

At the Crossroad of the Ancient World

The role of the kingdom of Kroraina on the Silk Roads between the third and fifth centuries CE

Tomas Larsen Høisæter

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)
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UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN



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Chapter 1: A road of evil demons and hot winds

太守李浩供給度沙河。沙河中多有惡鬼熱風。遇則皆死無一全者。上無飛鳥下無走獸。遍望目欲求度處則莫知所擬。唯以死人枯骨爲標幟耳。行十七日計可千五百里。得至鄯鄯國。其地崎嶇薄瘠。

Le Hao, the prefect of T'un-hwang, had supplied them with the means of crossing the desert (before them), in which there are many evil demons and hot winds. (Travellers) who encounter them perish all to a man. There is not a bird to be seen in the air above, nor an animal on the ground below. Though you look all round most earnestly to find where you can cross, you know not where to make your choice, the only mark and indication being the dry bones of the dead (left upon the sand). After travelling for seventeen days, a distance we may calculate of about 1500 *le*, (the pilgrims) reached the kingdom of Shen-shen, a country rugged and hilly, with a thin and barren soil.¹

It was with these words of dread that the Buddhist monk Faxian (法顯) in his *Foguoji* (佛國記, Record of Buddhist Kingdoms) recalled the first steps of his arduous journey westwards from Dunhuang at the edge of the Chinese world. Faxian, together with a small group of fellow monks, set out from the capital of the Jin-dyanasty at Chang'an in the second year of the *hongshi* era (弘始, 399 CE)² with the goal of reaching India. There they hoped to obtain a complete version of the *Vinaya-pitaka* or “the book of discipline”, part of the Buddhist canon. In order to get there, however, the monks had to complete a truly epic journey across much of the Asian continent and some of the most difficult terrain on the globe. Not only did they have to face the desert wastelands of the Gobi and Taklamakan deserts in the Tarim Basin, but they also had to cross several of the tallest mountain ranges on earth, and navigate the cultures and customs of the many kingdoms that lay westwards between China and India. Yet despite the palpable dread with which Faxian described the dangers and difficulty of their route the journey was successful, and after much hardship, Faxian would eventually reach India where he acquired the texts he sought.

¹ Legge, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms; Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fâ-Hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon, A.D. 399-414, in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline. Translated and Annotated with a Korean Recension of the Chinese Text*, 12–13.

² Legge, n. 2.

One cannot doubt the courage and determination of Faxian and his companions, for though his account likely contains some poetic exaggerations, the challenges they faced were truly grand. Their journey constituted one of the first recorded instances of someone travelling the entire stretch from China across Inner Asia to India, following the routes commonly described as the Silk Roads. These connections, which are generally depicted as a network of routes connecting China in the east with the Mediterranean world in the west though often also incorporating trade routes across the Indian Ocean, are usually described as having been opened in antiquity primarily due to the influence of the great empires of the Han dynasty and the Romans. Yet ideas and technologies, as well as resources, had travelled from or across this region since at least the early Bronze Age,³ including such essential skills as goat, sheep and horse domestication,⁴ or such important crops as millet.⁵ As such, Faxian and his companions were not the first to make their way across the harsh terrain of Inner Asia, as indeed the very religion they adhered to had travelled in the opposite direction to China, though few had travelled the entire way. Even in this feat, Faxian's journey was far from unique, for in the centuries both before and after him a number of similar journeys were accomplished by other Chinese monks.

The ability of ideas, items, and people to move across Inner Asia has naturally raised the question of how and by whom these connections and journeys were made possible, or posed as a question, "Which structures, factors and actors made exchange and travel across the Silk Roads possible?" Much of the literature on the Silk Roads has concerned itself mainly with this question. This is hardly surprising, as the answer to this question has a bearing on not only the travels of a few Chinese monks in a limited time period, but should also be of consequence to our wider understanding of long-distance movement and contact across Eurasia in antiquity more generally. Furthermore, given that such contact carried not only people but also religion, ideas, innovations, languages and plagues, often with wide-reaching consequences, this is

³ A good overview can be had in Cunliffe, *By Steppe, Desert, and Ocean: The Birth of Eurasia*; Brosseder, 'A Study on the Complexity and Dynamics of Inter-Action and Exchange in Late Iron Age Eurasia'.

⁴ Frachetti, 'Multiregional Emergence of Mobile Pastoralism and Nonuniform Institutional Complexity across Eurasia'.

⁵ Miller, Spengler, and Frachetti, 'Millet Cultivation across Eurasia'; Wang et al., 'Tianshanbeilu and the Isotopic Millet Road: Reviewing the Late Neolithic/Bronze Age Radiation of Human Millet Consumption from North China to Europe'.

clearly a question of great importance. As shall be discussed in more detail later in this introduction, most of the existing research on this question has primarily focused upon the role of the great empires of the east and west, and in particular on the role of successive Chinese dynasties, as well as on the “steppe” empires of the so-called “nomadic” people, like the Xiongnu and later the Turks.

To this approach, however, Faxian’s account would appear to provide a powerful correction, as Faxian and his companions undertook their travel during a very chaotic period in Chinese history, a period often called the Sixteen Kingdoms period (304-439 CE) due to the many fragmented states which ruled China during this time. It was, in other words, a period after the fall of most of the great empires of antiquity where Chinese state power did not reach far into Central Asia, and as such, the travelling monks could expect little aid or infrastructure from any imperial power. Faxian’s account would, in other words, appear to suggest that other actors and factors, aside from various powerful empires, played a role in making movement and connections across Asia possible. Secondly, Faxian’s account highlights a problem that has often garnered little attention amongst scholars of the Silk Roads, namely the problems posed by the vast and harsh terrain, across which these routes are thought to have run. The difficulty of this terrain would have raised several very concrete challenges, such as how to acquire provisions and water, and how to find one’s way – challenges, which as Faxian so vividly describes, could be lethal if ignored. Yet Faxian’s account also appears to point to an answer to this problem, since as they travelled the monks went from oasis to oasis, resting in each and often receiving aid from the local rulers or communities, as in the case of the prefect Le Hao of Dunhuang.

Drawing its inspiration from Faxian’s account, this dissertation will therefore propose to approach the central question of the Silk Roads, not primarily through Chinese or other literary sources, as has often been the case, nor through a wide look at the Silk Roads as connections between the east and the west. Rather, it will propose a bottom-up approach by conducting a case study of the region first traversed by Faxian and his companions, namely the southern Tarim Basin stretching from Dunhuang in the east to Khotan in the west, the southernmost part of today’s Xinjiang province in

western China. The case study will primarily focus on the kingdom of Shanshan (鄯善), or Kroraina as the locals knew it,⁶ and will draw upon the many sources uncovered there, both written and archaeological. These sources date mainly from between the third to the fifth centuries CE, which will form the timeframe for the dissertation, though where relevant, a few older sources from the first and second centuries will also be drawn upon. Through these sources, the case study will look at the economic systems of the Southern Tarim Basin, what evidence there is for contact with other regions, and how this can inform the larger debate about the Silk Roads. The primary research question of this study will therefore be, “Which structures, factors and actors made exchange and travel through the southern Tarim Basin possible between the third and the fifth centuries?”

Before laying out the full details of this dissertation’s approach and commencing with the discussion proper, it is however necessary to situate the discussion within the wider field of Silk Road studies. The following will therefore give a summary of the historiography of Silk Road studies and describe the primary narratives and approaches within which trans-Eurasian contact and exchange has previously been understood.

1.1 Historiography of the Silk Roads

Few historic routes of contact and exchange are as famous as the Silk Roads, alternatively called the Silk Road or Silk Routes, and since the field’s inception in the late nineteenth century, Silk Road studies have produced a vast number of publications. In his 2014 article *The Silk Road in World History: A review essay*, Andrea suggests two broad phases of Silk Road studies. The first phase he suggests, characterised by the “rediscovery” of the Silk Road, lasted from the late nineteenth century to the Second World War, while the second phase, starting in the 1980s, has been a period in which Silk Road studies have been institutionalised and fitted into a framework of global history.⁷ Yet with this separation, he appears to skip over a

⁶ See section 4.2.1 for a discussion of the names of the kingdom. Sufficient to say here is that the kingdom is sometimes also known as the kingdom of Kroraina after its capital, or with the Chinese names Loulan or Shanshan (spelled Shen-shen in Legge’s text above).

⁷ Andrea, ‘The Silk Road in World History’.

number of very influential works written in the 1960s and 1970s, and I will therefore argue that one could add a phase between the two to cover the period from the 1950s to 1980. This phase was characterised by important reactions, and at times, also a rejection of much of the initial thoughts of Silk Road studies.

Despite making these chronological divisions, however, it is important to note that the field of Silk Road studies has long been, and to a certain extent still remains, highly fragmented, broken up not only by the usual divisions of topics, language, and academic fields but also often by boundaries between different scholarly traditions. There has, for example, been a noticeable divide between scholars with a background in classical history and scholars with a background in Chinese history, with only some limited discussion crossing between the two traditions. Much of the work done within the broader field of Silk Road studies has furthermore tended to be highly focused, on often but a single document, collection or archaeological site, and normally with few attempts at connecting the findings of these individual studies to a greater Silk Road narrative. Finally, what can be termed Silk Road studies, often spans both vast areas, with some authors including sea trade on the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, and a vast time period, from pre-historic times to at least the Mongolian empires of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries – periods so vastly different that even climatic conditions may have varied. As such, the following will limit itself primarily to discussing works concerning the Central Asian Silk Road and the pre-Islamic period, which are the most relevant for our discussion.

Explorers and geographers of empires

The term Silk Road itself first started gaining traction following its use in the book *China* by the German geographer, geologist and explorer Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen in 1877.⁸ He travelled extensively in China across several expeditions, though he never travelled into the Tarim Basin and western regions of the country due to political instability, and wrote widely on geographical and geological topics related to China and its neighbours. In addition to the geography and geology of China and

⁸ For a discussion of the pre-Richthofian use of the term see Mertens, 'Did Richthofen Really Coin the Silk Road'.

Central Asia, however, Richthofen also had a keen interest in history and was himself interested in the question of how to cross the vastness of the Asian continent, having worked with the planning of a railroad line from China to Germany.⁹ Reading ancient sources, both Chinese and Western, he found mentions of routes and contacts between the east and the west and used the words “*Sererstrasse*” as well as “*Seidenstrasse*”, in both singular and plural, to describe these connections. These, he suggested, had carried trade from the ancient Chinese empires to the west since at least antiquity, which formed his primary focus.¹⁰ Richthofen’s work was followed by a number of scholars, for example Albert Herrmann who was the first to use the term “*Seidenstrassen*” in the title of a book, published in 1910 and translating as “*The old Silk Road between China and Syria*”.¹¹

Yet the Silk Road as a term, as well as a field of study, only gained widespread popularity following the discoveries of several archaeological sites made by a number of European travellers and explorers throughout Central Asia around the turn of the twentieth century. The most important contribution to popularising the term was made by Richthofen’s former student, the Swedish geographer Sven Hedin, who published highly popular accounts of his extensive travels in the Tarim Basin and Tibet, using the term Silk Road repeatedly. He was also the first to describe the ruins of Kroraina (Loulan) near the lake Lop Nur during his second Tarim expedition between 1899-1902, which was once part of the kingdom of Kroraina.¹² However, the most important discoveries, along with the most thorough archaeological work in the period, were done by the British-Hungarian explorer sir Aurel Stein. Across four expeditions, he and his team visited and surveyed a vast number of sites throughout Central Asia and made a number of important discoveries, such as the Buddhist cave complexes at Dunhuang and Kucha. They furthermore surveyed most of the major sites of the southern Tarim Basin, including sites near Khotan, the ruined town near Niya, the

⁹ Jacobs, ‘The Concept of the Silk Road in the 19th and 20th Centuries’, 1–3.

¹⁰ von Richthofen, *China, Ergebnisse Eigener Reisen Und Darauf Gegründeter Studien.*, 495–501.

¹¹ Herrmann, *Die Alten Seidenstrassen Zwischen China Und Syrien. Beiträge Zur Alten Geographie Asiens. I. Abteilung. Einleitung. Die Chinesischen Quellen. Zentralasien Nach Ssema Ts’ien Und Den Annalen Der Han-Dynastie.*

¹² Hedin, *Scientific Results of a Journey in Central Asia, 1899-1902.*

stupas of Miran, and several sites in the Lop Desert.¹³ A number of other expeditions also visited the region, for our purposes most notably a French expedition led by Paul Pelliot, a German expedition led by Albert von le Coq and Albert Grünwedel, and a Japanese expedition led by count Kozui Otani.

In addition to uncovering a number of nearly intact sites, many dating back to antiquity, the various expeditions uncovered large quantities of art and artefacts, many with clear connections both in technique and motif to Greco-Roman art. This struck a powerful cord amongst many European intellectuals at the time, who were deeply fascinated, and to a certain extent also inspired, by the exploits of Alexander and what they saw as the subsequent “Hellenisation” of large parts of Asia. Their early expeditions furthermore uncovered vast caches of written documents at a number of sites, including at Dunhuang, Kucha, Turfan, Niya, and the Lop Site, to name but a few. These collections were highly diverse, most commonly of a religious and predominantly Buddhist nature, but also including a significant number of secular documents. They had been written in an equally diverse number of languages and scripts, ranging from Chinese and Indian scripts and languages to local scripts and vernaculars, such as the Tocharian A and B languages. This too fed an image of a diverse “crossroad of empires”, across which the influence of a number of ancient civilisations could be felt.

These spectacular finds naturally fuelled an interest in Silk Road studies, and given the world inhabited by the first Silk Road scholars and their academic background with a strong focus on classical studies, it is hardly surprising that the first Silk Road narratives they produced primarily emphasised the role of Empires in shaping the Silk Road. This was, of course, also in keeping with their primary source materials, being predominantly Greek, Roman, and Chinese accounts. In this “Silk Road of Empires” narrative, the Silk Road was primarily a result of western, mainly Imperial Roman, interest in Chinese products. These consisted primarily of silk, which the Chinese traders exported westwards along routes such as those found described in both the *Hanshu* and the *Hou Hanshu*. The start of Silk Road connections, again

¹³ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*; Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*; Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*.

drawing from the Chinese chronicles, were usually placed at the time of Emperor Wu of Han in the first century BCE, following a Chinese diplomatic mission to the west, and were envisioned as well-travelled caravan routes. Thus, many of the early explorers too sought such “high roads”, as Stein was wont to call it, seen for example in his goal of tracing the Chinese routes westwards past the Lop sites during his third expedition.¹⁴

Towards the end of the 1920s and into the 1930s, however, this period of rediscovery and exploration by imperial explorers started to come to an end, as the old imperial order was deteriorating and war loomed. In the Tarim Basin, the Chinese republican government sought to take control of exploration in the region already in the 1920s, even putting a halt to Stein’s fourth expedition and confiscating his finds in 1931.

Reaction and rejection

In the aftermath of the Second World War and the subsequent dismantling of the European colonial empires, the focus and discourse within Silk Road studies also started to change, especially in relation to post-colonial thought, though in part also as various new national governments put a halt to further exploration by Western powers, especially in China. Much critique was levelled at the large-scale extraction of artefacts and manuscripts to Western collections, the most scathing example of this being the slightly later *Foreign devils on the Silk Road: the search for the lost cities and treasures of Chinese Central Asia* (1984) by Peter Hopkirk.¹⁵ Yet at the same time, as recently explored by Jacobs in his article *The Concept of the Silk Road in the 19th and 20th century*, the Silk Road concept itself started to gain entry in non-western academia during this period and was soon adopted for new purposes.¹⁶

However, while the “Empire” centric narratives of many of the early pioneers of Silk Road studies were increasingly challenged they were not, by and large, rejected nor discarded. Instead, a number of influential works, especially from the 1960s,

¹⁴ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 337–43.

¹⁵ Hopkirk, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road: The Search for the Lost Cities and Treasures of Chinese Central Asia*.

¹⁶ Jacobs, ‘The Concept of the Silk Road in the 19th and 20th Centuries’, 7–11.

further refined and cemented this narrative, such as Lucette Boulnois' *La Route de la soie* from 1963.¹⁷ Yet the by far most important work of this period, and likely the most influential book written concerning the Silk Road exchange since Hedin and Stein, was the study *Trade and Expansion in Han China. A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations* (1967) by Ying-shih Yü. Yü was not primarily writing about the Silk Road, and indeed he only uses the word twice,¹⁸ but rather his work concerned the foreign and economic policy of the Han dynasty vis-à-vis its neighbours, as the title suggests. Nonetheless, his narrative follows closely the “classical” narrative of a Silk Road initiated and driven by empires, although in Yu’s account the instigating factor was primarily the foreign policy and political system of the Han dynasty rather than economic interests. He focused, in particular, on the so-called “tributary system”, through which the Han court would seek the submission, in the form of token tributary gifts from foreign polities, which they in turn would lavish with a far larger counter gift in what he described as “tributary trade”. His work primarily examined the relationship between the Han and the Xiongnu, who as the most important barbarian threat he suggested would reveal the pattern of Chinese foreign and economic policy towards its neighbours, and he emphasised the truly vast scale of Chinese counter-gifts to the Xiongnu, which brought large amounts of Chinese commodities into the northern and western frontier.¹⁹ The importance of Yü’s work can hardly be understated, partly because of its influence on the study of early Chinese diplomatic and political practises,²⁰ but also as his sino-centric narrative and model of “tributary trade” has been incorporated into many major works on the Silk Road since Yü’s time.

A second important, though far less influential, reaction to the classical Silk Road narrative also appeared in this period in the form of Manfred Raschke’s extremely detailed work, *New studies in Roman commerce with the East* (1978), noteworthy, if nothing else, then for its extremely extensive notes. Raschke, though he

¹⁷ In English: Boulnois, *The Silk Road*.

¹⁸ Yu, *Trade and Expansion in Han China. A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations.*, 151–52.

¹⁹ Yu, *Trade and Expansion in Han China. A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations*. For more details on this approach, see below.

²⁰ Selbitschka, ‘Early Chinese Diplomacy: Realpolitik versus the So-Called Tributary System’.

in part followed Yü's descriptions of a "tributary trade" through which Chinese goods moved in large quantities into the norther steppe,²¹ took a radically different approach suggesting that one could not speak of commercial trade across Asia in this period at all, and certainly not long-distance trade. Rather, he suggested that the movement of goods and commodities across Eurasia in antiquity was primarily driven by social and political mechanism, for example as gifts in marriages or alliances, and it was in this light he understood Yü's tributary trade.²² In this his "minimalist" approach Raschke clearly drew inspiration from the similar "maximalist-minimalist" debate in classical history, championed amongst others by Moses Finley, though unlike them Raschke's work went largely unnoticed in the wider field of Silk Road studies.

The Silk Road in global history

The reason for this was likely in part due to the resurgence of popular interest in the traditional Silk Road in the early 1980s, seen particularly well in the Silk Road project launched by UNESCO in 1988 that included a series of six books entitled *History of civilizations of Central Asia*. This grand work aimed at bringing the often-scattered Silk Road research together, and also incorporate it into a larger framework. Similarly, the International Dunhuang Project, founded in 1994, sought to bring together the scattered document collections excavated during the early twentieth century, collections that had been spread across a number of countries and individual collections. This resurgent interest was, as pointed out by Andrea, at least for a large part occasioned by first the opening of China and later also the fall of the Soviet Union.²³ The new, increasingly outwards-looking China, in particular, took a strong interest in developing and using the Silk Road concept, culminating in the grand and multifaceted "Belt and Road" initiative launched in 2013 by Chinese president Xi Jinping. In this resurgent Silk Road of global connectivity and cooperation, there was little room for minimalism.

Another important factor was, however, the growing scholarly interest in globalisation and global history, topics into which especially the traditional Silk Road

²¹ Raschke, 'New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East', 606–22.

²² Raschke, 'New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East'.

²³ Andrea, 'The Silk Road in World History', 117.

narrative, with its interconnected and interacting Eurasian empires, fitted perfectly. A glance across the shelf of major publications concerning the Silk Road in antiquity from the past two decades will show that this narrative of empires remains important. In the past two decades, major works has carried titles such as *The Roman Empire and the Silk Routes*²⁴ or *Empires of Ancient Eurasia*.²⁵ Similarly recent edited volumes and conference volumes addressing the topic have included titles such as *Between Rome and China*,²⁶ *Silk: Trade and Exchange along the Silk Roads between Rome and China in Antiquity*,²⁷ *Eurasian Empires in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*²⁸ or *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity*.²⁹ Even perusing those volumes otherwise named, such as Xinru Liu's *The Silk Road in World History* for example, one will find that these works tend to focus upon the role of empires and follows along the lines of the classical narrative, Liu's book starting with two chapters entitled "China Looks West" and "Rome Looks East".³⁰ As such, it would be fair to say that the Silk Road is still seen as a phenomenon predominantly initiated by and reliant upon empires.

The increased interest in Silk Road studies and Central Asian studies in general in the past decades has, however, seen a diversification of Silk Road narratives and several critical responses to the traditional narrative. Though several merit mentioning, in particular Valerie Hansen's *The Silk Road. A new history* or Selbitschka's recent article *The Early Silk Road(S)*, both problematising the Silk Road concept itself,³¹ the most successful of these responses, and partly following in the footsteps of Raschke, has been an increasing interest in the role of the nomadic and semi-nomadic people of Eurasia and a re-evaluation of their traditional role as poor, rapacious, and ravaging barbarians. Primarily informed by new archaeological discoveries, it has been argued that the people of the Eurasian steppes carried goods over vast distances, and it has

²⁴ McLaughlin, *The Roman Empire and the Silk Routes: The Ancient World Economy and the Empires of Parthia, Central Asia and Han China*.

²⁵ Benjamin, *Empires of Ancient Eurasia: The First Silk Road Era, 100BCE-250CE*.

²⁶ Lieu and Mikkelsen, eds., *Between Rome and China. History, Religions and Material Culture of the Silk Road*.

²⁷ Hildebrandt and Gillis, *Silk: Trade and Exchange along the Silk Roads between Rome and China in Antiquity*.

²⁸ Kim, Vervaeke, and Adah, eds., *Eurasian Empires in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Contact and Exchange between the Graeco-Roman World, Inner Asia and China*.

²⁹ Di Cosmo and Maas, eds., *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca. 250-750*.

³⁰ Liu, *The Silk Road in World History*.

³¹ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*; Selbitschka, 'The Early Silk Road(S)'.

been pointed out that they did so long before the rise of the classical empires of Rome and Han. While largely agreeing on these basic points, however, proponents of this “steppe road”, to burrow Christian’s term,³² has proposed a rather varied range of models. Christopher Beckwith, for example, who argues strongly in his *Empires of the Silk Road* that the classical empires were in fact a disruptive force, suggests to simply replace the classical empires with the nomadic empires of the Xiongnu or the Turks as primary driving forces.³³ Others, such as Honeychurch or Di Cosmo, have meanwhile argued for a more “minimalist” and network-oriented approach more reminiscent of Raschke’s arguments.³⁴

1.2 Approaches to the Silk Road system

As this short summary shows, the modern field of Silk Roads studies has currently a number of competing narratives of the Silk Roads, though dominated by the narrative of a “Silk Road of Empires”. I use the term narrative here rather than, for example, theory, to emphasise that these presentations of the Silk Road tend to take a historic view and form, telling a story that usually traces the Silk Roads phenomenon’s formation and development over time. Yet all these major narratives, to a greater or lesser extent, present a framework for how the Silk Road system is thought to have functioned, differing largely in questions of the scale and form of the exchange as well as the primary actors involved. These are not strictly descriptive models as such, as they do not attempt to draw up a system in detail, but are rather what I will call different approaches.

