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The An Shi Rebellion and Rejection of the Other in Tang China, 618-763

by

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Abstract

Previous work on ethnicity in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) has cast the An Shi Rebellion (An Lushan Rebellion) as a kind of "breaking point" between the cosmopolitan, foreigner-friendly first half of the Tang Dynasty and the conservative, xenophobic second half. This paper analyzes the Rebellion from the opposite angle, as an event whose meaning was shaped by an increasingly xenophobic culture rather than the cause of the xenophobia. My research includes an updated, ethnic analysis of the Rebellion and close analysis of Tang cultural trends before and during the Rebellion, including religious policy, developing ideas of the foreigner in poetry and the emergence of ethnic violence. This project adds to the increasing literature on ethnicity in the Tang of the last ten years.

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Introduction: The Rebellion as an Event Defined by Culture

The An Shi Rebellion (755-763) was a turning point in the Tang Dynasty's acceptance of foreigners. Tang China prior to the Rebellion is often described as cosmopolitan and open to foreign influences. After the Rebellion, it became known for inward-looking culture and escalating persecution of foreign and religious communities. For this reason, cultural historians of the Tang claim that this attitudinal shift was a reaction to the Rebellion. In modern history, the Rebellion is always seen as a demonstration of the threat of the foreigner. The attitudinal shift of the Tang is thus seen as a reaction to this suddenly manifested foreign threat. This conventional interpretation places the social and political as a cause, and assumes that the attitudinal shift was a natural consequence of the catastrophic foreigner-led Rebellion. In my research I have found that the opposite is true. As is detailed in Part 1, the Rebellion was in no way drawn along ethnic lines, with both sides heavily associated with foreign influence in China. The definition of the rebels as representative of the threat of the foreigner did not arise logically out of the actual situation. Instead, this definition was shaped by a cultural context that defined all the Tang Empire's conflicts as a war between the Han people and the barbarians. The attitudinal shift away from cosmopolitanism and towards rejection of the foreigner pre-dated and defined the Rebellion. Through my research I traced the development of this cultural shift in popular literature and politics before the Rebellion. I found that the shift towards the rejection of the foreigner began at least three decades prior to the Rebellion. In Part 2 I will present the evidence of this shift, and demonstrate how this cultural context affected the Tang elites' understanding of the Rebellion as it occurred. Both Part 1 and Part 2 support my thesis that the identification of the Rebellion as a foreign invasion was primarily caused by pre-Rebellion cultural shifts rather than the actual events of the Rebellion.

The An Shi Rebellion is named after the two chief rebel leaders. The first was a Turco-Sogdian frontier general named An Lushan 安祿山 (703-757), who

rose against the Tang and established his own dynasty in the central and northeastern regions of China. Soon into his reign as rebel emperor, An Lushan was assassinated by his officers and personal staff. The throne passed to his son An Qingxu 安慶緒 (d. 759), whose reign was marked with military disaster that saw west-central China rescued by the Tang. On the verge of destruction, the rebel state was seized by one of the rebel generals, Shi Siming 史思明 (703-761), another former career soldier of the Tang, also of Turco-Sogdian descent. Shi Siming fought a bloody and partly successful war across central China until his assassination in 762. His son, Shi Chaoyi 史朝義 (d. 763) could not lead as effectively, and was defeated by the Tang forces in 763, after which he then committed suicide. This brought the Rebellion to a close. Despite the foreign heritage of the two royal families of the rebel state, the actual ethnic identity of both sides was extraordinarily complex. The rebel state had ties with Han Hebei separatists and employed thousands of Han officials and generals, while the Tang government during the Rebellion functioned as a Uyghur vassal. The Tang submission to foreigners would substantially outlast the Rebellion. For decades afterwards, the Tang court found itself unable to resist the attacks and hegemony of hostile and controlling foreign powers: the Khitans of the northeast, the Uyghurs of the north, and the Tibetans of the west.

Coinciding with the Tang government's submission to foreigners was an increasing hatred of the foreigner within China. The most striking examples of this were two massacres perpetrated during the Rebellion that together completely exterminated the foreign-born population of Fanyang 范陽 (also known as Youzhou 幽州, in the location of modern Beijing) and Yangzhou 揚州 (in modern-day Jiangsu Province). Following these outbursts of ethnic violence, the foreign populations, in particular the Sogdians, rapidly assimilated into Chinese society. Also during the Rebellion, military, political, and cultural elites often spoke of the Rebellion as a barbarian invasion. From the early 700s onwards, an increasing number of literary writings identified modern political problems with Han Dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE), Qin Dynasty (221-207 BCE), or Zhou Dynasty

(1046-256 BCE) events. By the 730s, these historical metaphors began to eclipse and obscure actual political realities. When the Rebellion broke out, it was quickly identified with these ancient struggles, and became seen as the continuation of an endless war between Han and barbarian rather than the ethnically and politically complex event that it was. This cultural shift towards the past can best be seen as a rejection of the contemporary ethnic realities of the Tang.

This paper builds on previous work on the Rebellion. I rely on a range of secondary sources, from early Imperial Chinese histories of the Rebellion to social and cultural histories of the 20th and 21st centuries. These sources have to be treated in different ways. The Imperial Chinese histories contain a very large amount of bias and invention, in particular concerning the life of An Lushan. Much of this has already been noted by 20th century historians, but these historians also offer conflicting social and political interpretations. Part 1 will examine all accounts of the Rebellion and analyze the discrepancies to present a complete and accurate basic history, with due attention to issues of ethnicity. This basic history will be the base of a broader cultural interpretation, in Part 2.

Many of the sources used are edited Imperial Histories which use, as their main source, the first known work to address the Rebellion, the now-lost *Veritable Records of Emperor Suzong* (*Suzong Shilu* 肅宗實錄). This was a collection of primary materials compiled shortly after the Rebellion. Though now lost, analysis of later texts has demonstrated that the *Veritable Records* were the primary source of material for the first written biography of An Lushan, the *History of An Lushan* (*An Lushan Shiji* 安祿山史記),[1] composed by a minor magistrate between fifty and one hundred and fifty years after the Rebellion.[2] This biography is just a compilation of sources, and has no strong central narrative. This work was not mentioned by any commentators at the time, and was likely not widely circulated.[3]

However, it was used as a source, along with the *Veritable Records of Emperor Suzong,* to compose the biographies of An Lushan in the two Northern

Song Dynasty (960–1127) histories of the Tang: the *Old Tang History* (*Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書) and the *New Tang History (Xin tangshu* 新唐書*)*, as well as in the narrative of An Lushan in Sima Guang's great compendium of the entirety of Chinese history, the *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government* (*Zizhi Tongjian* 資治通鑒). These histories are all preoccupied with the Chinese historiographical standard of "assigning praise and blame" (*baobian buyi* 褒貶不一). As a result, the dynastic histories tell a focused narrative of a treacherous barbarian, An Lushan, who deceived a court; Concubine Yang 楊貴妃 (Yang Yuhuan 楊玉環, 719-756), who was foolish enough to trust him; and the emperor, Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-756), who gave in to her charms. Generally speaking, in pre-modern histories the Rebellion is presented as a foreign invasion rather than a military mutiny.[4]

The traditional histories focus exclusively on the political situation, where powerful individuals vied for power, and the granting of power to the wrong individual spelled disaster. In the modern age, modern historians have re-examined the historiography of the causes of the Rebellion as a social event, with defined social causes and effects. The first and still definitive modern work on the Rebellion was Edwin Pulleyblank's 1955 *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lushan*,[5] the second and third volumes of which were unfortunately never completed.[6] Pulleyblank set out to apply modern methodologies to answer the then eleven-hundred-year old question of why the rebellion happened. This work drew heavily on the *Annales* school of history, giving social and economic causes to the rebellion rather than relying on the traditional Confucian interpretation of poor rulers, the female menace, and discontented peasantry. He devoted little time or space in his monograph to either, instead assuming that the nature of traditional Chinese "praise-and-blame" historiography ensured that the Rebellion would be forced into the narrative of weak emperors and selfish women regardless of the facts. In discussing whether the Rebellion could have been the result of an unhappy and overtaxed populace, Pulleyblank offered an interesting and nuanced chapter detailing the history of economic policy leading up to the rebellion, and found little evidence to indicate an increase of negative or anti-

peasant policies people in China prior to the outbreak of rebellion.[7] However, he does not address the evidence indicating a common perception of the time that the new policies, regardless of their effects, may have been oppressive. In addition, he offered up the apt observation that An Lushan's soldiers are invariably described in the histories as battle-hardened warriors, and never as peasants or bandits, thus raising serious doubts about the peasantry's role in the Rebellion.

Pulleyblank replaces these purported causes with several new causes, which combined to form what he called "forces of disintegration" and "centrifugal tendencies."[8] These include the growing resentment of some elites towards new economic and political policy, the concentration of power into fewer and fewer hands and increase of the power and efficiency of the frontier armies at the expense of the central armies. Having convincingly debunked traditional social reasons that so many soldiers and officers would follow and fight well for An Lushan, Pulleyblank offers an alternative explanation: alienation of the Hebei region from the remainder of China. He traces this to the central government's pattern of alternately starting wars on the Hebei frontier in times of peace, thus disrupting the regional trade patterns, and failing to defend the region from aggressors in times of war.[9] Pulleyblank's work thus demystified the Rebellion and provided a modern framework that allows modern historians to examine the events of the Rebellion not as myths but as actual historical events.

Fifty years after publication, Pulleyblank's volume remains the only monograph to thoroughly analyze the Rebellion with modern methodologies. This may partially be due to the still-prevalent mythologizing of the events of the Rebellion and the culture of the pre-Rebellion Tang; some historians may see the discussion of the Rebellion to be more for the fields of folklore studies and literature studies than for history. It may also have been due to the apparent resistance in the field of Tang history to adapt new methodologies influenced by linguistic or cultural studies. This resistance has only truly been overcome in the last decade, with the application of contemporary methodologies to Tang history,

particularly in the areas of Tang ethnic studies. However, the new trend has not yet resulted in a new monograph on the Rebellion itself.

However, though no new monograph has been written on the Rebellion, interesting work has been done for dictionaries and edited collections. Denis Twitchett, in his monumental *Cambridge History of China*, offered a strong, new, social analysis of the Rebellion, focussing on the role of Tang loyalists in Hebei.[10] By examining these holdouts of Tang control, Twitchett built an argument against Pulleyblank's supposed role of Hebei alienation in the Rebellion. While many of Pulleyblank's arguments stand up to Twitchett's criticism, the latter still managed to greatly complicate the view of the Rebellion's social causes and open up the social debate further. A short article in the *Berkshire Encyclopaedia of Chinese History* by Jennifer W. Jay also contributed to the discussion by discussing the impact of the military disaster of the Battle of Talas (751) on the weakness of the central government's military just prior to the Rebellion.[11]

While social historians have continued to work intermittently on the Rebellion, a much more lively interest has developed in the study of foreigners during the Tang, in particular the Sogdians and Turco-Sogdians. The foremost examples of this are the French historian Étienne de la Vaissière's *Sogdian Traders: A History* (*Histoire des Marchands Sogdiens*)[12] and the Chinese historian Rong Xinjiang's *Middle-Period China and Outside Cultures* (*Zhonggu Zhongguo yu wailai wenming* 中古中國與外來文明).[13] These works necessarily engage with the Rebellion both directly, by examining the place of Sogdians in Tang society both before and after the Rebellion, and indirectly, by studying the kinds of social structures that shaped the life of An Lushan and many of his generals.

Cultural historians have also begun to address the Rebellion in their works on the Tang. For example, the Rebellion was taken as a significant cultural event in Florence Hu-Sterk's article "Entre Fascination et Répulsion: Regards des Poètes des Tang sur les 'Barbares,'"[14] published in 2000. This article analyzes the tension between the acceptance and rejection of foreigners in Tang poetic

discourse, and takes the Rebellion as a catalyst of change towards a less ambivalent and more rejecting literary culture.[15] However, Hu-Sterk does not use sources specifically from the time of the Rebellion, and presumes the cultural impact of the Rebellion instead of analyzing it.

A similar approach can be seen in Marc Abramson's excellent *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, published in 2008.[16] Abramson relates the many appearances of ethnicity in Tang discourses over the course of the Dynasty, using a wide range of sources from the early to mid Tang. These sources depict ethnic identity as a widely variable and poorly-defined concept, based alternately on physiognomy, genealogy, religion, place of birth, politics, and conduct. Following this extremely in-depth analysis of the early part of the dynasty, he offers two sources from near the end of the book to demonstrate that, from the end of the eighth century to the closing years of the dynasty, the concept of ethnicity in the Tang underwent a radical change. Abramson describes this as a move from ambivalence and debate towards "a weary acceptance… of the need for non-Han allies while simultaneously shoring up the crumbling political situation with stricter definitions of the Chinese Self- particularly as they applied to political (i.e. protonationalistic) orientations."[17] This, Abramson argues, was adopted by the Song dynasty and beyond, forming the basis for early modern Chinese views on ethnicity.

While Hu-Sterk and Abramson acknowledge a serious shift in Tang Dynasty ethnic discourse and place the beginning of this shift at the time of the An Lushan Rebellion, they do not directly address the Rebellion as a cultural event. Rather, their work sees the Rebellion first and foremost as a social event, a catalyst for a cultural shift. It was seen as an event that changed the Tang's cultural signifiers for foreigners.

However, the Rebellion was also an event that was signified upon, not just by latter-day commentators but by the people who lived through it. Immediately after the outbreak of the Rebellion, we find numerous examples, literary and political, of elites using the Rebellion as a symbol of a larger foreign threat. No

work has yet acknowledged the Rebellion as an event defined by the greater culture, or analyzed indications of this.

It is not possible to achieve the same degree of detail for the An Shi Rebellion as for other works of cultural history that deal with more modern subjects. The pre-modern context, difficulties of translation, restriction to secondary historical material due to the loss of primary, and general scarcity of sources all make it more complicated to find evidence that conclusively supports the prevalence of any one cultural paradigm. As a result, my work is not exhaustive. While this paper outlines the key rhetoric and terms of a pre-Rebellion foreigner-rejecting paradigm as well the influence of this paradigm on the Rebellion, there is still much work to be done in order to fully understand the An Shi Rebellion as a cultural event. My discourse will hopefully open up new possibilities of examining the cultural impact of the Rebellion from a primarily cultural rather than a primarily social standpoint. To do this, I need to adopt some terms and concepts from cultural studies.

The use of contemporary cultural theory to examine the period of the Tang Dynasty is hindered due to the inescapable influence of the modern context. Most terms used by cultural theorists are intended to describe modern trends and events, and so carry with them a contextualization which may be at odds with the reality of the Tang period. For example, the words "ethnic" and "ethnicity" carry significant etymological baggage. The earliest known usage of ethnicity is to describe the quality being heathen, not Christian or Jewish. While this historical usage has been complicated considerably in recent years, there still remains a trace of the old meaning of ethnicity. Ethnicity is still used in a very racialized way; it is much more often used to describe the identities of non-Caucasian groups than Caucasian groups, and is still often a euphemism for race. As race is a concept with an excess of contextual baggage, the strong links between race and ethnicity render the concept inappropriate for non-modern cultural history.

Similar problems are present with the term "diaspora." The term "diaspora" implies the links between people of the same nation who have been

spread across several nation-states. It carries a meaning of disjunction or wrongness, as it was coined for a modern context where it is assumed to be the norm that nations should remain in nation-states. However, this was very much a developing ideology in the Tang Dynasty. The idea that nations should have definite boundaries was a contended idea. The word "diaspora" is problematic when used to describe scattered foreign communities of this time, as it implies a sense of disjunction, non-acceptance, and non-normativeness that may not necessarily have applied.

One possible solution to the problem of modern context would be to invent several new terms to describe cultural questions and concepts in ways that do not carry modern meanings. However, the field of cultural history has enough jargon as it is without the invention of jargon appropriate to the field of Tang history. A better solution is evident in Abramson, who chooses to use cultural studies terminology in a limited fashion, transparently explaining that certain modern meanings have been dropped. Following Abramson, I will use the phrase "ethnicity" and "ethnic" in a limited fashion to describe constructed categories of "otherness" among Tang society, while acknowledging that the Tang concept of ethnicity was not congruent with generally accepted modern definitions.

I will also on occasion use the same terms as the Tang sources, without attempting to translate them. There are several different words that were used as ethnic markers during the Tang. For the Chinese self, the two most common were *hua* 華 and Han 漢. *Hua* was unambiguously an ethnic marker; it had no geographic or historical meaning. Han was more complex. While Han in the modern day can be used exclusively as an ethnic marker, in the Tang Dynasty this was not the case. Tang literature blended the past and present, and often conflated geography with ethnicity. As a result, while in the modern age Han is used as *either* an ethnic marker *or* a historical period, in the Tang Dynasty Han was often used *both* as an ethnic marker and a historical period, as well as a geographic location and a moral principle. As stated above, the concept of ethnicity in the Tang was not the same as today, and often flowed together with concepts of

location, history, and culture. Another ethnic marker of the Tang Dynasty, Qin 秦, had a similar meaning. When providing translations of Tang-era documents, I always use the same word as the original author: *hua*, Han, or Qin. However, when writing nonspecifically about ethnicity during the Tang, I always use the word Han. This is for two reasons. The first is because Han encompasses the broader, more malleable concepts of Self that are not included in *hua*. The second is that Han is almost always used as a diametric opposite to the most common word used to designate a generalized Other, *hu* 胡.

Hu had an even more complex meaning than Han. It was used one of two ways. The first was as a specific ethnic marker for Indo-Iranians, particularly Sogdians. This usage was most common in the words and writings of the non-Han. For example, immediately prior to the Rebellion, An Lushan attempted to win over a Turkic general by saying, in Chinese, "My father was a *hu*, my mother was a Turk (*tujue* 突厥); your father was a Turk, your mother was a *hu*."[18] This demonstrates that at the time, it was clear that the literal meaning of *hu* was at least as specific as "western barbarian," as it clearly had a different meaning than the word used to describe the northern Turks. A later document demonstrates that the specific meaning of *hu* was in fact as narrow as Indo-Iranian: in a treaty stored in Dunhuang, dated to 885, there are independent, non-overlapping reference to Turks, Tibetans (*tufan* 吐蕃) and *hu.*[19] It is clear that during the dynasty *hu* developed a literal, official meaning of "Indo-Iranian."

However, most Han commentators ignored this literal meaning and used *hu* in a generalized, abstract meaning as the antithesis of Han. In the literature and political rhetoric of Chang'an, the word *hu* was used before and during the Rebellion to mean a uniform, threatening foreigner, or even a principle of foreignness. *Hu* was not merely an ethnic term in the modern sense. It was a geographic term, a concept of morality, and a historical entity. Despite its ubiquity in sources at the time, *hu* as an ethnic category has never before been studied in-depth. Even Abramson, in his *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, narrowed his focus to the concept of *fan* 番, because *fan* most clearly translates to the

modern English word “barbarian.” It was a non-geographic, nonspecific, non-exclusive phrase to indicate that someone was not Han. However, *fan* was not the primary way that the An Lushan Rebellion was understood. Political documents of the time invariably used *hu* when communicating the idea of an ethnic difference with the rebels. And in the cultural realm, *hu* as a group occupied the collective consciousness of the Tang elite as *fan* never could. *Hu* appears in the *Complete Tang Poetry* about 16 times as often as *fan*.[20] More importantly, as Stephen Owen has noted, the division between *hu* and Han was one of the few static boundaries that existed in the Tang cultural imagination.[21] As will be discussed in Part 2, the line between *hu* and Han was a fundamental boundary and came to be used as a political, cultural, or moral boundary. While *fan* may be the most analogous to modern concepts of ethnicity, it was not the most important division of the world at the time of the Rebellion.

For my research, I have had to supplement primary material with secondary. This is for two reasons. First, there is a relative dearth of primary sources for this period. The second reason is that the primary materials that do exist have already been edited, translated, and analyzed for context by more experienced scholars. While I have checked all my sources in the original, I generally defer to the authority of previous translators. I also draw heavily on work done to reconcile the different and sometimes contradictory statements of primary sources. In addition, many sources consist of both primary and secondary material. For example, I draw on the biography of An Lushan in the *Old Tang History*. This biography contains a large amount of material from an earlier document that I also make use of, the *History of An Lushan.* While both the *Old Tang History* and the *History of An Lushan* were composed using primary documents and the *Veritable Records of Suzong*, they offer different accounts of many events. As a result, latter-day politics and discourse may well have affected the recorded events. While I have taken great care, building on the works of previous modern historians, to separate out the more evident falsehoods, my historical account of these events may still bear the touch of generations of ideological editors. It is in the interest of avoiding the impact of even more of

these editors that I have decided to not use the accounts of the An Shi Rebellion in the *New Tang History*, which bear the marks of an editor aiming to redact all mention of Han supporters of the Rebellion.[22] For the *Old Tang History* and the *History of An Lushan*, I have relied on their definitive Western language translations to read in their entirety.[23]

My sampling of poetry is incomplete but convincing. I found poems in various ways. I used secondary sources to flag poems and poets who were more influential, then searched their oeuvre using an online search tool for passages concerning the *hu* or the Rebellion. I then went back to the secondary sources to find an appropriate translation. Where translations were unavailable, I provided my own. Due to the complexity of poetry translation, I included the original Chinese as an in-text citation for immediate comparison to my given English translations.

For the accounts of Emperor Xuanzong's flight from Chang'an and the following military coup, I have relied on the *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government* (*Zizhi Tongjian* 資治通鑒), which offers the most complete account. Having been compiled a full three hundred years after the events described, this work also has been highly edited from the source material. However, the abundance of verbatim quotations as well as Sima Guang's chronological organization makes it more likely that this given account was based on real annals of the events. All translations from this passage are my own.

All Chinese names and terms are given in *pinyin* Romanization. My translation of Chinese ranks may seem to be uneven, as I have picked and chosen translations from other scholars to ensure that each rank is given an English translation that best describes how that rank functioned at the time of the Rebellion. For example, I have translated the title of *zaixiang* 宰相 as "Chief Minister" rather than the more common "Prime Minister" because during the years before the Rebellion it was not uncommon for two or three men to hold this title simultaneously, a circumstance which renders the singular implication of "Prime Minister" unsuitable.

Part 1: Evidence Against a Clear Ethnic Dimension to the Rebellion

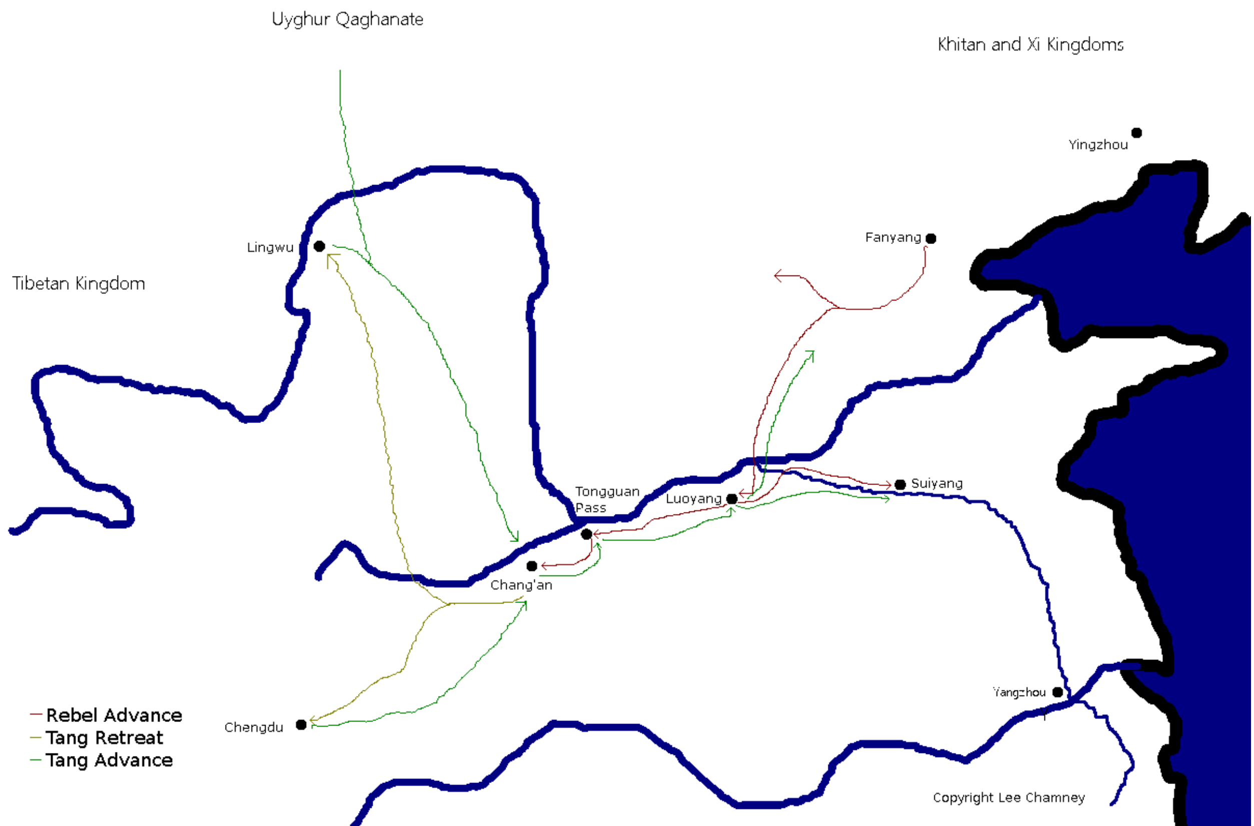

Figure 1. Map of Tang China During the An Shi Rebellion. A version of this map has been submitted for publication. "An Lushan," ***Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography*****.**

Previous accounts of the Rebellion, by Twitchett and Pulleyblank, do not explicitly address ethnic or cultural issues. These accounts are also dated and occasionally contradictory and considerable confusion about the Rebellion still exists in related historical works. Here I offer an updated narrative that draws together the work of earlier historians and builds upon it to offer an ethnic

analysis. I will also address some of the misconceptions of current historical accounts of the Rebellion.

