuries C.E.', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 27: 1, 2017, 80-81.

<sup>189</sup> See Jewel of Muscat 2009: Timeline, <https://jewelofmuscat.tv/the-timeline/>, accessed 18 February 2021.

<sup>190</sup> Vosmer et. al., 'The Jewel of Muscat Project', 131.

<sup>191</sup> Vosmer et. al., 'The Jewel of Muscat Project', 132.

long-distance maritime trade in China<sup>192</sup> and by default in Southeast Asia. Out of the total of 138 days the voyage of the Jewel of Muscat lasted half were spent in ports and drydocks for repairs. The experience also puts in doubt the optimistic ninety days of sailing from 'the Persian Gulf to China' (including a stopover in Quilon, southern India) which Pius Malekandathil has calculated.<sup>193</sup> Medieval seamen would not have enjoyed the same number of services the Jewel of Muscat received. Furthermore, the Jewel of Muscat did not sail to China, but only reached a half-way point (in Singapore), and it never undertook the return voyage, thus further disproving the idea of round-trip journeys in such ships.

## 6 Concluding remarks

This essay has provided initial evidence for the various places and people that the term Dashi describes and more research is necessary to identify potential Dashi locations in more detail. The conclusions drawn from the reading of three of the major Song sources disprove the notion that Dashi in the Song dynasty continued to refer to Arabs, Arab Muslims, Arab lands, Central Asia or West Asia only. Hirth's and Rockhill's translation of the *Zhufan zhi* as well as Kuwabara Jitsuzo's work on Pu Shougeng perpetuated the latter view that had emerged in scholarly publications of the nineteenth century. Both publications with their agenda of an Arab-controlled maritime trade denied South and Southeast Asian traders and sailors their rightful place in the development of shipping networks because of narrow and partial interpretations of Chinese sources. The maritime trade dominated by Arabs between the tenth and twelfth centuries is as problematic as the 'Indianisation' and 'Sinicisation' hypotheses that demoted Southeast Asians to mere passive agents in a 'transit zone for commercial interactions', as described by Tansen Sen.<sup>194</sup>

Rather than superimposing a network on the region with 'Arabia' (the Islamic World, West Asia) as the starting point and end point of a maritime trade, and thus diminishing Southeast Asia (and its people) to a mere, mostly, anonymous stopover on the way to southern China, consideration should be given to South Asian interactions with Southeast Asia, and Southeast Asian interactions with southern China.

As Dashi had been understood as a reference to 'Arabs' during the Tang, scholarly efforts to recognize Dashi as a multi-valent term in the Song have been and are minimal. It is common knowledge that one Chinese geographic designation could be applied to different places over time, while one and the same place might

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<sup>192</sup> Angela Schottenhammer, 'China's Gate to the Indian Ocean: Iranian and Arab Long-Distance Traders', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 76: 1-2, 2016, 136; 'Maritime Relations between the Indian Ocean and the China Sea in the Middle Ages', in Christian Buchet and Michel Balard, eds, *The Sea in History: The Medieval World/La Mer dans l'Histoire: Le Moyen Age*, Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2017, 799; 'China's Rise and Retreat as a Maritime Power', in Robert J. Antony and Angela Schottenhammer, eds, *Beyond the Silk Roads: New Discourses on China's Role in East Asian Maritime History*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017, 194.

<sup>193</sup> Malekandathil, 'Winds of Change', 262.

<sup>194</sup> Tansen Sen, 'Maritime Southeast Asia Between South Asia and China to the Sixteenth Century', *TRaNS: Trans-Regional- and National Studies of Southeast Asia*, 2: 1, 2014, 32.

be addressed by various Chinese appellations. A closer reading of Song dynasty sources reveals that Dashi may have been a flexible designation for people that included non-Muslim Southeast Asians and South Asians, too.

Against this background, it appears strange that Dashi should have designated one and the same region and people over the span of the Tang dynasty, the Five Dynasties and Ten States period, and the Song dynasty from the seventh to the thirteenth century.

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