At least four types of Silk Road narratives with connected approaches can be discerned in the literature, namely a “Silk Roads of Empires”, a “Tributary Trade” approach, a “Steppe Road” approach, and a “Organisations” approach. It must, however, be stressed that these are for the most part not set positions, and some authors frequently straddle more than one. Some are furthermore often incorporated into one-another, as is often the case with the “Tributary Trade” approach being

³² Christian, ‘Silk Roads or Steppe Roads?’

³³ Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*.

³⁴ Honeychurch, *Inner Asia and the Spatial Politics of Empire. Archaeology, Mobility and Cultural Contact.*; Di Cosmo, ‘A Note on the Formation of the “Silk Road” as Long-Distance Exchange Network’.

incorporated into the traditional “Silk Roads of Empires”. Nonetheless, I believe they all constitute useful descriptions of the primary ways the Silk Road system is conceived of. Given that the purpose of the following case study in part is to test some of the common Silk Road explanations against the Krorainan material, it is therefore worth briefly characterising these approaches.

The “Silk Roads of Empires”

The traditional narrative of the “Silk Roads of Empires” is, as seen above, the most common narrative of the Silk Road, and amongst our four it is also the one that is hardest to encapsulate in a single description, given the many changes it has undergone. To provide a brief outline of this narrative of the early Silk Road, exemplified here by Craig Benjamin’s *Empires of Ancient Eurasia*,³⁵ it usually sets the start of Silk Road exchange to the reign of Emperor Wu (157-87 BCE) of Han in the late second century BCE or just before, often tied to the diplomatic missions of Zhang Qian and the subsequent Chinese military expeditions to the north and north-west. This opened trade relations with the west, and in some narratives established the tributary system. In more recent versions, such as Benjamin’s version, the Xiongnu and Yuezhi nomadic confederations are often also emphasised, the former as an adversary to the Han but both also as important trading partners and recipients of tributary gifts which were spread outwards. Trade and contact then flourished with the large-scale export of silk and other valuables from China, in particular due to the large receptive markets created in the west by the Roman Empire. The intervening empires of the Parthians and the Kushans, primarily in modern Iran, Afghanistan and India, acted as important middlemen, shipping on and controlling the trade, from which they profited greatly. This first golden age of the Silk Road, or “first Silk Roads era” as Craig Benjamin terms it,³⁶ then came to an end around 250 CE following the collapse or decline of all five of the major empires involved, not to flourish again before the rise of the Tang dynasty in the seventh century.

³⁵ Benjamin, *Empires of Ancient Eurasia: The First Silk Road Era, 100BCE-250CE*.

³⁶ Benjamin.

How this trade took place is rarely substantiated, and as such, it is somewhat difficult to characterise the “Silk Roads of Empires” approach. All works that fall into this category are, however, characterised by their emphasis on the great antique empires as the instigators and drivers of exchange. Their diplomatic and military forays opened the routes, and especially the Han military, is usually credited with keeping them open. Their important role is furthermore often substantiated by turning to Pliny’s complaint of the vast sums lost by the Romans to eastern trade and by attempting to work out deficit figures for both the Roman and Han Empires.³⁷ Quite how this trade was carried out is usually less explicit, but references are frequently made to caravans of merchants travelling across Inner Asia, and the assumption seems to be that the trade was commercial in nature.³⁸ As such, the “Silk Roads of Empires” approach envisioned travel and trade, usually on a large scale, initiated and driven by Imperial policy but run largely for commercial purposes.

Tributary trade

Closely related to the “Silk Road of Empires” is Ying-shih Yü’s tributary approach that since its formulation has frequently been incorporated into the traditional narrative of empires and acted as one of its primary modes of explanation. At least as presented by Yü, however, its focus is somewhat different from the traditional narrative in that it primarily focuses upon the role of the Han Empire. Fundamental to his model is the idea that the people surrounding China were primarily interested in trade, and especially in the case of the nomadic “barbarians” who Yü thought relied on trade or raiding for their livelihood. As for the Han on the other hand, Yü proposed that the overriding imperative of the Han foreign policy was to incorporate foreign entities into the so-called “tributary system” by having them formally submit and sent tributary gifts to the Han court. This was he asserted a primarily ideological project, as the role of the Emperor as ruler of “all under heaven” made necessary foreign submission to Chinese authority. Therefore, to achieve this, the Han court was prepared to give vast

³⁷ McLaughlin, *The Roman Empire and the Silk Routes: The Ancient World Economy and the Empires of Parthia, Central Asia and Han China.*, 199–217.

³⁸ For some standard examples see, Ferguson and Keynes, ‘China and Rome’; McLaughlin, *The Roman Empire and the Silk Routes: The Ancient World Economy and the Empires of Parthia, Central Asia and Han China.*; Benjamin, *Empires of Ancient Eurasia: The First Silk Road Era, 100BCE-250CE.*

gifts in return for far smaller foreign tribute, as the most important element was their submission. For this reason, truly vast amounts of valuables, especially silk, were given to barbarians who submitted. In the case of the Xiongnu, for example, whom Yü uses as his primary case study, he cites shipment figures mostly taken from the *Hanshu*. On several occasions, these ran well into the tens of thousands of pieces of silk cloth as well as large amounts of unworked silk floss.³⁹ Indeed, he estimates that as much as seven percent of the annual government income would have gone towards maintaining this tributary system, which he suggests brought vast amounts of Chinese goods into the polities to the north and west.⁴⁰

Yü's second important observation on the tributary system, which has provided a model for many later descriptions of the Silk Road, was his suggestion that several polities further from China used the tributary system to open trade relations. As he describes it, "From the economic point of view, it is well known that the barbarians always took the tribute as a cloak for trade."⁴¹ By this he meant that envoys would bring small tributes in order to receive larger counter-gifts as well as being given access to the markets in which they could trade. He thought this was done primarily by the countries further to the west, although he believed that the kingdoms of the Tarim Basin too were engaged in such trading activities.⁴² Thus the "Tributary Trade" approach places the Han Empire's political needs as the driving force behind the Silk Road, and much of the trade is envisioned as being mainly socio-politically driven.

Yet while primarily focusing on the interaction between states, it should be emphasised that Yü also envisioned a place for private, commercially motivated trade operating under the tributary system. He described this as frontier trade, and he notes that a number of markets operated along the borders in which the Xiongnu in particular showed much interest. Private trade was run in part by private merchants, but Yü astutely observed that the frontier soldiers too appear to have played an important role in this trade. Yet while a significant factor on the frontiers with the

³⁹ Yu, *Trade and Expansion in Han China. A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations.*, 47.

⁴⁰ Yu, 36–64.

⁴¹ Yu, 59.

⁴² Yu, 133–71.

potential to enrich individuals, Yü clearly saw it as secondary to the tributary trade itself.⁴³

Minimalism and the “Steppe Road”

The third recurrent approach often invoked in explaining Silk Road exchange draw upon the more recent research on the role of the steppe people and has much in common with Raschke’s minimalist approach. Raschke saw the exchange not primarily as commercial or even economic activity, but rather linked it to political and especially social phenomena. Thus, instead of being carried by traders actively seeking profit, it is argued that the items that moved over vast distances moved through social and political connections. Examples of this could be gifts given as dowries or bridewealth at marriages, or gifts given in tribute or to secure political alliances. This view has a lot in common with Yü’s tributary model as far as mechanism is concerned, and Raschke even refers to Yü’s work in his discussion, though he disputes that this lead the steppe people to becoming middlemen trading the silk onwards and rather envisions a trickle on a smaller scale.⁴⁴

Not all later scholars have accepted Raschke’s minimalism, but proponents of the “Steppe Road” approach do like Raschke emphasise a shift away from the great antique empires and focuses rather on the people of the Eurasian steppes, hence the name. They also largely agree that this “Steppe Road” was driven, not primarily by commercial motives, but by political and social factors. Some versions focus on the role of nomadic empires as opposed to the classical empires, particularly notable in Beckwith’s account. He puts emphasis on the importance of the continued giving of gifts to their warriors by the leaders of nomadic confederations and empires as an imperative for them to continuously acquire foreign luxuries through exchange or raiding, which he describes as a *comitatus*-like system.⁴⁵

A very fruitful branch of the “Steppe Road” approach in recent decades has, however, been a growing focus on smaller groups and polities, as well as on networks. These works have increasingly challenged the unifying narratives of the traditional

⁴³ Yü, 91–132.

⁴⁴ Raschke, ‘New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East’, 606–22.

⁴⁵ Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, chap. 1.

“Silk Road” or “Steppe Road” driven by classical or nomadic empires and rather emphasized the interplay between a number of different factors, from empires and polities down to groups of local elites or merchants. In this, archaeologists have especially led the way, with for example Honeychurch in his *Inner Asia and the Spatial Politics of Empire*⁴⁶, Michael Frachetti across several articles,⁴⁷ and Brosseder in her *A Study of the complexity and dynamics of inter-action and exchange in late iron age Eurasia*.⁴⁸ These have argued that it is the interaction of different groups, both empires, nomadic and sedentary, which is key to understanding trans-Eurasian trade in the prehistoric and antique period.

Trans-regional organisations and Hansen’s minimalism

The fourth approach to understanding the Silk Road has been through an emphasis on the role of trans-regional organisations in facilitating and driving exchange. The organisations that has most frequently been pointed to are the Buddhism monasteries that started appearing across Central Asia in early antiquity and had become well established by the second and third centuries CE. Given their later appearance, after the usually recognised start of the Silk Roads exchange of the traditional narrative, Buddhism and Buddhist organisations are rarely seen as a driving force in and by themselves, and this approach is usually incorporated into the traditional narrative of empires. A few scholars, most notably Xinru Liu and Jason Neelis, have however emphasised the importance of Buddhism and Buddhist organisations in maintaining the Silk Roads after the fall of the Han empire.⁴⁹ Liu has further argued that Buddhism

⁴⁶ William Honeychurch, *Inner Asia and the Spatial Politics of Empire. Archaeology, Mobility and Cultural Contact*, New York: Springer, 2015.

⁴⁷ Michael Frachetti, ‘Bronze Age Exploitation and Political Dynamics of the Eastern Eurasian Steppe Zone’, in *Ancient Interactions: East and West in Eurasia*, ed. Katie Boyle, Colin Renfrew, and Marsha Levine, Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2002.

Michael D. Frachetti, ‘Multiregional Emergence of Mobile Pastoralism and Nonuniform Institutional Complexity across Eurasia’, *Current Anthropology* 53, no. 1, 2012.

Michael D. Frachetti et al., ‘Nomadic Ecology Shaped the Highland Geography of Asia’s Silk Roads’, *Nature* 543, no. 7644, 2017.

⁴⁸ Brosseder, ‘A Study on the Complexity and Dynamics of Inter-Action and Exchange in Late Iron Age Eurasia’.

⁴⁹ Neelis, ‘Long-Distance Trade and the Transmission of Buddhism. Primarily Based on Kharosthi and Brahmi Inscriptions’; Liu, *The Silk Road in World History*.

was a driving factor behind trade in later periods, primarily the Tang period, as especially silk earned an important place in many Buddhist rituals.⁵⁰

Finally, a fresh and quite different approach for understanding Silk Road exchange is provided by Valerie Hansen in her book, *The Silk Road. A new history* from 2012. In it she concludes, after a thorough examination of an impressive breath of sources, that Silk Road trade, at least in the sense of commercial ventures and active trade, existed only on a very small, local scale.⁵¹ She bases this on the dearth of commercial activities in the available sources, noting for example the fact that the Kharosthi documents found in the kingdom of Kroraina only contained a single mention of “merchants”.⁵² In turn, she emphasises two factors that she suggested played a major role, namely the movement of people and the army of the various Chinese dynasties that operated in Central Asia.

To the first she attributes the movement of ideas, languages, religions, and the many other intangible things that moved across Inner Asia, often carried she proposes by migration. Real trade however, she suggests, only took place during the Han (206 BCE to 220 CE) and, more importantly, the Tang (618-907 CE) dynasties when large Chinese military contingents were operating in the Tarim Basin. These, she suggests, stimulated the local economy due to the vast quantities of grain, coin, and silk shipped into the area to supply them, which in turn caused a flourishing of the local economy and a “mirage” of a Silk Road.⁵³ Hansen is thus perhaps the clearest proponent of an “organisations” approach in that she sees the Chinese army as the primary and practically only driver of true Silk Roads exchange, though it should perhaps be termed a minimalist “organisations” approach.

The search for the Prime Mover

We can, in other words, speak of four primary approaches for early Silk Road exchange, all identifying different forms and driving forces behind Silk Road contact and exchange. Firstly, we have the commonly cited, but fairly vague, commercial trade

⁵⁰ Liu, *Silk and Religion: An Exploration of Material Life and the Thought of People, AD 600-1200*.

⁵¹ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 236–37.

⁵² Hansen, 237.

⁵³ Hansen, chap. 8.

of the “Silk Road of Empires” approach, in which the primary driving forces were the commercial interests of the great empires of antiquity. Secondly, we have Yü’s “tributary trade” approach, in which the primary driving force was on the one hand a desire for trade amongst the barbarians and on the other an ideological and political agenda on the part of the Chinese Han Empire. This shares some commonalities with the “Steppe Road” approach, which suggest that the primary driving forces of trans-Eurasian exchange was not commercial interests at all but rather social and political processes primarily amongst the highly mobile people of the steppe. Finally, there is the “organisations” approach, usually combined with either a traditional “Empires” approach or in Hansen’s case with a minimalist view. This approach does, however, in both cases emphasise the role of trans-regional organisations, be they Buddhist communities or Chinese military forces active during the Han and Tang dynasties.

Though partly overlapping, these four approaches differ in at least three important questions, namely the scale of exchange, the primary actors, and the form of the exchange. As far as the first two points are concerned, they can all be placed along two primary axis of disagreement, namely a minimalist-maximalist axis concerned with the volume of exchange and a smaller polities-empire axis concerned with the primary actors. Thus, where the traditional and tributary approaches argue for large scale exchange and a maximalist view, the steppe approach and Hansen are generally more minimalist and envisioned exchange as happening primarily on a small scale. As for actors on the other hand, three of the approaches tend to focus upon the role of empires as primary drivers of exchange: the “Empires”, the “Tributary” and “Organisations” approach. While, only the “Steppe Road” approach focuses in part on the role of smaller polities and groups. At least three of these views furthermore focus on different forms of exchange, or at least sees one form of exchange as more important than others. Thus, the traditional approach proposes commercial exchange, while the tributary approach sees exchange mainly as tributary trade, and the steppe approach focuses on gift exchange.

In this schema above, I believe one can see one of the primary weaknesses of much of the work done on the Silk Road so far, namely a tendency towards seeking a single main cause, or a prime mover if one will, along with a single unified narrative.

Perhaps with the exception of scale however these differences are clearly not mutually exclusive, and to a certain extent the differences can be seen as the result of using different sources. An important path forward for Silk Road studies must therefore certainly be to attempt to reconcile some of these approaches, if possible, and in the following I will consequently, as far as the available sources allow, attempt to address all these approaches and their viability in the case of the kingdom of Kroraina.

1.3 Kroraina and Tarim Basin polities in the Silk Road narratives

Turning to the kingdom of Kroraina and the other polities of the Tarim Basin, it is notable that none of them are given much space in any of the narratives or approaches discussed above. This is somewhat surprising, given their central location along the very routes that at least the classical Silk Road is thought to have moved. Their near invisibility in much of the work on the Silk Road should, however, likely be seen as the result of the enduring focus on either empires or the steppe nomads in much of the literature. The one notable exception, however, is Valerie Hansen, who in her thorough study devotes individual chapters to a number of Tarim Basin sites, including the kingdom of Kroraina and its most important site, Niya. Yet as seen above, she finds little evidence for these sites having played a notable role in any form of Silk Road exchange, suggesting that the many artistic and cultural imports seen at Niya were the result of migration and that the local economy was overwhelmingly a subsistence economy, with very little room for commercially oriented exchange.⁵⁴

One notable older interpretation of the role of these polities exists, however, namely Hisao Matsuda's "*Historical and Geographical Research on the Ancient Tianshan*" from 1970, in which he discusses at some length the importance of the Central Asian oases in making movement across the region possible. In it, he gives a particularly apt metaphor for the oasis communities that made up the Tarim Basin polities, stating that 'In short, an oasis is like an island of arable land floating in the desert. (要するに、オアシスは沙漠に浮かぶ島であり、可耕地である。)⁵⁵ This

⁵⁴ Hansen, chap. 1.

⁵⁵ Hisao Matsuda, *古代天山の歴史地理学的研究 (Kodai Tenzan no Rekishichirigakuteki Kenkyu, Historical and Geographic Research on the Ancient Tianshan)*, Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 1970, pp. 5.

metaphor is an apt one, as these oases, which Matsuda describes as laying strung like beads on a rosary along the feet of the great mountain ranges of Inner Asia, were surrounded by harsh and difficult terrain. Matsuda, in his island metaphor, seeks to emphasise the isolation of these oasis settlements and how their natural conditions limited their development. However, he also turns this argument around, pointing out that precisely because of the limited resources available in each oasis, the growing polities of this region would have been reliant upon contact and exchange from an early period. He then goes on to propose that these early contacts between smaller oasis settlements throughout Inner Asia would in time grow into larger networks of exchange, networks that would eventually span across Asia connecting Iran and India in the west and China and Mongolia in the east. Indeed, Matsuda argues that in these essential connections between oases lay the very foundation of trans-Eurasian contact and exchange, that is the Silk Roads.⁵⁶

This would seem to fit remarkably well with Faxian's narrative. He travelled at a time where the empires of both the East and the West were in turmoil, after what Benjamin sees as the decline of the "First Silk Road Era",⁵⁷ and a period in which the Chinese had little influence in the Tarim Basin. Nor did he take a "Steppe Road" but rather travelled from oases to oases through the Tarim Basin. He did, however, travel during a period described by Xinru Liu as the heydays of Buddhist influence on the Silk Roads,⁵⁸ and in his narratives he naturally visits several monastic communities. As such, the period from the third to the fifth century appears perfect for a case study seeking examine the various approaches to the Silk Roads system, and given the sources available from the kingdom of Kroraina, it is also possible to conduct a bottom-up study of the Silk Roads, that is to say starting with the local economy and asking if one can find traces of a Silk Road at all.

1.4 Approaching pre-modern economy and trade

Returning to the primary research question of "Which structures, factors and actors made exchange and travel through the southern Tarim Basin possible between the third

⁵⁶ Matsuda, pp. 4–6.

⁵⁷ Benjamin, *Empires of Ancient Eurasia: The First Silk Road Era, 100BCE-250CE*.

⁵⁸ Liu, *The Silk Road in World History*, chaps 3–4.

and the fifth centuries?” it is worth remarking that the question has been left purposefully broad. On the one hand, it opens for structures, that is systems or institutions, factors, meaning driving forces, and actors, both smaller groups and states, in an effort to avoid being too constrained in the possible answers to the research question and to allow for all the approaches seen above. On the other hand, it attempts to take a broad view on the possible forms that contact across the region could have taken as well, seeking to look at not only economic activity but also more generally at travel and the connections such movement naturally spawned. Even so, much of what follows will discuss various forms of economic contact, and as such, it is necessary to consider how one ought to approach pre-modern economies and trade.

The study of economic history, whether within the discipline of history or economics, has a long past and has been the source of many fierce debates. Particularly noteworthy issues of the past century include the great “maximalist-minimalist” divide in history⁵⁹ as well as the question of historical specificity that long dominated the discourse in the field of economics.⁶⁰ Issues of how one can approach and seek to understand the economy of the premodern world has been at the heart of these debates, and from them has grown an awareness of the need for the explicit use of theory and a clearer methodology as well as a need to explicit engagement with models. In recent decades, a number of different approaches and models have grown out of or been incorporated into the study of premodern economics, often borrowed across disciplinary boundaries, including such well-established concepts as the centre-periphery model or the various forms of globalisation theory.⁶¹ This dissertation takes its inspiration and direction from two of these new approaches, namely network studies and the New Institutional Economics.

The network approach to the history of premodern economics has grown out of mathematical graph theory and in addition to providing a methodology for drawing up network models, this approach is characterised by a focus on the interaction of

⁵⁹ Seland, ‘Approaching Trade in Pre-State and Early State Societies’, 2–3.

⁶⁰ Hodgson, *How Economics Forgot History: The Problem of Historical Specificity in Social Science*.

⁶¹ Manning and Morris, *The Ancient Economy: Evidence and Models*.; Belich et al., *The Prospect of Global History*.

multiple actors.⁶² Thus, rather than seeking a single primary driver of Silk Roads exchange, as has often been the norm, this dissertation will attempt to focus on the interaction of various actors. This is, as noted above, not entirely new within Silk Road studies, as this network approach finds its parallels in some recent works primarily amongst archaeologists working with the prehistoric Silk Road connections,⁶³ from which I also draw inspiration.

The second inspiration for this dissertation is the school of New Institutional Economics, which has stressed that in order to understand a given society or economic system one must look to its institutions.⁶⁴ Institutions are, in North's words, the "rules of the game", that is to say the countless habits, practises, conventions, as well as written and unwritten rules of a given society. These institutions form the framework for the action of individuals within a given society, predisposing them to choosing certain actions over others and allowing them to make informed decisions when interacting.⁶⁵ This dissertation will therefore seek to identify such institutions as might have underpinned the Silk Roads and made trade and travel across the Southern Tarim Basin possible.

Finally, in this section it is worth clarifying some of the central terms concerning trade that will be used throughout this dissertation. Trade can be defined as the movement of goods between individuals,⁶⁶ but such a broad definition does not serve the purposes of this dissertation particularly well, as it will be important to distinguish between different types of trade. I will therefore operate with three types of trade, namely exchange, gift exchange, and trade. I will use exchange as a general term for all forms of exchanges of resources without any assumptions of scale or motif. Gift

⁶² Brughmans, 'Connecting the Dots'; Malkin, *A Small Greek World. Networks in the Ancient Mediterranean.*; Knappett, *Network Analysis in Archaeology: New Approaches to Regional Interaction.*; Seland, 'Approaching Trade in Pre-State and Early State Societies'.

⁶³ Frachetti, 'Multiregional Emergence of Mobile Pastoralism and Nonuniform Institutional Complexity across Eurasia'; Honeychurch, *Inner Asia and the Spatial Politics of Empire. Archaeology, Mobility and Cultural Contact.*; Brosseder, 'A Study on the Complexity and Dynamics of Inter-Action and Exchange in Late Iron Age Eurasia'.