The first of these is the erroneous assertion that the Tang, prior to the Rebellion, was peaceful and prosperous. This is a result of traditional histories that present dichotomies not only of praise and blame, but also of war and peace. To meet this dichotomy, traditional historians often presented the time before the Rebellion invariably as a period of peace, stability, and even de-militarization.[24] This appears to have even impacted the modern-day historical understanding of the Rebellion, leading to descriptions of the Rebellion as a serious rupture with little pre-indication.[25] However, the years before the An Shi Rebellion were fraught with disastrous frontier wars and constant threats of rebellion. The decade prior to the Rebellion saw three catastrophic defeats of Tang frontier armies, culminating in the defeat at the Battle of Talas in 751 that ended Chinese rule in Central Asia for a millennium. There were also very severe internal ruptures in the Tang during this period. In the fifty years prior to the Rebellion, there were six serious revolts against the central power: a palace guards coup in 705 that succeeded at removing Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (624-705), the assassination of her successor Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 684, 705-710) in 710, Xuanzong's accession in 712 and his subsequent attack on the retired Emperor's faction, a suspected planned palace coup against the Emperor Xuanzong in 736, and planned military coups against Xuanzong in 746 and 752. Xuanzong's two predecessors and his successor all came to power through violently overthrowing the previous government. The history of the eighth century shows a constant struggle for power in an unstable system, in which the greatest threats to power were members of the Emperor's family or inner circle. An Lushan was just another player in a violent and unstable game.

Similarly, post-Rebellion Imperial Chinese history has given rise to a false "Chinese or foreigner" dichotomy. The Tang Dynasty has almost always been portrayed as entirely Chinese, and its wars of defence and expansion have almost always been portrayed as wars of the Chinese against the barbarian. However,

this view obscures the ethnic complexities of the Tang. The Tang state was the political representative of the Han empire, but the core of the state, the royal or imperial clan, had both Chinese and Turkic cultural traits. The imperial Li family almost certainly had Turkic relations, and were influenced by Turkic culture even after a century and a half of rule. The historian Chen Sanping has effectively outlined the Turkic-influenced political and personal traits of the Tang, and argued that the pre-Rebellion Tang could best be conceived as a Sino-Turkic rather than purely Chinese-style dynasty.[26] Among the Turkic traits noted by Chen Sanping were the royal clan's use of Turkic language, their disregard for primogeniture in succession disputes, the regularity of coups by royal sons against their fathers, the practice of levirate, the practice of nipple-kissing and other Turkic personal rituals, the appropriation of the title "Qaghan" by Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 626-649), and styles of dress. Most importantly, the ethnic otherness of the Tang was an open secret among Tang high society. The Li family's repeated efforts to marry into the four great Chinese clans were rebuffed. Despite the Li family's unsurpassed wealth and power, the ethnically pure great clans steadfastly refused all offers of marriage. It is therefore extremely likely that the Turkicness of the Li family was widely known and derided by the elites, though Tang censorship had edited out any mention of it from the official sources.

This censorship was part of a broad and expensive Tang policy to conceal the Li family's Turkic heritage and policies behind an image of Chineseness. The centrepiece was a fictional genealogy. Among the Li family's claimed ancestors were Li Guang 李廣 (d. 119 BCE), a Han Dynasty general famous for his victories against barbarians, and Laozi 老子, the mythical founder of Daoism.[27] Their fictional relationship to Li Guang allowed the Li clan to position themselves as not just an old Chinese family, but also an old Chinese family with a tradition of preventing non-Chinese invasion. Their claim of Laozi as an imperial ancestor and their subsequent elevation of Daoism over the foreign religion of Buddhism likewise allowed for the royal house to position themselves of champions of Chinese culture. The Tang ruling family clearly felt that they would never truly overcome the xenophobia that existed prior to their rule, and instead attempted to

include themselves in the Han self-identity. Their political power, won by the military might of Turkic horses, was never parlayed into the cultural authority necessary to freely express their Turkic heritage.

In their attempts to cast themselves as Han, the Tang emperors occasionally made policies against multiculturalism in China. However, these were generally limited in scope and cynical in ideology. These policies did little to restrict the presence of foreigners in China, which steadily increased under the Tang. Large foreign communities appeared deeper and deeper in the Chinese heartland. In particular, large and powerful communities of foreigners were found in Chang'an and Luoyang, the political centers of China. There was even a huge foreign community at the city of Yangzhou in the traditionally Han South. Foreigners in China included a wide range of ethnicities from Japanese to Slavic. However, the two most common ancestries of foreigners in China by far were the two most often referred to by the word *hu*: Turks and Sogdians.

The presence of Turks within China is easily explained by pre-Tang history. Turkic peoples were the politically dominant group in the North China Plain from 304 onwards. By the time of the Rebellion, Turkic or Sino-Turkic rulers had controlled the north for 450 years, and the south for 170 years. To put this in perspective, by the time of the Rebellion people of Turkic ethnicity had controlled the north of China for a longer time period than people of European ancestry have controlled North America. During this time period, Turks settled in the Chinese heartland and worked as merchants, soldiers, and farmers. Their long historical legacy in China makes it not so much unusual that their communities were in China, but unusual that they were not included in the Han self-identity like previous foreign conquerors (for instance, the semi-nomadic Zhou 周 in 1045 BCE).

The presence of Sogdians in China was more complex. Sogdians were a subject people of various Turkic empires who were linguistically and culturally distinct from the Turks. The Sogdian homeland, the Zarafshan river valley of modern-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, was a fertile agriculture zone with

historical ties to the Persian and Hellenistic worlds. The Sogdian culture became based on an agricultural, sedentary lifestyle, distinct from their nomadic Turkic overlords. Sogdians spoke and wrote an Indo-Iranian language related to Bactrian. The sedentary culture, population density and literate traditions of the Sogdians made them invaluable to successive Turkic regimes. Sogdians were involved in the production of Turkic regimes' currency, their formulation of law codes and civil services, and their diplomacy. The power balance between Turkic qaghans and their literate Sogdian employees was complex. On at least one occasion, a Sogdian ambassador to the Byzantine Empire acted independently, using the threat of Turkic power to advance Sogdian-specific interests.[28] Through this and other uses of their authority within the Turkic empires, Sogdian aristocrats were able to block Persian and Jewish merchants' access to the overland trade route from China.[29] Instead, Sogdians routed overland trade through Sogdian diaspora colonies across central Asia. Sogdians who had left their homeland due to war or overpopulation, living in agricultural colonies across Central Asia and the Chinese northwest, were organized into a centrally planned trading network. This network appears to have been quite sophisticated, with its own forms of credit and postal system. After they achieved dominance over Central Asian trade, Sogdian merchant networks expanded into China. In the early Tang, Sogdian aristocrats and civil servants used the pretexts of Turkic diplomacy and interests to settle permanently in Chang'an.[30] The number of these permanently settled "diplomats" eventually approached three thousand. Sogdian merchants also set up shop throughout the city. Through various other means, legitimate and illegitimate, Sogdians also settled in the thousands in other major government and trade hubs. By the time of the Rebellion, Luoyang, Yangzhou, and Fanyang all had large populations of Sogdians, particularly merchants. Sogdians also settled rural agricultural colonies in the north, at Dunhuang, Turfan, and the Ordos Valley. Though the majority of Sogdians in China were farmers, the clustering of merchants in core areas led to a general stereotype of Sogdians as merchants.[31]

Sogdians came to play vital roles in Chinese society. They were the first adopters and transmitters of a huge variety of religious traditions. Fazang 法藏 (643-712), the most influential patriarch of the Huayan 華嚴 (Flower Garland) School of Buddhism, was a third generation Sogdian immigrant.[32] Sogdians were also influential in transmitting Manichaeism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism to China. Their foreign trade contacts kept them more connected to the rest of Eurasia than most people in China. The importance of their role as merchants was also implicitly valued by the Tang government's policy. When Yingzhou 營州 on the northeast frontier of China was re-established in 717, after years of neglect, the Tang government ordered it to be resettled by Sogdian merchants to maintain trade relations with the kingdoms in modern-day Manchuria and Korea.[33] Even immediately prior to the Rebellion, the Chief Minister was responsive to Sogdian merchant demonstrations against new monetary policy reforms.[34] The Sogdians were a recognized and valued part of the Tang state, even though they were excluded from the Tang self-identity.

The presence of Turks and Sogdians was a historical and political reality in the Tang. Turks and Sogdians raised warhorses, served in the armies and defended the frontiers. They ran major markets and acted as intermediaries between the Turkic world and the Chinese court. Sino-Turks made up a large part of the aristocracy and civil service. Multi-ethnicity was deeply ingrained in the reality of the Tang polity. An Lushan was just one of a long line of Turkic and Sogdian power-holders.

An Lushan was the product of Sogdian settlement in the northeast. While An Lushan's ancestors were Bukharan Sogdians, he was not born in or near Bukhara. According to official histories, An Lushan was born in February, 703, in Yingzhou, near the modern-day town of Jingzhou in Liaoning Province. There is no reason to think that this was not the case. Yingzhou had a large Sogdian population. In 703 it was controlled by the Göktürk Eastern Turkic Qaghanate, to which An Lushan's paternal and maternal clans were pledged. His mother was a Turkic woman of the aristocratic Ashide 阿史德 clan, closely associated with the

ruling Ashina 阿史那 clan of the Qaghanate. All official Chinese accounts of his birth indicate that he was born of the divine providence of Turkic gods, perhaps even immaculate conception, and later adopted by a Sogdian named An Yanyan 安延偃.[35] However, Pulleyblank has convincingly argued that An Yanyan was Lushan's biological father. This is strongly indicated by An Lushan's latter-day recorded statements professing Sogdian parentage and the records of An Yanyan's life.[36] The insistence of dynastic historians that An Lushan was Sogdian in name only is particularly puzzling in light of their constant portrayal of the adult An Lushan as Sogdian. It is possible that they were attempting to emphasize An Lushan's Turkicness in light of the greater antipathy towards Turks than towards Indo-Iranians during the Northern Song Dynasty, when these records were compiled.[37]

At any rate, An Lushan was certainly exposed to both Turkic and Sogdian culture as a child. An Yanyan was a Sogdian general in the employ of the Göktürks, waging campaigns against both other clans and the Tang armies. Based on An Yanyan's location and career path, Pulleyblank has argued that it is likely that Yanyan was born in a known Sogdian colony in the Ordos river valley in what is now Inner Mongolia, most of which had been granted by Empress Wu Zetian as a gift to the Göktürks in exchange for peace following the invasions in 697.[38] Following this transfer, An Yanyan and his brother An Bozhi 安波至 (fl. 703-720s) served as generals for the influential Qapaghan Qaghan (r. 694-716) until the qaghan's death. Since An Yanyan must have spent most of his career in the field, it is probable that his wife and son lived with one of the two settled groups of Sogdians while Yanyan was on campaign. An Lushan's childhood was likely spent either at his birthplace among the Sogdian colonists in Yingzhou, or at his father's birthplace in the Ordos valley.

The life of An Yanyan's family changed abruptly in 716 with the death of Qapaghan qaghan. Qapaghan Qaghan's chosen successor was speedily overthrown by a distant relative, who immediately began to purge the Eastern Turkic court of loyalists to the old regime.[39] An Lushan's family were likely a

target of the new qaghan's purges, as the official histories note that An Lushan's clan was "ruined" in 716.[40] An Yanyan likely died at this time, though it is not known for sure. An Lushan fled with his mother, his uncle, and his cousins across the border to Lanzhou 蘭州, a frontier city in the region of present day Gansu Province. They were taken in by a family of minor Tang officials of Sogdian descent, also of surname An but of no known blood relation to Lushan. Soon after arriving in China, Lushan's uncle and cousins took the best path to advancement available for foreigners in Tang China: they enlisted as officers in the Tang frontier armies.[41] Lushan, being only thirteen years old, instead remained in Lanzhou for a time and came to be adopted as a younger brother by his family's benefactor.

The next few years of An Lushan's life are steeped in myth. The official histories state that An Lushan spent his life as an interpreter and outlaw in the frontier markets. He allegedly wandered across North China until 732, when he was arrested for stealing a sheep in Fanyang, and pressed into military service by the newly-appointed Military Governor, Zhang Shougui 張守珪 (fl. 727-740). This account of events has been accepted by la Vaissière, but there are serious doubts as to its veracity.[42] Firstly, An Lushan was the adopted brother of a government official and the cousin of prominent officers in the frontier armies. There was no shortage of wealthy relations who could have sent An Lushan much more money than a sheep's worth if he was ever in need. It is extremely unlikely that An Lushan would ever have felt that stealing a sheep would be worth the risk of legal punishment, barring self-destructive or kleptomaniac urges. Pulleyblank has also pointed out that the story is very similar to the biography of Shi Siming, the other principal leader in the Rebellion, as well as stereotypical stories about barbarians' youth on the frontier.[43] Noting this, Pulleyblank argues that the number of similar stories and general probability make it unlikely that this particular story is true.[44] In addition, he cites a memo from 732 indicating that members of the Tang court were aware of An Lushan and approved of his taking up a post as a high officer under Zhang Shougui.[45] As it is unlikely that the court would be excited about the appointment of a sheep-snatching vagabond to

military office, it is almost certain that by 732 An Lushan had already been active in the military for some time. At some point in his early adulthood but some time prior to 732, An Lushan must have followed his cousins into the frontier armies. The most likely date for An Lushan's enlistment is 723 when he reached 21 *sui*, the Tang minimum age of enlistment. An Lushan probably served with his cousins in the Tang campaigns against the Tibetans, where he would have served under Zhang before Zhang was re-assigned to Fanyang.

It is interesting that all official histories of the Rebellion, even the *History of An Lushan*, written a spare fifty years after the Rebellion, chose to present An Lushan's early career as a wanderer or interpreter rather than as a career soldier. One possibility for this is that the Tang and Song historians were unable to find information on An Lushan's early military career and simply filled in the gaps. An Lushan could have simply been assigned the kind of occupations later historians assumed a *hu* on the frontier would have: an interpreter, a wandering outlaw, and a thief. The similarity with Shi Siming's biography certainly lends credence to the idea that the historians used stereotypes where sources were unavailable. However, in this particular case, one source actually was available: the court memo praising An Lushan's abilities in 732. Any court historian going through the annals looking for sources on An Lushan's career and associates would undoubtedly have come across that memorandum. The most probable conclusion is that the replacement of An Lushan's early military career with a stereotypical frontier lifestyle was a deliberate edit on the part of early historians.

Why would court historians have made this edit? It is entirely possible that historians felt that the image of the real An Lushan, who came to China at the age of thirteen and joined the army early in his twenties, was not foreign enough for the tone of official histories that cast the Rebellion as a foreign invasion. As a career soldier with few if any known foreign ties, the real An Lushan must have appeared to be much more similar to a military insurrectionist than a foreign invader. By deliberately ignoring the evidence for his military career and instead inventing a stereotypical frontier youth, later historians may have been

deliberately attempting to add ethnic dimensions to the Rebellion. As the first of these histories was written within a lifespan of the Rebellion, it is reasonable to assume that the desire to view and present the Rebellion as a foreign invasion was present among at least some elites who experienced the revolt firsthand.[46] This may also have been related to the desire to portray An Lushan as an incompetent who schemed, rather than worked, his way to the top of the military establishment.

This deliberate edit of An Lushan's life, made fifty years or less after the Rebellion, has caused a continuing misinterpretation of An Lushan as a stereotypical barbarian that lasts even up to the modern day. Every account of An Lushan's life, including his portrayal in literature and drama, was necessarily a part of this. Even more significantly, this misinterpretation colours all moral interpretations of the reigns of Xuanzong and his successor, Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756-762). An Lushan's position as a foreign merchant, rather than as a military elite, has been one of the most lasting historical biases in the world.

However, when one removes the constructed belief that An Lushan was a foreign merchant who bluffed his way to the top of the military, there is no remaining evidence that An Lushan was anything but a masterful military commander. An Lushan's career shows him to be a brave and driven general, with a stronger record of successes than most of his contemporaries. While he had both successes and failures, he had more of the former. More tellingly, the military power and political stability of the northeast increased steadily during his reign.[47]

In 734, he led an army to attack the Khitan tribesmen to the northeast in an attempt to disrupt their harvest and prevent them from threatening Tang power in the region. This campaign led to a decisive victory, breaking the Khitan army and collapsing their state.[48] The following year, An Lushan was a key player in securing an alliance with the central Korean kingdom of Silla 新羅 against the belligerent northern Korean state of Parhae 渤海. These victories appeared to have earned the recommendation and goodwill of both the Tang court and Zhang

Shougui. When, the following year, An Lushan made a serious error in judgement that led to the annihilation of his army, he was spared the death sentence on the recommendation of Zhang Shougui and several prominent Chief Ministers.[49] An Lushan was instead demoted, but his disgrace apparently did not last long. In late 736, he was favourably mentioned in a memo after being injured fighting the Khitan on the front lines. Even in defeat, An Lushan's usefulness and dedication was apparently evident to even the highest levels of government. This was opportune, as the highest levels of government were adopting new policies that made men like An Lushan extremely valuable.

These policy changes were instigated by an aristocrat by the name of Li Linfu 李林甫 (683-753). Several months after An Lushan's return to favour, Li Linfu outmanoeuvred his political rivals to become the sole Chief Minister. As one of his first projects, Li embarked on an ambitious overhaul of the Tang frontier armies. The apparent goal was to change the frontier armies from conscripted militia forces, commanded largely by Han civilian administrators with political ambitions, into permanent professional armies commanded by non-Han officers with few if any prospects in the Tang court.[50] In short, Li Linfu wanted to divest the military of officers like Zhang Shougui in order to employ more officers like An Lushan. This policy was aimed at increasing the experience and competence of the highest military leadership, thus improving military efficiency, while also stocking the military with men easily controlled by Li Linfu.

Likely due to this policy, An Lushan's career entered the fast track after 736. In 739 Zhang Shougui was demoted in disgrace and replaced with a member of the imperial clan, resulting in the promotion of An Lushan to a higher post.[51] In 741, after only two years, the new military governor was recalled. Instead of appointing another aristocrat from the central court, Li Linfu instead promoted career soldiers from the frontier armies up the chain of command. As a result, An Lushan's immediate superior became Military Governor, and An Lushan became the second-in-command.[52]

The following year, An Lushan was also given his first civil office, that of Vice-President of the Censorate.[53] Censors acted as high-level policemen, reporting on corruption or sedition within the bureaucracy and bringing criminals to justice. This was a blatantly political appointment as An Lushan was unsuitable to the position. While some military experience could be applicable, the position of Vice-President of the Censorate required a much broader skill set than what Lushan would have learned as a soldier. The position required literacy, but An Lushan was illiterate, despite speaking several foreign languages besides Chinese. In addition, the Board of Censors was managed from Chang'an, so any work that he performed as Vice-President would have been conducted by correspondence or on his infrequent visits to the capital. While it is unclear to what extent An Lushan actually managed to act in this role, it seems likely that both the Emperor and Li Linfu did not expect him to exercise any real power. It may have been an attempt to staff the upper levels of the bureaucracy with those whom Li Linfu deemed were not a threat to his power while simultaneously encouraging An Lushan to visit Chang'an more often and thus keep an eye on him.

In 742 An Lushan became Military Governor of the province of Pinglu 平盧, a newly formed province on the far northeast frontier that encompassed most of modern-day Liaoning Province, centered on An Lushan's birthplace of Yingzhou. Two years later Lushan was also given command of Fanyang. While it was unusual for a general with no civil experience to receive Military Governorships, he was by no means unqualified.

During a visit to the capital two years later, An Lushan was the primary agent of a factional plot to expose the rigging of a civil service examination by one of Chief Minister Li Linfu's partisans. An Lushan was successful and the examiner was demoted. Li Linfu struck back at several of the officials involved in exposing him, but did not make any reprisals against An Lushan's person, career, or reputation. Pulleyblank suggests that Li may have thought of An Lushan as just a simple barbarian, too stupid to have long-term schemes at

overthrowing central power.[54] However, there is another possible explanation, related to court politics of the time. Li Linfu's career was in many ways part of a generational struggle for control in government between two broad socio-economic groups. The members of the first group were powerful western aristocrats, including the royal Li family, with strong military traditions and large accumulations of war materiel, who filled the ranks of the Tang's armies. Most aristocratic families held several hereditary positions in the military and government, drawing large amounts of income from the state. Opposing the aristocrats was a rising power: southern and eastern magnate estate builders who, through purchase or intimidation, accumulated land and enserfed commoners. As the law code of Tang held that all land was the property of the state and could be redistributed at any time, the estate builders needed influence in government to protect their lands from lawful appropriation.[55] The estate builders increased greatly in influence during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian when most hereditary offices were abolished in favour of the theoretically meritocratic civil service examination system.[56] Through securing for themselves superior tutorage, the estate-owning class managed to dominate the examinations year after year, quickly becoming the majority within the bureaucracy.[57] The examination graduates were part of the "literati" who often expressed open hostility to aristocratic government officials still holding titles by way of hereditary privilege.[58] However, the fortunes of the literati turned when Empress Wu Zetian was overthrown by an aristocratic clique, to be replaced in a few years by Emperor Xuanzong. Under him the literati quickly lost ground. Li Linfu, the penultimate aristocrat, purged out the last literati Chief Minister in 737, and afterwards the estate-owners were effectively barred from high office. This caused a great deal of resentment among the elites of the south and east, especially when combined with centralizing economic reforms that attacked large estates by re-registering serfs as commoners.[59]

Li Linfu was aware of the volatile situation. The east, especially the area around Luoyang, was the economic heartland of Tang China. And, unfortunately for Li Linfu, it was far away from the aristocrats' sphere of influence. The

northeast in particular posed a challenge as it was within closer striking distance of the economic heartland than the northwest. And, as Pulleyblank has argued, the elites of the key northeast province of Hebei were particularly displeased with Li's dictatorship and the new economic reforms, leading to a stirring of latent separatist sentiments.[60] These sentiments stemmed from the conquest of their formerly independent region two hundred years earlier, as well as the continued neglect and contempt of the central court.[61] To ensure his continued control over China's economy, Li Linfu needed power and authority in the eastern regions. He therefore needed a strong and dependable leader in the northeast, and An Lushan was likely the only viable solution. A general who commanded the respect and loyalty of the Tang army closest to Hebei was the best hedge against eastern rebellion. Moreover, An Lushan was an illiterate military general with no lands to call his own, and therefore unlikely to share sympathies with the literati estate-builders. And even though An Lushan had shown himself to be in opposition to Li's power, Li may have preferred an independent, authoritative ruler over a poorly respected aristocrat or a seditious, factional literatus. It seems much more likely that Li Linfu was choosing the best of several bad options, than that he was blinded to An Lushan's intelligence and ambition by mere chauvinism, as Pulleyblank suggests.[62]

At any rate, An Lushan continued for the time being to perform admirably in the service of the Tang. In 746 the Khitan allied with another Turkic group, the Xi, and rose in revolt. An Lushan efficiently marshalled the northeast and dealt them a crushing blow, followed by an onerous peace. Both groups were given puppet kings and were unable to ever again build a mutual alliance.[63] As An Lushan was proving himself worthy of the Tang government's trust, the central armies were proving themselves to be a liability. A faction of officials, including a friend of An Lushan, were attempting to win over the armies stationed near Chang'an in a plot to depose the current Emperor and place the heir apparent, Li Heng 李亨, on the throne.[64] Li Linfu's agents uncovered this plot and embarked on a wide purge of the upper bureaucracy. Many of these officials were commanders in the frontier armies. In response, Li Linfu extended his policy of

professionalization of the officer corps to the highest positions. Perhaps inspired by An Lushan's leadership ability and independent politics, Li arranged to promote Lushan's cousin, An Sishun 安思順 (d. 756), to the command the northwest frontier armies in Hexi 河西. Similarly, he promoted Korean and Turkic generals to the command the frontier armies on the Silk Road and the north. Other than one ethnically Han general in Sichuan, the Tang Empire's defences were entirely commanded by foreigners. This gave rise to the idea, common both in the writings of elites who lived during the Rebellion and among later historians, that the An Shi Rebellion was a result of the lack of Han commanders in the military establishment.[65] However, that is hardly the case, as the other frontier commanders were to show themselves as able and loyal generals over the course of these events.

Returning to the career of An Lushan, he had his first recorded audience with the Emperor the year after Li Linfu's purges. In an oft-repeated anecdote, An was shown into the presence of Emperor Xuanzong and his favourite Concubine, Yang Yuhuan. An Lushan broke all court decorum by first bowing to Concubine Yang, and then to Xuanzong, explaining himself afterwards by stating that as a *fan*, the tradition of his people was to bow first to one's mother and second to one's father.[66] Pulleyblank accepted this as possibly stemming from An Lushan's poor understanding of court decorum, but this does not seem likely.[67] An Lushan, already one of the wealthiest and most powerful people in the Tang Empire, could undoubtedly have hired an advisor versed in Tang court etiquette prior to his visit had he any confusion about how to act. And while An Lushan's early childhood was spent in the lands of the Turks, who by many accounts did in fact perform obedience to their mothers first,[68] his clan and community were Sogdians, who had a strongly patriarchal society that very likely required one to first honour the father of a household.[69]

And, much more importantly, the honouring of Concubine Yang as an imperial mother, and furthermore the acknowledgement of her power as a head of the imperial household, had unmistakeable political overtones. This is due to the

fact that the Emperor's seditious heir apparent, Li Heng, was born by another concubine.[70] Li Heng therefore had every interest in preventing Concubine Yang from assuming the trappings of an Empress and thus elevating the status of her own children over that of Li Heng. As a result, by honouring Concubine Yang as an Empress, An Lushan was implicitly stating his opposition to Li Heng. He was showing his support for Emperor Xuanzong, who had chosen Yang as his most honoured consort despite the ill will towards her. By honouring Concubine Yang as an Empress or even as an Emperor, An Lushan showed his acceptance of Xuanzong's decision and his moral support for the current regime. It seems very unlikely that all this meaning could have come only through the accidental *faux pas* of a powerful general who had not bothered to educate himself in court etiquette. It is more probable that An Lushan took a stereotypical "barbarian" tradition, that of honouring matriarchs, and pretended that it was also a tradition of his own hyper-patriarchal people in order to add a veneer of charm and innocence to a strongly political move. Possibly as a result of this show of loyalty, during this visit An Lushan was promoted to President of the Censorate. An Lushan was able to make a radical political statement without making any direct enemies precisely because he was a "barbarian." He served in a role made necessary by an unstable political system. Xuanzong and Li Linfu had to put their trust in him to build allies against an inevitable play by Li Heng or the literati.

In 750, An Lushan was given the rank of Prince 王, showing the esteem held for him by Emperor Xuanzong, Concubine Yang, and Li Linfu.[71] Later that year, An Lushan led an army against the upstart Xi, who, unable to secure their old alliance with the Khitan, were easily defeated. Eight thousand Xi cavalrymen were captured and pressed into service. An Lushan led them to Chang'an to demonstrate his power and martial ability. He wintered in Chang'an and on his birthday in January of the following year, he was adopted as a son by Concubine Yang. Allegedly, some days after his adoption An Lushan freely entered the inner palace to visit Concubine Yang without the presence of the Emperor. While visiting he is said to have played a bizarre and possibly erotic game with Yang and her ladies-in-waiting, where he dressed up as a newborn baby and the ladies

washed him.[72] The idea that An Lushan was a toy, or even a lover, of Concubine Yang spread widely and demonstrated parallels between Concubine Yang and the "femme fatales" whom the Classics claimed brought down the Shang and Zhou Dynasties.[73] But it is unlikely that Concubine Yang's favour was a primary cause of the Rebellion. It is certainly true that, through his adoption and his title of Prince, An Lushan was inordinately and perhaps inappropriately favoured over the other frontier commanders. However, the real sources of his power were his appointments as Military Governor of Pinglu and Fanyang, which gave him not only control over the bulk of the northwest frontier armies, but also a horse-breeding region and a series of fortresses remote from the power and information networks of Chang'an. Lushan's subsequent appointments following his receipt of Concubine Yang's favour as adopted son and, later, as Military Governor of Hedong, increased his power but may not have been the exclusive reason An Lushan felt confident enough to rebel.

In the same year, An Lushan's eldest son An Qingzong 安慶宗 was given a full-time post at the capital, while his younger son An Qingxu received a post as an emissary. It became clear in later years that An Qingzong was actually coerced to remain at his post in the capital, and that he may even have been given the position in the first place to serve as a hostage ensuring An Lushan's loyalty.[74] An Lushan returned to Pinglu later that year to find the Khitan in disobedience. He arranged a punitive expedition against them, but lost due to the treachery of his eight thousand captured Xi cavalrymen.[75] His army in tatters, An Lushan executed the military commissioner of Fanyang and a Turkic prince under his command as scapegoats. It is clear at this point that An Lushan did not particularly desire allies amongst the Turks. It is also worth noting that when Shi Siming, the military commissioner of Pinglu and future rebel emperor, returned to An Lushan's camp, he was welcomed with open arms but later stated that if he had arrived earlier, he would have been the one killed as a scapegoat.[76] This is especially interesting because Shi, the only other Turco-Sogdian of high rank in An Lushan's armies, did not apparently feel that he would be granted any special clemency from An Lushan's rages. Had An Lushan been attempting to build a

Sogdian state or elevate Sogdians preferentially, Shi Siming would not have worried for his life.

An Lushan's defeat and the loss of a frontier army did not overly concern the court, as it was overshadowed by a powerful threat to central power. The court at Chang'an learned that the Northern Armies, far and away the most powerful military force in the capital region, were planning a palace coup with the likely intent of placing the heir apparent, Li Heng, on the throne.[77] Fortunately for Emperor Xuanzong, eunuch guardsmen managed to capture several seditious officers prior to the scheduled coup. The severity of the threat from his heir apparent Li Heng should not be understated. While Xuanzong is often presented as a fool for not taking the threat of An Lushan's growing power seriously, it should be remembered that he was constantly under the threat of a military coup by his own son. It is understandable that Xuanzong took military allies where he could find them.

Later that year, An Lushan faced a rebellion by a Turkic army under his command, whose commander feared that he would also eventually be executed as a scapegoat. The army fled into the Gobi and An Lushan was unable to recapture it.[78] Combined with the Xi revolt of the year earlier, it seems likely that An Lushan's army at this point was largely drawn from the regions under his command and not from allies across the border.

Shortly after, Li Linfu died in the capital in January 753. He specified on his deathbed that his power should be passed to his former adversary, Yang Guozhong 楊國忠 (d. 756), the second cousin and childhood friend of Concubine Yang.[79] Despite their old animosity, Li Linfu had many good reasons to select Yang Guozhong as his successor. Yang Guozhong was a powerful aristocrat with enough clout in the capital to fight against both Li Heng and the literati faction. He had built a clique of politicians and gained control of the only frontier army still commanded by a Han general, in Sichuan. Yang also worked to make allies among foreigners in Chang'an. When centralizing court measures threatened the wealth of the Sogdian merchant community in Chang'an, causing a mass

merchant demonstration, Yang Guozhong met with merchant leaders and agreed to press their concerns in court.[80] Yang's position as a spokesperson for the Sogdian merchant community is very significant. Given that one of An Lushan's primary goals was to depose Yang Guozhong, it is unlikely that the Chang'an Sogdians supported An Lushan. They would have had no reason to support a revolt when their representative in the court had already become Chief Minister.

However, though it is unlikely that the Chang'an Sogdian community supported An Lushan, the possibility remains that other Sogdian communities did. Besides the pastoral Sogdian settlements of the Ordos, An Lushan also ruled over at least one community of Sogdian merchants. This was the city of An Lushan's birth, Yingzhou, which was resettled partially by Sogdian merchants at the request of the Tang government in 717.[81] One would assume that if these merchants did not originally support An Lushan, they would have been compelled to change their minds sometime prior to the Rebellion. The possible support of China's Sogdian merchant community for An Lushan was also referenced in the *History of An Lushan*, which deserves to be cited in its entirety:

> In secret, in the various districts, western merchants established [markets] to buy and sell. Every year they brought the precious merchandise of foreign lands, the total value of which can be estimated at a million [cash]. Every time that the merchants arrived, [An] Lushan, in *hu* dress, remained seated on a double bed (?) while incense was burned [before him] and precious objects were arranged. He ordered the *hu* to stand to his right and to his left. The crowd of *hu* then surrounded [An Lushan] and prostrated themselves at his feet to implore the blessings of Heaven. [An] Lushan had the animals prepared and arranged for the sacrifices. The sorceresses beat the drums, danced and sang. Evening having come, they dispersed. Following this, he ordered the crowd of *hu* [to go] into the various districts in order to secretly sell pieces of gauze or silk as well as robes made of red silk or violet silk, purses embellished with gold or silver containing insignia in the form of fish, belts which are worn around the waist and

> other articles by the millions, and this in order to build up a reserve with a view to the revolt. He acted in this way for eight or nine years.[82]

La Vaissière takes this passage at face value, but the details of this anecdote render it highly suspect. Firstly, it is important to note that even if these ceremonies actually took place, it is highly unlikely that anyone present would have made a written record of them, let alone that such a record would eventually have been available to a Tang historian. An Lushan would have scrupulously covered up any suspicion of involvement with rituals or black magic, as a politician's involvement in such things was seen in the Tang as a sure sign of rebellious intent.[83] Since no trace of An Lushan's involvement in such rituals was discovered by the government prior to the Rebellion, it is apparent that the Tang government had no documentary evidence of it. Unless An Lushan's rebel government kept the records of these rituals on hand and failed to destroy them during the course of the Rebellion, there is no means by which a reliable account of these events could possibly have fallen into the hands of a latter-day historian.

This anecdote's authenticity can also be called into question on the basis of its details. For example, the description of the ritual performed by An Lushan and the Sogdian merchants is clearly based on Chinese rituals rather than the rituals of any of the four commonly practiced Sogdian religions: Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, and Nestorian Christianity. "Heaven 天" was not a commonly used Chinese transcription for either Ahura Mazda, the supreme deity of Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism,[84] or for the Christian God,[85] and has no functional equivalent in most forms of Buddhism. In addition, none of the four commonly practiced Sogdian religions practiced animal sacrifice.[86] As a final note, the only Sogdian religion that accepted female clergy with any regularity was Buddhism, and so the claimed presence of "sorceresses" rings false. While it is possible that the Sogdian merchant community had assimilated many Chinese or Turkic religious practices, when coupled with the dubious existence of source material for this anecdote it appears that the historian instead concocted a type of ritual based on those he had been in contact with.

Furthermore, the whole anecdote appears based on a poor understanding of the Sogdian trade networks. The vast majority of Sogdian merchants that An Lushan came into contact with already lived on the frontier, rather than having just arrived there.[87] Most merchants settled permanently at a chosen location in the trade network, operating short-distance trade with other sedentary Sogdians.[88] Moreover, any merchants who did arrive in the northeast on a semi-regular basis would undoubtedly have come not from "foreign lands" but from other areas of China; the Sogdian trade routes to the northeast and Korea almost certainly passed through Chinese territory where peace and transportation infrastructure made it more profitable. Similarly, even though Sogdian merchants were not known to regularly sell silks, as is claimed, if they did sell silks they would have bought them in China rather than in "foreign lands."[89] The odds of this particular anecdote being true are very low.

That is not to say that An Lushan did not meet with Sogdian communities at all; his ready supply of cavalrymen at the beginning of the Rebellion and the records of his herds of horses during the 750s strongly indicate that he was procuring warhorses from the major horse-producing region of the northeast, the Ordos Valley.[90] And as the inhabitants of the Ordos were mostly either Turks, with whom An Lushan had a rocky history, or members of the Sogdian colony into which his father had been born, it is likely that An Lushan's horse breeders were Sogdian. Given the prominence of merchants in Sogdian society, it is also safe to assume that many merchants of the Ordos did in fact support An Lushan's military build-up. However, whether these merchants knew that he would use the horses to rebel, and whether other Sogdian merchant communities, notably Yingzhou, also supported him, is entirely unknown. Enough Sogdians supported him to grant him the heavy cavalry that would be so useful on the North China Plain. In sum, An Lushan's Sogdian allies helped him create a fighting force more efficient than any other in China.

It is also unclear whether An Lushan planned to rebel prior to 754. While official histories are generally written as if the rebellion was An Lushan's life

purpose, the actual events suggest that it was the result of an escalating power struggle. In Chang'an, An Lushan was increasingly antagonized by Yang Guozhong, whose clique possessed political power but much less military power than An Lushan.[91] Yang expressed concern for An Lushan's lack of loyalty and stated that An Lushan would never come to the capital if summoned.[92] Emperor Xuanzong issued a summons to test this theory, and An Lushan arrived in 753 at Chang'an. An Lushan reportedly fell to his knees and begged Xuanzong to save him from the Yang Guozhong's malice. Impressed by this show of loyalty, Xuanzong sent him back to the northeast with additional appointments, among them the position of Divisional Commissioner of Horse Pastures and Herds for the northeast. This undoubtedly made it even easier for Lushan to amass warhorses.[93] In addition, Yang Guozhong's actions may have pushed An Lushan into open revolt to save himself from future political plots. If he was preparing for a Rebellion, one would assume that he would have asked his son An Qingzong to take leave of his post in the capital, where his life would be in danger. However, An Qingzong was likely compelled to stay at Chang'an as a hostage. The Emperor therefore must have suspected An Lushan's possible disloyalty, but was unable to take direct action and sought to control him through placating him with appointments while holding hostage his son and heir.

In 755 Yang's voice was joined by that of An Lushan's cousin, An Sishun, who reported to the Emperor that his cousin would likely rebel.[94] The Emperor again conceded to summoning An Lushan, who refused and gave the excuse of illness. Later in the year Emperor Xuanzong arranged a marriage for An Lushan's son Qingzong and ordered An Lushan to view the ceremony in Chang'an.[95] An Lushan refused. In December 755, he rose in rebellion. He led his army towards Luoyang in rebellion, claiming that he was marching to remove the "rebellious thief" (*nizei* 逆賊) Yang Guozhong from power on behalf of Emperor Xuanzong.[96]

Several commentators of the time, to be discussed later in this paper, described the rebels entirely as *hu*. Yet An Lushan's officers, from all

indications, were a multiethnic mix of Han, Sogdians, and Turks drawn from among the peoples of the Tang frontier. The names of his officers reveal his corps to be extremely varied: Sogdian, Korean, Turkic, and even Han names appear among his top advisors.[97] For the rest of his army, there is little certainty. The *Old Tang History* gives the possibly exaggerated figure of An Lushan's initial troop strength at 150,000.[98] Of these, 20,000 defected almost immediately when called up from their positions around Yingzhou. Interestingly, by its location, it is reasonable to assume that Yingzhou would have had the largest number of cross-border recruits, and was nonetheless disloyal to An Lushan. Of the 130,000 remaining, at least 2000 of these were known to be Sogdian knights, likely recruited from the Ordos valley and Yingzhou.[99] As for the other soldiers, little is known for certain. The spate of uprisings against An Lushan by foreign-born troops in the decade before the Rebellion makes it likely that very few still followed An Lushan. His army was composed almost entirely of professional Tang frontier soldiers, drawn from two large groups, former militiamen and landless commoners.[100] Militiamen were drawn from the general area of their posts. Hebei was a comparatively multiethnic region of the Tang.[101] It is reasonable to assume that this group was more multiethnic than the general Tang population, but any assumptions beyond that would be reaching. As for the other group in the frontier armies, landless commoners, it is most likely that this would be more or less representative of the general Tang population. Other than the 2000 known Sogdian cavalry, very little about An Lushan's army suggests that his troops were substantially more foreign than the general population. Other than their loyalty, there is little to distinguish An Lushan's original army from other frontier forces of the time.

However, it is likely that regardless of the original ethnic composition of the rebel army, over time it must have become more and more Han. This can be deduced by simple math. Later figures indicate that far more than 130,000 rebels were killed or captured during the course of the Rebellion. While these figures may have been exaggerated as well, it is clear that the rebels replenished their ranks over the course of the Rebellion. One major source for new soldiers may

have been the acquisition of guardsmen units from the cities and commanderies in Hedong. Many local commanders in the region allied with the rebels during their march and presumably lent troops to the rebels' cause.[102] As the army was marching from a frontier area to the Chinese heartland, the rebel army likely showed higher and higher percentages of Han soldiers as the Rebellion progressed. In addition, it is possible that the rebels, who controlled some areas of the country continuously for eight years, had developed some form of conscription with which to replenish their ranks with civilians, most of whom would have been Han.

An Lushan's army may well have grown even larger than 130,000 soldiers when it reached the Yellow River in January or February, 756, shattering local resistance. Upon learning that Emperor Xuanzong had, predictably, executed the hostage An Qingzong, An Lushan allegedly ordered thousands of prisoners to attack and kill each other. This strongly indicates that An Lushan was deranged, with no ability to take responsibility for his son's death, an obvious consequence of his rebellious actions, and no means to control his anger. Because An Lushan appears to have been delusional and violently emotionally disturbed, it is possible that many of his actions leading up to or taking place during the Rebellion did not have entirely rational causes. However, he still proved an effective commander, conquering Luoyang in late February or early March.[103] Soon thereafter, he made it clear that he was not, in fact, attempting to remove Yang Guozhong at the request of Emperor Xuanzong, by declaring a new dynasty, the Yan 燕, with himself as its emperor. This name was significant: Yan was the name of an independent state in the Hebei region for centuries prior to its conquest by the state of Qin (778-207 BCE) in the unification of China in 221 BCE. In the same way that Empress Wu Zetian in 690 had chosen a dynastic title, Zhou 周, to imply a return to the glory and power of an ancient dynasty, An Lushan must have chosen the name Yan to imply a return to a past when the northeast was free of central control. This choice of name was an attempt to appeal to the secessionist northeast at the risk of alienating the rest of China.

The role of Hebei elites in the Rebellion has been the subject of some debate. Pulleyblank grounds his analysis in the assumption that Hebei separatists supported and defended An Lushan. This argument is built on the number of Hebei political elites who supported the Rebellion or worked in the Yan government, as well as the continued worship of An Lushan after his death.[104] Twitchett dismisses it outright, stating that the large number of Tang loyalists in Hebei who marched against the rebels indicated that there was no pan-regional support. He further notes that there were few signs of discontent in Hebei prior to the Rebellion.[105] Both sides of the argument are reasonable. It is most likely that the truth lies somewhere in between the two. Yan would be a strange choice for a dynasty name if An Lushan did not think that there was a benefit to declaring that his dynasty would be Hebei-based. An Lushan therefore must have had allies who wanted to ensure Hebei's interests were better represented. Had An Lushan wanted to simply appease foreigners or the military, he would have chosen a name after his army garrisons, as did the founders of the Song Dynasty. While many Hebei Tang loyalists did not share this enthusiasm for An Lushan's rule, some, as indicated by Pulleyblank, undoubtedly did. At least as far as appearances go, An Lushan was more invested in creating a Hebei-focused dynasty than a foreigner- or military-focused one.

This principle carried over into the actual practice of Yan governance. As far as can be determined by the official histories' account, the Yan government set up by An Lushan was a duplicate of the Tang central government: six boards with Presidents by appointment, watched over by a Board of Censors.[106] Given An Lushan's desire to appeal to the eastern elite, one would expect that a civil service examination system would have been implemented to offer the eastern literati a stake in government. However, no such examination system was implemented, or at least recorded as being implemented. An Lushan's support of eastern concerns was apparently only skin deep. His support of Hebei separatism did not extend to creating the kind of society sought by Hebei elites.

Moreover, An Lushan had ambitions far beyond those of a mere separatist. In the summer of 756, he dispatched the majority of his army to Chang'an. The approaches to Chang'an were guarded by the half-Turkic, half-Central Asian frontier general Geshu Han 哥舒翰, who had led his army from the western frontier to oppose An Lushan's entry into the capital.[107] Geshu Han was defeated in battle on July 9, 756, and subsequently captured.[108] Five days later, knowing Chang'an to be lost, Emperor Xuanzong, his household, and his high ministers fled southwards towards Sichuan with the Northern Armies. On the 18th, the rebel army entered and occupied Chang'an.

The rebel troops proceeded to loot Chang'an. In the first day, they rounded up the Tang government officials who remained after Xuanzong's flight from the capital. On An Lushan's orders, these officials were captured and sent under guard to Luoyang, where they were ordered to serve in the upper echelons of the Yan government.[109] An Lushan's orders also included specific instructions to seek out and capture the Tang court musicians for the service of the Yan government. This led to a highly dramatized episode where a court musician was murdered for refusing to surrender. These officials and musicians formed a significant group within the Yan bureaucracy. The Yan highly prized the officials' expertise. There is little to suggest that the officials were abused, or that they were simply a temporary solution until An Lushan could replace them with more loyal bureaucrats. Many were placed in positions of real power, and at least one official received a substantial promotion by the rebels.[110] It appears that An Lushan was attempting to relocate the Tang government to Luoyang rather than tear it down. An Lushan's specific instructions to retrieve the court musicians also indicate that he wanted the Yan to have the same legitimacy as a Chinese dynasty as the Tang. At the very least, An Lushan wanted strongly to project the image of a Chinese-style government.

While An Lushan's troops were sacking Chang'an and abducting the government, Emperor Xuanzong's household and chief ministers were fleeing to the southwest. On the twentieth of June, Emperor Xuanzong's entourage spent the

night at a waystation near modern day Xianyang, Shaanxi. When Yang Guozhong stopped to speak to some angry Tibetan emissaries near the waystation, Li Heng sympathizers in the Northern Armies loudly proclaimed that he was conspiring with foreigners to support the Rebellion, and killed him. Following this, they asked the Emperor to order the execution of Concubine Yang, to which he agreed.[111] However, the bloodlust of the Northern Armies was not appeased. They also turned on the Tibetan emissaries. Their choice of the Tibetans demonstrates that their anger not just at the rebels and those in the government they perceived as helping the rebels, but also at foreigners in general. This bloody night was the first indication that many elites in China saw their dynasty under attack not by secessionist rebels led by a power-mad general, or even as an attack by Sogdians or Turks, but as a wholesale siege of the Han by a generic Other, who took form both as *hu* rebels and Tibetan envoys. The account of this night will be further analyzed later in this paper. From this point on, it can be reasonably assumed that Li Heng had taken control of the Tang government-in-exile. About a month later, on August 12, 756, it became official. Emperor Xuanzong resigned his post in favour of Li Heng, who took power as Emperor Suzong (r. 756-762).