⁶⁴ Hodgson, *How Economics Forgot History: The Problem of Historical Specificity in Social Science*; North, Wallis, and Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History.*

⁶⁵ North, Wallis, and Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, 13–18.

⁶⁶ Polanyi, Pearson, and Arensberg, *Trade and Markets in the Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory*, 266.

exchange, as the name suggests, I will define as a form of exchange where the primary purpose is social or political rather than economic. Examples of this would include such exchange as bridewealth or elite gift giving practises, but also political gifts such as tribute. Trade, on the other hand, will be taken to mean more complex forms of exchange, where the objective of at least one party is to make a profit or in some way accumulate wealth. This form of exchange therefore necessitates some shared concept of price, though it does not necessarily require the presence of money. The buying of a slave paid with camels and carpets will therefore be described as trade if there is awareness amongst the actors of the relative price of the various commodities. Finally, I will sometimes also use the terms long-distance exchange/trade as distinguished from exchange/trade taking place within a local area.

1.5 A case study of the kingdom of Kroraina in the Southern Tarim Basin

Turning to the case study at hand this dissertation will be divided into two parts, the first two chapters laying down the framework for the case study and the last six chapters constituting the case study itself. The first two chapters, chapters two and three, will present the very rich collections of sources available for the study of the kingdom of Kroraina, chapter two dealing with the archaeological sources and chapter three with the written sources. Chapter three will also introduce the method used in constructing the Kharosthi database that was constructed during this project and has been a central tool for exploring the Krorainan material.

The following six chapters of the case study will then follow, each structured around a question. Chapter four will discuss “How was the Socio-political landscape of the southern Tarim Basin between the third and the fourth centuries?”, presenting what is known about the political situation in the Tarim Basin and the socio-political conditions of the kingdom of Kroraina. Chapter five will next address the question of “How the Krorainan economic system was structured and how it functioned?” Inspired by the Institutional Approach of Hodgson and North, this chapter will start by considering the economic fundament of the kingdom before exploring the presence of institutions in its economic system. Chapter six will then turn towards the questions of

foreign connections by asking, “What evidence is there for long-distance trade in Kroraina?” To answer this question it will turn to both archaeological and written material, exploring the presence of foreign imports and their role in Krorainan society. Chapter seven will attempt to look at this question from another perspective, discussing “What networks of contact were the Krorainan oases part of and how far did they reach?” This chapter will draw up a network graph based on the Krorainan written sources, and its results will then be compared with a qualitative analysis of the same material. Together, these four chapters will show that there is evidence for long-distance trade in Kroraina, and chapter eight will consequently turn back towards the primary research question and ask, “Who carried out long-distance trade in Kroraina and the Southern Tarim Basin?” Finally, chapter nine will consider the oft neglected question of how trade and travel was made possible in the Southern Tarim Basin by asking, “What role did the local kingdoms play in enabling long-distance trade through the region?” With the case study finished, the dissertation will in its concluding chapter ten seek to return to the overarching problem of the Silk Road and the Silk Road approaches as introduced above, and based on the results of the case study will propose a new possible approach and an analytic model for the Silk Road.

Naturally, there are some drawbacks to the approach taken by this dissertation, and two in particular are worth noting, namely the lack of a chronological aspect and the problems of representativity. As will be shown in the discussions on the sources, the vast majority of material available from the kingdom of Kroriana originates from the same period, a period of perhaps as much as two hundred years. It is in most cases, however, not possible to accurately date these sources in relation to each other. As such, the proposed case study represents a snapshot of the Krorainan economy in the third and fourth centuries but is in most cases not able to consider changes over time. This is in itself not a problem, but it does constrain what questions the case study can hope to answer. The second problem, that of representativity, is a more general problem faced by all case studies, namely that a case can never be more than a case of itself. This again constrains the type of answers that the case study can provide, as its results and the proposed model will not automatically be valid for the entire Silk Road system as a whole. This too, however, is in itself not a problem, as the purpose of this

case study is just as much to propose directions for further research as reaching definitive conclusions, though this problem will be returned to in the concluding chapter.

These drawbacks aside, this approach to the question of the Silk Road is a novel one and I believe it opens for addressing at least three interesting points not often addressed in the extant literature. Firstly, it opens for an inquiry into the economy of the kingdom of Kroraina between the third and the fifth centuries CE, a topic which so far has received only limited attention, and will seek to clarify the contended question of long-distance trade in the kingdom. This will hopefully be a valuable contribution to understanding how the economies of the Tarim Basin polities functioned in late antiquity and the early middle ages. Secondly, it takes a bottom-up approach to the Silk Road. I believe this to be highly useful, for while a study can never free itself completely from apriorism, it does provide a fresh input to the recent debate on whether one can talk of a Silk Road at all, as raised by Hansen. Finally, by taking such a bottom-up approach, one is also forced to consider the very important questions of how a Silk Road might practically have functioned and how the many challenges faced by travellers like Faxian could be overcome, a problem which as we shall see has often been neglected.

Chapter 2: The archaeological sources of the kingdom of Kroraina

The most compelling reason for using the Kingdom of Kroraina as a case study for the economy of a Tarim Basin polity and what role such a polity might have played on the Silk Road in late antiquity is the very rich source material available from the kingdom. Kroraina is well known from Chinese historical records, appearing as one of the major polities in the Tarim Basin, though the Chinese records mainly concern themselves with political history. The primary reason, however, for the richness of Kroraina's sources is what appears to have been a rather sudden abandonment of at least two of the kingdom's primary oasis towns sometimes in the fourth or fifth centuries, namely the Niya site in the west and the Lop Nur sites in the east. (See map 2, 3, and 4) Coupled with the extreme aridity of the Tarim Basin, which provided excellent preservation for both surface ruins as well as graves, this sudden departure of the population preserved two of the kingdom's primary hubs more or less intact. Explored by a succession of expeditions across the twentieth century, the kingdom's various sites have yielded an extraordinary amount and variety of archaeological material. Most crucially for the purpose of this dissertation, the expeditions also discovered large amounts of written documents produced in the kingdom itself.

These sources, held together with Chinese and other historical records, allow for a broad reconstruction of the political, social, and economic conditions of the kingdom of Kroraina and form the basis for this dissertation. Before proceeding with the analysis proper however some preliminary remarks on these sources and the way they will be employed in this dissertation are in order. This chapter and the following chapter three will therefore discuss the two primary source corpora, this chapter the archaeological sources and chapter three the written sources. The written sources presented in chapter three will further be divided into the foreign, primarily Chinese, histories that mention Kroraina and into the locally discovered corpus of documents, covering several languages. Finally, chapter three will present the method of construction and composition of my database of the largest group of local documents,

the Kharosthi material, including a discussion of the typology and prosopography used on this material.

It may seem a curious choice to discuss the locally produced written sources last, as these will be at the very heart of the following discussions. I have chosen to do this however because I would like to stress the important relationship between the written sources and their archaeological contexts. As recognized already by sir Aurel Stein in some of his early discussions on the ruins of Kroraina,⁶⁷ and as especially emphasised by Mariner Erza Padwa in his PHD dissertation,⁶⁸ seeing the local documents in relation to their findsites allows for a much broader understanding of their content. In particular it allows us to identify certain individuals with certain areas in the archaeological sites, which is exceedingly useful when drawing up the prosopography of the local documents. An introduction of the archaeological sites and the finds they yielded are therefore essential for understanding the written source from Kroraina itself and the following will consequently present a brief overview of the history of Kroraina's rediscovery before discussing the major Krorainan archaeological sites.

2.1 The rediscovery of Kroraina

The early explorers

The first modern account to confirm the existence of ruined cities in the deserts of the south-western Tarim Basin was the Russian army colonel and geographer Nikolai Przhevalsky, who travelled along the rivers of the Tarim and into Qinghai in 1876-1877. Przhevalsky in his account noted several ruined sites, both near Charkliq and near Lop itself, though he did not appear to have visited these sites.⁶⁹ Thus, the first rediscovery of actual ruins from Kroraina by a scientific expedition happened on the 28th of March 1900 when the Swedish geographer and explorer Sven Hedin happened upon a small group of ruined houses in the Lop-desert. He was at the time crossing the

⁶⁷ See for example Stein's debate on dating the Niya site found in Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 242–46.

⁶⁸ Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', chap. 5.

⁶⁹ Przhevalsky, *From Kulja, across the Tian Shan to Lob-Nor.*, 76–77.

desert from the south and found the ruins south of the delta of the Kum-Darya, near where it reached the then northern shore of the lake Lop-nur. They were not the ruined cities described by Przhevalsky, but these mostly destroyed and insignificant looking structures were the first of many remnants of the once vast Kingdom of Kroraina to be uncovered.⁷⁰

Hedin's journey across the desert was part of his second expedition to the Tarim region (1899-1902) in which he was primarily concerned with exploring and mapping the region's geography. As such Hedin only conducted a brief exploration of the houses at the time, which yielded but some carved wooden beams and some pottery. But when he returned to the area in March of 1901 he stayed longer and discovered a far larger group of ruins, with several large buildings as well as a tower-like structure, and from them uncovered a large cache of documents in Chinese. This larger site, which he thought an ancient village or post, he later identified with Loulan, the oldest Chinese name for the kingdom of Kroraina. With these discoveries, Sven Hedin was the first to bring the remnants of the kingdom of Kroraina into scientific knowledge, though in truth he was far from the first person of his time to visit and explore the ruins of Kroraina.⁷¹

The oases and deserts of the vast Tarim Basin was and still is littered with ruins and other remnants of past human activities, in many cases extraordinarily well-preserved owing to the region's generally very dry climate. By the start of the twentieth century these sites had long been known amongst the local inhabitants, who sometimes still lived on or near them, and sometimes happened upon them by chance. Some of the local inhabitants even actively sought them out in search of treasure,⁷² or more mundanely as shelters or sources of building materials.⁷³ Indeed the many discoveries made by local explorers and sold on to the Russian and British consuls in Kashgar, active from 1882 and 1890 respectively, was one important factor drawing European explorers to the region.⁷⁴ Sir Thomas Douglas Forsyth, who had himself

⁷⁰ Hedin, *Scientific Results of a Journey in Central Asia, 1899-1902*, 620.

⁷¹ Hedin, 617–46.

⁷² Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:237.

⁷³ This point was highlighted in Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 205.

⁷⁴ Jacobs, 'The Concept of the Silk Road in the 19th and 20th Centuries', 6–7.

travelled the western parts of the Tarim Basin on diplomatic missions, gives an excellent example of the local's relationship to the ruins of Kroraina based on an account related to his Yarkand mission of 1873-74 by a Kirghiz traveller,

They (the ruins) are on the desert to the east of the Katak ruins, and three days journey from Lob, in a south-west direction along the Khoten river. The walls are seen rising above the reeds in which the city is concealed. I have not been inside the city, but I have seen its walls directly from the sandy ridge in the vicinity. I was afraid to go amongst the ruins because of the bogs around and the venomous insects and snakes in the reeds. I was camped about for several days with a party of Lob shepherders who were pasturing their cattle. Besides it is a notorious fact that people who do go amongst the ruins almost always die, because they cannot resist the temptation to steal the gold and precious things stored there.⁷⁵

Just which ruins the Kirghiz and the Lop herders camped by is not known, though from the description of walls it must have been one of the larger sites in the region. They did not dare to enter, yet despite the dread reputation of these ruins many local explorers did brave them. In fact, the vast majority of the Krorainan sites, aside from Hedin's first accidental discoveries in the Lop-desert, were discovered thanks to the knowledge of a number of local treasure hunters and explorers.

Sir Marc Aurel Stein, a naturalized British citizen of Hungarian origins, was amongst the first to recognise this and availed himself at almost all instances of men he described as local "treasure-seekers". It was, in no small part, thanks to the expert knowledge and skills of these local explorers, such as Turdi at Dandan-Uiliq, Abdullah and Ibrahim at Niya, and Tokhta Akhun at Lop, to name but a few, that he owed his tremendous success. (See Figure 1) And it was precisely thanks to two of these local men, namely Abdullah of Keriya and Ibrahim of Niya, that Stein would make his first visit to an ancient Krorainan site on the 27th of January 1901, namely the Niya site. Led by his local guides north along the Niya river, from the village by the same name,

⁷⁵ Przhivalsky, *From Kulja, across the Tian Shan to Lob-Nor.*, 24–25.

Stein was shown an entire abandoned oasis filled with ruined structures. Over the course of his subsequent excavations, he found over forty-five intact building complexes, several vineyards, orchards and channels, a bridge, and also a stupa. Even more important, however, was the discovery of many hundreds of more or less intact Kharosthi documents, some even found in their original place of storage. Unlike Hedin Stein had been trained in archaeology and had also hired a team of local men to work as diggers to conduct excavations for him. This work, coupled with his habit of making copious and well-organized notes, allowed him to make a detailed and very thorough survey of the northern part of the Niya site across three expeditions, in 1900-1901,⁷⁶ 1906-1908,⁷⁷ and 1913-1916.⁷⁸ During the second and third expedition, he also visited the Lop-desert. There he explored the Loulan site discovered by Hedin, which he named the Loulan station, tracing the remnants of the ancient wall, the stupa or tower, and excavating several of the larger buildings where he uncovered even more documents in a number of languages. In fact, across these three expeditions Stein discovered all the major known sites of the kingdom of Kroraina and its environs, including the ruins at Endere, Charchan, Charkliq, Miran and Yingpan, as well as a host of smaller sites both in and around the Lop desert. Stein also left large and extremely detailed multi-volume reports of all his expeditions in *Ancient Khotan*, *Serindia* and *Innermost Asia*, which remain invaluable to any student of the kingdom of Kroraina

But while Hedin and Stein were the most important of the early explorers of Kroraina they were not the only ones. The American geographer Ellsworth Huntington visited sites in the Southern Tarim Basin during his travels in 1905-1906, notably those at Niya and Endere, and purchased some further Kharosthi documents from the locals.⁷⁹ The Japanese explorer and monk Zuicho Tachibana also visited some of the Lop Desert sites and Miran as part of two expeditions led by him. These were the so-called second and third Otani expeditions, in 1908-1909 and 1910-1914 respectively, named after their organizer and original leader count Kozui Otani. Tachibana

⁷⁶ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*.

⁷⁷ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*.

⁷⁸ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*.

⁷⁹ Huntington, *The Pulse of Asia, a Journey in Central Asia Illustrating the Geographical Basis of History*.

excavated at both sites and most notably discovered a complete letter to a Chinese general known from historical records at the Loulan station.⁸⁰

Into the 1920s Chinese authorities and scholars were, however, quickly becoming concerned with the vast quantities of artefacts, documents, and even murals taken out of the country. Of the Tarim Basin sites it was especially the case of Dunhuang that caused outrage, as explorers, primarily Stein, Tachibana, and the French Paul Pelliot, carried off the Mogao cave's vast manuscript collection, much of which was written in Chinese. Thus, when Stein, who was still adventuring despite being nearly seventy and having lost all his toes on the right foot to frostbite on a previous expedition, managed to organize a fourth expedition in 1930 it immediately met with distrust in China. Stein was initially given a permission to explore, but notably not to excavate, and managing to visit Niya. Following accusation of going beyond his permit, however, Stein's expedition was brought to a premature end in 1931.⁸¹ Sven Hedin, on the other hand, fared better, as he managed to organize a joint Sino-Swedish expedition in 1928-31 and later was assigned by the republican government to survey potential routes for a highway in 1934. Unlike on his 1899 expedition, Hedin this time brought along a number of archaeologists who did most of the surveying and excavation work, primarily the Swede Folke Bergman and the Chinese Wenbi Huang. The expedition surveyed the northern parts of the Lop desert, along the Kum-Darya and nearby areas, the Kuruk Tagh mountains north of the desert, and briefly also the Cherchen and Miran areas, uncovered some new sites and numerous graves. In particular, the area along the so-called "Small river" or *Xiaohe* (小、河) as it has become known proved fruitful. There Bergman found a large prehistoric cemetery that Bergman called Ördek's Necropolis after its finder, though it is now commonly known as the *Xiaohe* cemetery. Yet the same area also yielded a number of graves from the Krorainan period, as well as a watchtower.⁸²

⁸⁰ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 1329–30.

⁸¹ Brysac, 'Sir Aurel Stein's Fourth "American" Expedition'.

⁸² Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*.

Chinese and Sino-Japanese expeditions

With the increasing civil conflict in China, the eruption of the Sino-Japanese war and the ensuing Chinese civil war, no further systematic excavations or surveys were undertaken on Krorainan ruins until the late 1980s, with one exception. In 1959 a Chinese expedition led by local archaeologists discovered a grave near the Niya site, the first grave to be discovered from the western part of the kingdom of Kroraina, though the expedition was unfortunately poorly documented.⁸³ From 1979-1980 however the work across the Krorainan region intensified as in the same year a Chinese team surveyed at the main Lop site and carried out excavations at a nearby cemetery,⁸⁴ while another team uncovered the prehistoric Gumugou cemeteries along the Kum-Darya.⁸⁵ The 1980s saw further discoveries, as in addition to work in the Lop desert a large number of graves were also uncovered at Zagunluk in the Charchan oasis in 1985,⁸⁶ and further work was carried out at the Xiaohe cemetery discovered by Bergman. Yet the largest of these modern expeditions was the Sino-Japanese expedition to the Niya site, that carried out several seasons of survey and excavation between 1988 and 1997. In addition to revisiting and mapping many of the ruins already described by Stein, and conducting some targeted and modern excavations, they also surveyed a far larger area both to the north and south of the known site, bringing the number of identified structures to over 100. They further uncovered a series of burial grounds, some which were excavated and yielded graves with very rich assemblages. Though only found in limited numbers the expedition also uncovered further examples of both Chinese and Kharosthi documents.⁸⁷

⁸³ Xinjiang Museum of Archaeology (新疆维吾尔自治区博物馆考古队), '新疆民丰大沙漠中的古代遗址 (Ancient Ruins in the Xinjiang, Minfeng Desert)'.

⁸⁴ Xinjiang Loulan Kaogudui (新疆楼兰考古队), '楼兰城郊古墓群发掘简报 (Preliminary Report on the Excavation of a Cemetery in the Outskirts of Loulan)'.

⁸⁵ Chen and Hiebert, 'The Late Prehistory of Xinjiang in Relation to Its Neighbors', 250.

⁸⁶ The Museum of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (新疆维吾尔自治区博物馆), CPAM of Bayingolin Mongolian Autonomous Region (巴音郭楞蒙古自治州文物管理所), and CPAM of Charchan county (且末县文物管理所), '新疆且末扎滚鲁克一号墓地发掘报告 (Excavation of Graveyard No.1 at Zagunluk in Charchan, Xinjiang)'.

⁸⁷ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1996; The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999; Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教

In the following three decades, up to the present, the work in the former Krorainan region has continued to sporadically yield new discoveries. The best known of these are the excavations of the Yingpan cemeteries first discovered by Stein. The work that started there in 1995 discovered more than 300 separate burials and excavated a number of graves of varying types, including the famed Yingpan man of grave n.15 bedecked in gold and fine textiles.⁸⁸ Furthermore, more work has been carried out in the Lop desert, often in response to looting, and several burials have been uncovered. Most noteworthy was the discovery in 2003 of a bi-chambered tomb with large and fairly intact murals as well as a finely decorated coffin.⁸⁹

While certainly spectacular and important for furthering our understanding of the kingdom of Kroraina, many of the recent excavations do suffer from insufficient and scattered reporting. Except for the Sino-Japanese excavation, they have also remained limited in scale, most frequently taking the form of rescue excavations. As such the works of the early explorers, and especially sir Aurel Stein, remains invaluable for their breadth and the thoroughness of reporting. None the less the continuing exploration of the territories once ruled by the kingdom of Kroraina, and the extraordinary state of its preservation means that the kingdom is unusually well-document archaeologically. But the wealth of sites and materials discovered should not lead us to believe that we have the complete picture. For as the continuous discovery of new sites has shown, much of ancient Kroraina remains undiscovered and unknown, be it tombs or other structures in the vast Lop desert, or yet unknown oasis towns now buried under the modern oases of Charchan or Charkliq. This should be kept in mind

文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遗迹学术调查报告书 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*.

⁸⁸ The Institute of Archaeology of Xinjiang (新疆文物考古研究所), ‘新疆尉犁县营盘墓地 15 号墓发掘简报 (Excavation of Tomb 15 at the Yingpan Site, Yuli, Xinjiang)’; The Institute of Archaeology of Xinjiang (新疆文物考古研究所), ‘新疆尉犁县营盘墓地 1995 年发掘简报 (Excavation of the Yingpan Graveyard at Yuli, Xinjiang)’; The Institute of Archaeology of Xinjiang (新疆文物考古研究所), ‘新疆尉犁县营盘墓地 1999 年发掘简报 (1999 Excavation of the Yingpan Graveyard at Yuli, Xinjiang)’.

⁸⁹ Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Cultural Relics Bureau (新疆维吾尔自治区文物局), *新疆维吾尔自治区第三次全国文物普查成果集成: 巴音郭楞蒙古自治州卷 (The Results of the Third National Cultural Relics Survey from Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region: The Volume of Bayinguoleng Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture)*, 167–68.

in the following survey of sources, as the unevenness of the discoveries and the levels of exploration might make some sites seem more important than they truly were.

2.2 Archaeological sources and their designations

The archaeological remnants of the kingdom of Kroraina are many, spread over several sites covering a vast area in the south-eastern Tarim Basin. A full and detailed survey of every site is beyond the scope and the need of this dissertation, and the following section will therefore concentrate individually on the three major sites that has yielded written material before dealing more briefly with the smaller sites. The three major sites in question are, going from the west to east, the Niya site, the Endere site, and the central Lop site, made up of the areas L.A. and L.B.

These two last site designations are drawn from Stein's system of site labelling that will be used throughout this text. In this system the first letter is an abbreviation for the location or area in question followed by an alphabetical designation if necessary, thus L.A is Lop site A and L.B is Lop site B. The abbreviation N. is used for the Niya site and E. for the Endere site. The Arabic numeral following the letter or letters designate individual ruins or structures within the site in the order of their survey by Stein. Ruin N.1 is thus the first ruin surveyed at the Niya site. Individual items found by Stein and Bergman are in turn given a designation starting with the ruin as above, followed by the room (if any) and then their number on the find list. Item N.3.vii.4 would therefore be the fourth item on the list for room seven of the third ruin explored at the Niya site, in this case a wooden chair.⁹⁰ The only exceptions to this are those sites and structures only surveyed by Chinese teams or the Sino-Japanese team, in which case their designation system will be used. These takes the form of a year number, indicating the year of discovery, followed by a letter and a numeral. Thus, one for examples has the designation 93A18 for a ruin of the Niya site surveyed in 1993, corresponding to Stein's N.1. In the case of items, they are labelled with the ruin designation followed by a number.

⁹⁰ It should be noted that in the first of Stein's three reports, *Ancient Khotan*, this system had not been given its final form and so the ruin designation is missing in the designation given in this inventory lists. The inventory lists themselves are however drawn up on a ruin by ruin basis.