Li Heng's coup was not a reaction to the Rebellion. Li Heng had already attempted a military coup a decade earlier, and had been hostile to his father, Emperor Xuanzong, most of his adult life. He did not take power because An Lushan had caused the Empire to lose faith in Xuanzong; rather, he took power because he had made it his life's goal to subvert the military units nearest to Chang'an. The vulnerability of Xuanzong while on the road and in disgrace undoubtedly helped Li Heng, but the coup itself was the product of a decades-long process. I make a special mention of this because it further undermines the idea that the chaos of the Rebellion was an ethnic conflict. Xuanzong's own flesh and blood was equally rebellious, but more effective, than the "foreigner" An Lushan.

A similar family dispute was tearing apart the new Yan Dynasty. Following the execution of his hostage son, An Lushan elevated An Qingxu, the second son of An Lushan's first wife, the Sogdian Lady Kang 康.[112] However, if the *Old Tang History* is to be believed, Qingxu was an unsuitable candidate for the throne of Yan. He was noted as being small minded and having nonsensical speech, both of which indicate that Qingxu probably suffered from a mental or nervous disability. And as his father's health waned throughout 756, Qingxu, according to latter-day commentators, became concerned that his father would soon transfer the leadership to his more suitable younger brother, the half-Han An Qingen.[113] The fact that An Lushan had taken a Han empress, and furthermore was considering making her son the heir apparent over the three-quarters-Sogdian (though unsuitable) An Qingxu, shows that he saw little value in keeping his line non-Chinese.

As Qingxu's fear of displacement by his half-brother grew, many of An Lushan's officers and personal staff were increasingly concerned by Lushan's irrational rages. Among them was An Lushan's personal groom Li Zhu'er 李豬兒, a Khitan slave who, some years before, had been castrated by order of An Lushan. While the memory of his castration alone might have been enough to cause Li Zhu'er's enmity, he also had reason to fear for his life. An Lushan, increasingly deranged, routinely had his personal officers beaten for small crimes. Targets of his rage included not only Li Zhu'er, but also a prominent rebel general, Yan Zhuang 嚴莊 (fl. 755-761). Terrified of a future under An Lushan and craving power, Li and Yan plotted to kill An Lushan. They asked for An Qingxu's consent to kill An Lushan without punishment, and received it. On January 29, 757, they entered An Lushan's tent, where he lay sick, and stabbed him to death.[114] An Qingxu succeeded his father as Emperor of Yan. Yan Zhuang became President of the Board of Censors and ruled as dictator.

While both the Tang and the Yan thrones were usurped within a year of each other, the transition went much smoother in the Tang. Suzong had extensive contacts and prestige, and easily outmanoeuvred the last holdouts to the new

regime. He then turned his efforts towards re-establishing Tang control of Chang'an. To this end, Suzong consolidated an alliance with the rising Uyghur Qaghanate. The Uyghurs were the foremost group in a confederacy of Western Turkic groups. This confederacy came to dominate the western steppe following the collapse of the Göktürk Eastern Turkic Qaghanate in the early 740s. In Chinese sources, the people of the confederacy were given the name of Uyghurs, despite the fact that the group who actually self-identified as Uyghur were only a small minority of the total population. This confederation has no known link to the modern-day ethnicity of the same name.[115] The inclusion of the Uyghur army in the Tang campaigns led to the Tang becoming a *de facto* tributary of the Uyghur Qaghanate. Over the next six years or so, the Uyghurs successfully negotiated extraterritoriality for their subjects, the right to loot several Chinese cities, and an extremely unequal trading relationship.[116] From Suzong's alliance with the Uyghurs onwards, the Tang became the agents by which a foreign power economically oppressed China. This massively complicates the ethnic dimensions of the Rebellion. The Yan royalty were Turco-Sogdians who advanced the independence from outside control of Hebei. The Tang royalty were Sino-Turks, more Chinese than Turkic, who advanced the dependence and penetration of China as a whole by a foreign power.

The Uyghurs' first act in the alliance was supporting a Tang push into the northern Hebei region on December 7, 757. The Uyghur qaghan himself led an army to support the invading Tang general, but first requested that the Tang general bow down and do obeisance to his army's wolf banner.[117] This request was granted. It is clear that this general was willing to submit to foreign hegemony in order to have a fighting chance against the Yan.

In exchange for looting privileges and the promise of a marriage into the Tang royal clan, the Uyghurs dispatched 4000 cavalrymen to serve under the command of a Chinese general of Göktürk descent, Pugu Huai'en 僕固懷恩 (d. 765). This Uyghur force may appear small compared to other armies recorded at the time, but one Uyghur trained cavalryman was undoubtedly several times more

effective in combat than the semi-professional soldiery that made up the bulk of the Tang forces.

The effectiveness of the Uyghurs in battle was proven in September of 757, when the Tang army marched to recapture Chang'an, allegedly marshalling 150,000 men against the rebel garrison's 100,000. Official histories write that the Uyghur commander, known only by his title "viceroy" (*yagbu, yehu* 葉護) showed great initiative and bravery. In the official account, the Uyghur viceroy urged the Tang commanders to march hard and share in the sacrifice of their troops prior to the battle.[118] Once the battle began the viceroy charged with the Uyghur cavalry and broke the left flank of the rebel forces, ensuring a Tang victory.[119] The *New Tang History* states that in the wake of the battle, 60,000 rebel captives were executed.[120] Though it does not state how many were spared, judging by similar large-scale battles waged against the rebels, it was likely very few. In the aftermath of the battle, the Tang army denied the Uyghurs the right to pillage that they had agreed upon. The Uyghur viceroy noted his disapproval. The viceroy was placated by a show of obeisance by the Tang heir apparent, as well as the promise of plunder in the future.[121] This is, to my knowledge, the first show of obeisance by a member of the Li family to a foreigner since the founding of the Tang. It was the first of many indications that the Tang had ceded sovereignty to the Uyghurs. Nonetheless, it allowed Emperor Suzong to re-establish the Tang court at Chang'an.

Meanwhile at the rebel camp Yan Zhuang committed the bulk of his forces to halting the Tang march between Chang'an and Luoyang. The Uyghurs again turned the rebel army's flank, leading to a fighting rout. Lacking the strength to defend Luoyang, the Yan government relocated northward into Hebei. Yan Zhuang abandoned An Qingxu and defected back to the Tang, where he was shown mercy.[122]

When the Tang army again arrived at Luoyang in December, it agreed to the Uyghur request to pillage the city. This may have been out of necessity to maintain the Uyghurs as allies, or it may have been an attempt to punish the

people of Luoyang for what was seen as tacit support of An Lushan and his eastern separatist allies. The Uyghurs were let loose in the city for several days.[123]

Over the course of the following year, several government officials ruling over commanderies in Yan-controlled Hebei defected to the Tang, often bringing land and armies with them.[124] Interestingly, the Tang reversed their previous policy of extreme brutality against captured rebels and welcomed these officials with open arms and promotions.[125] As the Tang advance towards the rebel strongholds continued, more and more officials defected back to the Tang. Finally, in late 758, the Tang army reached and besieged An Qingxu and his forces.

At this time Shi Siming, the former Sogdian military commissioner of Pinglu under An Lushan who feared that had he been present immediately after Lushan's defeat by the Khitan in 751 he would have been executed as a scapegoat, controlled a large army outside of the Tang siege. Seeing an opportunity, he unilaterally declared himself a Prince of Yan and rallied the Yan troops together to rescue the rebel government. On April 7 of the following year, Shi Siming's army broke the Tang siege and forced them to hurriedly retreat. Shi then summoned An Qingxu to his pavilion. Faced with the defection of numerous generals to Shi Siming, An Qingxu came to submit approximately one week later.[126] Shi Siming pardoned An Qingxu for his failures to defend the Yan state, but charged him with unfiliality for being complicit in the murder of his father.[127] An Qingxu, two of his brothers, and all generals in his faction who had not defected to Shi Siming were put to death.

The record of these proceedings shows the extent to which the Yan rulers sought to emulate the style of Chinese rulers. Shi Siming's pronouncements demonstrated the three cardinal Confucian virtues: benevolence, as he forgave An Qingxu's incompetence; filiality, as he showed himself to be deeply offended by An Qingxu's betrayal of An Lushan; and righteousness, for punishing what under Confucian doctrine could not be forgiven. Shi Siming's words and actions

towards An Qingxu would not have been out of place in most imperial Chinese courts. The Yan state emulated the Tang in terms of the personal conduct of its rulers, in addition to in the actual form of the government.

However, under Shi Siming, increased Sogdianization and Turkicization did appear to be evident among the Yan. The History of An Lushan noted that many among Shi Siming's court acted inappropriately and dressed as barbarians, in contrast to the courts of the two previous Yan rulers.[128] This could be due to a deliberate policy by Shi Siming. It could also have been due to the location of Shi Siming's newly-established capital at Fanyang, which he renamed Yanjing 燕京. This location, near the frontier, may have allowed the *hu* in the Yan court to ignore a wider range of Chinese customs that in Luoyang were necessary to placate the largely Han population. Another possibility is that the capture of Luoyang had shifted the Yan court's demographics. Many former Tang government officials were recovered in the Tang sack of Luoyang. The court at Yanjing may have had to be reconstituted from frontier elites, who were more influenced by foreign culture than the captured officials at Luoyang. It is not likely that Shi Siming himself was aching to return to foreign ways, as his empress appears to have been Han.[129]

Shi Siming's rule was considerably more effective than An Qingxu's. In June, 760, he recaptured Luoyang.[130] However, instead of re-establishing his capital in the vulnerable central areas of China, he chose to keep it at Yanjing. Like An Lushan, however, Shi Siming still sought dominion over central China. He mounted a campaign aimed at retaking Chang'an in the spring of 761, which proved to be his last.

Like An Lushan's death, Shi Siming's death came about through the machinations of a paranoid son. Shi Siming's eldest, Shi Chaoyi 史朝義 (d. 763), was worried about being replaced as heir apparent by his younger brother.[131] Accordingly, Shi Chaoyi had his father abducted and killed by factional generals. The pattern of filicide in the Yan state carried with it an interesting ethnic dimension. An Qingxu and Shi Chaoyi's situations had a great deal in common.

Both were elder sons in danger of being replaced by younger half-brothers. More importantly, both were the sons of first wives who were overlooked by their fathers in order to elevate ethnically Han second wives as empresses. An Qingxu's mother was a Sogdian and was replaced as empress by a Han woman; Shi Chaoyi's mother's ethnicitiy is unknown but she was also replaced by a Han woman. These family conflicts of the Yan, generally seen to be the sole result of personal politics, may have been reflective of the Yan's ethnic policy. The choice of Han second wives as empresses by both An Lushan and Shi Siming certainly indicates their desire to elevate the Han parts of their households over the *hu* parts. The paranoia of Qingxu and Chaoyi may have been due to their fathers' apparent desires to create a Han-style dynasty. Having seen their mothers replaced in power by Han women, both of these usurpers may have realized that they would have no place in a Han household.

Though Shi Siming favoured his Han wife and half-Han children overChaoyi, he also portrayed himself as Sogdian. His tomb outside Luoyang has recently been unearthed. On his epitaph are two reign titles, one in Chinese and one in Sogdian.[132] This is perhaps the greatest evidence to the contrary of this part's hypothesis that the Rebellion did not have the characteristic of an ethnic invasion. The presence of a separate reign title in Sogdian indicates that, while Shi Siming generally ran the Yan state as a Chinese empire, he was simultaneously presenting himself to the Sogdians under his rule as a Sogdian ruler. However, as has already been pointed out by la Vaissière, this arrangement was not unheard-of during the Tang. A century earlier, Emperor Taizong proclaimed himself both as Emperor of China and Qaghan of the Turks.[133] Given the Tang's own practice of taking multiple reign titles, Shi Siming's epitaph alone is not enough to conclude that there was a meaningful ethnic difference between the rebels and the Tang.

Shi Chaoyi's first year of rule was marked by mixed fortune. Almost immediately after he ascended to the throne, one of Shi Siming's former vassals viciously sacked Yanjing and turned the city over to the Tang. This could have

been the end of the Rebellion, but then Shi Chaoyi had a stroke of luck. In the spring of 762, both Emperor Suzong and the retired Emperor Xuanzong passed away, leaving the Tang in a leadership crisis.[134] Shi Chaoyi attempted to take advantage of this situation by sending an emissary to the Uyghur qaghan informing him that the Tang were in disorder and ripe for a major attack. The Uyghur qaghan raised an army and marched into North China to examine the Tang defences. After some brief raids, the qaghan considered attacking Chang'an to pre-emptively prevent the rise of a strong or defiant Tang leader. In the end, the Tang managed to narrowly save their alliance with the Uyghurs through the intervention of the qaghan's wife, a daughter of Pugu Huai'en, who brokered a meeting between her father and husband. The former convinced the latter that the leadership in Chang'an, under the newly-crowned Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762-779), was strong enough to challenge a Uyghur invasion.[135] The qaghan accepted this and offered to renew his alliance with the Tang. Everyone involved in brokering this peace was a Turk. The Tang government was not only subservient to the Uyghurs, but also dependent on Turks within China to make critical diplomatic decisions.

This renewed alliance gave the Tang the soldiers they needed to go on the offensive, but the Uyghur qaghan was aware of the leverage he had received. The qaghan came to oversee military operations against the Yan personally. Later that year, when one of the Daizong's sons refused to salute the qaghan, the qaghan ordered the prince to instead perform a ceremonial dance. When the prince's ministers complained that it was unsuitable for a Chinese prince to perform a foreign rite, the qaghan had the ministers beaten to death.[136] While the prince did not, in the end, perform the dance, there were no repercussions for the murders. The power and hegemony of the Uyghurs over the Tang government was made abundantly clear.

When the Tang recaptured Luoyang on November 19, 762, the Uyghurs again sacked the city, this time burning several districts to the ground.[137] This victory, while won at a high cost, was the last major battle against the rebels. The

Tang army advanced into Hebei, and the following year Shi Chaoyi committed suicide. A tentative peace with the remaining rebels was brokered. The remaining Yan generals would be allowed to hold sinecures as governors of the Hebei region, operating virtually independently, in exchange for peace.[138] If Hebei separatism was a real goal of the Yan, then that goal had been achieved. This period of Yan independence was seen in a positive light by many living in Hebei, with many worshipping An Lushan, An Qingxu, Shi Siming, and Shi Chaoyi for several centuries thereafter.[139]

In the wake of the Rebellion, Tang society and politics saw significant changes. Firstly, the Tang state was vulnerable to exploitation by the Uyghur qaghan. The Uyghurs insisted they agree on a standard unequal trade of several thousand warhorses for hundreds of thousands of bolts of silk every year.[140] To make matters worse, the Uyghurs ended up sending draft horses or sick and lame horses, in effect robbing the Tang state of vast quantities of wealth every year.[141] The Tang's utter inability to stop this arrangement led to the subjugation of a huge portion of the Chinese economy to a foreign interest.

To make matters worse, the Rebellion had also wrought massive and damaging economic changes. The traditional apparatuses of taxation and land distribution were damaged irrevocably.[142] Without its tax base, the wealth and power of the Tang was greatly injured. New financial and social structures had to be developed in the absence of government-overseen land and tax distribution.

As another blow, Tang control of the overland Silk Road trade route was ended by Uyghur and Tibetan expansion into the Gansu region. Contact with the Tang's Silk Road colonies in Anxi was cut, though Tang garrisons there remained loyal.[143] The lack of Tang involvement in Central Asia allowed the newly-formed Abbasid caliphate to dominate Silk Road trade. At the same time, non-Uyghur merchants in China suffered a sharp decline. Sogdians across the country, fearing persecution, changed their names to hide their heritage.[144] Virtually all mention of the Sogdians disappeared from the historical record following the Rebellion.[145] Sogdian temples, including Zoroastrian, Manichaean, Christian and Buddhist

temples, were initially spared, likely due to the influence of the Uyghurs who shared those religions. But this clemency only lasted as long as the Uyghur Qaghanate existed.

There are many indicators that the An Shi Rebellion was primarily a multiethnic uprising rather than the invasion of an ethnically Han state by the *hu*. Firstly, while of foreign origin and extraction, An Lushan was a lifelong member of the Tang military establishment and had few if any ties to foreign powers. Secondly, the Tang military establishment at the time of the Rebellion was controlled mostly by non-Han, yet all other major commanders supported the Tang during the Rebellion. This indicates that there was no evident feeling of solidarity among the *hu* or *fan* elites in other parts of the empire. Even within An Lushan's own family there was no consensus, as his own cousin An Sishun attempted to warn Xuanzong of An Lushan's plans. In addition, the Tang army that defeated the rebel forces only managed to do so by enlisting the help of the Uyghur army, a violent and rapacious force significantly more hostile to the common people of China than the rebels. Thirdly, An Lushan and, to a lesser extent, Shi Siming, appeared to be more closely aligned with Hebei secessionists than with foreigners. This is indicated by their Confucian conduct, the structure of their government and the dynastic name Yan. It is also evident in their strategic choices: the bulk of the rebel armies always moved towards the center of China to neutralize the Tang threat rather than sweeping across the north to liberate and unify the Turks and Sogdians of China.

Part 2: New Cultural Paradigms and Ethnic Violence during the Rebellion

As was demonstrated in Part 1, the evidence strongly indicates that the Rebellion did not meaningfully divide China along ethnic lines. Yet, both Tang discourse and the genocidal attacks on foreigners indicate that many elites of the time defined the Rebellion as an ethnic conflict. The definition of the rebels as foreigners was one of the earlier examples of the anti-foreign ideology that would define the remainder of the Tang Dynasty. However, the understanding of the Rebellion and the violence it inspired were shaped by earlier cultural definitions of the foreigner far more than by the actual events of the Rebellion. Pre-Rebellion documents show the increasing popularity of a conceptual paradigm that defined the Tang political power as uniformly Han and their enemies as uniformly foreign. This paradigm informed the collective belief that the Rebellion was a foreign invasion.

The conceptual paradigm was based on four main beliefs. The first was the belief that the Tang state and the Han nation were one and the same. In this framework, the boundaries of the Tang were also the boundaries of the Han people, regardless of where they happened to actually lie. The second aspect was a belief that these boundaries were not created by the state but rather were eternal and natural. In consequence, any foreign element within the political borders of the Tang was seen as unnatural. These two aspects allowed for the generalization of a complete Han Self, which mapped exactly on to the political boundaries of the Tang empire. The third main belief was the corollary: the generalization of a whole and complete barbarian Other, denoted by the term *hu*. Just as in the Han Self was a uniform entity, of a specific and definable geography, ideology, and culture, so the *hu* also became equally uniform. *Hu* became increasingly general and ambiguous, eventually applying to all foreigners to the north or west as well as their supporters. The fourth belief was the idea that the *hu* and Han were eternally opposed to each other, locked in an irresolvable battle of interests. This manifested in constructed narratives of eternal frontier wars as well as a total

refusal to acknowledge any mutually beneficial relationships between Han groups and *hu* groups. Together, these four beliefs gave rise to an entirely constructed view of geographic, political and cultural realities. This view acknowledged neither the mixing of cultures nor the complicated political situations of the Tang. Nonetheless, it was the primary lens through which the Rebellion was viewed by both literary and political figures. As the four beliefs together formed a concrete, consistent, self-reinforcing conceptualization of the world, I will be referring to them as a single paradigm, called in this paper the "static boundary paradigm."

This view was anti-factual and existed only through continuous forgetfulness of political realities. The Tang ruling clan were living contradictions of the static boundary paradigm, being either partially or wholly descended from Tabgach Turks at the time of the founding of the Tang dynasty. In addition, the Tang empire was increasingly multiethnic. Non-Han people increasingly entered the empire both by migration, as large foreign communities settled in the Chinese heartland, but also by subjugation, as the Tang empire's borders pushed farther north and west than ever before. The static boundary paradigm required one to forget that the borders were shifting, or that migration and the ethnicity of the royal family made the concept of a purely Han state untenable.[146]

Perhaps due to these uncomfortable realities, the static boundary paradigm had a limited impact on the elites of the early Tang. Instead, political realities compelled the Tang government to adopt a relatively nuanced, sympathetic understanding of the place of foreigners both within their borders and without. The Tang's entire foreign policy, including their use of marriage alliances, tributes, bribes, peace treaties and the adoption of Turkic titles, demanded a worldview that accepted the reality of shifting boundaries. In order to serve as a general or diplomat in the Tang, one would have had to have a deep understanding of foreign cultures and political situations. This led to a political discourse that the historian Chen Sanping called "politically correct," in which the legitimacy of foreign rulers and cultures was acknowledged or even promoted.[147]

The “politically correct” paradigm and static boundary paradigm coexisted in China throughout the early Tang. Far from assimilating, the Tang rulers became increasingly confident in their own power. The reign of Emperor Xuanzong, immediately prior to the Rebellion, was a high water mark for Turkic influence. Under Xuanzong there were more marriage alliances with foreigners than all previous Tang Emperors combined,[148] as well as a wide embrace at court of Turkic fashions.[149] Yet, at the same time, the static boundary paradigm, which expressed itself in literature, political elites’ memorials, and even government decisions, also became more and more visible. By the time of the Rebellion, the cultural vocabulary of static boundaries could be seen in the words of an array of court poets, military leaders, and even in the Emperor’s.

The first indications of the static boundary paradigm’s influence can be seen in the Tang court’s religious policy edicts, often used to attack politically threatening religions. Later in the dynasty, the paradigm began to appear in new developments in literature, which over time became increasingly concerned with the supposed war between *hu* and Han. This occurred to such an extent that by the time of the Rebellion most major poets conceived of the world in such terms. This essay will track both developments in literature and developments in the language of political and religious policy. This will demonstrate the shifting authority given to the static boundary paradigm prior to the Rebellion.

The first Emperor of Tang, Gaozu 高祖 (r. 618-626), had many characteristics of a non-Han Emperor. He spoke Turkic at home, complained that his son, the future Emperor Taizong, was too influenced by Han customs, and at one point in his life swore fealty to the Eastern Turkic Qaghan.[150] But even during Gaozu’s non-Han reign, static boundary rhetoric was involved in the decision-making processes of the Tang court. For example, in 621, the grand historiographer of the Tang, Fu Yi 傅奕 (554-639), submitted memorials requesting a total ban on Buddhism as well as forcible laicization and compulsory marriage for monks and nuns.[151] Fu Yi’s arguments were built upon the assertion that a *hu* religion is inappropriate for the Han people. The memorial began with

the statement that "Buddhism began in *hu* lands," and noted, with disapproval, that these *hu* scriptures were translated by the Han. Fu Yi, having set up this binary opposition between the *hu* and Han, draws upon it repeatedly for the remainder of the memorial. Most tellingly, Fu Yi later noted that, following the acceptance of Buddhism in China, "The *hu* threw the Han into disorder so that people had to flatter ministers, local governors were cruel and the Emperor was weak." As shown in this statement, Fu Yi not only considered Buddhism to be an evil doctrine, but also believed it to be a vehicle by which the *hu* had entered and harmed China. Interestingly, Fu Yi avoided any mention of the Turkic invasion that ultimately destroyed the Western Jin 西晉 (265-316). Instead, Fu Yi cast the fall of the Western Jin as the result of the debilitating influence of *hu*, or *hu* culture. This is an example of one of the core beliefs of the static boundary paradigm. Any *hu* presence in Han lands was unnatural and undesirable in and of itself, regardless of what the *hu* were actually doing.

Fu Yi's memorial is the earliest example of the rejection of the foreigner by the Tang government. It is particularly striking in its virulence and strength of conviction, especially when one considers that Fu Yi was submitting it to an Emperor of foreign heritage. At any rate, Fu Yi did not win the support of the Emperor, or, apparently, the support of enough powerful elites to influence policy.

Five years after Fu Yi's first memorial, Emperor Gaozu did actually enact measures against the growing wealth and power of Buddhism. However, these were part of a larger, sweeping reform to religious policy that affected the Han religion of Daoism as much as Buddhism. They also were purely economic in nature, with none of the moralizing, assimilating legislation for which Fu Yi had called. Yet, even these measured, economy-centred reforms could not find sufficient support among the court elite. They were repealed just three months later, as Gaozu's mounting unpopularity led to a coup by his Buddhist-friendly son, the future Emperor Taizong, in 626. Cultural conservatives apparently did not have anywhere near the power or influence commanded by organized Buddhism.