Stein's system of designation and registration, also followed by Bergman, was chosen as it remains the most complete of the systems for designating ruins in the kingdom of Kroraina, covering all the major ruins discovered to date. It is also very precise, indicating the room in which a given item was discovered. And it is the system most useful to English speaking readers. This is partly because Stein, Hedin, and Bergman's works remain the most accessible of the excavation reports from the former kingdom of Kroraina and partly as Stein's designations have remained in common use in the English literature on the kingdom. Where relevant however I have also provided alternative designations in brackets behind Stein's designation and this has also been done on all maps of specific sites.

2.3 The Niya Site

The Niya site is the largest and most thoroughly excavated of the Krorainan sites found to date, having been excavated on six occasions, though it was likely not the largest town in the kingdom of Kroraina. Sir Aurel Stein visited the site on each of his four expeditions, if only briefly during the last two, and it was later excavated in 1959 by a Chinese team and between 1988 and 1997 by the Sino-Japanese team. Several less organized and often unreported expeditions, have also been undertaken at the site, including numerous visits by local treasure hunters, Huntington's visit, and, in modern times, also several visits by small teams from local museums.⁹¹

The site itself lies deep in the Taklamakan desert, roughly one fourth of the way across, and is almost entirely arid. The southernmost ruins are located some 86 km due north from the modern Niya town, Minfeng county, along the now dried up Niya river, from which the site gets its name. The river flows northwards from the Kunlun range in the south and, in modern times, reach no further than the Muslim shrine "Imam Jafar-Sadik mazar" nearly 15 km south of the southernmost ruins. During the site's heydays, however, the river reached much further north, flowing on the east side of the southern ruins before bending westwards and continuing north past the northern ruins on the western side, making the Niya site a terminal delta oasis. Surrounded by

⁹¹ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:65-100.

flowing sand dunes to both the east and the west, these features created a fertile valley of sorts, with all the ruins confined to a narrow band running north-south. This is seen clearly in the distribution of the ruins, as the distance from the northernmost to southernmost of the known ruins measures roughly 23 km, while the broadest point east to west measure only some 3 km. (See map 5-11)

Across this site has been identified a large number of structures in varying types and states of preservation. Most prominent is the remnants of a stupa, built in brick, near the centre of the northern part of the site, as well as the remnants of a large walled circumvallation in the southern part of the site. But the best preserved and most thoroughly surveyed are the structures identified as dwellings, ranging in size from very small buildings with but two or three rooms to large and complex structures with a number of rooms, corridors, and even halls. Stein in total identified forty-five such dwellings across the Niya site, primarily north of the river's bend, but later surveys by the Sino-Japanese expedition recorded as many as ninety-four. Some of these ruins are actually clusters of dwellings, for example in the case of N.2 (92B4), while others are but a few worked logs found together. Around and in between these dwellings have been found a number of other structures and areas, such as sheds for animals, furnaces or ovens for manufacturing, and the fences of orchards and fields. Near some of the structures Stein also traced channels and paths, often lined with trees, and he furthermore uncovered a wooden bridge across the river where it bent westwards. The remains of water tanks built in brick have likewise been attested near three of the dwellings. Finally, several burial sites have been uncovered at the Niya site, though the exact number remains unclear. One group of graves was noted already by Stein, but the first large scale excavations of graves were done by the 1959 Chinese expedition although their work unfortunately remains poorly documented. The Sino-Japanese expedition however uncovered a total of eleven such cemeteries which they documented in great detail, although one of these eleven, cemetery 93MN1, appears to be the same as that documented by Stein. The correct identification of ancient burial sites is however complicated, as human skeletons were sometimes found scattered on the surface. This could be the remnants of burials either disturbed by nature or by

previous treasure seekers, but as noted by Stein, it could also be the remains of past treasure seekers who had gotten lost.⁹²

Additionally, it is noteworthy that most ruins and remains have been found in the northern part of the site, including the stupa and the majority of larger dwellings. This might in part reflect the historic settlement pattern, but is likely also in part a result of modern conditions. For the southern part of the site remained watered for much longer than the northern areas, and Stein still found living toghrak (black poplar) trees with autumn leaves during his 1906 expedition.⁹³ As a result, the southern part of the site is still covered by much more vegetation than the northern part, especially in the form of high tamarisk-covered sand-cones, making the discovery and tracing of ruins far more difficult there. Pending further detailed surveys of the southern areas it is therefore difficult to say exactly where the heart of the ancient oasis lay.

The structures and the three primary contexts of documents

As seen from the above, the Niya site has yielded a large number of ruins and a wide range of very well-preserved archaeological contexts. A detailed discussion of each of these contexts lies beyond the scope of this introduction, but in order to give a better idea of what the ruins of Niya were like, it is worth looking closer at some of the ruined dwellings. This is also useful because the discovery of over 800 documents and inscriptions, primarily in Kharosthi, remains by far the most important sources yielded by the Niya site, with a crucial bearing both on dating and our understanding of the kingdom of Kroraina, and nearly all of these came from ruined dwellings. It is therefore pertinent already here to make some notes of these dwellings and the contexts in which the written documents were uncovered.

But as nearly all of the forty-five ruins excavated by Stein yielded documents, and some written material has even appeared in burial contexts, it is necessary for the sake of brevity to make a selection. This selection is aided by the fact that majority of documents came from one of three contexts. These are surface finds scattered about rooms, encrusted in rubbish heaps, or found deposited in archives, and all three of

⁹² Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 223.

⁹³ Stein, 213.

these contexts can be excellently illustrated by looking at three ruined dwellings, N.1, N.5, and N.24. These three structures are not only amongst the best preserved and most thoroughly documented of the ruined dwellings, but they are also the three ruins that yielded the most written material, with 165 Kharosthi documents from N.1, 185 Kharosthi documents and 56 Chinese documents from N.5, and finally 89 Kharosthi documents from N.24, including here only the legible documents. The following will therefore look at these three ruins in turn, discussing the structures, the context of the documents, and finally some brief notes on whom might have lived in these dwellings, a topic with some bearing on later chapters. An excellent and very complete overview of all the ruins surveyed by Stein and their association with individual actors can however be found in Mariner Padwa's PHD dissertation *An Archaic Fabric* from 2007.⁹⁴

The scattered finds of ruin N.1

Turning to our three ruins, the first, N.1, lies east from the stupa along the eastern edge of the settled area. The surviving structures lie amidst heavily eroded grounds that have left the ruins standing on a wind-dug hill surrounded by heavily eroded slopes. (See figure 2) The dwelling as it survives forms an inverted L shape with the hook pointing northwards, measuring some 15 metres by 21 metres, with the remnants of a shed and fenced enclosure area to the south-west. It is far from the largest ruin excavated at Niya, but as noted by Stein the heavy erosion suffered by both the walls and the ground upon which it stands means that the structure was likely once bigger. This is also suggested by the large amount of timber debris found to the east and north.⁹⁵ The surviving structures of N.1 were built following techniques and plans observed across the Niya site, and indeed other southern Tarim Basin sites, with wood and plaster as the primary building materials. The framework of the buildings had been laid by massive square beams of *terek* (white poplar), sometimes extending across several rooms, which traced the walls. Upon these had been set square wooden post supporting the roof with smaller intermediary posts between them, all joined by

⁹⁴ Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)'.
⁹⁵ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:235.

crossbeams, creating the framework for the walls. These had been constructed by securely fastening a matting of diagonally woven tamarisk branches to the outside of the posts, and the matting was in turn covered by layers of hard, white plaster on both sides. This created sturdy walls between 15 and 20 cm thick, the remnants of which still survived intact in certain sections of the ruins. In fact, Stein repeatedly remarked upon the sturdiness of the constructions and noted how his local diggers were greatly impressed by the skills of the carpenters who had once prepared and raised the Niya structures.⁹⁶

The surviving remains of N.1 consisted of five rooms as seen from the plan, with the majority of documents originating from room i and room iv. Of these room iv was the largest, measuring some 8,2 metre square, and along three of the sides had been set broad, raised platforms along the walls. In the centre of the room stood eight sturdy posts that had once supported a raised roof and between them was an oval plaster platform with a rim which had served as a fireplace.⁹⁷ Stein correctly identified this room as similar in type and likely also function to the Uighur *aiwan* or *iwān*, a shaded and ventilated room for recreation and general living often placed centrally in dwellings, indeed a room that remains a common feature of traditional Tarim Basin houses even today.⁹⁸ (See Figure 3) In the case of N.1.iv however it had apparently also served as a space for “office”-work as no less than forty-nine written documents were found within.⁹⁹ These many Kharosthi tablets were found scattered about the room with two more concentrated batches on the platform near the southern wall (c on Stein’s plan) and on the original floor by the fireplace. It would therefore seem that some documents had originally been stored, likely immediately after use, in the room N.1.iv, and indeed as shown by Stein it is likely that more of the scattered tablets had originated from these batches, only to later have been thrown about by the digging of treasure seekers.¹⁰⁰ Though the typology of documents will be discussed in detail in the next chapter it is also noteworthy that nearly all the documents from room iv

⁹⁶ Stein, 1:317.

⁹⁷ Stein, 1:322–23.

⁹⁸ Debaine-Francfort and Idriss, *Keriya, Mémoires d'un Fleuve: Archéologie et Civilisation Des Oasis Du Taklamakan*, 38–39.

⁹⁹ Document n.73-166.

¹⁰⁰ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:323.

turned out to be either administrative lists or letters, both private and administrative correspondence. These “transient” types of documents would naturally not have been stored for very long, indeed there are many cases of reuse and possibly some drafts amongst the known documents, and this seems to support the impression of the room iv as having served as an “office” as opposed to a storage, at least during the warmer parts of the year.

This contrasts sharply with room i, from which sixty-seven documents were excavated. This room was much smaller, measuring 4.8 by 4.2 metres, with a raised platform on two sides and a stone fireplace in the southern wall.¹⁰¹ These features are strikingly similar to the so-called *kichlikeui* or “winter houses” of traditional Tarim dwellings today, a smaller and well isolated room used for sleep and living during the colder months.¹⁰² (See Figure 4) The origin of its documents too is markedly different, for though they were found scattered about room i and the neighbouring room v they had all seemingly originated from the hollow between the fireplace and the wall marked as (a) on Stein’s plan. It was the treasure seeker Ibrahim, who led Stein to the ruin, who had first happened upon them when digging, and seeing no value in them he had thrown them behind him or over the adjacent wall into room v. He could however explain that they had originally been found neatly stacked in horizontal rows in the hollow.¹⁰³ Having been thus deposited right next to a fireplace one can of course not discount the possibility that these documents had been stored there with the intent to use them as firewood. This does however seem less likely to have been the case given the nature of the documents in question, for vast majority of them were wedge-shaped tablets containing “royal commands”.¹⁰⁴ This document type, containing various royal instructions and in some cases rulings, would certainly have been useful to store, for later consultation by the officials. Furthermore, there is good evidence to suggest that these “royal command” documents were in many cases kept for a time by either an official or one of the concerned parties, as a sort of legal guarantee.¹⁰⁵ It would

¹⁰¹ Stein, 1:316–17.

¹⁰² Debaine-Francfort and Idriss, *Keriya, Mémoires d’un Fleuve: Archéologie et Civilisation Des Oasis Du Taklamakan*, 38.

¹⁰³ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:316–17.

¹⁰⁴ 59 of the documents are identified as such, together with 6 lists, 2 letters and one unidentified document. See section 3.4.2 below for a full overview of the typology of documents used.

¹⁰⁵ See the treatment of this in section 5.5.

therefore make good sense for these documents to have been deposited in a storage space or archive, and one could imagine how the well-isolated *kichlikeui*-like room N.1.i would have been perfect for this purpose.

Finally, given the wealth of documents uncovered at the ruin N.1, it is possible to say something about who lived in the dwelling. As already noted by Stein following the initial translation of some of the documents, a person named Lýipeya,¹⁰⁶ with a variety of official titles, occurs very frequently in the documents from ruin N.1.¹⁰⁷ In fact, Lýipeya appears in no less than 82 of the 165 documents from ruin N.1, far more frequently than any other actor. He is furthermore either addressee or addresser, sometimes alone and sometimes with others, in thirty out of thirty-eight letters from the ruins, some of which were either sent by or to his sons, father, or brother-in-law.¹⁰⁸ It is therefore beyond doubt, as also concluded by Padwa in his very thorough prosopographical discussion,¹⁰⁹ that ruin N.1 was the residence of Lýipeya and his family.

The rubbish heap of ruin N.5

Moving on to our second example of ruin N.5 it is one of the most thoroughly excavated ruins of the Niya site, having been excavated not only by Stein but also having been one of the focal point of the Sino-Japanese team's investigation. N.5 lies a little more than 2.5 km north-east from the Stupa and nearly due north from the ruin N.1 and N.2 area, along what was likely once the eastern edge of the "valley" of cultivation at the Niya site. As seen from the plan produced by the Sino-Japanese expedition it was quite an extensive complex of structures, although this was not known by Stein who only excavated the easternmost structure FC. (See figure 5) This was because, unlike the ruin N.1 with its partly intact rooms, the ruins of N.5 had been almost annihilated by the wind. Like many other of the Niya ruins the ground around the structures had likewise become heavily eroded, leaving N.5 standing on a plateau

¹⁰⁶ Actor n.8. See section 3.4 discussing the actor database.

¹⁰⁷ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:326.

¹⁰⁸ See document n.25, 34, 83, 84, 86, 89, 91, 97, 99, 101, 106, 107, 113, 119, 126, 127, 130, 133, 139, 140, 145, 150, 152, 153, 157, 159, 160, 161, 162, 164, and 165.

¹⁰⁹ Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', sec. 6.1.

with the northern and eastern part of many buildings completely eroded away.¹¹⁰ As traced by the Sino-Japanese team, however, the ruin consisted of a fenced-in compound with six clusters of structures, with the entire compound turned slightly towards the north-east. These clusters consisted of a hall and surrounding passages FD, a cluster of buildings FC (N.xv), a structure for storing ice FB, the small shrine FS (N.xvi), a large gate FA, and animal sheds north of that, all structures built following the patterns described in the case of N.1.¹¹¹

Of these both FD and FS, very thoroughly excavated by the Sino-Japanese expedition, are of some interest as both had been decorated with Buddhist art. In the case of FD these took the form of four wooden statues painted with ink, 65.8 cm tall and depicting identical Bodhisattva figures with their hands raised. (See figure 6) They were found in the rather large rectangular room FD III, measuring 7.1 metres by 10.15 metres, placed around a round pillar in what appears to have been a hall.¹¹² FS on the other hand, took the form of a smaller square structure, 5.2 by 5.3 metres, with a raised platform at its centre. Within Stein found two small figurines depicting a person with a topknot and clasped hands,¹¹³ quite similar in style to the Bodhisattva's of FD, and later work by the Sino-Japanese expedition uncovered a fallen wall mural showing a male Buddha-like figure with a halo.¹¹⁴ (See figure 7) As already suggested by Stein this content, as well as the shape of the structure itself, makes it very likely that it was originally a small shrine and is indeed very similar in character to a shrine uncovered in the neighbouring Keriya valley to the west.¹¹⁵

Yet none of these structures yielded written material beyond a single Kharosthi tablet found by Stein at FS (N.xvi), namely the *Takhti*-shaped document n.399 containing texts for three different letters, likely drafts. Instead, the massive haul of over 200 documents from N.5 has come exclusively from the rubbish heap in FC IV

¹¹⁰ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:340.

¹¹¹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:62–63.

¹¹² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:71–75.

¹¹³ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:375.

¹¹⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:63–65.

¹¹⁵ Debaine-Francfort and Idriss, *Keriya, Mémoires d'un Fleuve: Archéologie et Civilisation Des Oasis Du Taklamakan*, 82–105.

(N.xv), a large room in the western part of the structure FC measured to 7.5 by 14 metres by the Sino-Japanese team.¹¹⁶ Though it might originally have been an *aiwan*-like room, outfitted with a platform along its eastern wall and four wooden posts in the centre, Stein quickly realized that it had, at some point, been turned into a rubbish heap. For within he found an over 1-metre thick layer of encrusted refuse containing mainly broken pottery, matting, wood, straw, rags of various woven materials, as well as a large number of wooden tablets. Stein also suspected that the salt impregnation of many documents had been caused by the presence of ammoniac in the deposit, suggesting that the rubbish heap had also been used as a convenient toilet, something which its pungent odour seemed to support.¹¹⁷ Stein did unfortunately not excavate with stratigraphy, but he did leave an unusually detailed record of the excavation of room FC IV, as he divided the room into several sections of work. He also noted that the rubbish heap, and thus also its content, clearly had accumulated over a longer period, as he was able to find the remains of the original roof about two thirds of the way into the deposit. Since he found rubbish as well as tablets both above and below this layer, he speculated that the room, after having been turned into a rubbish deposit, had not been maintained, thus causing the eventual collapse of the roof. In this connection Stein further noted that the practice of turning disused or damaged rooms into rubbish deposits was still practiced amongst the wealthy in the Tarim Basin in his time, and such a process appears to have been the case also with room FC IV.¹¹⁸

The conditions of this refuse heap proved ideal for conserving documents, as the number of surviving and readable documents suggests. Yet owing to its origins and share size, it is far more difficult to say something about who might have deposited the documents there and who might have inhabited the ruin N.5, and Padwa refrains from any definitive conclusions.¹¹⁹ Broadly speaking, however, there seem to be three primary associations possible for N.5, namely as the dwelling of Somjaka,¹²⁰ as the

¹¹⁶ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China), 1999, 2:67.

¹¹⁷ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:341–44.

¹¹⁸ Stein, 1:342.

¹¹⁹ Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', 149–59.

¹²⁰ Actor n.85.

dwelling of Šamasena and his son Larsu,¹²¹ or as a centre for a Buddhistic monastic community. Starting with Somjaka he is strongly associated with the rubbish heap as he is by far the most frequently appearing actor from its documents, appearing in seventy-three documents. It should be kept in mind however that Somjaka, who frequently carried the important title of cozbo or mahacozbo, is also the most commonly occurring actor in the entire Kharosthi corpus and as such his appearance could be a mere coincidence. In the case of the documents from N.5, however, he is notably the most commonly identifiable addressee in the letters from the rubbish heap, appearing as such in fifteen out of thirty-three letters, and N.5 is, in fact, the only ruin to have yielded letters to Somjaka with the exception of document n.585 from N.24 and n.837 whose findspot is unknown. Finally, and perhaps most tellingly, is the presence in the rubbish heap of a number of documents on leather, nearly unique to N.5, containing commands from the king to his officials, primarily cozbo Somjaka. Indeed, in one, the very well-preserved document n.272, it even notes how the king made cozbo Somjaka the sole governor of the local province centred on the Niya site.

Given this heavy presence of Somjaka in the rubbish heap of N.5, it would therefore seem natural to interpret the ruins as his residence, a solution seemingly favoured by Padwa¹²² and also argued by Yoshizaki.¹²³ Even so, two other actors are also closely associated with the ruins, namely a father and a son Šamasena and Larsu, both whom served for periods as cozbo and in the case of Šamasena is also called mahacozbo in document n.390. Though they only appear in twenty-two and six of the documents respectively, three of which overlaps, this is far more in both cases than from any other structure. Furthermore, Šamasena is the addressee in three letters, and is also addressed by the king in three of the “Royal Command”-type documents on leather. Finally, and most significantly, is the fact that in six of the nine “Legal”-type documents from the ruin either Šamasena or Larsu appears, in five of the cases as the person said to keep the document. This would certainly seem to point to them

¹²¹ Actor n.81 and n.385.

¹²² Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 154.

¹²³ Yoshizaki, ‘The Small Square Shrine 93A35 [N5] in Niya’.

inhabiting the structure, or at least an area nearby, since these documents would normally have been kept in a private archive.

The final possible association of the ruin, that with a monastic community, is the conclusion reached in the Sino-Japanese report, though this is based almost entirely on the archaeological evidence from the structures FD and FS, which furnished art of a Buddhist character.¹²⁴ This in itself does not appear very convincing, as many of the Niya ruins contained art. Furthermore, one could easily imagine powerful officials like *Soṃjaka* or *Ṣamasena* keeping personal shrines, as suggested by Yoshizaki.¹²⁵ At first glance the documents from N.5 might appear to support a monastic interpretation, since sixteen documents contain monks or references to the monastic community. This is, however, nothing unusual given the large amount of documents from N.5, and the monks in these documents primarily appear in non-religious contexts.¹²⁶ Nor does it make much sense to argue that the document cache might represent documents written by the monks, since as will be discussed in the next chapter the vast majority of known documents were written by scribes who were not monks.¹²⁷ Yet one document does seem to favour the association between a monastic community and ruin N.5, namely document n.345. This document is a legal document of Larsu, concerning the resolution of a theft involving the slave of a monk. Upon the reverse of its under-tablet, however, it carries a list seemingly unrelated to the main text whose first word reads as “*saṃgaramaṃ*”, which Thomas Burrow translates as “In the monastery”¹²⁸, followed by a list of goods deposited or given by various people. This certainly indicates that an actual monastic institution, capable of physically storing things, was located nearby and that the legal document had, after it lost its value, been repurposed as a list for the inventory of this monastery.

The simplest solution may lie in realising that none of the three proposed associations are necessarily mutually exclusive. Looking, for example, at the

¹²⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China), 1999, 2:75–77.

¹²⁵ Yoshizaki, ‘The Small Square Shrine 93A35 [N5] in Niya’.

¹²⁶ See document n.225, 248, 252, 265, 288, 290, 295, 322, 330, 331, 340, 345, 358, 385, 386 and 399.

¹²⁷ There are in fact only three known actors who were both monks and either entitled scribe or served as scribe in a document, namely actors n.100, 537 and 1322.

¹²⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 66.

chronological information available about the three actors, Soṃjaka, Śamasena, and Larsu, one can see that they belonged largely to different periods. (See appendix V) As such the ruin N.5 might originally have been the residence of Soṃjaka, only to later be sold or perhaps even inherited by Śamasena or Larsu, though no family ties are known between the first and the last two. Similarly, all three men are in various ways associated with Buddhism and the monastic community at Niya. Soṃjaka, for example, is in the letter n.288 addressed as “a Bodhisattva in person”,¹²⁹ and asked by a fellow cozbo to welcome and host a monk, likely the carrier of the letter, bringing an oral message. Śamasena is for his part addressed as one “who has set forth in the Mahayana”¹³⁰ in the letter n.390, and Larsu is even said to have donated food to the monastic community in document n.343 and seeking to acquire merit in document n.345. As such all three of these men might have been patrons of the Buddhist community and might have hosted the monastery near their own residence. A satisfactory solution to the problems of ruin N.5 does, however, await further excavations, in particular of the surrounding area.

The hidden archive of ruin N.24

Turning finally to the third case of N.24, only excavated by Stein, it is located roughly 2.5 km north-west of the stupa amongst a cluster of very well-preserved ruins. (See figure 8) The surviving structure is large, measuring some 24 by 26 metres, and like our other examples stood upon a heavily eroded plateau, with timber debris to the north and east bearing witness to the missing rooms of a once much larger structure. The surviving rooms in the western part of the compound were evidently intended for work with animals and agriculture, or perhaps storage, while the rooms in the eastern part of the compound were taken up primarily by two large rooms iv and vii with adjacent passages and chambers. Both these large rectangular rooms had been outfitted with raised platforms on three sides and in the case of iv Stein found two massive roof beams which he speculated might have supported a second floor.¹³¹ Room iv had in its days of use also been beautifully embellished with wooden carvings, as shown by the

¹²⁹ Burrow, 51.