Fu Yi's proposal, Emperor Gaozu's moderate reforms, and the severe backlash that followed demonstrate many things about the position of static boundary rhetoric at the outset of the Tang. Fu Yi's proposal demonstrates that even in the early Tang there already existed a rhetoric of the *hu* as Other. Fu Yi believed in a clear division of a Han Self and a *hu* Other and asserted that the penetration of the former by the latter was responsible for the development of general evils in society. He believed this so strongly that he argued that Buddhism, by this point a largely Han religion, should be banned as a consequence.[152] Furthermore, Fu Yi's continued employment by Emperor Gaozu despite his vocal opposition to foreigners demonstrates that Gaozu felt the need to respect cultural conservatives. The static boundary paradigm had already been established among influential elites. Gaozu was forced to try to take the middle road.

Another issue on which Gaozu remained neutral was the influx of a new Sogdian religion entering China under his reign. The earliest document addressing a Sogdian form of worship dates to 621, the same year as Fu Yi's first memorial, and takes a neutral, accepting tone.[153] It remarked on the teachings of Zoroastrianism, and noted that a Persian temple, likely also Zoroastrian, was founded in Chang'an. This temple was almost certainly built by the Sogdian community, as the title used for the temple leader is *sabao* 薩保, a word derived from the Sogdian title "caravan leader."[154] The tone of this document again shows the early Tang court's attempt to disagree with the anti-foreign sentiments while refusing to openly condemn it. The court permitted this new *hu* religion but made no statement judging the content of the teachings.

However, there were some indications in the early Tang that the static boundary paradigm had some influence on policymaking. Gaozu's successor Taizong took stronger positions both for and against foreign religions in China. A decade after Fu Yi's memorial, it apparently became necessary for the Emperor to make concessions to those in court who wanted to draw a hard boundary between *hu* and Han culture. In 631, after several years of appeasing Buddhists, Taizong

attempted to force Buddhists to submit to "secular" Chinese morality through an edict forbidding monks from receiving homage from their own parents.[155] While not nearly as heavy-handed as later measures in the Tang, this edict was at the time an unprecedented rejection of Buddhist morality. Unlike earlier edicts, this was a direct refutation of Buddhist mores and an assertion of the value of traditional Chinese culture over Buddhist beliefs. It seems evident that Taizong was acting in support of the conservative, anti-foreign elements in the court. This became increasingly true as the years passed.

In 637, Taizong ruled that Buddhism was a false and foreign religion.[156] But, like Gaozu before him, Taizong was only condemning Buddhism as part of a superficial confluence of interest with conservatives. Taizong was not personally offended by the foreignness of Buddhism. He cultivated a relationship, both personal and financial, with a foreign-influenced Buddhist monk, Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664), whose journey to India to acquire new Buddhist texts has been immortalized in fiction.[157] Taizong's patronage and interest in a foreign monk who imported foreign scriptures shows a certain cynicism in his condemnation of religion's foreignness. Given this, it is likely that Taizong's attack on Buddhism as foreign was more likely a way to build solidarity with cultural conservatives against the political power of Buddhism, than to genuinely condemn Buddhism for being foreign.

Taizong's other religious policies also show his disagreement with the concept of static boundaries. The first record of Taizong's interactions with Iranian religions is a simple record, in the first year of his reign, stating that a Zoroastrian magus named Helu 何祿 "introduced Zoroastrianism to the palace."[158] The exact implications of this phrase are difficult to ascertain. It is possible that Helu, like the early Buddhist missionaries to China, had convinced some palace inhabitants to follow his teachings. However, this may not have been the case as Zoroastrianism was not typically known to be a missionary religion.[159] Possibly, Helu "introduced Zoroastrianism to the palace" in the sense that he offered his abilities as a magician or astrologer and wished to talk about his philosophy, but

did not actively seek to convert members of the palace. Whatever the case, Taizong was impressed and established for Helu a new Zoroastrian temple in Chang'an. Even if Helu was not actively seeking converts, the new religion would undoubtedly have had some impact on Chang'an society at large, an impact Taizong was willing to accept. This demonstrated that the Emperor was not concerned that the new religion would be a threat to the social order. Similarly, when the first Nestorian Christian church was founded in 738 by Iranians, Taizong expressed no strong feelings one way or the other.[160] The founder of the church did not have any evident difficulty obtaining land and a charter for his house of worship, and no records exist of court disapproval. This shows particular tolerance on the part of Taizong because Nestorian Christianity was typically an evangelical religion and known to convert Han individuals.[161] Taizong's acceptance of this church in the capital showed that, unlike Fu Yi, he did not believe there was harm in allowing *hu* ideologies to influence the Han. During Taizong's reign, the concept of static boundaries had very little influence on the court's decision-making process.

But religious policy was far from the only indication that Taizong did not make decisions based on the static boundary paradigm. Another, even more convincing indication was Taizong's revival of "peace marriages" (*heqin* 和親), deliberate diplomatic marriages made with neighbouring rulers. In these marriage alliances, women from the royal clan and aristocracy were selected to become wives or queens to the chieftains of nomadic groups. This practice reached its apogee under the Tang, when real daughters of emperors were sent as princess brides to the Uyghur chiefs, who had come to the aid of Tang during the An Shi rebellion. Later in the indigenous Song Dynasty and Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the diplomatic policy of such marriage alliances was rejected as an abomination.[162] Notable in the Tang was the sheer frequency of these marriages, vastly greater than in the Sui or Han. Reaching a height during the reigns of Emperors Xuanzong and Suzong,[163] these marriages violated the core tenets of the static boundary paradigm. It is easy to see how the plight of these girls, mostly Han but also non-Han, as in the case of the daughters of Pugu Huai'en, would later

became a literary motif. Many poems blamed the royal Li family, with its Turkic blood, for forcibly sending princesses and royal relatives and to marry foreign kings.

Taizong, in conclusion, made policies with only a modicum of fear or respect for those desiring to remove foreign elements from the Han. By disregarding the idea of a *hu* and Han divide, Taizong was able to maintain his dream of ruling as both Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan, over both Han and Turk. However, as the years of his reign went on, his dreams of a vast multiethnic empire became increasingly untenable. Following the military victories of Taizong's early reign, his military machine came to a grinding halt during an expensive and ultimately unsuccessful campaign against the Korean state of Koguryŏ, which had formed an alliance with the Turks.

Following the failure of Taizong's expansionist dreams, Tang government policy underwent a shift. Taizong's successor, Gaozong, changed the government's focus from the creation of a multi-ethnic empire to the creation of a unified and loyal Han identity. This shift required a renewed belief in a meaningfully bounded Han self-identity. The key to creating this was Gaozong's propagandistic promotion of Daoism. The Tang royal family's fictional Daoist ancestry made it possible for Gaozong to fit the royal house into a Han identity. The Tang royal family could identify with Daoism and Other the foreign religion of Buddhism. By focusing on religion instead of other cultural traits, Gaozong redefined the concept of ethnicity so that his own family's Turkic cultural indicators would not immediately define them as foreigners. To this end, Gaozong not only extolled Daoism as superior, but also worked to actively promote Daoism by constructing Daoist temples in every prefecture.[164] The downside of this policy was that the non-Han ethnicities of the Tang empire were excluded from the new orthodox religion of the Tang empire. Gaozong's dream was not to be emperor and qaghan, but to be a Han, Daoist Emperor. This political shift coincided with the rise of static boundary paradigm as an influential alternative to Taizong's worldview.

In parallel to the changing policies of Gaozu, Taizong, and Gaozong, Tang literature underwent a shift away from the glory and righteousness of conquest and towards a reaffirmation of the existence of static boundaries between *hu* and Han. This shift occurred first in border poetry, and then spread into wider literature. It is most apparent in border poetry because it was the one field of literature compatible with the idea of static borders of any type. As Stephen Owen aptly noted, "boundaries of all kinds did not typically exist in the Chinese cultural imagination; the exception was the north and northwest frontiers."[165] Over the first eighty years of Tang rule, border poetry would develop from a celebration of the government's ability to move the border and expand the power of the Han, to a belief that the border under attack by forces both within and without.

The early Tang saw a flourishing and redevelopment of frontier poetry, which further developed and expressed the static boundary paradigm. During the reigns of Gaozu and Taizong, border poetry followed pre-Tang aesthetic conventions, showing little if any variation from pre-Tang patterns.[166] However, following Taizong's reign, border poetry underwent major shifts, placing a much greater emphasis on conflict, violence, and futility.[167] For example, in the 660s poem "Black-Maned Bay 紫騮馬"[168] by Lu Zhaolin 盧照鄰 (c. 636-695), the subject of the frontier army is given an unprecedented treatment through the introduction of frustration and futility. In a startling departure from older frontier poetry, the frontier wars are not seen as glorious but as an unending tragedy, causing the poet to feel an intense fatigue. This was an early example of a new Tang-specific mode of border poetry, focused not on the glory of an expanding empire but on the constant threat of the foreign.

By the 680s, border poetry developed into a uniquely Tang expression of the static boundary paradigm. This can be seen in the works of Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂 (661-702). Unlike other poets, Chen Zi'ang's poetic career was built upon anti-foreignism. When arriving in Chang'an for the first time, Chen embarked on an elaborate publicity stunt. Chen purchased a foreign musical instrument and

announced a public concert where he would demonstrate his innate mastery of the instrument. When a crowd arrived, Chen smashed the instrument against the ground, and instead distributed tracts of his poetry.[169] With this gesture, Chen Zi'ang publicly announced his opposition to foreign culture in China and proposed that his poetry would be the alternative. Chen's action was a statement that the presence of foreign culture was inappropriate.

Chen Zi'ang's longest work, the *Stirred by my Experiences* (*Ganyu* 感遇), was a major watershed for the static boundary paradigm in Tang literary history. This collection was foundational for later political allegory, and expressed many emotions and political beliefs related to Chen's short and violent life.[170] Among the topics covered was the frontier, where Chen served as a civilian advisor in a campaign to subdue the Khitan.[171] Chen's reflections on frontier warfare evoke images of a static, ultimately futile war between Han defenders and *hu* invaders. A typical passage describes a frontier soldier with the words: "Always he rages when *hu* troops invade, thinks this is a shame to our Han state 每憤胡兵入, 常為漢國羞,"[172] specifically contrasting in the structure of the poem the words "Han" and "*hu*." This passage indicates the existence of a strong duality between the Han and *hu* in both characteristics and geographic location. It provides depth and definition to both words. The "Han state 漢國," at its most literal, would mean the historical Han Dynasty. Similarly, the literal meaning of *hu* would be an ethnic group. However, the usage of the two words in parallel here implies an equivalence in meaning. This indicates that either the word "Han" had acquired an ethnic meaning, the word *hu* had acquired a geographic meaning, or both. Later Tang poetry demonstrates that it was both. Han was a place, the imagined location of the former Han Dynasty, mapped on to the contemporary borders of the Tang Dynasty. It was also an ethnicity denoting those who "naturally" lived within the boundaries of the former Han Dynasty. *Hu* was simultaneously an ethnic group, people who live outside the boundaries of the former Han Dynasty, and the corresponding location. As will be seen later in this essay, the meanings

of these two words would continue to expand over the course of the Tang Dynasty to bring even more of the world into the duality of *hu* and Han.

In Chen's poem, the ethnic complexity of the Tang government and frontier is entirely absent, as is any recognition of the existence of a shifting border in the northeast. The "Han land," far from being a continuously expanding empire, is instead a static constant by which the exterior world is defined. In Chen's poetry, regardless of the ethnic makeup of a frontier area or the year when it was first conquered by the Tang, the presence of Tang political control immediately rendered it Han land. This required Chen to practice a form of deliberate forgetfulness, perhaps best described by the phrase, coined by the cultural historian William Hamilton Sewell, of "a rhetoric of amnesia."[173] Chen was deliberately forgetting both the actual and historical realities of the frontier, instead constructing a hard frontier in which everything *hu* remained on one side and everything Han on the other. The cognitive dissonance at how two totally separate peoples, principles and places could share a border without any parts crossing over is perhaps best expressed in another line of the *Stirred by my Experiences*: "How close are the *hu* and the Qin! 胡秦何密邇!"[174] The hard border had been imagined so completely that Chen wrote poignantly on the strangeness of these imagined circumstances.

The poems of *Stirred by my Experiences* also are laden with the same sense of intense fatigue as Lu Zhaolin's poetry. However, the reasoning underlying this fatigue is more clearly expressed. In these poems a natural consequence of the generalization of the frontier as a specific, static line is the belief that the frontier has never changed. By dialectically opposing *hu* and Han on this line instead of acknowledging of the more complex ethnic reality, it naturally follows that every frontier war as part of the same, unending, unwinnable struggle. Chen did not think of the northeast as a battle between the current administration and the Khitan, but rather as the latest in an eternal series of battles between the Han Self and the *hu* Other.

Stirred by my Experiences was only one collection of poems, by one prestigious poet. However, it was considered, by poets who lived at the time of the Rebellion, to have been a foundational work of political allegory and commentary.[175] The basic conventions present here: the sense of an eternal struggle, the construction of a hard cultural and geographic frontier between the Han and the *hu*, and the tragic figures of Han soldiers aging without glory on the frontier, are omnipresent in later Tang border poetry. The rejection of a multicultural frontier zone became fundamental to later poetry.

This cultural shift was not confined to Gaozong's reign, but continued into the unofficial and official reigns of Empress Wu Zetian in the late seventh century. The political realities of Wu's reign made her seek allies on both sides of the foreigner debate. Her primary enemies were the royal clan and the royal clan's allies. The most marked change was in policy towards Central Asian religions. In stark contrast to the open and accepting attitude of the early Tang rulers towards Zoroastrianism and Nestorian Christianity, in the 690s the court met the somewhat similar religion of Manichaeism with immediate and sustained hostility. The first record of any interaction with Manicheans is a moral objection: "In 694, a [graduated initiate] brought to the court the heretical Scripture of Two Principles."[176] Thus, in the first ever recorded contact with Manichaeans, the court had already ruled it "heretical." One possible theory for this instant hostility is strictly political. In the 690s the Buddhists acquired vast political clout through their support of Empress Wu, and were likely threatened by a religion somewhat similar to their own. This theory is upheld by a later record that specifies that the court was upset because Manichaeism was pretending to be Buddhism, in what the court saw as a deliberate attempt to deceive the people into following their religion instead of Buddhism.[177] But despite the political reasons for the court's immediate dislike of Manichaeism, the relevant part of this edict, for the purposes of this study, is the word "heretical" (*xie* 邪). By its very nature, that word implied that there was a correct doctrine rather than several doctrines of equal standing, a position that the Tang court had previously taken. This was a far cry from the nonjudgmental acceptance of Central Asian religions and imperially

sponsored religious debates of the reigns of Gaozu in 618-626 and Taizong in 626-649. The possibility of a complete, unified national Self, already fully developed in literature, was under Wu seen as a possibility by the court, at least in the realm of religious policy.

Nor was this shift confined to the turbulent years under Empress Wu. Immediately after gaining power in 712, Xuanzong moved to scale back the power of the Buddhists. To accomplish this, he turned to cultural conservatives who believed in the static boundary paradigm. Chief among these was Yao Chong 姚崇 (650-721), one of the ministers responsible for Xuanzong's coup.[178] Yao Chong was a veteran of the public service who was instrumental in an ill-fated attempt in 710 to reform the examination system and abolish aristocratic appointments. He was distanced from the foreigner-friendly Sino-Turkic aristocrats who dominated the government under Emperors Gaozu, Taizong, and Gaozong. Judging by the specifics of Yao's suggested reforms, his anti-foreign views informed his opposition to Buddhism. While some of the suggested reforms, such as destroying unregistered monasteries and examining monasteries for tax evaders, were clearly prudent financial decisions, others, such as an attempt to legally force monks to do Confucian filial obeisance to their parents, were tinged with the same assimilationist tone of Taizong's reforms. And while this was not the first time that the Tang government tried to address the relationship between monks and their parents, it was thus far the most personally intrusive, and unlike previous reforms, was not immediately rescinded. Political culture had changed over the century to accept blatantly cultural anti-Buddhist legislation.

Xuanzong's literati advisors would eventually be displaced by aristocrats under the governance of Li Linfu's clique. However, under Li Linfu there was no dramatic return of anti-foreign policies. While Li Linfu is most often known for the vast amounts of power he trusted to foreign-born military officers, his regime was also marked by the dominance of the static boundary paradigm in Tang religious policy. In 732, the court ramped up the persecution of Manichaeans; an

edict issued that year called for the strict suppression of Manichaean doctrine.[179] In particular, the edict specified that any Han person found practicing Manichaeism would be subject to penalties. Tellingly, *hu* were granted an exception under the law and allowed to practice Manichaeism so long as they kept it among themselves. This edict was not a rejection of foreigners, but a rejection of Han people who accepted a foreign doctrine. The court of Emperor Xuanzong was not offended by the Manichaean doctrine in and of itself, but instead was offended by the spread of a *hu* doctrine to the Han populace. The court was trying to create in reality the longstanding belief that Han and *hu* were completely separate.

One can see this even more clearly in the reforms of this period to Buddhism.[180] This is most evident in the edict of 736 to place Buddhism under the control of the Court for Diplomatic Relations, rather than an internal government office.[181] This was a deliberate statement that Buddhism was not only a foreign religion, but that Buddhists themselves were to be addressed the same way as foreigners.

Even more telling than the restriction and redefinition of foreign religions was the propagandistic promotion of Daoism. In 726, Xuanzong ordered that all households should be required to keep a copy of the seminal Daoist text, the *Classic of the Way and its Power* (*Daodejing* 道德經).[182] This was the first of a long series of attempts to convert the populace to Daoism. It was followed by an order for every prefecture to set up and honour a temple to Laozi in 732, the establishment of state schools for Daoist studies in 741, and the change of examination policy in 747 to make the *Classic of the Way and its Power* the most important of the canonical books. These new policies were not simply due to Xuanzong's personal preference for Daoism. Xuanzong, unlike previous Tang emperors, also embraced the static boundary paradigm. In his poem "Granting a Blessing to the Daoist Priest Deng Ziyang 賜道士鄧紫陽,"[183] he stated "I know the three Daoist rituals, they help me to defeat the barbaric *hu* 自知三醮後，翊我滅殘胡

." Xuanzong was conscious of the ethnic ramifications of promoting Daoism, and even spoke of the usefulness of Daoism in countering the *hu* threat.

Coinciding with Xuanzong's acceptance of the static boundary paradigm, the paradigm also came into its fullest potential in literature under his reign. The themes of late 7th century border poetry came to be fully developed and increasingly tied in to real political and social struggles. This allowed for the static boundary conception of a total and unending opposition between *hu* and Han to be portrayed with unprecedented consistency. New themes were introduced, including the influence of *hu* culture on the Han soldiers of the frontier, and the figure of the *hu* Tang general. Yet these themes were still placed within an overall framework of generalization and total dichotomy, in the end reinforcing the paradigm rather than undermining it. By the end of Xuanzong's reign and the beginning of the Rebellion, the static boundary paradigm had taken over not only the conventions of border poetry, but also the worldview of the poets.

A central figure in the entry of the static boundary paradigm to mainstream poetry was the descriptive poet and landscape painter Wang Wei 王維 (701-761), one of the most successful and respected poets of the Tang. An accomplished poet and a high-ranking politician, Wang associated with the faction of the literatus Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (673-740), a veteran minister and poet from Guangdong province. Wang Wei exemplified the literati agenda. When Li Linfu had Zhang Jiuling removed from power, he also removed Wang Wei from court politics by sending him as a civilian advisor to a renewed campaign against the Tibetans.[184] Wang Wei's poetry about the campaign shows very strong elements of the static boundary paradigm. Wang clearly casts the struggle against the Tibetans as a continuation of Han dynasty struggles, on one occasion using the classical phrase "Huns" (*xiongnu* 匈奴) to describe the adversaries.[185] He also embraces the idea of a self-evident static boundary between the *hu* and Han. In the poem "My Mission to the Frontier," 使至塞上 Wang Wei explicitly draws a hard border at Juyan 居延 (western Inner Mongolia) with the following lines:

My solitary carriage sent out to the border;	單車欲問邊，
Through tributary states I pass Juyan.	屬國過居延。
A traveling tumbleweed goes out to the Han frontier,	征蓬出漢塞，
A returning goose enters the *hu* skies.[186]	歸雁入胡天。

Despite the fact that, as Wang Wei acknowledged, he was already passing through tributary lands of the non-Han, he still saw Juyan as a hard and clear barrier between the *hu* and Han. Unusually, in this poem, Wang Wei does seem to acknowledge a limited fluidity of the barrier. The *hu* world sends tumbling refuse across the border into the Han world, while the Han sends back a bird. This poem seems to suggest that despite this interchange, nothing fundamental has altered either the *hu* or Han to make the border any less static or absolute.

Wang Wei's poems demonstrate how even an esoteric, literary poet, with high political power and extensive responsibilities, was encouraged to ignore reality by the conventions of the static boundary paradigm. This is particularly notable because Wang Wei was very mainstream and influential. It is also notable because Wang Wei's poetry is otherwise esoteric, and strongly demonstrates Owen's assertions that boundaries of all other kinds did not typically exist in the Tang literary imagination. However, when it came to the boundaries between Han and *hu*, Wang Wei's esoteric worldview was made subservient to the concept of a static boundary. Even while the interest in and impact of frontier poetry was on the increase, it was also undergoing a transformation towards a more complete expression of the static boundary paradigm.

Another poet of this period was Gao Shi 高適 (706-765), a civilian secretary in the frontier military. Gao Shi served in the frontier wars under An Lushan, and as such is an ideal example for how the Tang cultural elite viewed An Lushan prior to the Rebellion.[187] Gao Shi's poetry is also useful for historians in a more general sense, as like the poetry of Wang Wei it demonstrates how the

creation of a multiethnic empire was perceived by eyewitnesses at the frontier. However, Gao Shi chose to forgo writing about his own experiences in favour of poetic convention, so his poems are generic and heavily influenced by the static boundary paradigm. For example, in the poem "Ji Gate" 薊門, he composed the following quatrain:

Dark and brooding beyond the Great Wall,	黯黯長城外，
The sun sinks and again dust, again smoke.	日沒更煙塵
Hu horsemen press us hard,	胡騎雖憑陵，
Han soldiers worry not for their lives.[188]	漢兵不顧身

This quatrain follows the general conventions seen decades earlier in Chen's *Stirred by my Experiences*, such as the contrastive dualism between Han and *hu*, as well as the sense of a timeless, eternal defensive struggle by the Han to repel the *hu*. This is interesting because Gao Shi would have had firsthand experience that the actual situation on the frontier was much more complex than the contest over a static boundary between *hu* and Han. By the time Gao Shi wrote this poem in the late 730s, Li Linfu's military reforms were in full swing, and professional *hu* officers, such as An Lushan, had become an integral and authoritative part of the northeast military. The dichotomy between *hu* horsemen and Han soldiers was demonstrably false, but Gao Shi, influenced by static boundary poetic conventions, was forgetful of the reality of his experience.

Gao Shi was so convinced of the reality of the static boundary paradigm, despite his own contradictory experience, that he even applied this paradigm to broader political commentary, moving allegorical border poetry away from overarching laments and towards specific grievances. This can be seen in his "Song of Yan" 樂府, the opening couplet of which reads:

The House of Han has smoke and dust in the northeast,	漢家煙塵在東北，
The Han generals leave their homes to defeat the barbarous thieves.[189]	

漢將辭家破殘賊[190]

There are a number of interesting elements here. The phrase "House of Han" 漢家 is significant but also conventional: it was a common poetic description of China during the Tang, appearing more times in the *Complete Tang Poems* than "Middle Kingdom" (*zhongguo* 中國), "Great Tang" (*datang* 大唐), and "Han Kingdom" (*hanguo* 漢國) combined.[191] By referring to the Tang Empire as a Han household, Gao Shi joined the large contingent of Chinese poets who chose to describe the Tang Empire as an ethnic unit, rather than a political one. Also in this passage is another apparent contradiction of Gao Shi's likely experience on the frontier and how he chose to describe it. Despite serving in the same campaign as An Lushan and many other Turco-Sogdian officers, Gao Shi nonetheless described the generals of the army as "Han generals." Also of note is the description of the Khitan not as *hu* but as "thieves" (*zei* 賊). The word "thieves" may have been chosen primarily for its rhyme with "north" (*bei* 北), so it could perhaps be a mistake to read too much into its use here, but it is still important to note that, for Tang poets, "thieves" was apparently an acceptable description of a foreign invading army. Here there was the extension of the Han/*hu* binary into other areas of morality, including lawful/criminal. The essential evilness and otherness of the *hu* was such that they could be conflated with domestic evils.