¹³⁰ Burrow, 79.

¹³¹ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:225–26.

two very fine examples of carved wooden brackets found by Stein. (See figure 9) Given their position in the heart of the compound, the presence of decoration, and their characteristic layout, these rooms were clearly a form of *aiwan*-like room of the type seen also in N.1 and N.5, though the larger vii may have been intended as a reception room or possibly a guest room. The two rooms iv and vii themselves only yielded one document each, document n.509 and n.515, but the surrounding corridors and rooms to the north yielded a further seven.¹³² It is noteworthy, however, that amongst these nine were four documents with a literary character, primarily what appears to have been copies of Buddhist texts possibly written out as scribal exercises.

But the real treasure of N.24 was found in the slightly smaller room viii, just south of vii. Upon commencing excavation of this room, Stein's diggers immediately hit upon a wealth of written documents, scattered on or near the original floor without any order or organization. In the end, the room yielded no less than fifty-four documents from its floor, and as room viii otherwise only yielded a complex mousetrap and a few sticks,¹³³ Stein interpreted it as an office or archive of sorts.¹³⁴ It was only after the room had been cleared, however, that one of Stein's most experienced local men, named Rustam, started excavating near a large clay lump on the floor. He had recognized the lump as a marker, and digging just a few centimetres down, he uncovered a hole between the lump and foundation beam that had been packed tightly with wooden documents. This "hidden archive" had no container or box provided, but given the mark was clearly intended as a secret storage and upon excavation yielded no less than twenty-five intact and still sealed documents,¹³⁵ all except one of which were either contracts or legal documents.¹³⁶

From the documents of this extraordinary archive, it is an easy task to identify the owners of the ruin N.24, starting with Signaya, followed by his son named Ramṣotsa. He was in turn followed by his son Suḡuta and grandsons Caṣgeya, Sunaṃta, and Sodaya.¹³⁷ Ramṣotsa's presence as a patriarch of the family is clearly

¹³² See document n.507-515.

¹³³ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:263.

¹³⁴ Stein, 1:226.

¹³⁵ Stein, 1:227.

¹³⁶ See document n.568-593.

¹³⁷ Actors n.942, n.380, n.381, n.384, n.386, and n.830. See also Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', sec. 6.13-14.

attested by the hidden archive, as he appears as the document holder in no less than thirteen documents, mostly contracts on land.¹³⁸ It is likely, however, that he was not alive at the time of the site's abandonment, for his documents appear only in the hidden archive. (See appendix V) Instead it appears the dwelling was inhabited by his son, if still alive, and his grandsons at the time of its abandonment. In the case of Suḡuta, this association is based on his presence in nine legal documents, three contracts and one letter.¹³⁹ Caṣgeya meanwhile is seen in two letters, one contract, and one legal document,¹⁴⁰ his brother Sunaṃta in four legal documents,¹⁴¹ and the less well-attested Sodaya in two letters.¹⁴² It furthermore seems quite possible that they were sharing the compound, as the brothers Caṣgeya and Sunaṃta appeared as joint keepers in document n.576 and the father Suḡuta and Sunaṃta similarly in document n.577.

Taken together these three examples, N.1, N.5, and N.24, gives a good idea of both the type of ruins encountered at the Niya site and the contexts in which their documents were discovered. These ruins, their documents, inhabitants and contexts should be kept in mind in what follows, as they will form important cases later in the dissertation, but also because all three are crucial in the dating of the Niya site, its documents, and by extension also many of the other sites of the kingdom of Kroraina.

The dating of the Niya site

Since Stein's initial discovery of written documents, there has been little disagreement on the dating of the Niya site as a whole, though disagreement exists about certain parts of the site. Looking at the site as a whole, it is clear that the Niya ruins were at some point abandoned, as opposed to being destroyed, razed or sacked, as there is no evidence of such violence. It has been noted that the Niya river had been gradually receding, as shown both by 14C analyses of wood done by the Sino-Japanese expedition¹⁴³ and the discovery of bronze age remains north of the main Niya site. One

¹³⁸ See document n.571, 574, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 586, 587, 589, 590 and 592,

¹³⁹ For legal see n.507, 527, 570, 575, 576, 577, 578, 584 and 593. For contract n.568, 572, 591 and the letter n.519.

¹⁴⁰ See document n.519, 546, 573 and 576.

¹⁴¹ See document n.575, 576, 577 and 588.

¹⁴² See document n.519 and 547.

¹⁴³ Yonenobu and Itoh, '14 C Dating of the Niya Site in the Tarim Basin'.

could therefore suggest that the abandonment of the site was due to changing climatic conditions, a possibility already discussed at length by Stein. Such degrading conditions, however, must have been a slow and gradual process, and as concluded by Stein, the abandonment of the site does not appear to have been a gradual one, neither due to worsening climatic conditions nor a shift in the Niya river's course.¹⁴⁴ This is seen, Stein argues, in the general uniformity of the ruins and finds across the site, suggesting a roughly common era, but especially by the presence of hidden archives suggesting sudden abandonment. These archives, in particular the carefully deposited and marked archive in ruin N.24, he took as a sign that whoever abandoned this building intended to return and retrieve their cache of valuable documents. Furthermore, given the scattering of other tablets across the floor of this room and the ad-hoc nature of the archive, Stein suggested that the building had been abandoned in a hurry. Stein's observations on the archive of N.24 are further reinforced by the fact that the use of such improvised archives were still common amongst the local people of the Tarim Basin during Stein's time, in situations where valuables had to be abandoned in a hurry with the intention to retrieve them later.¹⁴⁵ Stein, therefore, concluded that the entire site had been abandoned suddenly and at about the same time. This his conclusion appears to be correct, and it is further supported by evidence from the Kharosthi documents. For documents dated in the reign of the last of the king known from the Niya site, Vaṣmana,¹⁴⁶ has been found both in the northern and the southern part of the site, for example at N.1 in the north (doc.116) and at N.45 in the south (doc.801). This would surely not have been the case if for example a failing water supply from the river had driven the settlement slowly southwards over a period of decades. Such a slow movement did however likely happen over multiple centuries, as shown by the bronze age remains to the north, and changing climatic conditions was likely an important factor in why the Niya site was not later reoccupied.

Returning to the question of dating, we can safely conclude that most of the Niya site, as it survives, was abandoned at the same time, and that the surviving site as

¹⁴⁴ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 244–46.

¹⁴⁵ Stein, 233.

¹⁴⁶ For a detailed discussion of the order of kings and the dating of the Kharosthi documents see section 3.3.3 below.

a whole consequently dates to roughly the same period. Yet, a precise dating of this period would seem nearly impossible, was it not for the presence of a single dated Chinese document in the rubbish heap of N.5. This document, labelled N.xv.326 in Stein's first report¹⁴⁷ and written on a wooden slip in common Chinese fashion, contains only a long dating formula and the title *Taishou* (governor) of Dunhuang (敦煌太守), its last part being broken.¹⁴⁸ The date is however perfectly legible, and gives the 20th day of the 10th month of the 5th year of the Taishi (泰始) era, corresponding to the year 269 CE.¹⁴⁹

This then gives an anchor point, indicating that at least part of the refuse heap of ruin N.5 dates to the second half of the third century. Stein did as said unfortunately not excavate the refuse heap with stratigraphy, which could have facilitated a dating of the layers of the refuse heap. Yet for the room N.5.xv he left a detailed description of how the room was cleared, including splitting it into sections and as always numbering the documents in the order in which they were found.¹⁵⁰ We can therefore note, that the Chinese slip N.xv.326 was found in the central section C of the room, together with many Kharosthi documents mainly involving the cozbo Somjaka. Somjaka as previously mentioned is closely associated with the structure N.5 and dated Kharosthi document in which he appears, dated using the regnal year of local kings, all fall into the reigns of the king Mahiri, the second to last king known from the Niya site.¹⁵¹ The dated Kharosthi documents of room N.5.xv, furthermore, all date to either king Mahiri or king Vaṣmana,¹⁵² the two last known kings, and in the case of king Mahiri the most commonly occurring king, at the Niya site. Though the chronology and dates of these two kings will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter we can here conclude that their reigns too likely should fall into a period contemporary to or after the Chinese slip N.xv.326, from the middle of the third to the start of the fourth century.

¹⁴⁷ As noted his designations had not yet started including structures and the full form should be N. 5. xv. 326.

¹⁴⁸ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:408.

¹⁴⁹ Stein, 1:537.

¹⁵⁰ Stein, 1:341–42.

¹⁵¹ See document n.222, 415, 568, 569, 573, 578, 582, 584, 637, 732 and 858.

¹⁵² See document n.222 (M), 298 (M), 318 (V), 322 (M), 324 (M), 327 (?), 331 (M), 343 (V) and 345 (V).

This considered, given the prevalence of Mahiri dates amongst the excavated documents and the fact that Vaṣmana was the last known king, one cannot doubt that the majority of the Niya site as it survives must also date to the second half of the third or early fourth century. This agrees broadly with the ¹⁴C dates taken by the Sino-Japanese team using wood from N.2 and N.3, which gave ranges from 1950±40 BP and 1555±55 BP respectively,¹⁵³ and also with the admittedly scanty numismatic record which only contained Chinese *wuzhu* (五銖) coins in circulation from the Han to the Tang dynasty.¹⁵⁴ As noted this dating is also generally agreed upon by most scholars, but while a broad dating for the surviving site can be given, individual ruins and contexts are far more difficult and in some cases debated. These issues of the individual dating of ruins will, however, be discussed where relevant.

2.4 The Endere Site

Moving eastwards to the Endere site, it is located along the Endere river in Andir, Niya county, and is the least well explored of the major Krorainan sites. Endere was first explored and some areas excavated by Stein during his first and second expedition, though he spent significantly less time there than at the other major sites, staying, for example, only four days in 1906 as opposed to the twelve days he stayed at the Niya site during the same expedition. Stein's work aside, the Endere site was only visited briefly by Huntington during his travels,¹⁵⁵ and in the last twenty years by two Chinese survey teams in 2007 and 2012 respectively.¹⁵⁶

The Endere site, like Niya, lies in what was once a terminal oasis delta located deep in the shifting sands of the Taklamakan and a little over 100 km north of where the river leaves the mountains. This puts its known ruins on the same latitude as the

¹⁵³ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:384–88; Yonenobu and Itoh, '14 C Dating of the Niya Site in the Tarim Basin'.

¹⁵⁴ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 27–28, 182.

¹⁵⁵ Huntington, *The Pulse of Asia, a Journey in Central Asia Illustrating the Geographic Basis of History*, chap. 10.

¹⁵⁶ Liang et al., '新疆安迪尔古城遗址现状调查及保护思路梁涛 (Investigation on the Status of the Andir Ancient City in Xinjiang)'; Liang, '新疆和田安迪尔古城佛塔保存现状及保护对策 (Study on the Conservation of Pagoda in the Endere Site of Khotan, Xinjiang)'; Zhang, Zhang, and Yu, '新疆安迪尔古城病害特征及加固措施建议 (On the Deterioration of and Consolidation Measures for Ancient Andier City in Xinjiang)'.

southernmost of the Niya site ruins. Yet unlike in the case of Niya, where the river has receded southwards, the Endere river has instead moved laterally, its current bed lying west of the ruined site. These lateral shifts are well known from the region and are mainly connected with the annual summer floods, with the Endere river in particular seemingly very prone to such shifts. This was observed by Stein himself, as between his first visit in 1901 and his second visit in 1906 the main bed had moved back to an older course,¹⁵⁷ and when comparing Stein's map with modern satellite images, it would indeed seem as if the lower river-bed has again shifted westwards. Several older river-beds, both near, west, and east of the ruined site can furthermore easily be traced by satellite image, showing that the river through its history likely moved frequently. (See map 12) Along its new course the Endere river still reaches a significant distance north of the Endere ruins, and the closest village to the ruins lies almost 20 km further north into the desert, showing that the area occupied by the Endere site would have had an ample water supply in periods in which the river ran closer.

Turning to the remains on the site they, much like in the case of Niya, are spread out along a narrow band running north-south, likely the area watered by the Endere river at the time of their construction. The known structures, though few, divide into three groups, a northern group, a middle group and a smaller southern group, measuring around 4 km from the northern to the southern one. (See map 12) Starting with the two least explored groups, the northern and southern one, the northern group consists of a large stupa, still over 4 metres tall despite significant damage, two smaller stupas nearby, and a large square circumvallation. The latter measures about 110 metres square surrounded by massive walls, the best preserved of which remains 4 metres thick and rises about 7 metres, with a smaller enclosed area in the south-eastern corner.¹⁵⁸ (see map 13) No dwellings and very few artifacts were found in this group, however, though all the structures were surrounded by so-called "tati"-fields of broken pottery. The same largely also held true for the southern group,

¹⁵⁷ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 275.

¹⁵⁸ Liang et al., '新疆安迪尔古城遗址现状调查及保护思路梁涛 (Investigation on the Status of the Andir Ancient City in Xinjiang)', 140–41.

consisting primarily of a small but well-built ruined fort (the southern fort) and a few much-decayed remains of dwellings surrounding it.¹⁵⁹

Instead the vast majority of find made by Stein at the Endere site came from the only excavated group of ruins, namely the middle group, centred on a circular fort within which Stein identified five structures. (See figure 10) Two of these, E.1 and E.2, appear to have been shrines or similar, both found decorated with Buddhist statues and murals, as well as yielding a large number of written documents in Brahmi, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese. E.1 also carried both Tibetan and Chinese graffiti on its walls, more of which was also uncovered in the larger structure E.3. The presence of Tibetan documents immediately pointed to a date for the fort during the heydays of Tibetan activity in the Tarim Basin, namely in the seventh and eight centuries, something which the art styles seen broadly supported.¹⁶⁰ This dating was made absolutely certain with the discovery of a Chinese graffiti in E.1 that started with a date, namely the 7th year of the Kaiyuan (開元) reign, being 719 CE.¹⁶¹ The fort can therefore be identified as a Tang era fort, built either by the Tibetan or Chinese armies vying for control over the Tarim Basin in that period and certainly inhabited at various periods by both. Based on this, Stein also concluded upon a similar date for the large stupa of the northern group, though with some reservation as he observed it to be far more decayed than the circular fort.¹⁶²

Yet during his second expedition Stein came to realize that the Tang era fort had, in fact, been built upon and amongst the ruins of an older site. For underneath the fort's walls, in the south-western corner, he came upon a large rubbish heap which the walls had been built over, indicating that it predated them. From this rubbish heap he excavated, amongst a number of other items, a Kharosthi document on leather exactly like those from N.5. From the ruins of two small dwellings, clustered with a stupa and a tower a short distance south-west of the Tang era fort, Stein furthermore uncovered another five Kharosthi documents conforming in type to the Kharosthi documents of Kroraina. More recently a further example of Kharosthi, in the form of a rare

¹⁵⁹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 283–84.

¹⁶⁰ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:421–34.

¹⁶¹ Stein, 1:428, 546.

¹⁶² Stein, 1:437.

inscription on stone, was found broken at the base of the nearby stupa n.4 by Christoph Baumer in 1998.¹⁶³ Like their documents, these structures too appeared to pre-date the Tang era fort, for E.6 was found covered by a layer, both over the rooms and walls, of animal dung.¹⁶⁴ Stein next noted that the northern ruins, the western ruins from the middle group, and the southern ruins had all been built with the same type and uniform dimensions of sun-baked bricks, distinctly different from those that had been used in the Tang era fortification and its structures.¹⁶⁵ Based on this Stein concluded that the Endere site and most of its ruins had originally been occupied during the Krorainan period before being abandoned, only to be re-occupied on a smaller scale by the Tang era fort which in turn was itself abandoned sometimes not long after 719 CE.¹⁶⁶

This explanation, while sound, certainly begs further archaeological investigation, especially of the northern and southern groups of ruins and utilizing modern stratigraphically methods. Yet that Stein's conclusion is correct is beyond reasonable doubt, at least concerning the Kharosthi documents themselves. It is shown quite clearly by the style of script and language used, which in all but one example is identical to that found elsewhere in Kroraina. Furthermore, the formulations and typological features seen in the Krorainan documents are mirrored in several of those from Endere. This can be seen, for example, in the dating, including royal titular, from the stone inscription n.870 or the familiar style of leather document n.665. It is likewise seen in the well-known shape of the rectangular tablet with strings and seal, exemplified by document n.663 and n.664. Finally, looking at the content of the documents, they are clearly from the same period as the other Krorainan material. Examples of this include known names in n.870 and the reference to wedge-tablets in n.663, but is seen best in the reference to two places named Puṣṅari and Parvata in document n.660, both known from other documents.¹⁶⁷ It is thus quite clear that these documents belong to broadly the same period as the other Krorainan Kharosthi documents.

¹⁶³ Salomon, 'A Stone Inscription in Central Asian Gandhari from Endere (Xinjiang)', 1.

¹⁶⁴ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 276–79.

¹⁶⁵ Stein, 281.

¹⁶⁶ Stein, 286–89.

¹⁶⁷ For Puṣṅari see document n.770, for some of the many examples of Parvata see n.12, 110, 133 and 140.

The Kharosthi documents and their find-sites can as such be safely assigned to the heydays of the kingdom of Kroraina in the third and fourth centuries, though precise dates are not possible. It is also likely that the northern and the southern group of ruins falls into this timeframe, though this remains uncertain. Modern excavations and further work on the site might be able to clarify this problem, yet as things stand, it is important to use the Endere material with caution. This is especially true for the artifacts found on this site, for given that several of the areas had seen re-use it is likely that later objects might have intermingled with older artifacts there.

2.5 The central Lop sites – L.A and L.B

Finally, in the very easternmost part of the Tarim Basin, one finds the central Lop sites of L.A and L.B in the north-eastern parts of the Lop desert. These two sites are actually a full 13 km apart and thus does not constitute a single site as such, but together they represent the largest and most thoroughly excavated of the Lop sites, as well as being the centres of a network of smaller sites and finds. They were both first found and explored by Sven Hedin in 1900-1901, before being subsequently visited by sir Aurel Stein in the winters of 1906 and 1914. It was Stein during these two expeditions who conducted the only major excavations done at the site to date, surveying and mapping a number of structures as well as uncovering a large number of artifacts and documents. In between Stein's two expeditions, however, Zuicho Tachibana also visited and conducted some limited work on the site, and it was also later visited by members of Bergman's Sino-Swedish team. Following this, several smaller surveys and excavations have been undertaken by Chinese teams, notably in 1980 and repeatedly in the 2010s.¹⁶⁸

Both the L.A and L.B sites are located in the northern part of the extremely arid Lop desert, just west of the lake Lop Nur. Lop Nur, poetically called “the wandering lake” by Sven Hedin, has in historic times proven highly unstable, shrinking in size as well as moving repeatedly between the north and the south. Thus, when originally

¹⁶⁸ Xinjiang Loulan Kaogudui (新疆樓蘭考古隊), ‘樓蘭城郊古墓群發掘簡報 (Preliminary Report on the Excavation of a Cemetery in the Outskirts of Loulan)’; Wu, Tian, and Mu, ‘樓蘭地區新發現漢印考釋 (A Study on the Seal Newly Found in Loulan Area)’.

mapped by Przhevalsky in 1877, it lay far south in the Lop Nur depression nearer to Miran and was known as Qara-qoshun, a state of affairs also prevailing during Stein's expeditions. However, as predicted and later observed by Hedin, the lake started migrating in 1921, and by 1928 it had formed a new lake Lop Nur in the northernmost part of the basin, close to the L.A and L.B sites. This remarkable phenomenon is due to a number of climatic and hydrological factors, the specifics of which are still being debated,¹⁶⁹ but as observed by Hedin and his teams, it was, in particular, influenced by the flow, volume, and movement of the Tarim and Kōnche rivers flowing from the west. These would in periods flow together southwards and would, sometimes joined by the Charchan river, empty into the southern basin and form Qara-qoshun. Yet at other times, they would flow eastwards along the Qum and Quruq riverbeds, emptying into the northern Lop Nur across a wide delta of shifting courses and canals, the traces of which can still be seen plainly on satellite image despite the drying up of Lop Nur due to modern damming.¹⁷⁰ The L.A and L.B. sites lay in the southern part of this vast deltaic area that must, at the time of their occupation, have enjoyed a fairly large and stable water supply feeding large scale irrigation works and farmland. This was already suspected by Stein as he observed the presence of many dead trees in the region, for example at L.B.4,¹⁷¹ but it was conclusively proven by surveys conducted by a Chinese team in 2008-2010. Their survey showed that a large area to the west of L.A, reaching more than 10 km to the shores of lake Lop Nur, had, in fact, been irrigated farmlands with channels drawing water from the rivers.¹⁷² (See map 15)

Both the L.A and L.B sites yielded numerous ruined structures, with L.A yielding both the most and the largest ones. The L.A site lies within a large square circumvallation measuring approximately 310 by 330 metres, the walls of which has suffered much decay and rises no higher than about one and a half metre. Within stood a large stupa, or possibly a watch tower, in the north-eastern part, surrounded by the traces of two large buildings. Stein managed to map a further seven structures,

¹⁶⁹ Qin et al., 'New Evidence of Agricultural Activity and Environmental Change Associated with the Ancient Loulan Kingdom, China, around 1500 Years Ago', 54–55.

¹⁷⁰ Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 46–50.

¹⁷¹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 404.

¹⁷² Qin et al., 'New Evidence of Agricultural Activity and Environmental Change Associated with the Ancient Loulan Kingdom, China, around 1500 Years Ago'.

primarily in the south-western area close to a gate, from which most of the documentary evidence was excavated.¹⁷³ (See figure 11) These various ruins of the L.A site yielded a total of thirty-nine Kharosthi documents covering most of the major types known, including several contracts, legal documents, letters, lists, and royal commands. Furthermore, in almost every ruin of L.A, and in particular in and around L.A.2, a large number of Chinese documents were found, both on wood and on paper. In fact, between them, Stein and Hedin gathered no less than 479 Chinese documents from L.A, and together with later finds done by Chinese teams, this number has reached 681 Chinese documents.¹⁷⁴

It is also noteworthy that the largest number of these Chinese documents were found in L.A.2 and the adjacent rubbish heap of L.A.6.ii, as L.A.2 is distinctly different from the other buildings in construction method. As observed by Stein the other buildings of L.A had been constructed in wood and plaster, with a sturdy wooden framework of large beams between which had been fastened horizontal bundles of reed that formed the core of walls that had then been plastered, just like the larger buildings of the Niya site. The layout of the structures too distinctly recalled the Niya site.¹⁷⁵ L.A.2, on the other hand, had thick walls built with large sun-dried bricks, with the remnants of small “cells” in which many of the documents were found. The plan too, with its large dimensions, was quite unlike the other structures of the site, and Stein’s local workers immediately identified it with a Ya-men, that was residents for Chinese officials, of their own time.¹⁷⁶ These structural features, and the amount of Chinese material found within, lead both Stein and most later excavators to identify L.A.2 as a Chinese structure.¹⁷⁷ This is certainly possible, and as shall be discussed further in chapter four, it is quite clear that L.A had a heavy Chinese presence, for a period even a garrison, though L.A.2 could possibly also have been part of a palace or similar important structure.