But the real innovation in the "Song of Yan" comes later in the poem, in the following section:

Officer's feathered orders fly above the sand sea, 校尉羽書飛瀚海，

The barbarian chief's hunting fires shine on Wolf Mountain. 單于獵火照狼山。

The cold bleakness of the landscape extends to the furthest extremity,

山川蕭條極邊土，

The *hu* horsemen press hard amongst the wind and rain. 胡騎憑陵雜風雨。

Our vanguard warriors are half dead and half living, 戰士軍前半死生，

Beautiful women in the pavilions [of the generals] are still dancing and singing.

美人帳下猶歌舞。

There is a lot to comment on here. First, the use of the phrase "barbarian chief" (*chanyu* 單于) to describe the leader of the Khitan, despite the leader's official title of "King" (*wang* 王) is notable. "Barbarian chief" is deliberately anachronistic and, to coin a term, anageographic, as it is a classical phrase most commonly used to describe leaders of the ancient Xiongnu barbarians in the northwest in the Han dynasty rather than the Khitan in the northeast in the Tang period. Thus, Gao Shi in this poem is describing not only the specific campaign he witnessed but also the historical campaigns against the Xiongnu. This added a sense of historicity to the presupposed Han vs. *hu* struggle. This sense is further increased by Gao Shi's revolutionary decision to introduce specific, political grievances to the scene, as in the last line of this section.

Earlier poems had criticized military policy. However, to my knowledge, this is the first frontier poem to criticize military leaders on the basis of their personal morality. This adds several dimensions to the poem. First, like the description of the Khitan as thieves, it links frontier warfare with themes of domestic politics. The image of a man in authority who surrounds himself with women while his responsibilities are neglected goes back to classical times in China. By invoking it, Gao Shi tied again domestic morality into frontier defence. In this poem good governance and sexual moderation were necessary to prevent foreign aggression; it is only through moral behaviour that the immoral "thieves" could be defeated.

However, this statement goes far beyond a conflation of the *hu* Han struggle with traditional Chinese morality. It can also be read as a specific attack on the military authorities of the Khitan campaigns, including An Lushan. This poem thus serves not only as a traditional, early-Tang-style border poem lamenting the endless struggle between *hu* and Han, but also a specific policy critique of the style of military governance shown on the frontier. The introduction of real political purpose to border poetry showed the strength of the

static boundary paradigm: it was so well-established that poets felt comfortable using it to frame real-world political allegory. The static boundary paradigm was increasingly considered a viable worldview, as applicable to warfare as to politics.

The final two couplets of the "Song of Yan" are also of note:

Seeing bare swords covered in blood, one after the other, 相看白刃血紛紛。

When death is joined with virtue, how can one think of fame? 死節從來豈顧勳。

How can the sovereign not see the suffering of the campaign battlefields?

君不見沙場征戰苦。

So far, we always think of [Tang alleged imperial ancestor] General Li.[192]

至今猶憶李將軍。

As can be seen, Gao Shi's description of military incompetence and the tragedy of the frontier is concluded with a reference to Li Guang, the claimed ancestor of the imperial Li clan. Li Guang was a general who fought against the Xiongnu in the early Han Dynasty, eight centuries before the rise of the Tang. The implication here is that the current Tang military establishment had come a long way from the virtue of their purported ancestor. This is another pointed, contemporary political criticism, and it only makes sense in the context of the static boundary paradigm. Since, as seen earlier in the poem with the phrase "barbarian chief," Gao Shi had established that the *hu* and the ancient Xiongnu are interchangeable, it naturally follows that generals unsuccessful against the *hu* should look to Li Guang for inspiration. Gao Shi's worldview did not allow for the possibility that either than Han or the *hu* had changed over time. No changes in the morale, disposition, or troop strength of either group could possibly have affected the outcome. As a result, the sudden failure to effectively defend the border must have been due to a personal failing on the part of the general.

Casting blame on the military leadership for failures on the frontier became increasingly common in Tang poetry of the eighth century. It is not a

coincidence that the near-ubiquitous criticism of the military leadership developed at the same time that Li Linfu began to appoint foreigners to leadership positions. Frontier poems could not, for the sake of the imagined hard borders of the static boundary paradigm, acknowledge the presence of the *hu* generals in the Han military. There was no conceptual space in frontier poetry to do so; the *hu* were always on the other side of the border. Any ethnic grievances held by poets against the foreign-born military leaders would have had to be expressed as moral grievances. This is not to say that all poetic critiques of military leadership were actually ethnic grievances in disguise, but some of them undoubtedly were. As will be discussed later, the speed with which An Lushan was reclassified from Han to *hu* in Tang literature following his rebellion strongly suggests that consciousness, and discontent, with his ethnicity must have already been present.

While both Wang Wei and Gao Shi were politicians, neither were part of the emperor's inner circle. However, the trends they engaged with reached into that circle, to the emperor himself. Xuanzong's personal poetry and was influenced by the ideas of static boundaries and eternal struggles. Xuanzong echoed previous frontier themes of the Han versus the *hu*, even though these themes were in direct conflict with Xuanzong's cosmopolitan court. For example, in Xuanzong's poem "The Whirling Troops Celebrate Victory 旋師喜捷," he presents a self-congratulatory scene where he dispatches an able general to defend the Han. Here Han is used explicitly as an ethnic marker, as in the line "From Chang'an a Han general flies 長安漢將飛." Xuanzong, perhaps self-consciously, wanted to make it clear that he was sending Han generals to fight on the frontiers. This was at odds with reality, but a perfect fit in the static boundary paradigm. Poetic convention simply would not allow Xuanzong to describe how he sent An Lushan and his cousin An Sishun, or Geshu Han, or Pugu Huai'en, to the frontiers. The conventions of the static boundary paradigm inhibited the writings even of the Emperor.

Tang frontier poets came to express increasing discontent with the military leadership and increasing sympathy with ordinary soldiers. By far the most

famous of these poems is the “Song of the War Carts” 兵車行, by the famous Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770). Du Fu never served in a military campaign, and his only experience with frontier life was a brief period he spent with Suzong’s government-in-exile along the Tibetan frontier. As a result, while Du Fu did write some frontier poetry, these frontier poems were rarely revolutionary. Du Fu’s best works on the frontier wars and the *hu* versus Han dichotomy tended to focus on sights and sounds of the home front. “Song of the War Carts,” quoted below in entirety, is one of these, and gives a strong sense of the depth of disgust that the Tang cultural elite felt for the military elites.

The wagons went by rumbling, horses snorted and neighed

車轔轔， 馬蕭蕭，

Men on the move, bows and arrows on each man hung at the waist.

行人弓箭各在腰。

Mothers and fathers, children and wives ran along saying farewells,

耶孃妻子走相送，

Tugging their coats, stamping their feet, weeping and blocking the road,

牽衣頓足攔道哭，

The sound of weeping rose up straight and beset high wisps of cloud.

哭聲直上干雲霄。

And the dust was such you could not see the bridge at Xianyang.

塵埃不見咸陽橋。

Someone passing by that road asked of the men on the move, 道旁過者問行人，

And one of them just said, “They’re calling men up often” 行人但云點行頻。

Some from the age of fifteen are up north guarding the river, 或從十五北防河，

Then on until age forty they serve west on army farms. 便至四十西營田。

When I left, the village headman gave a turban for my head; 去時里正與裹頭，

When I get home, my hair will be white, 歸來頭白還戍邊。

Then back to patrol the frontier again. The blood that has flowed at

frontier posts would make waters of a sea, 邊亭流血成海水，

Yet our Warlike Sovereign's will to expand is not yet satisfied. 武皇開邊意未已。

Haven't you heard: in two hundred districts east of the hills that belong to

the House of Han, 君不聞， 漢家山東二百州，

Thousands and thousands of hamlets and towns grow with thorns and briars?

千村萬落生荊杞？

"Even with a sturdy wife who can hold the hoe and plough, 縱有健婦把鋤犁，

Grain grows over the field banks, you can't tell east from west.

禾生隴畝無東西。

But then, it is worse for troops of Qin, they have suffered the cruellest battles,

況復秦兵耐苦戰，

Driven to it, treated no different from dogs or barnyard fowl. 被驅不異犬與雞。

"You, sir, may well ask; 長者雖有問，

Does a conscript dare complain? 役夫敢申恨?

Now, take the winter this year- 且如今年冬，

They won't stop taking troops from Guanxi, 未休關西卒。

The county officials will press for tax, 縣官急索租，

But from where will the grain tax come? 租稅從何出？

I have learned that bearing males is bad, 信知生男惡，

But bearing girls is good. 反是生女好。

If you bear a girl you can still manage to marry her to a neighbour;

生女猶得嫁比鄰，

If you bear a male he'll end up buried out in the prairie grass. 生男埋沒隨百草。

Haven't you seen on Kokonor's shores 君不見， 青海頭，

White bones from ancient days that no one gathers? 古來白骨無人收？

The new ghosts are tormented with rage, the older ghosts just weep;

新鬼煩冤舊鬼哭，

When the sky grows shadowed and rains pour down, you hear their voices wailing."[193] 天陰雨濕聲啾啾。

This poem is extremely noteworthy in that it is not a frontier poem per se, but a political allegory in the style of a frontier poem. It follows all the conventions of Tang frontier poems, including the folk song style, anachronisms, use of Han and Qin as a substitute for Tang, criticism of military officers, and the assumption of an eternal conflict. However, it does not actually take place on the frontier. Du Fu has made the frontier a universal concern, linking events of the frontier with the prosperity of China as a whole. By linking the frontier with the heartland, Du Fu was able to create a profoundly political poem. The center of this poem is a criticism of the Emperor, probably the most direct and blatant of any pre-Rebellion poem. This criticism is thinly veiled behind the words "Warlike Sovereign 武皇," the title of a famously warlike emperor of the Han Dynasty. However, like many other frontier poems, this poem is painting a Han Dynasty setting on to a more current political critique.

This poem is thus another example of the static boundary paradigm influencing worldviews beyond those immediately concerned with the frontiers. In a poem set in central China, criticizing the Emperor's policy, there are still many elements stemming from the static boundary paradigm. One notable element is an expansion and clarification of the idea that there are naturally defined boundaries for each ethnic group. Du Fu is criticizing the Emperor for expending the men of Qin and depleting the wealth of the Han household by attempting to expand further than their "natural" borders. This is both based on earlier border poetry's conflation of the geographic and ethnic meanings of Han, and a refinement of it. Du Fu, in this poem, implies that Emperor Xuanzong has an inappropriate desire for expansion. While this implication is based on a belief in the existence of natural boundaries for the Han household, it does not follow earlier works in making these boundaries congruent with current Tang political control. Rather, Du Fu feels that the Tang had overstepped the natural boundaries of the Tang. His opposition to military expansion shows a developing schism between poets, the cultural representatives of the Han, and the Tang government, the political representatives of the Han. Du Fu rejected the idea that the Tang government was expanding the House of Han, instead asserting that the Tang government, by its constant military expansion, was actually damaging the House of Han. This places the Tang court in an unusual location in Du Fu's constructed world. If the government was harming the House of Han, it follows that the government was not quite Han themselves.

On the other hand, Du Fu did not equate the Tang government with the *hu* either. His writings never directly equate the Tang court and the *hu*, nor do they apply conventional *hu* stereotypes to the Tang leadership. However, his later writings would increasingly classify the Tang's Uyghur allies as *hu* and indistinguishable from the Yan rebels. Du Fu was also highly critical of the government's extravagance and love of foreign delicacies, which both carried a whisper of foreignness.[194]

It is also worth noting that while this poem is highly critical of the practice of conscription, conscription itself was almost entirely phased out by the time it was written. As part of Li Linfu's attempt to professionalize the frontier armies, in 737 he offered land, permanent salaries, and tax exemptions to enlistees for permanent military contracts. This policy was very successful. Within a year of the decree being issued, armies were fully staffed by permanent enlistees.[195] By the time "Song of the War Carts" was written, the only coerced soldiers in the Tang frontier armies were the Turkic and Sogdian cavalrymen who were compelled to serve as a condition of their continued residence in the Tang protectorates.

Apparently, to give weight to this critique, Du Fu invented a totally fictional situation at total odds with the actual political situation of the time. The government was not "calling up men often," but rather offering continuing financial incentives so desirable that there were far more potential enlistees than positions. The men who were drawn to a lifetime of military servitude in exchange for land and a salary were usually landless commoners displaced by the expansion of gentry estates and Buddhist monasteries.[196] Du Fu's statement that "Thousands of hamlets and towns grow with thorns and briars" was totally false; if there was land with briars to be cleared available to the soldiers, they would likely have stayed at home. Du Fu's political critique exists in an imagined universe, where the complexities of changing military policy, population pressures, and foreign-born soldiers are totally erased. All that remains is an unjust government sending men to their deaths in a vain attempt to create a multinational empire.

Du Fu's invention of a reality in which the Tang government is unilaterally bad and damaging to the House of Han again points to the expansion of the static boundary paradigm into the realm of politics. Du Fu imagines that the House of Han is whole and complete by itself, with more than enough land for everyone, whose only problem is a government that continues to steal its people. Most interesting is the fact that Du Fu wanted to invent fictional bad policies for

the Tang government. Du Fu apparently had an ardent dislike of the current government, but had difficulty finding actual problems with their military policy to criticize. A strong possibility is that, as already discussed, Du Fu felt that the Tang government was not Han, and thus felt justified in criticizing them for imaginary flaws. Regardless of whether the Tang actually conscripted Han people and sent them to die, Du Fu must have felt that it is the kind of thing the government might do, as in his view the government was opposed to the House of Han.

Du Fu was not alone in his criticism of the Tang government, particularly the Tang's military aims. Much of the pre-Rebellion Tang literature on the frontier appears very similar to modern-day pacifist literature. However, Tang literature, shaped by the static boundary paradigm, also typically included the notion of an eternal struggle between *hu* and Han. This notion rendered the anti-war sentiments of the poems into mere idle daydreams. For example, take this following anti-war prose and poetry work by Li Hua 李華, (710-767):

> Since the times of the Qin and Han, many have been our troubles with the nomads (*yi* 夷) all around us. The heartland has squandered its strength here, with no generation free of it. It is claimed that in olden days neither Chinese nor barbarian (*rong* 戎) defied the king's armies. But the peaceful influence of culture has failed to spread, and instead military officials applied their own irregular solutions. The irregularity of military solutions is distinct from fellow feeling and right. And in this way the Royal Way went wide of the mark and no longer worked… 秦漢而還， 多事四夷； 中州耗斁 (?)， 無世無之。古稱戎夏， 不抗王師。 文教
>
> 失宣， 武臣用奇；奇兵有異于仁義，王道迂闊而莫為 …
>
> [describing a battle] At a time of such bitter cold, Heaven lent strength to the *hu*. Their murderous spirit was overwhelming, whereby they struck and slaughtered. Coming in a straight column, they cut the baggage train in half; then ranged in a line, they fell upon the troops. The Commandant

has just surrendered; the General has perished, buried under a heap. Corpses pack the slopes of great gulches; blood fills the watering holes of the Great Wall. One cannot bear to tell of it, how they all became bleached skeletons, with no distinction of rank or degree…當此苦寒， 天假強胡， 憑陵殺氣， 以相剪 屠。 徑截輜重， 橫攻士卒； 都尉新， 將軍覆沒。 屍填巨港之岸，血滿長城之窟。 無貴無賤， 同為枯骨， 可勝言哉！

…Of the teeming folk bred by the Gray One, Heaven, none lacks a father and mother to provide for and to support, fearing lest they not live to great old age. No one lacks wife or husband, who are like guest and like friend. Yet living, what kind of love did these men enjoy; and for what grave charge were they slain? And their families never knew whether they perished or survived. Or perhaps someone gave them word, but they did not know whether to doubt it or believe; their hearts were left deeply troubled, and, both sleeping and waking, they saw their loved ones. They would pour a libation and gaze weeping off toward the horizon. Heaven and Earth were sad on their account, and the plants and trees were forlorn. For if the lament and sacrifices could not reach them, on what could the dead rely? There had to be years of misfortune in consequence, with the people surrendered and in flight.

Alas! Was it the times or was it ordained? Yet from the earliest times it has been like this. What can be done? Imperial virtue must spread to the nomads all around. 蒼蒼蒸民，誰無父母？ 提攜捧負，畏其不壽。 誰無兄弟，如手如足？ 誰無夫婦，如賓如友？ 生也何恩， 殺之何咎？ 其存其沒， 家莫聞知。 人或有言，將信將疑。 代(?)心目， 寢寐見之。 布奠傾觴， 哭望天涯。 天地為愁， 草木凄悲。 吊祭不至， 精魂何依 ？ 必有凶年， 人其流離。 嗚呼噫嘻！ 時耶命耶？ 從古如斯。 為之奈何， 守在四夷。[197]

This prose work cuts to the heart of pre-Rebellion frontier poetry. The static boundary paradigm and the dissociation of Tang military goals from the Han's best interest gave rise to a deep compassion for the soldiers dying on the frontiers. But at the same time, the static boundary paradigm also made any

solution to their suffering unfeasible. The belief that the *hu* presented a constant and eternal threat has made both defensive warfare and, within limits, offensive warfare, a necessary condition of living under Heaven, as demonstrated in the phrase, "Imperial virtue must spread to the nomads all around." Li Hua, similarly to other poets of his time, expressed strong disgust at the effects of war, while upholding as valid a primary cause of the war: the desire to pacify the *hu* through military aggression. In this passage, despite the nominally pacifist tone, the static boundary paradigm is more developed and evident than ever. That boundaries were natural and static is fully accepted, with the implication that Heaven lent strength to the *hu* in times of cold weather. The *hu* are seen as almost a consequence of cold weather, a natural force of destruction by the will of Heaven. The *hu*/Han distinction, originally only meaningful in the context of Tang political control, had developed into an encompassing ethnic, geographic, and cosmological reality. Of utmost importance was the eternal struggle against the *hu*; all else, even the soldiers' suffering, was secondary.

Li Hua was not the only poet of this opinion. In many works, the need to defeat the *hu* took precedence over other matters. Even Li Bai 李白 (701-762), who had spent time on the frontier and wrote against the Tang's military establishment, was still so impressed by the necessity of defeating the *hu* that he could write poems that were bloodthirsty and warlike in the extreme. An example is "The *hu* Are Gone!" 胡無人行, below.

Harsh winds blow the frost, grass shrivels by Kokonor, 嚴風吹霜海草凋，

Now compound bows are strong and hard, the *hu* horses exult. 筋幹精堅胡馬驕。

Warriors of the House of Han, three hundred thousand strong, 漢家戰士三十萬，

…

Imperial soldiers shine in snow descending from Jade Gate Pass 天兵照雪下玉關，

The slaves' arrows come like the sand and stick in coats of mail. 虜箭如沙射金甲。

“Cloud” and “Dragon,” “tiger” and “wind” – our formations interchange;

雲龍風虎盡交回，

The Morning Star lies in moon’s halo: a sign that the foe can be crushed.

太白入月敵可摧。

The foe can be crushed, the Nomad Star put out: 敵可摧，旄頭滅，

We tread on *hu* entrails, we wade through *hu* blood. 履胡之腸涉胡血。

We hang up *hu* in the blue sky, 懸胡青天上，

We bury *hu* by Purple Pass. 埋胡紫塞旁。

The *hu* are gone! 胡無人，

The Han is glorious! 漢道昌，

May His Majesty live three thousand years 陛下之壽三千霜。

And sing how the great wind sweeps the clouds along: 但歌大風雲飛揚，

“How will I find fierce warriors to guard my land all around?” 安得猛士兮守四方。[198]

In this poem, the conventional lament for the suffering of soldiers, extremely popular among pre-Rebellion poets, was swept aside in Li Bai’s enthusiasm to see the *hu* brutally defeated. This is not necessarily a sign that Li Bai was particularly cruel or bloodthirsty; on the contrary, his poetry often demonstrates compassion and grief following violence. Nor was this poem praising violence for violence’s sake. It is only that the static boundary paradigm equated, in Li Bai’s mind, the human bodies of the *hu* with the constant threat of the Other. Like Li Hua, Li Bai saw the struggle between *hu* and Han as unavoidable; as such, it was right to rejoice in a victory, even a temporary one.

The essence of this victory is in the phrase translated here, following Owen, as “The *hu* are gone, the Han is glorious! 胡無人，漢道昌.” This translation keeps the terse emotion of the original, but obscures a lot of interesting nuances in the phrase. Firstly, Owen’s translation assumes that the *hu* is a plural noun, and thus an ethnic marker, while the Han is a singular noun, and thus a geographic location. However, the structure of this phrase follows the structure of previous couplets in frontier poetry, equating and contrasting the phrases *hu* and Han. In this sense, both *hu* and Han are simultaneously singular and plural, geographic and ethnic. Secondly, the phrase translated in Owen as “gone” 無人 has the more literal, and macabre, sense of “depopulated.” Thus, the first line simultaneously means “the *hu* (plural ethnic marker) are gone” and “the *hu* (geographic location) is depopulated.” Thirdly, the phrase translated as “glorious” 道昌 could also be translated, more closely, as “prosperous.” Lastly, the pairing of these two phrases suggests a causal link, so an alternative translation would be “when the *hu* [region] is depopulated, the Han is prosperous.” This further solidifies the reasons for Li Bai’s joy at this violence; the *hu* and Han are locked in a zero-sum game, and Han prosperity is directly tied with *hu* depopulation.

Also interesting is the reference to the *hu* as “slaves” (*lu* 虜). This would become a central feature of later Imperial Chinese ethnic discourse; it was used to imply natural slavery in Chinese racial slurs up to the early twentieth century. [199] Here it adds to the static boundary paradigm by building in a conception of social class. Foreigners were not only always violent enemies; they were also slaves revolting against their natural social class. This trope appears in later poetry as well as in at least one military pronouncement during the Rebellion. The static boundaries between *hu* and Han, by the time of the Rebellion, were connected to the boundaries between master and slave.

Li Bai was not alone in these extreme views of the foreigner. In the same vein as his other self-congratulatory works, Xuanzong once wrote an epic poem of his frontier conquests entitled “Pacifying the *Hu* 平胡.” There are some interesting nuances here, so I quote the poem in its entirety below:

The various slaves suddenly become violent,	雜虜忽倡狂，
Regardless of reason, they frequently venture to make turmoil.	無何敢亂常。
Feathered messages early in the day pour in [to the court],	羽書朝繼入，
Beacon fires can see each other in the night.	烽火夜相望。
A general bravely exits the ominous gate,	將出凶門勇，
Soldiers, because of the dead land, are determined.	兵因死地強。
The Meng [Mongols] all ride forward,	蒙輪皆突騎，
Grip their swords as hawks take flight.	按劍盡鷹揚。
Drums and horns sound out over the hills and plains,	鼓角雄山野，
Dragons and snakes enter the battlefield.	龍蛇入戰場。
Flowing [blood] moistens the desert,	流膏潤沙漠，
Blood dirties the sword points.	濺血染鋒鋩。
Fog clears from the dark mountain pass,	霧掃清玄塞，
Clouds open to the calm new moon sky.	雲開靜朔方。
Military deeds have now ceased	武功今已立，
[The barbarians] are ashamed and virtuous before the prince/king.	文德愧前王。

First, it should be mentioned that the use of “prince/king 王” in the last line makes the intended time period of this poem hard to place. The prince/king could be Xuanzong as a young man, prior to becoming Emperor, involved in Wu Zetian’s northern campaigns. Alternatively, and more likely, it is a classical reference to Zhou times, when the heads of state were known as kings. Still, like other frontier poetry, it appears to be a classical scene painted over a modern event. The description of the enemy as Mongols (*meng* 蒙) is unusually specific.

Nonetheless, it is still used in a generalized and abstract way, as the poem as a whole is still entitled "Pacifying the *hu*." Mongol is here a synonym of *hu*.

Also of note is the description of the *hu* as "the mixed blood slaves" (*zalu* 雜虜). Emperor Xuanzong, like Li Bai, had embraced the idea that foreigners were natural slaves. This could have acted as a justification for the Emperor's continual military campaigns. It also may have been an attempt by the Emperor to fit his writings to current poetic conventions. The important thing to note here, however, is that the culture of poetry was not separate from political culture. Poetic trends influenced the way Xuanzong described foreigners in his personal writings. Just as the genre of frontier poetry briefed officials on what to expect at the frontier, it also briefed Xuanzong on how to understand the wars he commanded.

Xuanzong engaged with frontier poetry more than any other Tang Emperor. He and Taizong are the only two Tang Emperors to ever use the word *hu* in their personal poetry, and of the two, Xuanzong used it more often.[200] In addition, all of Xuanzong's usages of *hu* were in political frontier poems similar to the one quoted above.[201] This may be a tentative hypothesis, but it seems likely that Xuanzong, living in a time when the static boundary paradigm was becoming common in a wider range of poetry, may also have been more culturally influenced by it than previous Emperors.

By the time the Rebellion began, the static boundary paradigm had become the dominant way to view the world. Under its influence, individuals from Du Fu to Xuanzong consciously denied actual political circumstances in order to uphold the conventions of genre. The static boundary paradigm had already developed to such an extent that it led to a whole spectrum of ideas in literature. From the original, imagined premise of a static border between two sharply defined ethnic zones, there arose a spectrum of geopolitical worldviews. Some, like Li Bai and Emperor Xuanzong, embraced the inevitability of conflict and celebrated the victory of the Han. Others grew frustrated with the imagined static struggle. Du Fu, perhaps representative of a larger group, expressed his

frustration by Othering the government and blaming them for crimes real and imagined. However, regardless of how an individual reacted to the imagined eternal Han-*hu* rivalry, the vast majority of poets accepted its reality without question.

The static boundary paradigm is very evident in the official life story of An Lushan. His alleged life as a wanderer and a thief, his alleged flattery, and the assumption that it was obvious he would rebel all indicate that An Lushan's biography was written on the assumption that his presence within China was unnatural. It is difficult to separate the early descriptions of An Lushan, written within a lifetime of his Rebellion, from the secondary content added by Song historians. Despite this, some conclusions on how An Lushan was perceived can be drawn from the sources.

First, An Lushan had a very specific self-identity. He used *hu* to describe his father, but only in the more literal and specific meaning of "Indo-Iranian."[202] He described his mother as a Turk. An Lushan did not personally generalize foreigners. However, he was aware of the generalization, and at times used it to his advantage. As discussed in Part 1, on at least one occasion An Lushan claimed that he paid obeisance to women first because he was a *fan*. He did this because it suited his immediate political goals to adopt an element of stereotypical Turkic culture. An Lushan was aware of the stereotypes surrounding foreigners and cloaked himself in them.

Related to this was An Lushan's role as a "token barbarian" in the Tang court. Descriptions of him place him in the stereotype, common for Sogdians, of a "wine barbarian."[203] "Wine barbarian," a stereotype described by Abramson, was an alternative to the more common, grotesquely muscular and violent "military barbarian" stereotype. "Wine barbarians" were opposite in physiognomy and characteristics to "military barbarians." They were grotesquely fat rather than grotesquely thin, overburdened with *yin* rather than *yang*, and craven and lazy rather than brave and energetic. However, the two stereotypes shared the characteristics of selfishness, cruelty, and sexual immorality. More to

the point, both stereotypes are grotesque exaggerations of what was considered ugliness and immorality, in stark contrast to the body-normative, well-balanced idealized Han.

An Lushan was placed directly into this stereotype by his later chroniclers. In stark contrast to accounts of another Turco-Sogdian general, Geshu Han, An Lushan was never described as having any military prowess whatsoever.[204] His victories are attributed to treachery, and his rank is attributed to flattery. An Lushan is also described as extremely obese. Certain contradictions in the official histories indicate that his obesity might have been exaggerated. For example, the *Old Tang History* contains the following self-contradictory paragraph:

> An became exceedingly fat in later years, so that his stomach hung past his knees. He weighed three hundred and fifty catties (231 kg). Whenever he walked, he put his arms around his advisors, and they supported his body. Only then was he able to move about. When he came before Xuanzong, he performed the "Dance of the Barbarian Whirl" and in it moved as swiftly as the wind.[205]

This paragraph exemplifies the degree to which the stereotypes about barbarians obscured the reality of An Lushan's identity. Here An Lushan is presented with two stereotypical attributes of the "wine barbarian." The first is extreme obesity. The second is the love of the feminine arts of music and dance. The fact that these two characteristics are in this case mutually exclusive was of no interest to the historians, or the writer of their source materials. The inherent contradiction was not seen at the time because of the extent to which An Lushan's identity had become merged with that of a generalized "wine barbarian."

But, despite the open knowledge of An Lushan's ethnicity and the ways in which he played into a stereotype, there are no examples of any usage of the generalized *hu* to describe him prior to the Rebellion. On the one occasion where An Lushan was described as a *hu*, it was in the specific sense of "Indo-Iranian."[206] The same can be said of the northeast frontier armies in general. This places An

Lushan in an unusual place in ethnic discourse. His ethnicity was known, remarked upon, and engaged through stereotypes. At the same time, it was rarely spoken explicitly. The fact that most of the Tang's armies were commanded by *hu* was not a topic of either conversation or political commentary. Neither An Lushan, nor his armies, was thought of as part of the generalized foreigner while serving the Tang.

Yet, this changed abruptly as soon as An Lushan and his troops rose in revolt. Following the outbreak of the Rebellion, both poets and political elites began to refer to them as *hu*. *Hu* during the Rebellion did not replace more accurate descriptors, like "rebel" (*ni* 逆) or "thief." Rather, all three were used interchangeably by the same sources. Tang government officials used both to refer to the rebels, in both official and unofficial settings. Many poets also switched between the two depending on their poetic needs.[207] It was not that the rebellion was sometimes not seen as a foreign invasion, but that the distinction between a rebellion and a foreign invasion was not considered meaningful.

This use of *hu* can be seen as a way to rationalize the violence and complexity of the Rebellion. It offered a simple explanation for the Rebellion by rationalizing it as a foreign invasion. More importantly, it fit well into a worldview defined by static boundaries between the Han and *hu*. By identifying the Rebellion as just the latest incarnation of *hu* in the millennium-long struggle, elites brought order to the chaos of the Rebellion.

An early example of this is in the recorded statements of the military mutineers who removed Xuanzong from power. This took place at a waystation near Chang'an the day after Xuanzong and his court fled the capital. Below is an account of these events from the *Comprehensive Mirror* that demonstrates how the ethnic generalization of the world played into the violence here.

> On July 15 [756], [the court] arrived at Mawei 馬嵬 waystaion. The officers and men were exhausted and angry. General Chen Xuanli 陳玄禮 (fl. 710-762) blamed Yang Guozhong for the disaster. He desired to

execute Yang, so the eastern palace eunuch Li Fuguo 李輔國 (704-762) spoke of this to the heir apparent [Li Heng], who could not decide [if this was wise]. They encountered Tibetan emissaries; twenty Tibetans blocked Yang Guozhong's horses. [The emissaries] complained of their lack of food. Guozhong did not adequately respond. The military officers said, "Guozhong participates in the *hu* slaves' rebel conspiracy." Someone yelled this from among the cavalry. Guozhong fled inside the western gate [of the waystation]. The officers followed him and killed him, cutting his body apart, raising his head on a spear outside the gate. At the same time they killed his son, Finance Minister Yang Xuan 楊暄, and the Ladies of Han and Qin [Concubine Yang's older sister and a relative of Concubine Yang and Yang Guozhong, respectively]… The Emperor sent [palace eunuch] Gao Lishi 高力士 (684-762) to ask about this. Xuanli responded [to the eunuch's questions]: "Guozhong plotted a rebellion; it is not suitable to honour Concubine Yang [as an imperial concubine]; I hope his Majesty will retract his favour and execute her lawful punishment." The Emperor responded, "I pledge that I will resolve this." Crossing the threshold, he leaned on his cane and stood. For a long time it was thus. Then Wei E 韋諤 (fl. 756), a scribe of signs and omens, said, "You cannot afford to incur the wrath of the multitude. Safety depends on time. You must come to a quick decision." Thereupon he kowtowed and shed his own blood [to show his seriousness]. The Emperor said, "The concubine has lived for a long time deep in the Inner Palace. How could she have known Guozhong would rebel? Gao Lishi said, "The concubine is innocent. However, they also killed Guozhong. The concubine is in your inner circle. How can we be safe? I wish your majesty would consider this carefully. The army's tranquility indeed follows your own [household's]." The Emperor therefore ordered Gao Lishi to take the concubine to a Buddhist shrine and strangle her there.[208]

(至馬嵬驛，將士饑疲，皆憤怒。陳玄禮以禍由楊國忠，欲誅之，因東宮宦者李輔國以告太子，太子未決。會吐蕃使者二十餘人遮國忠馬，訴以無食，國忠未及對，

軍士呼曰：「國忠與胡虜謀反！」或射之，中鞍。國忠走至西門內，軍士追殺之，屠割支體，以槍揭其首於驛門外，並殺其子戶部侍郎暄及韓國、秦國夫人… 上使高力士問之，玄禮對曰：「國忠謀反，貴妃不宜供奉，願陛下割恩正法。」上曰：「朕當自處之。」入門，倚杖傾首而立。久之，京兆司錄胡前言曰：「今眾怒難犯，安危在晷刻，願陛下速決！」因叩頭流血。上曰：「貴妃常居深宮，安知國忠反謀！」高力士曰：「貴妃誠無罪，然將士已殺國忠，而貴妃在陛下左右，豈敢自安！願陛下審思之，將士安，則陛下安矣。」上乃命力士引貴妃於佛堂，縊殺之。)

In all likelihood, no one present at the waystation during these tragic events was under any illusion that the massacre was anything but another pro-Li Heng coup by a sympathetic general. It had long been known that Li Heng had many friends in the Northern Armies. In addition, most of the officers in the Northern Armies had been around long enough to remember previous, similar plots by Li Heng-sympathetic generals in the early 740s. Most likely, none of the officers were under the impression that Yang Guozhong's inability to immediately respond to the starving Tibetans blocking their path was actually an attempt to conspire with the Yan rebels. Most were rather following their own general's orders or simply choosing the winning side. However, whether any of the military actually believed in Yang's alleged conspiracy is not all that important. What is important is the apparent belief that Yang Guozhong's fleeting contact with Tibetans was a reasonable pretext for the military coup. Only six months into the Rebellion, it had already become established that any contact with foreigners, however brief or inconsequential, could be a sign of disloyalty to the Tang.

Similarly, it is unlikely that anyone in the army mistook the Tibetan emissaries for Yan rebels. While the general knowledge in the Tang of foreigner's physiologies was extremely vague, the emissaries undoubtedly would have borne banners and clothing that marked them as Tibetans.[209] Additionally, the soldiers must have known that the probability of a group of Yan rebels travelling almost a hundred kilometres ahead of the main army with no weapons or armour in order to block the path of a vastly superior force was extremely low. It is a certainty that the military officers were aware that these starving men were

Tibetans, with no connection to the Yan rebels, save the fact that both groups were perceived as foreigners. It is also likely that the soldiers had heard that the proper Chinese name for Tibetans used in official correspondence: was *tufan* 吐蕃. Given all this, why did the instigator of the coup refer to the Tibetans as "*hu* slaves" 胡虜? This statement is a compelling piece of evidence that the use of *hu* to mean a generalized foreigner was present not just in literature but also in political elites' understanding of the world. It was irrelevant that the emissaries were Tibetan; their identity as generalized foreigners, now called *hu*, superseded their identity as *tufan.*

It was apparently also irrelevant that the Tibetan Empire was not actively aiding the Rebellion. The Tibetans' proximity to China made them threatening, and all threatening foreigners were evidently believed to be in league. Just as the Tibetans who watched the Tang army in Li Bai's poem The Moon at the Fortified Pass were *hu*, so the Tibetans emissaries, by virtue of being foreign, were seen as being in league with the *hu* rebels by virtue of being also, fundamentally, *hu*. The pre-Rebellion understanding of *hu* as a threatening foreigner with many faces had simply been extended towards the rebels a mere six months after the Rebellion broke out. The Rebellion was just one more instance of the *hu*'s encroachment on China's peace.

Also of note is the reference to the Tibetans not just as *hu*, but as *hu* slaves. This is drawn from the same cultural vocabulary as the pro-war poems of Xuanzong and Li Bai. The appearance of this term shows that the belief that all *hu* were natural slaves was also present in the military and political realms. Even though Tibet at this point was not and had never been within any dynasty's borders, the Tibetans were at this point still seen by some elites as the natural slaves of the Tang. It may not just be their identity of foreigners that linked them to the Rebellion; as natural slaves the mere existence of foreigners in service to governments other than the Tang would have been an act of rebellion. If, as it appears, all foreigners were thought to be essentially the same *hu*, and all *hu* were thought of as slaves, then the Tibetans, by refusing the Tang's hegemony, were rebels before there was a Rebellion. In the mind of the officer who shouted the

slur, and likely many others, the Rebellion may have been one more example of the *hu* casting off what was seen as their rightful place in the world.

This demonstrates the simplicity, appeal, and popularity of the static boundary paradigm. The distinctions between rebels, foreigners, and weak government ministers were eradicated by a paradigm that saw all foreign threats as in league and all foreignness to be feared. The *hu* had become abstracted, de-individualized, and de-humanized. It did not take very long for the Rebellion to be meaningfully defined in culture as a foreign invasion in political discourse.

Within a few years, it also was apparent in poetry. The best poetic source during the Rebellion was Du Fu, as his attention to real life and broader political concerns makes it easy to date his works. In the "Song of Pengya" 彭衙行, Du Fu offered a narrative of his journey fleeing from An Lushan's forces. In the "Song of Pengya," the irrelevance of the distinction between rebel and foreigner is very apparent. While in the first line he refers to the rebels as "thieves," in the second last couplet he refers to them as *hujie* 胡羯, or Central Asians. There was no need for a distinction between the two. Du Fu was dealing with a cultural vocabulary that considered *hujie* and *hu* to be appropriate references to the Rebellion as a whole.

Later in the Rebellion, Du Fu, writing while traveling in the South in 760 CE, wrote the poem "An Attendant Seeks a Small *Hu* Descendent, I Permit Its Adoption" 從人覓小胡孫許寄.[210] The term "*Hu* descendent (*husun* 胡孫)," which I have translated literally, was an uncommon poetic term for "monkey," appearing only four times in the *Complete Tang Poetry*. Of those four times, one is in this Du Fu poem, one is in an esoteric Li Bai descriptive quatrain, one was written well after the Rebellion, and one is of an uncertain date, by an obscure Tang poet named He Zhonggui 河湄鬼. I have also been unable to find the phrase in classical or Sui Dynasty texts through the China Text Project, though that is in no way a complete search. It is likely that the term was a rare but lasting metaphor originating by at least the time of the Rebellion and lasting into the 9th century. It is a likely origin for the modern term "macaque (*husun* 猢猻)." I have considered

the possibility that the term was not racial, and instead a usage of *hu* in the descriptive sense, leading to a translation of "bearded son" or similar. However, I feel this is unconvincing. I have found few instances of the use of *hu* in a way that does not reference the foreigner. In addition, this phrase arose in the same era as the use of *hu* to mean foreigner. It is highly unlikely that "bearded son" would have suddenly come into use in the Tang entirely independently from the parallel development of *hu* as an ethnic term, without a poet like Du Fu being aware of this double meaning. It is, at one level at least, reflective of the ongoing dehumanization of the *hu*.

The ascription of animal characteristics to barbarians was nothing new to Chinese scholars, but the exact terminology and sentiments in this poem still warrant a special mention. The description of a monkey as a *hu* descendent breaks many common conventions in Tang animal comparisons. All other Tang derogatory animal comparisons were rooted in geography, with foreigners invariably being referred to by the names of animals from the same approximate region.[211] For example, Tibetans were most commonly derided with the term "dogs and sheep" (*quanyang* 犬羊) while Central Asians were referred to by the slur "foxes," (*hu* 狐) both for the geographic location of the animal and the homophony.[212] Thus, the ascription of *hu* characteristics to a central Chinese animal represents a new development in the conceptualization of *hu* during the Rebellion. After the Rebellion began, *hu* was increasingly ambiguous, no longer even tied to a specific geographic location but rather a principle of subhumanity that could just as accurately be compared to a steppe fox as a southern monkey. Nor was this comparison made without vindictiveness, as shown by the third couplet of the poem where the attendant states that he "Would sneer at its worried *hu* face, when it first moves at the sight of the horse whip 預哂愁胡面，初調見馬鞭."[213] The imagined resemblance of monkeys to *hu* was humorous, and joy could be found by worrying and scaring the imagined *hu*. This hatred may have been caused by the Rebellion, but it was shaped by the prior understanding of the *hu* as an amorphous enemy.

This became even more tragically apparent two years later, in the first recorded selective massacre of foreigners in the Rebellion, at Yangzhou. The massacre occurred in 760, when the front between the Tang and Yan had again stabilized between Luoyang and Chang'an. Emperor Suzong received word that a Tang loyalist general, Liu Zhan 劉展 (fl. 756-763), cut off from the main army by the Yan control of Luoyang and the northern Grand Canal, was disobeying orders and contemplating rebellion. Suzong ordered other Tang sympathisers to subdue Liu, who failed. These attacks pushed Liu into open rebellion. Liu took control of the southern branch of the Grand Canal at Yangzhou and extended his power over a large swath of the lower Yangtze valley for several months. In the end, Liu was defeated and captured by a former Yan rebel, Tian Shengong 田神功 (fl. 756-763), who ruled an area of Hebei independently. In capturing Liu, Tian Shengong was attempting to both increase his territory and demonstrate his loyalty to the Tang. He dealt a crushing defeat to Liu at Zhengzhou 鄭州 in modern-day Henan, and marched unopposed into Yangzhou in late 760. The *Old Tang History* gives the following account of the capture of Yangzhou:

> "Arriving at Yangzhou, [Tian's army] greatly plundered the property of both common people and merchants; inside the prefecture they dug holes near houses for hidden things everywhere; merchant *hu* and Persians (*bosi* 波斯) were killed in the thousands." 至揚州，大掠百姓商人資產，郡內比屋發掘略遍，商胡波斯被殺者數千人。[214]

The ethnic dimension presented here is undeniable; while both common people and merchants were robbed, only foreign merchants were killed. Moreover, Han government officials and aristocrats, many of whom would have been as wealthy as the merchants, were apparently untouched. The soldiers were apparently still on a rein, as they neither robbed nor murdered the Han officials who could be of use to the new administration under Tian. It is reasonable to conclude that the soldiers were not entirely running amok, but were acting on some direction from their officers. It would also be reasonable to conclude that the selective extermination of foreign merchants was probably directed or at least

actively permitted by the officers rather than occurring spontaneously. This is consistent with the other recorded massacre of foreigners during the Rebellion, which will be detailed later.

So why would Tian Shengong or his officers order the wholesale murder of a large portion of the most economically productive class in the new jewel of his demesne? It is unlikely that Tian feared the power of the foreigners; despite having been robbed, the merchants would likely have still supported Tian's rule of Yangzhou if only to prevent yet another army from seizing and looting the city. This would be consistent with the behaviour of local elites in other sacked cities of the time, which almost invariably accepted without resistance whichever army happened to be occupying them at the time.[215] Tian's motive must have lain elsewhere.

As has been argued throughout this essay, the static boundary paradigm had, by the time of the Rebellion, built up in the collective consciousness a dichotomy between the Han and the people covered by the constantly evolving term *hu*. In this passage, *hu* has come full circle; the official definition of "Central Asians" has been so forgotten that the author of the source material cited here in the *Old Tang History* apparently felt that *hu* did not implicitly include Persians. *Hu* as a word was then just a reference, applying to whichever foreigners happened to be fundamentally opposed to the Han, rather than Central Asians or Northern/Western barbarians as a group. *Hu* during this period, as has been demonstrated, could apply to Sogdians, Turks, Tibetans, Koreans, and Yan rebels, any or all of whom may have been targeted in the Yangzhou massacre. The breadth of the purge is also indicated in a slightly altered account of the event from elsewhere in the *Old Tang History,* which states "Wealthy merchant *hu*, Roman, Persian *and so forth* merchants who died were numbered in the thousands" 商胡大食, 波斯等商旅死者數千人波斯等商旅死者數千人.[216] The chilling phrase *and so forth* (*deng* 等) indicates not only that a wide variety of foreigners were killed, but also that the specific ethnicity of those foreigners was so unimportant to the historian's account that it did not warrant a mention. This

purge was not directed at any specific group or groups, but rather at the general *hu* menace.

The purge can therefore be viewed as an act of political symbolism, a bloody, public rejection of all things *hu*. Tian Shengong made it clear that he opposed the *hu* completely and mercilessly, and thus was on the side of the Han. The utility of such a statement is readily apparent. Tian Shengong, a former Yan rebel who acted independently of Chang'an, would naturally be highly suspect in the eyes of the Tang. Tian Shengong wanted a settlement with the court that accepted his power, independence, and usefulness to the Tang without having to surrender any territory as a show of loyalty. A symbolic massacre of the Other provided an avenue to demonstrate his loyalty and commitment to the Tang without surrendering any of his hard-won independence. This may seem illogical as by then the Tang court was a virtual tributary of the Uyghurs, but, as demonstrated in literature and at the Mawei mutiny, Tang elites had fully, illogically, conceptualized the struggle as one between a Han Tang Empire and a *hu* Yan rebel state. The massacre, though damaging to the wealth of Yangzhou and Tian Shengong's demesne, showed that Tian felt similarly and chose unequivocally the Han side.

Very similar circumstances surrounded the other major recorded massacre of foreigners during the Rebellion, and suggest very similar conclusions. Though the main, imperially-controlled Tang armies were never recorded as engaging in any explicitly ethnic violence against foreign populations, another former rebel with sympathies to prove ordered another major ethnic purge in 763. Again, it seems to be an act of public political symbolism, in which the former rebel seeks to establish himself as even more Han than the Tang armies through a wide slaughter of groups labelled "*hu*."

In this case, it was Gao Juren 高鞠仁 (fl. 756-763), a Yan general in the northeast who refused the command of Shi Chaoyi, instead attempting to defeat a rival independent warlord, a Turk of the Ashina clan, and carve out his own domain in the north. Gao Juren's ethnicity is unclear in the sources. Given his

location as a commander of the far northeast and the name Gao, sometimes used by Koreans and Turks, it is certainly possible that he was non-Han or mixed-blood. Like Tian Shengong, Gao Juren was eager for the support and acknowledgement of the Tang court, and also like Tian, engaged in large-scale political violence to prove his allegiance. The *History of An Lushan* gives the following account of Gao's capture of the former Yan capital, Yanjing, from Ashina:

> The Tang [general] Juren at that time ordered that within the city, those who killed *hu* would be greatly rewarded. Following this, the *jie hu* 羯胡 [Sogdians][217] were completely exterminated. Children were thrown into the air and caught on spears. Those who had tall noses resembling those of *hu* and were thus additionally killed were extremely many.
>
> (唐鞠仁今城中殺胡者重賞，於是羯胡盡殪，小兒擲於中空以戈_之。高鼻類胡而濫死者甚眾).[218]

Unlike the massacre by Tian Shengong's troops, where the involvement of officers can only be deduced by conjecture, this event was very explicitly ordered by the military commanders. Far from acting on their own initiative and hatred, the soldiers in this massacre were actually bribed into violence. Gao Juren wanted a slaughter, and was willing to open the military purse and pay for it. This massacre was a cold, premeditated political move, meant to publicly establish Gao's ethnic sympathy as Han, and thus his political sympathy as Tang. Another notable similarity with Tian Shengong's actions was the breadth of the massacre. Though the account specifically notes that Sogdians were exterminated, it also states that the order was for *hu* in general, and that even Han with the appearance of *hu* were targeted. Gao Juren's actions were meant to be a blanket rejection of the *hu*, regardless of specifics.

These two acts of political violence only occurred due to the rise of the static boundary paradigm. In the era of Emperor Taizong, a century earlier, the idea of expending money to depopulate an area of economically productive

foreign citizens would have been ludicrously counter to the aims of either the Tang army or local warlords. But the idea of a multiethnic empire that combined the wealth, productivity, and culture of multiple groups, was already forgotten. By this point, ethnic identity was more important to local warlords than wealth, power, or a stable society. The static boundary paradigm that had, prior to the Rebellion, already rendered the Tang's ethnic relations to an eternal performance of Han Dynasty wars between static Han and *hu*, gave rise during the Rebellion to a kind of performative violence. With this kind of violence, warlords independent of the Tang could perform a show of nominal loyalty rather than demonstrate actual loyalty by taking orders, by acting out this supposed eternal struggle between Han and *hu*.