¹⁷³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, chap. 11.

¹⁷⁴ Hou and Yang, 楼蘭漢文簡紙文書集成 (*A Collection of the Chinese Documents on Paper from Loulan*), 31–51.

¹⁷⁵ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 370–71, 378–79.

¹⁷⁶ Stein, 275–376.

¹⁷⁷ Xu et al., ‘Radiocarbon Dating the Ancient City of Loulan’, 4.

This is also distinctly different from the L.B site, which, being spread out across a large area and not being fortified, had more in common with the layout of the Niya site. The ruins, as described by Stein, were divided into three groups, L.B.1-3, L.B.4-5 and L.B.6, across roughly 7 km from east to west. (See figure 12) All six ruins were constructed in a fashion similar to those of the Niya site and the majority of those of the L.A site, with a large wooden fundament and plaster walls. As shown best by L.B.4 their internal layout was also very similar to that seen at Niya, including several large *aiwan*-like rooms and halls. (See figure 13) L.B.4 was also notably large, and together with L.B.2, which Stein interpreted as a temple, it yielded particularly fine examples of wood carvings. Most of the surrounding landscape had long since been annihilated by the relentless erosion of wind and weather, but Stein did survey three stupas in the area as well as the remnants of an harbour near L.B.4.¹⁷⁸ The L.B site, during Stein's rather quick excavation, yielded only six Kharosthi and three Chinese documents, seven of them from the large L.B.4. Luckily, four of the Kharosthi documents were very well preserved and could be identified with known types, including two letters and one royal command. From the two letters, document n.702 and 703, it is even possible to elucidate the likely owner of the dwelling L.B.4, as both were addressed to the *guśura* Leśvaṃna and his wife Kuyiñoae.

Turning to the question of dating it is noteworthy, that the central Lop sites, much like the case at Niya, do not show any signs of having been destroyed or subjected to warfare. Although, having been far less thoroughly explored when compared with the Niya site, this is not entirely certain. Nor is it possible to say anything certain about other reasons for its abandonment, though in the case of the Lop sites, a sudden major shift in the northern rivers and the lake Lop Nur would have been devastating indeed. As for the dates of the Kharosthi documents from the central Lop sites, they only contain one complete date, in the regnal year of the king Aṃgoka from document n.677. Yet as shown by the style and content of the Kharosthi documents, as well as the material culture and architectural style in use, the central Lop sites L.A and L.B clearly dated to the same period as Niya and parts of the Endere site. This is further reinforced by the multiple dated Chinese documents from L.A,

¹⁷⁸ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 393–406.

found intermingled with Kharosthi records of various kinds and in the case of document n.699 even carrying both languages. The Chinese documents give a broad range, but all dated documents fall between 263 and 330 CE.¹⁷⁹

This finds corroboration in the large-scale radiocarbon study by Xu et al, whose samples all fell into three periods according to the area from which the samples had been taken. The oldest samples, giving ranges from 404-358 BCE, came from tamarisk samples taken from the base of smaller completely eroded structures, suggesting that the site had been occupied for a long time. Samples from the base of intact structures instead gave a range from the mid-first to the early third century, while samples from the walls and roofs showed slightly later ranges in the third and fourth centuries, suggesting that the structures were raised in the first or second century and subsequently repaired down to the fourth century.¹⁸⁰ This gives a very good overview of the site's likely history and seems entirely in keeping with the date of inhabitation and subsequent abandonment suggested by the excavated documents. Both documents and C14 dates also agree with the one dated document from Niya which gave the date 269 CE. Thus, it is quite clear that the archaeological remains of the major Krorainan sites must date roughly from the third to the first half of the fourth century CE.

2.6 The minor Krorainan sites

With the dates and data from the three major sites of Niya, Endere, and the central Lop cluster in mind, we turn next to the smaller or less well excavated sites, namely the minor Lop sites, the southern oases of Charchan, Charkliq, and Miran, the north-western Lop sites of Xiaohe and Yingpan, and finally a short discussion on the many cemeteries of the region. As shall be seen, it is in many cases difficult to tell if these sites were, in fact, part of the kingdom of Kroraina, though it seems likely to have been the case for most of them, and they are therefore worth considering briefly.

¹⁷⁹ Hou and Yang, 楼蘭漢文簡紙文書集成 (*A Collection of the Chinese Documents on Paper from Loulan*), 20.

¹⁸⁰ Xu et al., 'Radiocarbon Dating the Ancient City of Loulan', 4-7.

The minor Lop sites

The minor Lop sites were primarily found and excavated by Stein, Hedin, and Bergman's expeditions, though new surveys by Chinese teams regularly uncover new sites in the vast Lop desert. Stein designated all Lop sites with the designation L. followed by a letter, with sites running all the way to T. (See map 14-17) Of these, two clusters are of particular interest, namely the group north of L.E¹⁸¹ and the group near L.K¹⁸², both of which were fortified sites with structures inside. Both L.E and L.K were, however, notably smaller than the fortified site L.A, with L.E being a square of roughly 130 square metres and L.K being a rectangle measuring roughly 65 by 150 metres.

The first group lay north of L.A, near the northernmost known shoreline of Lop Nur, and in addition to L.E, consisted of the fortified posts L.F and L.J, and two cemeteries at L.I and L.Q. Both L.E and L.F yielded some Chinese documents, two dated to 266 and 267 CE,¹⁸³ and in the case of L.F also a single Kharosthi document¹⁸⁴, placing their last occupation in roughly the same period as the other Krorainan sites. Strikingly the four sites L.E, L.F, L.I, and L.J, lie on an almost straight line north-eastwards, curving slightly east, probably following near to the ancient northern shore of Lop Nur. As Stein discovered, this was likely also the same line followed by an ancient route between the Lop sites and areas further east, as near L.J, he was able to trace a line of 211 Chinese coins running for about 27 metres. These he supposed had fallen from some traveller moving along the same north-easterly line, a conclusion further strengthened by the find of a scattering of Chinese-style arrowheads some 45 metres further along the same line.¹⁸⁵

The second group of sites too, those near the fortified site of L.K, can be associated with routes away from the central Lop sites, lying far south of L.A on the line towards the southern oases of Miran and Charkliq. The group consists of two fortified positions, L.K and the small post L.L to the west, as well as two clusters of

¹⁸¹ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 259–90.

¹⁸² Stein, 180–204.

¹⁸³ Maspero, *Les Documents Chinois de La Troisième Expédition de Sir Aurel Stein En Asie Centrale*, 77.

¹⁸⁴ See doc.757.

¹⁸⁵ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 290–91.

ruined dwellings, L.M and L.R, all four situated along the dried up traces of two rivers. L.K and L.M both yielded Chinese documents and from L.M was also excavated three Kharosthi documents, one Brahmi fragment, a Sogdian document, and some fragments in Kuchean.¹⁸⁶ These would again point to a period of occupation similar to that of the other Krorainan sites, though the Brahmi and Kuchean documents may indicate that L.M was occupied somewhat longer than the other Lop sites.

These two groups aside the majority of remaining surveyed sites in the Lop area, both as surveyed by Stein and by Hedin/Bergman, lay along the Qum and Quruq rivers in the northern part of the Lop desert. Most of these were cemeteries, including Stein's sites L.H, L.S and L.T¹⁸⁷ and Bergman's graves n.34-39.¹⁸⁸ Some dwellings were, however, also found in the area by Bergman's team, though they were only subject to brief examinations.¹⁸⁹ More recent Chinese expeditions have uncovered a few more sites south-east of L.A, notably the so-called Zhangza n.1 ruin¹⁹⁰ and a nearby cemetery Lop Cemetery I.

Charchan, Charkliq, and Miran

Moving on to the southern area between the Lop sites and the western sites of Endere and Niya, one finds the three oases of Charchan, Charkliq, and Miran strung out along the foothills of the southern Kunlun mountains, all of which are still fertile and inhabited. Apart from Miran, which had at some point been abandoned and then newly re-colonized at the time of Stein's first visit,¹⁹¹ these oases have seen continuous occupation since antiquity. As a consequence, they have all yielded few archaeological remains. This is probably partly due to the ancient sites lying in the very same place as the modern settlements, thus being buried below them, but partly also due to the local inhabitants cannibalizing older structures for building materials, fertilizers and other resources.

¹⁸⁶ Stein, 193–95.

¹⁸⁷ Stein, 732–49.

¹⁸⁸ Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 118–46.

¹⁸⁹ Bergman, 155–59.

¹⁹⁰ Wu, Tian, and Mu, '楼兰地区新发现汉印考释 (A Study on the Seal Newly Found in Loulan Area)'.

¹⁹¹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 346–47.

No surviving ruins have been traced at Charchan to date, though Stein observed some old remains of walls and large “*tati*” areas of broken pottery rubbish to the south-west of the oasis. From these were found some smaller objects, such as beads and bronze buckles, but without a context they are of course impossible to date. Stein, furthermore, briefly visited what he identified as a stupa of the Krorainan type some two-days travel downstream along the Charchan river.¹⁹² Bergman observed a similar situation during his visit to Charchan, although he did find five graves south-west of the modern oasis.¹⁹³ These were part of what was later discovered to be a large cemetery, now named Zaganluk cemetery, containing 102 identified tombs.¹⁹⁴ With the exception of parts of Zaganluk cemetery, which will be discussed with the other cemeteries below, it is, however, not possible to give even an approximate date to the Charchan material.

Charkliq has yielded more results, as Stein was able to trace the remnants of a walled site and a stupa in the oasis of Charkliq itself, during his first visit. Unfortunately, this “Sipil” as the locals knew it had been built on and around by the oasis’ current inhabitants, preventing any closer examination.¹⁹⁵ Two further ruins to the south of the present oasis along the river were, however, explored by Tachibana during the third Otani expedition in 1910-1911, named Koyumal and Bash-Koyumal. Stein followed up this exploration with excavations during his third expedition. At Koyumal he traced the remnants of a stupa and what he thought to be a small monastery, excavating a number of cells some of which contained the remains of Buddhist sculptures. At Bash-Koyumal, on the other hand, he traced the walls of a fortified post likely built to control movement between the oases and the mountains to the south. Both these sites yielded written documents, but they all proved to be religious fragments in Sanskrit and Brahmi. Thus, Stein concluded that the two sites,

¹⁹² Stein, 300–303.

¹⁹³ Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 204–18.

¹⁹⁴ The Museum of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (新疆维吾尔自治区博物馆), CPAM of Bayingolin Mongolian Autonomous Region (巴音郭楞蒙古自治州文物管理所), and CPAM of Charchan county (且末县文物管理所), ‘新疆且末扎滚鲁克一号墓地发掘报告 (Excavation of Graveyard No.1 at Zaganluk in Charchan, Xinjiang)’.

¹⁹⁵ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 313–14.

as he found them, dated to the Tang period.¹⁹⁶ It is, however, likely that some of the structures themselves, especially the stupa of the “Sipil” site and the fortress Bash-Koyumal, could date back to the Krorainan period as they resemble similar structures elsewhere in Kroraina. Such a scenario has also gained some support from a recent radiocarbon sampling done by Lu et al. at Bash-Koyumal, giving the range of 203±60 CE,¹⁹⁷ though more samples are certainly needed before a definitive conclusion can be reached. As it stands, neither the finds from Charchan nor Charkliq are of much use for the purpose of this dissertation, as the exact date and context of their finds are mostly uncertain.

A little more can, however, be gleaned from the better-studied remnants of the Miran site, labelled as M by Stein. The site, to the east of the modern settlement, contains primarily two types of ruins, namely a fortification and a number of stupas. As shown by both its archaeological contents, recent radiocarbon dating,¹⁹⁸ and most importantly the large quantities of Tibetan documents found within, the last occupation of the fortress can safely be dated to the seventh and eighth centuries with no signs of earlier remains.¹⁹⁹ The stupas and shrines, however, appear to date from an earlier period, likely to the Krorainan period of the third and fourth centuries. This conclusion, reached by Stein and generally agreed upon by most scholars, relies partly upon the discovery of three Kharosthi texts, two wall inscriptions and one silk inscription, all in ink, and partly upon the architectural features of the ruins which agree with examples from Lop.²⁰⁰ In many of the structures, most prominently in M.3 and M.5, spectacularly fine Buddhist murals have been uncovered. The perhaps finest examples, from M.5, were immediately recognized by Stein as depicting the story of the Vessantara Jataka, a story of one of the Buddha’s previous lives.²⁰¹ These murals have attracted much attention by art historians and several excellent studies cover them, notably Marilyn M. Rhie’s comprehensive chapter in her *Early Buddhist Art of*

¹⁹⁶ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 164–67.

¹⁹⁷ Lü et al., ‘A Preliminary Study of Chronology for a Newly-Discovered Ancient City and Five Archaeological Sites in Lop Nor, China’, 68.

¹⁹⁸ Lü et al., 68.

¹⁹⁹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, chap. 12.

²⁰⁰ Stein, 537–38. For a full overview see Nakanishi, ‘The Art of Miran: A Buddhist Site in the Kingdom of Shanshan’.

²⁰¹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, chap. 13.

China and Central Asia, and Yumiko Nakanishi's dissertation *The Art of Miran*.²⁰²

Given the rich and diverse art of the site one could very well consider Miran a fourth major site from the kingdom of Kroraina. Yet as the ruins yielded little in the way of artefacts or documents, and no structures of a non-religious nature, the site's role in the kingdom is difficult to discern. Moreover, as several detailed studies already exist that covers their artistic and religious aspects, they will not be treated in further detail here.

Xiaohe and Yingpan

Turning finally to the north-western parts of the Lop desert and the foothills of the Kuruk-tagh mountains, one reaches the very edge of the lands once ruled by the kingdom of Krorainan at the Xiaohe and Yingpan sites. It is, in fact, quite unclear whether or not these sites should be associated with the kingdom of Kroraina at all, especially in the case of the Yingpan site. Starting with Xiaohe, however, or Small River as Bergman knew it, the designation covers a number of sites along the dried traces of the eponymous "Small River". The river, once a branch of the Kum river, ran southwards into the Lop desert and, at its highpoint, might have reached to the southern marshes of Qara-qoshun. It was first surveyed and excavated by Sven Hedin's Sino-Swedish team led by Bergman, who uncovered no less than seven cemeteries along or near the river, the most well-known of which is Ördek's Necropolis (Xiaohe cemetery). This large site, which has yielded over a hundred graves, is a Bronze Age site, however, and as such of little bearing upon this study.²⁰³ Of greater interest is the other cemeteries, several of which share many characteristics with the burials of Niya and the Lop sites, as well as the remnants of a watchtower to the south where the traces of the river disappeared into the desert.²⁰⁴ They would seem to indicate that the area was inhabited during the time of the kingdom of Kroraina, that is the first few centuries CE, though as they have yielded few artefacts and no written documents, they are difficult to use in a more detailed fashion. Recent work by the team of Houyuan Lu has, however, uncovered what might be the remnants of a

²⁰² Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia*, 1:370–92; Nakanishi, 'The Art of Miran: A Buddhist Site in the Kingdom of Shanshan'.

²⁰³ Yang, 'Shifting Memories'.

²⁰⁴ Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 51–118.

fortified site²⁰⁵ a little distance north and upriver of the Xiaohe cemeteries. The surveyed ruins consist of nothing more than the corner of a large wall, seemingly part of a circumvallation, and have yet to be excavated or surveyed further. (See map 21) C14 dates from the walls as well as charcoal found nearby did, however, give ranges from the fourth to sixth century,²⁰⁶ which would seem to indicate that the walls were raised during or just after the Krorainan period. While further investigation is still required before anything definitive can be said, it does serve as another indication that the Xiaohe area was inhabited during the period here under consideration.

The Yingpan site, designated Ying. by Stein, lies further north-westwards at the foothills of the Kuruk-tagh mountains just where the Shindi river descends from a plateau into the plains below. This its location is clearly one of some importance, for it forms a crossroad with routes north-westwards along the Konche river, south-eastwards towards the Lop depression and northwards along the Shidi river through the Kuruk-tagh to the Turfan depression. In fact, further upstream in the gorges of the Shidi river both Stein and Bergman traced petroglyphs and the remnants of small watch posts, indications that the route had been in use since ancient times.²⁰⁷ At Yingpan Stein traced three groups of ruins, that is a group of stupas on a hill in the east, a large circular circumvallation down on the plains and another standing stupa nearby. The site yielded few artefacts and no major finds, in part due to flooding and later settlement, but likely also due to the limited time Stein spent at Yingpan. He did, however, find indications that the main ruins belonged to the Han period, that is the first or second century, though, as he found a Tang coin near the first group of stupas, he surmised that at least that group of ruins had seen activity down into seventh and eighth centuries. Notably Stein also found four wooden shavings with Kharosthi characters at this group of stupas, the script in the same style as those known from Kroraina. These shavings had likely been cut from a tablet intended for re-use, though they do not appear with the rest of Stein's Kharosthi material in Rapson et al and their

²⁰⁵ The Chinese team referred to this new ruin as a city, a designation also used for the circumvallations at L.A, L.E and L.K. This designation may however be somewhat misleading and the designation fortified site has therefore been used here.

²⁰⁶ Lü et al., 'A Preliminary Study of Chronology for a Newly-Discovered Ancient City and Five Archaeological Sites in Lop Nor, China'.

²⁰⁷ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran, 728-29*; Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region, 183-94*.

current whereabouts, and, unfortunately, also their contents, remain unknown.²⁰⁸

Given the presence of Kharosthi it does, however, seem that the Yingpan ruins were in use during the third and fourth centuries CE here under consideration.

In addition to the ruins, Yingpan has also yielded a large number of old burials, at least 300 according to the survey done by a Chinese team in 1999.²⁰⁹ All these older burials were found on the edge of the plateau to the north-east of the ruins, a location overlooking the Shidi river and the plains below. Showing a variety of burial styles, the Yingpan cemeteries likely cover a rather long period of time, but some show clear parallels to Krorainan burial practises of the first to the fourth century, as will be discussed further below. As such they are another indications that the area was settled and the ruined sites in use during the Krorainan period.

Yet, as noted initially, it is very difficult to tell whether these areas were under the political control of the kingdom of Kroraina. A detailed discussion of this problem, and the borders of the kingdom of Kroraina during the first to fourth centuries, lies beyond the purview of this dissertation. For now it is sufficient to note that this issue cannot be conclusively resolved, and as such the finds from Xiaohe and Yingpan will not feature prominently in this dissertation. Culturally, however, both the Xiaohe and Yingpan sites were very close to the Krorainan sites, as seen in architectural style, burial practises, material culture and, in the case of Yingpan, the use of Kharosthi. They will, therefore, serve as useful comparisons to the better contextualized the Krorainan material, showing that the state of affairs prevalent in Kroraina was not unique in the Tarim Basin during the period under consideration.

Graves and cemeteries – Lop, Niya, Xiaohe, Yingpan, and Zagunluk

The south-eastern Tarim Basin, the area roughly comprising the kingdom of Kroraina, has yielded a very large amount of exceptionally well-preserved burials. Graves and cemeteries have been found at the Lop sites L.C, L.F, L.H, L.Q, L.S and L.T, at the Niya site, at Xiaohe, at Yingpan, and at the Zagunluk site near Charchan, to name but

²⁰⁸ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 750–55. The three shavings in question are Ying. 1. a. 1-4.

²⁰⁹ The Institute of Archaeology of Xinjiang (新疆文物考古研究所), ‘新疆尉犁县营盘墓地1999年发掘简报(1999 Excavation of the Yingpan Graveyard at Yuli, Xinjiang)’.

the best documented cases. These many burials have also received a lot of attention, maybe more so than any other facet of the region, due to their good state of preservation. Several scholarly works exist on the topic, with Armin Selbitschka's PHD dissertation "*Prestigegüter entlang der Seidenstrasse?*" providing a particularly thorough discussion of the Krorainan finds.²¹⁰ Their occupants and rich assemblage will play an important role also in this dissertation, and while a detailed presentation of each will only be given where relevant, some general remarks are in order.

The burials found in the region are not all from the same period, ranging in date from at least the Bronze Age down to the first centuries CE. Certain sites, such as Xiaohe and Zagunluk, were also in use over a longer period of time, yielding both older and younger burials in close proximity to each other.²¹¹ Luckily, a broad typology and chronology for the various burial types and their associated assemblages have been established. The Bronze Age burials, variously described as the Gumogou culture²¹² or the Xiaohe horizon after the best known sites, are easily distinguished and represented by such sites as Ördek's necropolis at Xiaohe or the L.S and L.T sites in the Lop desert. They are characterized by several distinct features, most prominently two-part wooden coffin and characteristic burial dresses in wool, often with decorated felt hats.²¹³ Very similar burial practises were furthermore uncovered at Ayala Mazar cemetery, to the north of the iron age site of Jumbulakum along the Keriya river, by Christoph Baumer in 2009.²¹⁴ Such similarities in burial practise across the Southern Tarim Basin are likewise seen in the tombs of the first millennium BCE,²¹⁵ though

²¹⁰ Selbitschka, *Prestigegüter Entlang Der Seidenstrasse? Archäologische Und Historische Untersuchungen Zu Chinas Beziehungen Zu Kulturen Des Tarimbeckens Vom Zweiten Bis Frühen Fünften Jahrhundert Nach Christus*.

²¹¹ The Museum of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (新疆维吾尔自治区博物馆), CPAM of Bayingolin Mongolian Autonomous Region (巴音郭楞蒙古自治州文物管理所), and CPAM of Charchan county (且末县文物管理所), '新疆且末扎滚鲁克一号墓地发掘报告 (Excavation of Graveyard No.1 at Zagunluk in Charchan, Xinjiang)'; Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 51–117.

²¹² Chen and Hiebert, 'The Late Prehistory of Xinjiang in Relation to Its Neighbors', 250–57.

²¹³ Yang, 'Shifting Memories'.

²¹⁴ Baumer, 'The Ayala Mazar-Xiaohe Culture: New Archaeological Discoveries in the Taklamakan Desert, China'.

²¹⁵ For some examples see the early period Shanpula tombs from near Khotan and the mid-period Zagunluk tombs. Wang and Xiao, 'A General Introduction to the Ancient Tombs at Shanpula, Xinjiang, China'; The Museum of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (新疆维吾尔自治区博物馆), CPAM of Bayingolin Mongolian Autonomous Region (巴音郭楞蒙古自治州文物管理所), and CPAM of Charchan county (且末县文物管理

being fewer and less well-known, and most importantly for this dissertation also in the graves of the first centuries CE.