My paper has analyzed the Rebellion as an event whose meaning was shaped by an increasingly xenophobic culture rather than taking the Rebellion as the cause of the xenophobia. The research included an updated, ethnic analysis of the Rebellion and close analysis of Tang cultural trends before and during the Rebellion, including religious policy. My analysis also traced the conceptualization of the foreigner in poetry and the emergence of ethnic violence.

In conclusion, there was no clear ethnic identity to either side of the Rebellion. The Tang ruling family was known to have foreign heritage. Their top generals, including An Sishun, Geshu Han, and Pugu Huai'en, were all foreigners with very similar career paths to that of An Lushan. Moreover, the Tang actually invited foreign raiders into China, allowing them to sack Luoyang on two separate occasions. At the same time, the Yan Dynasty had many high-level Han commanders and set itself up as a Chinese-style court. Both sides were led by mostly foreign or culturally mixed leaders, and both attempted to rule by traditional Chinese principles. Politically, the Tang court, which served the Uyghurs, was significantly more representative of foreign powers than the Yan, which alienated the Khitan and Turks. The Rebellion was not by itself an

indication of the dangers of foreigners in China, as it was only suppressed with the help of foreigners in China.

Instead, the Rebellion was seen as a foreign invasion because Tang elite culture had already internalised a worldview marked by a static, unchanging boundary between *hu* and Han. This paradigm increased in prevalence and significance in the years prior to the Rebellion. First seen in frontier poetry and cynical anti-Buddhist measures at court, the idea of natural, static boundaries between Han and *hu* eventually spread to social commentary and religious policy in general. In this paradigm, the Rebellion *had* to be seen as an invasion because the possibility of foreigners being involved in both sides of a conflict, or existing naturally within China's borders, was unthinkable. Rebellion of a Tang army became part of a wider *hu* conspiracy. The killing of those labelled as *hu* became an act of symbolic importance. *Hu* became increasingly vague and dehumanizing in culture. The cultural meaning of the Rebellion was dependent on a prior understanding that the world was divided into two irreconcilable enemies. The genocidal ethnic violence against the *hu* was, from the perspective of Tang culture at the time, inevitable. They were just the latest casualties in an endless and unsolvable war.

While my research is not exhaustive, the evidence strongly upholds the thesis that the perception of An Shi Rebellion as a foreign invasion was at odds with the ethnic realities of the situation, and only arose because of a dominant cultural paradigm that demanded that all political borders be congruent with ethnic boundaries. Further avenues of research would include additional analysis of poetry, including additional qualitative analysis of the contents of poetry as well as quantitative analysis to track the prevalence of static boundary poetry over different time periods and regions. Additional research could also include a closer study of Tang essays and government memorials, including the materials used by Abramson, to link more specific ethnic discussions with broader elite culture. A more theoretical direction to take the research would be to attempt to describe broader cultural or sociopolitical reasons for this shift. Greater insight into this

cultural shift could add a great deal of complexity and detail into our understanding of the end of cosmopolitanism in the Tang.

Endnotes

[1] Howard S. Levy, introduction to *Biography of An Lushan* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 8-9. Also, in general, the *Old Tang History* contained a large amount of older, sometimes primary, materials. Twitchett, Denis, "The Compilation of the Chiu T'ang Shu" in *The Writing of Official History under the T'ang.*

[2] Levy, introduction to *Biography,* 9.

[3] Levy, introduction to *Biography*, 9.

[4] Levy, introduction to *Biography,* 17.

[5] Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lushan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955).

[6] Edwin Pulleyblank, Interview by Lee Chamney, Vancouver, November 9, 2009.

[7] Pulleyblank, "The Background of the Rebellion of An Lushan- Economic," in *Background*.

[8] Pulleyblank, *Backround,* 102-103.

[9] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 80.

[10] Denis Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung (reign 712-756)" in Denis Twitchett, ed., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3 (London: Cambridge University Press: 1979).

[11] Jennifer W. Jay, "An Lushan (An Shi) Rebellion" in *Berkshire Encyclopaedia of Chinese History*.

[12] First published as Étienne de la Vaissière, *Histoire des marchands sogdiens* (Paris: Collège de France et Institut des Hautes Études chinoises, Bibliothèque de

l'I.H.E.C., n° XXXII, 2002). Used in this essay in its official translation: Étienne de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders: A History*, trans. James Ward (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

[13] Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, *Zhonggu Zhongguo yu wailai wenming* 中古中國與外來文明 (Beijing: Sanlian chubanshe: 2001).

[14] Florence Hu-Sterk, "Entre Fascination et Répulsion: Regards des Poètes des Tang sur les 'Barbares,'" *Monumenta Serica*, vol. 48 (2000), p. 19-38.

[15] Hu-Sterk, "Fascination et Répulsion," 21.

[16] Marc S. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[17] Abramson, *Ethnic Identity*, 182.

[18] *Old Tang History (jiutangshu* 舊唐書*),* 104, translation Pulleyblank, *Background* 110.

[19] Paul Pelliot, "Le 'Cha Tcheou Tou Fou T'ou King' et la colonie sogdienne de la région du Lob Nor," *Journal Asiatique*, series XI, vol. 7, 1916, p. 111-123, as quoted in La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 124.

[20] In the *Complete Tang Poetry, hu* appears 1639 times, while *fan* appears 93 times. Determined with the search tool of the *China Text Project,* http:// http://ctext.org. Granted, this includes the rarer usage of *hu* as a particle.

[21] Stephen Owen, "Tang Literature of the Frontier," *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: beginnings to 1911* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 462.

[22] The *New Tang History's* severe redactions of An Lushan's biography have already been noted in Levy, introduction to *Biography,* 7-8. To his comments I

would add that the redaction of the names of virtually all An Lushan's generals, appears to have been aimed at reducing the Rebellion to a single act of defiance by one insane foreigner.

[23] Respectively, Howard S. Levy, trans., *Biography of An Lushan* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960) and Robert des Rotours, trans., *Histoire*.

[24] For example, *Old Tang History* biography chapter 200a fol. 2*b*: "The nation having enjoyed peace for a long time, the people were unacquainted with warfare." Trans. from Levy, *Biography*, 38.

[25] For example, David Young, *Du Fu: A Life in Poetry* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), xiii.

[26] Chen Sanping, "Succession Struggle and the Tang Imperial House," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Nov., 1996),

[27] Howard J. Wechsler, "The Founding of the T'ang Dynasty: Kao-tsu" and "Tai-tsung (reign 626-49) the Consolidator" in Denis Twitchett, ed., *Cambridge History of China* vol. 3, 150 and 218.

[28] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 235

[29] La Vaissière, "Part Two: The Commercial Empire" in *Sogdian Traders*, 96-195.

[30] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 141.

[31] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 112-116, and Denis Sinor, *Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 270.

[32] Chen Jinhua, "More than a Philosopher: Fazang as Politician and Miracle Worker," *History of Religions,* vol. 42, no. 4 (2003).

[33]Pulleyblank, *Background,* 134.

[34]Pulleyblank, *Background*, 41.

[35] The histories clearly indicate divine providence in his birth and mention no father, but *Old Tang History* also notes "少孤隨母在突厥中." Here 少 appears to be a time indicator, indicating that An Lushan was orphaned when he was young; implying that perhaps he had a father at some point. One interpretation of the fable could be that An Lushan's mother was made fertile by the gods but impregnated by a man, who died when Lushan was young, as opposed to conceiving immaculately. See *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 1a, *History of An Lushan* a fol. 1a, *New Tang History* 225a fol. 1*a*. However, a reading that indicates immaculate conception would also be valid, as such events were common in the biographies of notable men in medieval China. See Edward H. Schafer, *The Divine Woman; Dragon Ladies and Rain Maidens in T'ang Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 23-24.

[36] Pulleyblank, *Background* 11-14.

[37] For example, *New Tang History* 19 fol. 215a gives four groups of foreigners who have been constant scourges of the Chinese state; in this list Turks are mentioned but Indo-Iranians are not.

[38] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 12.

[39] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 19.

[40] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 19.

[41] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 19-20.

[42] For example, la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 217.

[43] Pulleyblank, *Background* 16-17.

[44] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 17.

[45] *Records of Qujiang District (Qujiang ji* 曲江記*),* chapter 8 page 9b, as cited in Pulleyblank, *Background*, 20-21.

[46] For example, the *Veritable Records of Emperor Suzong*, written shortly after the Rebellion, which became a source for the *History of An Lushan.*

[47]C. A. Peterson, "Court and province in mid- and late T'ang" in Twitchett, ed., *Cambridge History.* 468-472.

[48] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 21.

[49] The one Chief Minister who disagreed with the consensus and recommended An Lushan's execution was the literatus Zhang Jiuling. His opposition was likely due to his position as a literatus and examination appointee; he naturally would have been opposed to Li Linfu and the power of permanent frontier commanders. See Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung," 407-408.

[50] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 70.

[51] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 82.

[52] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 83.

[53] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 1b, as translated in Levy, *Biography*, 32.

[54] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 85.

[55] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 29-30.

[56] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 42.

[57] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 42.

[58] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 57-58.

[59] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 30.

[60] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 29-32, 75-81.

[61] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 75-81.

[62] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 85.

[63] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 93

[64] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 93

[65] Levy, introduction to *Biography,* 17.

[66] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 1b, translated Levy, 33.

[67] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 96.

[68] Chen Sanping, "Succession Struggle," p. 395.

[69] Though there are some indications that women held high status in Sogdian culture, such as the appearance of female warriors in Sogdian visual art, the overwhelming preponderance of sources on the Sogdians indicate a very male-dominated society. In addition, the primary religion of the Sogdians, Zoroastrianism, was a highly patriarchal faith. Lee Chamney, "Gods, Heroes, and Arts of the Sogdians: Windows into the Cultural Values of a Lost Civilization" (Honours thesis, University of Alberta, 2009) 16-19, 43.

[70] Li Heng was, in fact, eight years older than Concubine Yang.

[71] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 96-97.

[72]*History of An Lushan*, a fol. 7*b*, translation des Rotours, *Histoire*, 97.

[73] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 97.

[74] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 2*b*, translation Levy, *Biography*, 37.

[75] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 2b, translation Levy, *Biography*, 36.

[76] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 98.

[77] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 66.

[78] *History of An Lushan* a, translation des Rotours, *Histoire,* 116.

[79] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 92-93.

[80] *Old Tang History* 9 fol. 9b, as cited in Pulleyblank *Background*, 134.

[81] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders,* 143.

[82] *History of An Lushan* a, Chinese to French translation by des Rotours, Biography, 218. French to English translation by La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 218.

[83] This was no mere superstition, but a political reality. Revolutionaries, most notably Empress Wu, prepared for their takeovers by having astrologers and magicians forecast prophecies that legitimized their right to rule.

[84] The Chinese transcription of Ahura Mazda was and is 祆.

[85] The Christian God was transcribed from Syriac as *Aluohe* 阿羅訶. See John R. Lawton, , "Description and Significance of the Nestorian Stele" *Assyrian International News Agency* http://www.aina.org/articles/dasotns.pdf [accessed August 27th, 2011]

[86] Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism all rejected the sacrificial aspects of their parent religions (specifically, Judaism, pre-Achaemenid religion, and Vedic religion). The two most common Sogdian religions, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, both emphasized vegetarianism as well as the need to keep fire and earth uncontaminated by the dead flesh of humans or animals.

[87] The community in the Ordos valley dates to at least the seventh century. The Yingzhou Sogdian community was resettled in 717. Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony in Inner Mongolia, *T'oung Pao, Second Series* 41, no. Livr. 4/5 (1952): 317-356.

[88] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders,* 165.

[89] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 174-175.

[90] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 211 indicates the importance of the Ordos as a horse-producing region. As the area was partly under the control of the Tang, it would make sense that An Lushan purchased his horses from there rather than from the Khitan or Xi across the border, or from the Turks with whom he had few positive interactions.

[91] Yang's clique only controlled Sichuan's army, which by its location must have had few cavalrymen- they would have been no match for the rebels in open country.

[92] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 2b, translation Levy, *Biography*, 237.

[93] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 2b, translated Levy, *Biography,* 237.

[94] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 13.

[95] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 2b, translation Levy, *Biography*, 38.

[96] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 2b, translation Levy, *Biography*, 38.

[97] Among An Lushan's officers, Shi Siming and General Cao (no given name is available in the sources) are the only ones with Sogdian family names.

[98] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 2b, translation Levy, *Biography*, 38.

[99] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 219.

[100] Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung," in *Cambridge History*, 416.

[101] Peterson offers a balanced take on the degree to which Hebei had become multi-ethnic. Peterson, "Court Peterson, "Court and Province," in *Cambridge History*, 471.

[102] As evidenced by the widespread re-defection of Hebei and Hedong officials once the tide turned in favour of the Tang. See *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 4b, trans. Levy, *Biography*, 45.

[103] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 3a, translation Levy, *Biography*, 39.

[104] Pulleyblank, *Background,* 17.

[105] Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung," in *Cambridge History*, 471-472.

[106] *History of An Lushan* b, translation des Rotours, 329-330.

[107] Geshu Han had been appointed commander of the forces in the western province of Longyou as part of Li Linfu's attempts to staff the upper military bureaucracy with foreigners. See Pulleyblank, *Background*, 71.

[108] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 3b, translation Levy, *Biography*, 41.

[109] Marsha L. Wagner, *Wang Wei* (Boston: Twang Publishers, 1981), 50.

[110] Wang Wei served as Grand Secretary to the Imperial Chancellery under the Yan, a position he would only receive from the Tang in the last year of his life. Wagner, *Wang Wei*, 54-55.

[111] *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government (zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑒) 218, entry for *bingshen* 丙申.

[112] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 4a, translation Levy, *Biography,* 43, gives An Qingxu's mother's name as Kang (康), a typical surname for Sogdians originating in from Samarkand.

[113] *History of An Lushan* b, translation des Rotours, 291. Qingen's mother's family name was Duan (段) and was likely Han.

[114] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 3b, translation Levy, *Biography* 42.

[115] In fact, the name Uyghur was never self-applied by modern Uyghurs until very recently. The first known use of the word was in Soviet documents, followed by People's Republic of China documents. It is likely that the name was chosen by the PRC to describe the Turkish inhabitants of their territories in an attempt to link their new conquests into ancient Chinese history. See Jay Dautcher, *Down a Narrow Road: Identity and Masculinity in a Uyghur Community in Xinjiang China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), 49-50.

[116] Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony in Inner Mongolia", *T'oung Pao, Second Series* Vol. 41, (1952), 317-356.

[117] Colin Mackerras, introduction to *The Uighur Empire According to the T'ang Dynastic Histories* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 17.

[118] *Old Tang History* 195 fol. 3a, translation Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire*, 56.

[119] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 4a, translation Levy, *Biography,* 42.

[120] *New Tang History* 225a fol. 5b, as quoted in Levy, *Biography*, 82 (footnote 165).

[121] Mackerras, introduction to *Uighur Empire*, 20.

[122] *History of An Lushan* b, translation des Rotours, 297.

[123] Mackerras, introduction to *Uighur Empire*, 20-22.

[124] *Old Tang History* describes Yan Zhuang's surrender, with thousands of soldiers, in *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 4b Levy, *Biography*, 45.

[125] The most obvious example would be Yan Zhuang, the former *de facto* leader of the Yan under An Qingxu, who was given a government position after defecting. *History of An Lushan* b, translation des Rotours, 297

[126] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 4b and 5*a*, translation Levy, *Biography* 48.

[127] *Old Tang History* 200a fol. 4b and 5*a*, translation Levy, *Biography* 48.

[128] *History of An Lushan* b, translation des Rotours, 331.

[129] The *History of An Lushan* lists his empress as a woman surnamed *Xin* (辛). This is not a surname commonly used by either Turks or Sogdians. *History of An Lushan* b, translation des Rotours, *Histoire,* 328.

[130] Mackerras, introduction to *Uighur Empire*, 23.

[131] I agree with the reasoning of des Rotours, *Histoire*, 329, footnote 1, in assuming that the dynastic accounts' statement that Chaoyi's brother was officially made heir apparent at Shi Siming's coronation must be false, as later accounts contradict this.

[132] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 219.

[133] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 220.

[134] Mackerras, introduction to *Uighur Empire*, 23.

[135] Mackerras, introduction to *Uighur Empire*, 23.

[136] Mackerras, introduction to *Uighur Empire*, 24.

[137] Mackerras, introduction to *Uighur Empire*, 25.

[138] Peterson, "Court and province," *Cambridge History,* 484-486

[139] Pulleyblank, *Background*, 17.

[140] La Vaissière, Sogdian Traders 220-222

[141] Mackerras, introduction to *Uighur Empire*, 47.

[142] C. A. Peterson, "Court and Province," in *Cambridge History,* 485-486.

[143] C. A. Peterson, "Court and Province," in *Cambridge History,* 486.

[144] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 221-222.

[145] La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 221-222

[146] Chen Sanping, "Succession Struggle and the Ethnic identity of the Tang Imperial House," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* third series vol. 6 no. 3 (Nov., 1996).

Weschler, "Kao-Tsu," in Twitchett, ed., *Cambridge History*, 151.

[147] This was particularly the case in scholarly writings. See Chen, "Succession Struggle," 401.

[148] Xuanzong made ten marriage alliances during his reign. By comparison, all previous Tang Emperors together made eight alliances. Xuanzong was also the last "non-barbarian" Emperor of China to make marriage alliances with foreigners. See Pan Yihong, "Marriage Alliances and International Politics from Han through T'ang," *Asia Major* vol. 10, part 2 (1997).

[149] Chen, "Succession Struggle," 382

[150] Chen, "Succession Struggle," 379-84. Wechsler, "T'ai-tsung," in Twitchett, ed. *Cambridge History,* 220.

[151]*Comprehensive Mirror,*191.

[152] Buddhism had become highly integrated into mainstream Han society by the early Sui. See Arthur F. Wright, "Sui Dynasty" in Denis Twitchett, *Cambridge History of China,* 55.

[153] *New Records of the Two Capitals* (*Liangjing xinji* 兩京新記) 3, p. 4a, translation Donald Daniel Leslie, "Persian Temples in T'ang China," *Monumenta Serica 35* 1981-83, 281.

[154] Albert E. Dien, "The Sapao Problem Re-examined," *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* vol. 82, no. 3 (Jul-Sep 1962): p. 335-346.

[155] Wechsler, "T'ai-tsung," in Twitchett, ed. *Cambridge History,* 218.

[156] Wechsler, "T'ai-tsung," in Twitchett, ed. *Cambridge History,*218.

[157] Wechsler, "T'ai-tsung," in Twitchett, ed. *Cambridge History,* 219.

[158] *Records of the Buddha (fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀) 39, fol. 71*b*, translation Leslie, "Persian Temples," 281.

[159] Leslie, "Persian Temples," 295.

[160] *New Records of the Two Capitals* 3 fol. 14a, translation Leslie, "Persian Temples," 282.

[161] Later documents show great popularity of Christianity amongst Han people. Leslie, "Persian Temples," 284.

[162] Chen, "Succession struggle," 383.

[163] See footnote 148.

[164] Denis Twitchett and Howard J. Wechsler, "Kao-tsung (reign 649-83) and the Empress Wu: the inheritor and the usurper," in Twitchett, ed., *Cambridge History,* 264.

[165] Stephen Owen, "Tang Literature of the Frontier," *An*," *Anthology of Chinese Literature: beginnings to 1911* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 462.

[166] Owen, "Tang Literature," 460.

[167] Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of the Early* T'ang (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 93.

[168] *Complete Tang Poetry* 18, translation Owen, *Early T'ang*, 93.

[169] John C. H. Wu, *The Four Seasons of Tang Poetry* (Rutland, Vermont, Charles E. Tuttle, 1972), 43.

[170] Owen, *Early T'ang*, 163.

[171] Owen, *Early T'ang*, 163.

[172] *Complete Tang Poetry* 83, translation, *Early T'ang,* 221, slightly altered.

[173] William Hamilton Sewell, "What is Privilege? A Rhetoric of Amnesia," in *A Rhetoric of Bourgeois Revolution: the Abbé Sieyès and What is the Third Estate?* (Durham, Duke University Press: 1994), 110-144.

[174] *Complete Tang Poetry (quantangshi* 全唐詩) 83, translation Owen, *Early T'ang,* 222.

[175] Owen, *Early T'ang*, 184-185.

[176] *Records of the Buddha* 39 page 76, translation Leslie, "Persian Temples," 283.

[177] *Records of the Buddha* 40 page 79b, translation Leslie, "Persian Temples," 284.

[178] Richard W. L. Guisso, "The Reigns of Empress Wu, Chung-tsung, and Jui-tsung," in Twitchett, ed., *Cambridge History,* 327.

[179] *Records of the Buddha* 40 fol. 79b, translation Leslie, "Persian Temples," 284.

[180] *Records of the Buddha* 40 fol. 14b, translation Leslie, "Persian Temples," 284.

[181] Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung" in *Cambridge History* 411.

[182] Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung" in *Cambridge History,* 411.

[183] *Complete Tang Poetry* 3, my translation.

[184] Wagner, *Wang Wei*, 41-42.

[185] This was in "Song of Longxi 隴西行," *Complete Tang Poetry* 20.

[186] *Complete Tang Poetry* 18. Translation Wagner, 44, slightly edited.

[187] Owen, *Great Age of Chinese Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 149.

[188] *Complete Tang Poetry* 24. Translation Owen, *Great Age,* 150, slightly altered

[189] *Complete Tang Poetry* 213, my translation.

[190] *Complete Tang Poetry* 213, my translation.

[191] Based on the search engine of "The Chinese Text Project," http://ctext.org/.

[192] *Complete Tang Poetry* 213, my translation.

[193] *Complete Tang Poetry* 216. Translation Owen, "Frontier Poetry," 462.

[194] *Complete Tang Poetry* 216.

[195] Mark Edward Lewis, *China's Cosmopolitan Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 46.

[196] Lewis, *China's Cosmopolitan Empire*, 46.

[197] Translation Owen, *Anthology*, 475-477, slightly edited.

[198] *Complete Tang Poetry* 12, translation Owen, *Anthology,* 465, slightly altered by using *hu* in lieu of the less accurate translation "Turks," and adding "are" to the line "The Han is victorious" to address the complicated meaning of Han as both a place name and an ethnic marker.

[199] For example, example, *dalu* 韃虜 "Northern barbarian slave" was a common racial epithet for Manchu people during the early 1900s.

[200] Based on a search of the *Complete Tang Poetry* using the search tool of the China Text Project.

[201] See "旋師喜捷," "賜道士鄧紫陽," "平胡," and "送胡真師還西山" in *Complete Tang Poetry* 3, as well as "吊白居易," in *Complete Tang Poetry* 4.

[202]*Old Tang History* 104 Translation Pulleyblank 110.

[203] Abramson, *Ethnic Identity*, 92.

[204] Geshu Han was often praised by contemporary commentators for his military victories. However, no such documents exist for An Lushan. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity*, xvi-xvii.

[205] *Old Tang History* 1a-2b, Levy 34

[206] This was the previously-mentioned argument between and An Lushan.

[207] A good example of Du Fu's use of both "rebels" and *hu* is in the "Song of Pengya" 彭衙行, *Complete Tang Poetry* 217.

[208] *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government* 218, entry *bingshen* 丙申. My translation.

[209] Abramson, "Deep Eyes and High Noses" in *Ethnic Identity*.

[210] *Complete Tang Poetry* 225, my translation.

[211] Abramson, *Ethnic Identity,* 27-33

[212] Abramson, *Ethnic Identity* 28-29.

[213] My translation, influenced by Du Fu, *The Autobiography of a Chinese poet, A.D. 712-770* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1929), 37. I chose to translate 哂 as "sneer" to highlight that the attendant is planning to mock the monkey.

[214] *Old Tang History* 124, translation mine.

[215] Most notably, Luoyang, Chang'an, and Yanjing.

[216] *Old Tang History,* 110. Translation Schafer, *Golden Peaches,*203.

[217] Abramson, *Ethnic Identity*, 4.

[218] *History of An Lushan* b. Translation mine, influenced by des Rotours, *Historie,* 346.

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