The graves of the first centuries CE have conventionally been dated based on their assemblages, mainly Chinese silks and mirrors in styles of the later Han dynasty and their successors. This is further strengthened by the presence in several of these tombs of Kharosthi texts, and in a rare few cases also Chinese writing.²¹⁶ Especially the presence of Kharosthi is useful, for while the exact date of its introduction to Kroraina is not known, the script's use in the region does appear to have started somewhere in the later first or second century CE. Like those of the preceding periods the burials of this later period are characterized by distinct burials customs, and while exceptions exist they broadly fall into one of three categories, namely mass-burials, "boat"-shaped coffins, and "box"-shaped coffins.

Of the three the mass-burials are by far the hardest to date, as earlier periods also used this form of burial and, due to the lack of a coffin, both the bodies and their goods are often in a very poor state of preservation. Yet that some mass-burials do date to the first centuries CE, is made clear by the pieces of silk with Kharosthi writing found by Hedin at the mass-burial of cemetery n.34.²¹⁷ The "boat" and "box" coffins are more secure, and given that they were found buried on top of each other at the cemetery 95MN1 at Niya, one can also be sure that they date to the same period. That this period was the first four-five centuries CE is, in turn, shown by the Kharosthi inscriptions from the 95MN1 "box"-coffins M1 and M8, as well as their assemblages which contain many later Han dynasty artifacts.²¹⁸ These common coffin types, as their names suggest, take different forms. The box-shaped coffin takes the form of a wooden "box", normally on legs and sometimes painted, while the "boat"-shaped coffin takes the form of a hollowed-out log resembling a canoe. These two types,

所), '新疆且末扎滚鲁克一号墓地发掘报告 (Excavation of Graveyard No.1 at Zagunluk in Charchan, Xinjiang)'.
²¹⁶ Kharosthi appeared in Bergman's grave n.34 and 80LBMB2 both in the Lop desert and both 95MN1 M1 and M8 of the Niya site. The documents are n.807 and n.871-877. Chinese occurred on document n.871 from Bergman n.34 and also what might have been a recipe from Zagunluk grave M73.

²¹⁷ Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 118–31.

²¹⁸ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, vol. 2, sec. 5.

which go back to Hedin and Bergman's finds in the Lop desert,²¹⁹ have been found in most of the southern Tarim cemeteries, including Niya, L.C, L.Q, Xiaohe, Yingpan, Zagunluk, and even Sampila near Khotan.

Thus, one sees that across the southern Tarim Basin there was, since at least the Bronze Age, many elements of shared burial culture. This does make it difficult to identify the political affiliation of a site based on its burials alone, something which complicates the understanding of sites primarily known from their burials, such as Xiaohe and Yingpan. Yet this shared burial culture does seem to reflect on a broader set of shared cultural elements, conventions, and institutions, stretching right across the southern Tarim Basin from Khotan in the west to Lop in the east.

2.7 Conclusion

As I have endeavoured to present above, there is a rich archaeological sources material available for this case study. I have chosen to focus primarily on three major sites, the Niya site, the Endere site, and the central Lop sites L.A and L.B. These will be the primary archaeological contexts drawn from in this dissertation, though where relevant I will draw on material from the minor Krorainan sites as well. Yet, for all their richness the archaeological sources only get us so far, and as I have attempted to show in the discussions of the three exemplary ruins of the Niya site, N.1, N.5, and N.24, they are only really brought to life when coupled with the many documents found at these sites. As such we next turn to the written sources covering the kingdom of Kroraina, both those from outside the kingdom itself and more importantly those produced and found locally.

²¹⁹ Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 106–16, 131–34.

Chapter 3: The written sources of the kingdom of Kroraina

The written sources for the history of the southern Tarim Basin and Kingdom of Kroraina from the third to the fifth century CE can broadly be divided into two types, namely written records and historical accounts, that is to say primary and secondary sources. This chapter will consider them in turn, and part one will start by presenting the most relevant secondary sources. These were all made outside the Tarim region, and the most relevant secondary sources are Chinese, primarily in the form of histories and travelogues. In part two the chapter will then move on to the locally produced written records created in or near the kingdom of Kroraina. These written sources appear in a variety of languages, including notably documents in Chinese and Sogdian. Still, the majority of the written sources were produced by the kingdom's officials, and were written in the Prakrit language using the Kharosthi script, and as such they are commonly referred to as the Kharosthi documents. Since these documents will be at the centre of the following chapters the Kharosthi documents will be considered in some detail, including important aspects like their date and who wrote them. Finally, this chapter's part three will present the method of construction and composition of the Kharosthi document database, which, as the name suggests, records all the Kharosthi texts from the kingdom of Kroraina. Its construction is worth considering in some detail as it has formed a core pillar in my research on the case study, and this section will furthermore introduce my document typology and method of conducting prosopography on the Kharosthi texts.

3.1 Historical sources from China and elsewhere

Starting with the historical accounts the available sources are limited, as the Tarim Basin polities created no surviving histories. Instead, almost all the available material comes from the Chinese historical tradition, primarily the “standard histories” and travel accounts, as well as a few rare mentions in Indian or Western traditions. Owing to their content and nature, none of these sources will form a central part of the dissertation, but as they will form important supplementary evidence, it is worth discussing them briefly here.

“Standard histories”

The Chinese tradition of history writing goes far back, but reached maturity during the Han dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE), especially with the two monumental works *Shiji* (史記, Record of the Grand Historian) and *Hanshu* (漢書, Book of Han). These popularized a form of history writing, the annals-biography style, that would come to dominate Chinese history writing, and laid the foundations of the so-called “standard histories”, that is historical works dedicated to individual dynasties. These histories were composed of a number of basic annalistic accounts documenting each Emperor’s reign, followed by various treatises and biographies dealing with specific topics or individuals.²²⁰ These texts, for the most part, do not give a full account of the history of the Tarim region and its polities, but rather discusses them only in connection with the political activities of Chinese dynasties. As such much of the material they provide are in the form of short mentions or notes, for example on the arrival of tributary missions at court, or short accounts of politically relevant episodes such as alliances and warfare. But most important for our purposes were the customary inclusion of a “biography” (傳) on the “Western Regions” or “Western Rong”, which dealt directly with matters concerning the peoples and polities of Inner Asia and areas further to the west. From these accounts it is possible to draw a basic outline of the political situation in the Tarim Basin during the period under consideration, and a few of the Chinese histories also provide some information on geography, demography, military disposition, products, and similar topics. Although the kingdom of Kroraina, Loulan (樓蘭) or Shanshan (鄯善) in Chinese accounts, is mentioned in most of the histories dealing with the Tarim Basin before the fifth century CE, only a few of these give substantial information. Five works are of particular interest, namely the *Hanshu* (漢書, Book of Han), the *Hou Hanshu* (後漢書, Book of the Later Han), the *Sanguozhi* (三國志, Records of the Three Kingdoms), the *Jinshu* (晉書, Book of Jin), and finally the *Weishu* (魏書, Book of Wei).

The stories and information contained in these Chinese “standard histories” came from a variety of sources, depending upon the specific text in question. In

²²⁰ Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 622–25.

general, they drew primarily upon either official records and accounts, or previous histories, though in some cases they may also have contained eyewitness accounts. Of the five sources of special interest to the study of Kroraina only three of them, the *Hanshu*, the *Sanguozhi* and the *Weishu*, were actually written at a time close to the time they describe. In the case of the *Hanshu*, compiled in the late first century CE, it dealt with the early history of the Han dynasty from the second century BCE to the beginning of the first century CE. The *Sanguozhi*, compiled between 264 and 280 CE, covered the so-called “Three Kingdoms” period from 221-280 CE.²²¹ The *Weishu* was also fairly close in time to some of the events it records, covering the period from 386-550 CE and having been compiled between 551-554 CE. In all three cases much of the material would have come from direct access to the imperial records and archives, since the authors were court scribes and officials, as well as possible testimonies from eyewitnesses.

The remaining two, the *Hou Hanshu* and the *Jinshu*, were compiled long after the period they cover, 25-220 CE for the *Hou Hanshu* finished in 445 CE and 265-420 CE for the *Jinshu* completed in 646 CE. Most of the information for these two last accounts cannot have come directly from archives, as these were either destroyed or simply lost to time. Instead, their accounts likely came from other, mostly lost, histories written closer to the events, histories that often in turn drew on archival records and officials accounts.²²² The use of earlier histories was also to a certain extent the case with the three first works, seen for example in later inclusion into the *Sanguozhi*'s of a lengthy quote from an earlier work called *Weilüe* (魏略) in its description of the western regions.²²³ The exact providence of the available material for all five books is however largely unknown, with the exception of the *Hou Hanshu*'s chapter on the Western Regions. For in the case of this chapter on the Western Regions the author Fan Ye explicitly state its sources, explaining, “they are

²²¹ Wilkinson, 626.

²²² Wilkinson, 598–600, 622.

²²³ The quote was added to an annotated version of the *Sanguozhi* by Songzhi Pei, who finished his commentary in 429. Hill, ‘The People of the West’. Introduction.

from Ban Yong's report [presented] at the end of [the reign of] Emperor An [107-125 CE], and so on."²²⁴

This note, in addition to giving a useful anchor for the information contained in the *Hou Hanshu*, also shows the awareness concerning questions of accuracy and truth in the Chinese historical tradition. As discussed by Wilkinson there was a strong sense amongst Chinese historians that accuracy was important in a good historical account, and given their reliance on official records as their sources, the Chinese tradition is often surprisingly accurate in terms of chronology and numbers.²²⁵ This is seen reflected in the texts. One can for example observe that in the *Hou Hanshu*'s chapter on the Western Regions, population figures are only given for those polities with which the Chinese military and administration was in contact, while for more distant states like Parthia and Rome such numbers were not provided as they would have had to be invented. As observed by Hill, many, though not all, of the distances given in the same text are likewise surprisingly accurate.²²⁶ That said, however, the accounts do contain many glaring omissions, exaggerations and errors, and a critical approach is therefore always necessary. Being court officials, the historians of the "standard histories" were for example often constrained by political considerations and motives, and consequently their portrayal of imperial action is nearly always positive. And most pertinently for our case, they were also well-educated members of the Chinese elite and courts. As such, their accounts of foreign places and peoples are naturally products of their environment and reflects the worldview and interests of the Chinese elites. This is seen, for example, in the lack of detailed descriptions of the political systems of foreign states, except where they proved fascinating or affected the Chinese state in some way. There is further a strong tendency for aggrandizing the actions of the Chinese dynasties and their representatives, and conversely to emphasize both the moral faults and the submissiveness of the foreigners. Finally, the perhaps biggest problem with the Chinese historical accounts for the student of the Tarim Basin's history, is that they do not present a continuous narrative but rather a number of shorter episodes. These are regularly broken following internal turmoil in China, as

²²⁴ Hill, *Through the Jade Gate*, 13.

²²⁵ Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 603–5.

²²⁶ Hill, *Through the Jade Gate*, xx–xxi.

contact between China and the Western Regions collapsed, only to later be re-established. These weaknesses are crucial to keep in mind, for while the accounts given by the Chinese “Standard histories” are invaluable sources to the political history of Inner Asia, often the only ones available, they do not provide a full picture.

Other Chinese sources

Besides the Chinese histories various other Chinese sources makes mention of the kingdom of Kroraina and other polities of the Tarim Basin, ranging from dictionaries to the hagiographies of Central Asian Buddhist monks, though these are usually very brief. Of interest to this dissertation are two types of accounts, namely the travelogues of Chinese pilgrims and geographical texts. As seen in the introduction a number of Chinese Buddhist monks made their way through the Tarim Basin during the first centuries CE, primarily on their way to India to seek out original knowledge and manuscripts of their religion. Several accounts describing these monks and their journey exits, many collected in the *Gaoseng Zhuan* (高僧傳, Biographies of Eminent Monks) composed in 530 CE.²²⁷ Two such journeys are of particular interest, namely the journeys of the monks Faxian (法顯) and the famed Xuanzang (玄奘), as both left detailed travelogues of their own. Faxian travelled to India from 399-413 CE, going as seen via the Tarim Basin and visiting the kingdom of Kroraina, a journey which he himself described in the text *Foguoji* (佛國記, Record of Buddhist Kingdoms) completed in 416 CE.²²⁸ Xuanzang meanwhile travelled in the same fashion to India via the Tarim Basin, though by a longer northern route, between 627-645 CE, as recorded in his work *Da Tang Xiyu Ji* (大唐西域記, Great Tang Record of the Western Regions) finished in 646 CE.²²⁹ Both these monks recorded a wealth of details about the areas they travelled through, including geography, politics, and cultural practises, and both furthermore recorded legends and fantastical stories they encountered, though all with a particular slant towards Buddhism, Buddhist history,

²²⁷ Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 388.

²²⁸ Legge, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms; Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fâ-Hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon, A.D. 399-414, in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline. Translated and Annotated with a Korean Recension of the Chinese Text*, 2-5.

²²⁹ Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 739.

and Buddhist practises. Being thus very detailed, and being eye-witness accounts, they are both excellent sources, though unfortunately neither give more than passing details on the kingdom of Kroraina. This is especially true of Xuanzang who, travelling in the seventh century, lived after the fall of the kingdom of Kroraina and could but observe its ruins. Both narratives do however have some bearing on the following, both for the information they provide but also because they preserved Buddhist legends about the region.

Less is said of the kingdom of Kroraina and its neighbours in Chinese geographical works of the period, though some occasional mentions are made. Though several geographical works were produced in the first half of the first millennium CE²³⁰ the only one that deserves special mention here is the *Shuijing zhu* (水經注, Commentary on the Classic of Waterways). This commentary, compiled ca. 515-524 CE by Daoyuan Li, was an annotation and expansion upon an earlier work called the *Shuijing* (水經, Classic of Waterways), said to originate from the third century BCE but now thought to have been written in the third century CE. Li however massively expanded the work, including a total of 1252 waterways as well as many details about the surrounding areas, including notes on their history.²³¹ Not only Chinese rivers are covered, for the *Shuijing zhu* does included descriptions of the rivers of the west, including the Tarim Basin rivers, and their adjacent countries. It is however very difficult to know exactly where Li took his information for the sections on the Tarim Basin from, and it is also not clear if all the information used described the same time period, making it an interesting, if difficult, source.

Other secondary sources

Aside from the Chinese tradition there are almost no secondary historical sources to the Tarim Basin polities in antiquity, and even those few that do describe it generally gives short and vague descriptions. Classical authors from the first century CE, such as Pomponius Mela in *De Situ Orbis* and Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia*, do speak of the peoples of Inner and Eastern Asia, though their tales are mainly of wild,

²³⁰ See Wilkinson, 715–16, 732–33.

²³¹ Wilkinson, 200.

often cannibalistic, people between them and the silk bearing *Seres*.²³² Ptolemy's second century *Geographike Hyphegesis* provides some more detailed information, which various scholars have attempted to fit to the actual geography of Central Asia, but his account of the Tarim Basin remains purely geographical and as such of little interest in this dissertation.²³³ Similarly, the information from Indian and other traditions are extremely limited, though one interesting example is known. This appears to have been a Buddhist tradition that connected the Kushan ruler Kanishka I with some of the Tarim Basin polities, as seen both in an Indian legend quoted by Xuanzang, and in the Tibetan text *Li yul lun-bstan-pa* or "Prophecy of the Li Country".²³⁴ Xuanzang did however, as noted, write in the seventh century, while the *Li yul lun-bstan-pa* dates to the eight century, both significantly later than the events they purport to describe, and their accounts are more pious legend than actual historical narratives.

On the whole, we are left with a Chinese historical tradition that provides a political history for the Tarim Basin region supplemented by some descriptions, though often patchy and broken at regular intervals. This aside there is almost no other historical narratives to rely on, making it easy to dismiss the Tarim Basin polities as "people without history", something that has indeed often been done. This however disregard the large number of written, primary sources available for the kingdom of Kroraina, to which we will now turn next.

3.2 The Krorainan written sources: The non-Kharosthi material

As discussed in the previous chapter, all the major Krorainan sites, Niya, Endere, and the central Lop sites, have yielded significant amounts of documents. The documents were written in one of four languages, Chinese, Sogdian, Prakrit, or Kucheana, also known as Tocharian B. As discussed above the documents generally came from one of three contexts, namely surface finds, rubbish heaps, and archives, though these did at

²³² Coedès and Sheldon, *Texts of Greek and Latin Authors on the Far East*, 9–15.

²³³ de la Vaissière, 'The Triple System of Orography in Ptolemy's Xinjiang'; Tupikova, Schemmel, and Geus, 'New Reading of Ptolemy on the Silk Road: A New Interpretation of Ptolemy's Coordinates'.

²³⁴ Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World, Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629)*; Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan*; Falk, *Kushan Histories*, 115–16.

times overlap, and all four languages were found together in various sites. The majority of these documents appear to have been locally produced and of an administrative nature, written either on the site in question, or another site within the kingdom of Kroraina, and as such they constitute a unique set of primary sources to the kingdom's history.

This collection of documents will serve as the primary source for this dissertation, with a focus on the Kharosthi documents produced by the inhabitants of the kingdom of Kroraina themselves. It is therefore necessary to give a detailed presentation of these sources here, as well as the database created from the Kharosthi documents. The following will present the Chinese, Sogdian and Kharosthi documents in turn, before tackling the database. The Kuchean documents will be left out however, as there has been but a single find of Kuchean fragments in the form of two small pieces L.M.1.36 and 37 found by Stein,²³⁵ neither of which were decipherable.

Chinese documents from Kroraina

Documents written in Chinese script and language were common in the kingdom of Kroraina, with a total of 830 documents and fragments known to date. The vast majority of these, 765 documents in all, were found at various Lop sites, including at L.A (681), L.B (3), L.C (4), L.E (10), L.F (2), L.K (55), and L.M (10). Within these sites L.A.2 and L.A.3, with their adjacent rubbish heap L.A.6.ii, were particularly rich sources of Chinese documents, accounting for fully 604 documents.²³⁶ Far fewer Chinese documents have been found at sites further west as only the Niya site has yielded Chinese documents from the antique period in any significant quantity. A total 74 Chinese documents have been found at Niya, primarily in the various structures of ruin N.5. A single Chinese fragment, seemingly used to pack some form of powder, has also turned up in the Zaganluk burial M73 near Charchan.²³⁷ These Chinese

²³⁵ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 194, 1028.

²³⁶ Hou and Yang, 楼兰汉文简纸文书集成 (*A Collection of the Chinese Documents on Paper from Loulan*), 31–54.

²³⁷ The Museum of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (新疆维吾尔自治区博物馆), CPAM of Bayingolin Mongolian Autonomous Region (巴音郭楞蒙古自治州文物管理所), and CPAM of Charchan county (且末县文物管理所), ‘新疆且末扎滚鲁克一号墓地发掘报告 (Excavation of Graveyard No.1 at Zaganluk in Charchan, Xinjiang)’, 130.

documents were written on long wooden slips, on paper, or in a few rare cases on silk. Their form partly explains the great quantity of Chinese documents, as in the case of the texts on wood, a single document were in many cases made up of a number of wooden slips bound together, but as these strings of slips can rarely be reconstructed the number of recorded document fragments become very high. They cover a broad range of types, but consists primarily of commands, reports, and various forms of lists and notes, all used for administrative or record-keeping purposes. Of particular note are a number of pass-slips, used for controlling travel through Chinese border territory, found at Niya. In addition to these administrative documents a fair number of letters are known, both official and private, as well as a few fragments of known literary works, some writing exercises, and one mathematical exercise. The most remarkable example of these types of literary texts are Hedin's document p.1 from L.A, a sheet of paper containing text taken from a classical Chinese treaties on strategy and statecraft called the *Zhan Guo Ce* (戰國策, Strategies of the Warring States).²³⁸

This variety of Chinese text types found at the Krorainan sites naturally raises the question of who might have produced them, as some, such as the *Zhan Guo Ce*, points to a high level of literacy. As will be detailed in section 4.1.3 it is beyond doubt that many of these Chinese documents were produced by the administration of a Chinese garrison active in the Lop region during third and fourth centuries. The ruins L.A.2-3 were likely the headquarters of this garrison, which accounts for the vast amounts of primarily administrative documents found there. The presence of the garrison commanders, some of which were high ranking Chinese military men, probably also goes some way to explain the presence of Chinese literary works such as the *Zhan Guo Ce* in Kroraina. Yet it is likely that parts of the local population, either settled Chinese immigrants not connected to the Chinese official presence and probably also some of the local elites, were literate in Chinese script and language. This is shown by the repeated finds of several fragments from two well-known Chinese textbooks, namely the *Jijiupian* (急就篇, Quickly Master (the Characters) Chapters) and the *Cangjiepian* (倉頡篇, Cangjie's Chapters). Both works were basic

²³⁸ Conrady, *Die Chinesischen Handschriften- Und Sonstigen Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in Lou-Lan*, 76–78.

primers and proto-dictionaries, listing characters and providing easily memorized phrases for repeating, intended to help learning the Chinese script. The examples of the *Jijiupian* comes from across the Lop sites, with examples excavated not only at L.A but also at L.C, L.E and L.F,²³⁹ while parts of the *Cangjiepian* were excavated at the Niya site ruin N.14.²⁴⁰ These clearly indicate that someone was learning to write Chinese characters both in the Lop area and at the Niya site during the time of the kingdom of Kroraina, a fact further supported by the presence of a number of writing exercises in Chinese.²⁴¹

Exactly who used these textbooks and did the writing exercises is of course exceedingly difficult to tell. Some might have been the products of Chinese soldiers and officials, though one would think that the official scribes sent to Kroraina were already literate prior to their posting. It seems more likely that locally settled people used these learning tools, whether they were Chinese immigrants or native Krorainan. That local Krorainan elites were familiar with Chinese culture can almost be taken for granted, partly due to the archaeological evidence of their tombs but also when considering that several Krorainan princes throughout the kingdom's history were recorded as serving at the Chinese court, including a prince sent in 284 CE according to the *Jinshu*.²⁴² The use of textbooks by local scribes or elites certainly would seem to be the case with the *Cangjiepian* found at Niya, as there was at no point an official Chinese presence known at the Niya site. Furthermore, some of the Chinese documents were found in what was clearly Krorainan homesteads, such as at L.M.1-2 and at N.5, and indeed there are also several cases where one and the same document carried both Chinese and Kharosthi characters.²⁴³ Finally, and most clearly, is the evidence provided by the Chinese document LA.6.ii.065 (Cn.922) where the writer identifies himself as being from Loulan, that is Kroraina.²⁴⁴

²³⁹ Maspero, *Les Documents Chinois de La Troisième Expédition de Sir Aurel Stein En Asie Centrale*, 61.

²⁴⁰ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡學術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:306-7; Wang, '略说尼雅发现的苍颉篇汉简 (The Han Bamboo Slip of the Cangjie Chapter Discovered in Niya)'.

²⁴¹ See Conrady p.7, 14c-d, 25c, 26b, 30b, 31-33, 35 and w.116. Also Chavannes Cn.925.

²⁴² Xuanling Fang et al, JS, 3.

²⁴³ For some examples see the Kharosthi documents n.699 and 868.

²⁴⁴ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental*, 190.

However, while one cannot be entirely certain who produced the various Chinese documents found in the kingdom of Kroraina, their dates are luckily far more certain, as sixty-one of the Chinese documents found so far carried dates.²⁴⁵ These dates were expressed in imperial regnal years and gives dates ranging from 263 CE (L.A.2.v.3. Cn.738) to 330 CE (L.A.1.iii.1. Cn.886). As shown very nicely with a table in Rhie 1999 (See figure 1) almost two-thirds of the documents cluster in the earliest part of this span, from 265-270 CE, followed by a gap until 310 CE with only six documents between 310-330 CE. Furthermore, the later dates are only found in the Lop region, being from L.A and L.E, while the single dated document from the Niya site, N.xv.326 from N.5, gave the date 269 CE as noted above. As argued by Yue Wang, however, the script on the fragments of the Cangjiepie found at N.14 does resemble the script used during the first century in the Later Han period,²⁴⁶ opening the possibility that some of the Chinese documents from Niya may be slightly older. While possible, this is however difficult to say for sure, and it seems equally likely that the Chinese script used at remote Niya might have lagged behind trends seen in Central China. Such outliers aside, it is clear that the Chinese documents found in Kroraina generally date from between 263 CE to 330 CE, with a weight towards the earlier part of the period.

Finally, as might already have been noticed, there is a variety of systems in use for ordering the Chinese documents from Kroraina. This stems from the fact that the initial haul of documents from Hedin and Stein were collected, studied, and translated in a variety of different volumes. Hedin's collection is found in Conrady 1920²⁴⁷ while the majority of Stein's finds were studied and translated by Chavannes 1913,²⁴⁸ containing the documents of Stein's second expedition, and Maspero 1953,²⁴⁹ with the documents from the third expedition. The first haul of Chinese documents from Niya,

²⁴⁵ For the dated documents collected by Hedin and Stein see: Conrady, p.16a-b, 20, 22 and w.1, 49-52, 54, 64-65, 71, 102, 107, 114. Chavannes, N.xv.326 from Niya and further Cn.721-730, 733, 735-739, 741, 748, 878, 886, 896, 910, 912 from Lop. Maspero, Mn.175, 195, 213, 214, 216, 221, 229, 246-248. See also Hou and Yang, 楼兰汉文简纸文书集成 (*A Collection of the Chinese Documents on Paper from Loulan*).

²⁴⁶ Wang, '略说尼雅发现的苍颉篇汉简 (The Han Bamboo Slip of the Cangjie Chapter Discovered in Niya)', 58.

²⁴⁷ Conrady, *Die Chinesischen Handschriften- Und Sonstigen Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in Lou-Lan*.

²⁴⁸ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental*.

²⁴⁹ Maspero, *Les Documents Chinois de La Troisième Expédition de Sir Aurel Stein En Asie Centrale*.

collected during Stein's first expedition, was however translated by Chavannes in an appendix to *Ancient Khotan*.²⁵⁰ Finally, Hou and Yang has more recently published a revised collection of all the Chinese documents found at the Lop sites by 1999.²⁵¹ While theirs is the only complete collection, they do however not provide a new numbering system. Furthermore, as their collection only gives the original Chinese text, I will in the following refer to the numbers of Chavannes, Conrady, and Maspero where possible, as these are more accessible to the average reader. In order to distinguish them from each other and the Kharosthi documents, I refer to each with a separate designation. For Chavannes Cn. is used, for Conrady either p. or w. for paper and wooden documents respectively, and for Maspero Mn. I have also used their translations for quoted text throughout, though checked against the updated readings of Hou and Yang.

Sogdian documents from Kroraina

The second group of documents from Kroraina are those written in Sogdian, the language spoken in ancient Sogdiana, a region that covered much of modern-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Sogdian is a North-Eastern Iranian language, and was primarily written using its own script derived from Aramaic. Unlike the vast amounts of Chinese and Kharosthi documents found in the kingdom of Kroraina, however, only seven Sogdian documents have been found to date, most of which are fragments. Stein found four documents at the L.A site, two in L.A.2, one in L.A.4, and one in the rubbish heap L.A.6.ii.²⁵² He uncovered a further two from the L.K cluster in the southern part of the Lop desert, with one document from the small fort L.L and one from a rubbish heap at the farmstead L.M.2.²⁵³ In addition, the Sino-Japanese expedition found a single Sogdian document at the ruin N.37 of the Niya site, labelled 93A27F1:3.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*.

²⁵¹ Hou and Yang, 楼兰汉文简纸文书集成 (*A Collection of the Chinese Documents on Paper from Loulan*).

²⁵² L.A.II.x.01 (Or.8212/1368), L.A.II.x.02 (Or. 8212/1368), L.A.IV.v.028 (Or. 8212/1365), L.A.VI.ii.0104 (Or.8212/102).

²⁵³ L.M.II.ii.09 (Or. 8212/1823) and L.L.018 (Or. 8212/1735).

²⁵⁴ Sims-Williams and Bi, 'A Sogdian Fragment from Niya'.

All the seven Sogdian documents had been written on paper. Three, L.A.6.ii.0104, L.M.2.ii.09, and 93A27F1:3 from Niya, are slightly larger and recognizably parts of documents while the remaining four are little more than paper scraps. (See figure 2) Due to their poor state, only three have been deciphered, being L.A.2.x.01 by Benveniste,²⁵⁵ L.M.2.ii.09 by Sims-Williams²⁵⁶ and 93A27F1 by Sims-Williams and Bi,²⁵⁷ but interestingly all three are fragments of letters. Given the language and the few attested names in the documents, it is almost certain that the writers themselves were Sogdians, though where they wrote their letters from is less certain. Yet as shall be discussed in later chapters, there is evidence that some Sogdians might have settled, at least for a time, in the kingdom of Kroraina, and we have ample evidence that they passed through the kingdom going east and west. Turning to the question of dating, none of the documents contain any full or known dates, though L.M.2.ii.09 does give the month and day. That the documents date from the Krorainan period is however beyond doubt, given that they were all found together with Chinese and/or Kharosthi documents that can safely be dated to the third and early fourth centuries.

3.3 The Krorainan written sources: The Kharosthi documents

The third group of documents from the kingdom of Kroraina are the so-called Kharosthi documents, sometimes alternatively called the Niya documents or the Kharosthi inscriptions. Being both the largest collection of documents and the one with the most content per document, the Kharosthi collection will be of particular importance to this dissertation. These documents were written using the Kharosthi script and writing a locally adapted form of Gandhari. Both script and language derived originally from the Gandhara region in North-western India where they had both developed, Kharosthi from its roots in Aramaic and Gandhari being a Gandharan form of Prakrit, a Middle Indo-Aryan language. As discussed by Burrow, the version of Gandhari written in the kingdom of Kroraina was however notably idiosyncratic,

²⁵⁵ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 1031.

²⁵⁶ Sims-Williams, *A so far unedited early Sogdian letter from Loulan (Stein collection, L.M.II.ii.09)*, forthcoming

²⁵⁷ Sims-Williams and Bi, 'A Sogdian Fragment from Niya'.

having borrowed extensively from other languages and having been adapted to local use.²⁵⁸

Documents and inscriptions in Kharosthi have been found at all major and most minor Krorainan sites, with the total number of documents and inscriptions known to date being 880. The renewed archaeological efforts and interest of Chinese researches since the 1980s has however meant that new Kharosthi documents are regularly being found, either discovered archaeologically or in museum collections. The exact find spot of some of these documents recently discovered in museum collections are uncertain, but the vast majority of the Kharosthi documents with a known find site came from the Niya site, which alone has yielded at least 777 documents. Other smaller find sites includes L.A (41), L.B (6), L.C (1), L.F (1), L.M (3), Endere (7), Miran (3), and Yingpan (1), with 40 documents being uncertain. Why so many more documents have been found at Niya does not have a single clear answer though two important factors likely contributed to this, namely the intensity of archaeological study at that site, and the nature of the site's abandonment. For, as seen from the discussion on archaeology above, the work done at the Niya site has been at a far larger scale, and over longer periods, than any other Krorainan site. At Niya most of the work has also concentrated on dwellings of various kinds, as opposed to stupas, walls or tombs, locations that by their nature are more likely to yield documents. Secondly, the Niya site, as also discussed above, appears to have been abandoned rather suddenly, but seemingly with the intent to return. This can be contrasted with the likely more gradual abandonment of many of the Lop sites, following desiccation, which would have meant that more documents were moved off the sites. This strong bias towards the Niya site is however important to keep in mind in the following, as it does to an extent warp the view of the kingdom presented through the Kharosthi documents.

Despite this flaw, the Kharosthi documents are a unique source to the kingdom of Kroraina. Although my typology for the Kharosthi documents will be discussed in more detail below, it is worth noting that perhaps the greatest strengths of the Kharosthi collection is the breadth of document types present, ranging from

²⁵⁸ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*.

administrative documents to private ones, including letters, contracts, household registers and a few literary texts. The administrative documents, such as royal commands or lists related to taxation, do however make up the vast majority. As indicated by these types, the Kharosthi documents were nearly all produced within the kingdom of Kroraina. Official scribes, whose profession was hereditary and who were appointed by the ranking royal official, generally wrote them. That these scribes were trained locally, in most cases by their parents or other relatives, are shown by the frequent occurrence of copied texts and exercises in buildings associated with scribes, such as N.24.²⁵⁹ The existence of scribes capable of writing Gandhari, a language from North-Western India, does however raise the important question of who these scribes were, how the Gandhari language and Kharosthi script made it to Kroraina, and also generally about language use in the kingdom of Kroraina. The importance of these questions were recognized already by Stein during his first expedition, for as he put it, “Such a fact could only be accounted for by historical events of far-reaching importance, or else by ethnic movements little suspected hitherto.”²⁶⁰ Naturally these questions have since Stein’s discoveries been the matter of some debate. The question of how language and script, as well as many other Gandhari cultural elements such as religion and artistic styles, made it to Kroraina is discussed in more detail in section 4.1.4. Here however it is worth briefly discussing the questions directly pertaining to the documents, namely the interlinked questions of the scribe’s background and language use in Kroraina.

Kharosthi and language use in Kroraina

Broadly speaking there are two explanations in the literature for the identity and backgrounds of the scribes which wrote the Kharosthi documents, one that suggests they were either migrants from Gandhara or descent of such migrants, and one that suggest that the scribes were locals speakers of a local language. Valerie Hansen, who in her 2012 book gives the fullest discussion of the first explanation, suggests that

²⁵⁹ For some examples of what were likely exercises, or possibly drafts of copies, see documents n.511, 512, 514, 523 and 565.

²⁶⁰ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:321.

many of the scribes were of Gandharan origins based primarily on two points.²⁶¹ Partly she bases her conclusion on the names of the scribes seen in the documents, which she points out were Indian names of Sanskrit origin such as Buddhasena. Secondly, she points to what can be termed the migration theory for the origins of Gandharan cultural elements in Kroraina, which suggests that large groups of people from Gandhara migrated into the Tarim Basin sometimes during the second century CE, bringing their language, script, and culture with them. This theory has been set forth by a number of scholars, including Meicun Lin in his *Kharosthi Bibliography* (1996), Valerie Hansen in both *Religious Life in a Silk Road Community: Niya During the Third and Fourth Centuries* (2004) and *The Silk Road: A New History* (2012), and Arnaud Bertrand in his article *Water Management in Jingjue Kingdom* (2012). It is also briefly contemplated by Mariner Padwa in his 2007 dissertation, though he does not offer a clear conclusion.²⁶² Hansen suggest that these Gandharan migrants, having brought their language and culture to the kingdom, then served as scribes to the local Krorainan rulers.

I have discussed the migration theory at length elsewhere, and consequently the theory itself will not be discussed in detail here.²⁶³ Sufficient to say it can be refuted on two primary points. The first is the absolute lack of sources that directly supports such a scenario. The second, and more important, point is the strong continuity seen in Krorainan material culture and practises through time, as exemplified by for example building and burial practises in the region. It is however necessary to scrutinize the first supposition of Hansen, that the writers of the Kharosthi documents were primarily of Indian origins as inferred from their names. For of the twenty-three individuals identified as scribes in the documents only four have names of clear Indian origins, namely Dhamapriya, Budharachi, Namdaṣena, and Saṃghamitra,²⁶⁴ while the remaining nineteen had local names. Of the four men with Indian sounding names the first and last were Buddhist monks, suggesting perhaps that their name choice might

²⁶¹ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 44–45.

²⁶² Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', 250–51.

²⁶³ Høisæter, 'Migrants or Monks. The Problems of a Migration Scenario in First to Fourth Century Caḍota by the Niya River'.

²⁶⁴ See actors n.100, 534, 614, 1322.

have been linked to their monasticism.²⁶⁵ Naṃdaṣena was furthermore the son of the previously encountered official Soṃjaka, whose name most certainly was local. As for the name Budhaṣena mentioned by Hansen, it is a name that appears in a number of documents, likely all referring to the same person.²⁶⁶ This Budhaṣena was however never a scribe, though he is referred to as a monk. One most certainly cannot suggest his background to have been Gandharan based purely on his name however, as the names of his family points in other directions. In documents n.856 and n.857 for example he feuds with a brother named Lyimira, with a local name, and in document n.858 his father is said to be named Marega, identified as a name of Bactrian origins.²⁶⁷ His family thus contained names with Indian, Iranian, and local roots, showing clearly that the mere presence of Indian sounding names cannot be taken as proof of origin.

Instead, the second possibility, that the scribes were primarily local learned men, seems far more likely. This explanation was first suggested by Thomas Burrow, who noted the heavy influence of a local language on the documents, a language he named Krorainic. This language was expressed not only through hundreds of local names and several local words used in the documents, but also through frequent alterations of the spelling of Gandhari words due to the influence of Krorainic pronunciation.²⁶⁸ One of the best examples of this phenomenon given by Burrow is the lack of voiced stops, like g, j, d, and b in Krorainic, which lead to them frequently being replaced by the unvoiced k, c, t, and p.²⁶⁹ Thus the name of Suḡuta, the son of Ramṣotsa of ruin N.24, was often spelled Suḡuda.²⁷⁰ Based on a number of similarities in both phonetic structure, suffix formation and words, Burrow tentatively suggested that this Krorainic language might have been a form of Tocharian, a language group

²⁶⁵ That this was a fairly common practise is attested by the fact that the majority of identified monks carried Indian sounding and often clearly Buddhist names. Given their strong local ties, including kinship ties, it seems impossible that they were all Indian immigrants and not people of local origins. For discussion on monks in Kroraina see section 4.3.3.

²⁶⁶ Based on the prosopographical criteria listed below the database records actors n.415 and n.567 both as Budhasena, though this was in all likelihood the same person.

²⁶⁷ Sims-Williams, *Bactrian Personal Names*, 2:84.

²⁶⁸ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, v–ix.

²⁶⁹ Burrow, 5.

²⁷⁰ See for example n.575 for a case with d and n.576 for a case with t.

previously known from the northern Tarim polities of Kucha and Karashar.²⁷¹ But even though later studies has for the most part accepted Burrow's propositions on Krorainic, with some notable exceptions such as Hansen, there has been little further work on this topic.²⁷² A recent posthumous publication by the Tocharian specialist Klaus T. Schmidt might change this however, for in the text *Eine dritte tocharische Sprache: Lolanisch*, edited by Stefan Zimmer, he proposes a third Tocharin language to have been spoken in Kroraina, namely Tocharian C or Lolanic. This Lolanic he bases on ten documents and inscriptions, written in Kharosthi, whose contents had yet to be deciphered.²⁷³ The work has received a mixed reception amongst linguists²⁷⁴ and being such a recent publication there is much research left before the existence of Tocharian C, and any possible connections to the Krorainic of Burrow, can be conclusively proven.

Whether or not one accepts the connection between Krorainic and the Tocharian languages, or the existence of a Tocharian C language, Burrow's research quite clearly shows that the writers of the Krorainan Kharosthi documents were not native users of Gandhari. This is reflected in their names, for as noted previously fully nineteen out of thirty-three known scribes had Krorainic names, although as shown by the case of Budhaṣena this could often say little of origins. That these scribes were men of local decent and had been so for a long time is however quite clear when looking at several of the best-known scribes, such as Lȳipeya from ruin N.1 or Ramṣotsa from N.24. Both had Krorainic names, as did all their known kin except a Saṃgha who might have been Lȳipeya's brother,²⁷⁵ and both appears to have inherited their farmsteads from their fathers. Both are also closely affiliated with local kinship groups, being Peta-avana and Yave-avana respectively, and in document n.581 Ramṣotsa is even explicitly said to be a member of Yave-avana. It is not clear if Lȳipeya's father had also been a scribe, but in the case of Ramṣotsa's family the

²⁷¹ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, ix.

²⁷² For a good discussion of this see, Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', chap. 8.2.

²⁷³ Schmidt, 'Eine Dritte Tocharische Sprache: Lolanisch'.

²⁷⁴ Adams, 'Tocharian C: Its Discovery and Implications'; Koller, 'Klaus T. Schmidt with Stefan Zimmer (Ed.): Nachgelassene Schriften. 1. Ein Westtocharisches Ordinationsritual. 2. Eine Dritte Tocharische Sprache: Lolanisch. (Monographien Zur Indischen Archäologie, Kunst Und Philologie 24.) x, 275 Pp. Bremen: Hempen Verlag, 2018.'

²⁷⁵ See actor n.174.

hereditary nature of the scribal profession is shown very clearly, given that his father, his son and at least one of his grandsons were also scribes.

As discussed in detail by Padwa there is also every reason to believe, especially given the nature of writing legal documents and the presence of literary compositions, that these Krorainan scribes were not merely reproducing text.²⁷⁶ Rather some of their numbers were truly literate in Gandhari, perhaps even in Chinese, and developed it as suited their needs. Thus, instead of a somehow separate or distinct group of Gandharan migrants serving as local scribes it is quite clear that the Krorainan scribes were, at least in the vast majority of cases, learned members of the local elite whose skills and duties were hereditary.

On the shape of the documents and the use of seals

Before moving on to the second much contested issue surrounding the Kharosthi documents, that of their precise dating, it is necessary to briefly make some notes on the form of the documents and the Krorainan use of seals. The 880 known Kharosthi documents were written with ink and wooden styles on a variety of materials, including leather, silk and some examples of paper from the Lop sites, but the vast majority of surviving documents were written on wooden tablets. These tablets come in a bewildering array of shapes and conditions, with some, such as the so-called oblong tablets, being simple wooden boards, as exemplified by document n.478, while others appears to be little more than a stick cut in half, as for example document n.547. (See figure 3) The majority of the documents had however been more carefully shaped, being primarily wedge-shaped tablets, rectangular tablets, or so-called “Takthi”-shaped tablets, the latter being rectangular boards with small handles. (See figure 4-6) The “Takthi”-shape, far less common than the two others, was always used individually and appears to primarily have been for taking notes, lists and drafts. Documents written on the wedge-shaped and rectangular tablets on the other hand were generally double tablets, meaning that a full document consisted of a cover-tablet and an under-tablet that fit together. This arrangement not only gave more surface for

²⁷⁶ Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 256–61.

writing the contents of the document on, but crucially also served as an envelope for the main text which was invariably written on the obverse of the under-tablet and if needed continued on the reverse of the cover-tablet. Addresses and notes were then usually added to the outside of the two tablets as needed.

This envelope arrangement allowed the main text of the document to remain safe from damage during transportation, yet as with all envelopes the primary purpose of this arrangement was to keep the contents hidden and safe from tampering. To facilitate this the double-tablets had been shaped with a number of grooves, and in the case of the wedge-tablets a hole. Through these were tied a complex knot of strings that held the documents shut, and the strings were in turn fastened with one or more clay seals. (See figure 7) Thus, in order to look or tamper with the content of the document in question one would have to cut the strings, which could in turn not be re-applied without breaking the seal. This clever method for sealing the documents has been revealed, not only by the shape of the documents themselves, but also by the finds of many still intact and sealed documents retaining both strings and seal. Although some variations in tying technique and the number of seals do exist, the method used was in general very consistent across all known examples.²⁷⁷

The Krorainan practise of sealing and use of seals was in other words highly sophisticated. It is therefore unfortunate that beyond Stein's initial remarks no detailed study of Krorainan seals and sealing practises exists, though some individual seals have attracted much attention as shall be seen shortly.²⁷⁸ Though a detailed study of the seals and sealing practises cannot be presented here, a few brief observations on the Krorainan use of seals must be made. For it is important to recognize that seals in Kroraina served not only to protect the documents from tampering but were also used as a form of authentication and authorization of the contents of the document. This is for example seen in the sealing practises on formal contracts, where the seals set were

²⁷⁷ For a detailed discussion of both document shapes and the methods used for sealing them see Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:344–48.

²⁷⁸ For a short but thorough discussion of Krorainan seals and sealing practises see Enoki, 'The Location of the Capital of Lou-Lan and the Date of the Kharosthi Inscriptions', 237–43. A debate about a seal from the Anau site in Turkmenistan has also drawn on seals from Niya as neatly summarized in Tao and Wang, 'The Anau Seal and the Questions It Raises'.

invariably those of the magistrates who presided over the exchange.²⁷⁹ Thus, while both form and image of the seals in use in Kroraina varied greatly, ranging from seemingly abstract geometric patterns to representations of both animals and people,²⁸⁰ the individual seal can in all cases be linked to a single actor. Two good examples of this is the anthropomorphic seal of the well-known cozbo Somjaka and the elephant seal of cozbo Kamciya.²⁸¹ (Figure 8) The top seal in the figure is Somjaka's seal from document n.569, and offers the clearest imprint available of this seal, which appears to represent a human figure holding something in its hands. The same seal is also discernible on five other documents, appearing alone on n.244, n.568, and n.573, and together with two others, on n.582 and n.584. That it is in fact the seal of cozbo Somjaka is explicitly stated on five of them, n.244, n.568, n.569, n.582, and n.584, while in document n.573, which lacks a specific statement about seal ownership, cozbo Somjaka is stated to be the presiding magistrate. The square elephant seal of cozbo Kamciya appears on two documents, n.583 which is the example seen in the figure, and n.592. In both cases Kamciya's ownership of the seal is clear as he is the presiding magistrate in document n.583 and explicitly said to be the seal's owner in document n.592.

Several other equally well-attested examples of these sealing practises exist, and we have examples of the seal of nearly every major official active at the Niya site in the period of the documents. As such it is beyond doubt that the seals set on a document were placed by a very specific actor, and in the case of contracts and legal documents this was invariably the person who had commissioned them and authenticated the contents, most commonly one or more royal official.

Dates and chronology

With these points on the shapes and sealing of the documents in mind, we turn to the much-debated problem of the chronology and precise dating of the Kharosthi

²⁷⁹ For some typical examples see document n.331, 569, 582, 592. A detailed discussion of the use of seals in both contracts and legal documents can be found in section 5.4.3, where a few deviant cases are also commented upon.

²⁸⁰ The images seen on the seals themselves are discussed in more detail in section 6.3.4.

²⁸¹ Actor n.944 (n.1041), sometimes spelled Kamjiya.

documents. Naturally, given their archaeological context, there has not been much debate about which broad period the documents must fall into. For as will be recalled, the documents at both Niya and the Lop sites were found intermingled with dated Chinese documents, spanning from the mid-third to the early fourth century CE. However, beyond this broad range, the question becomes more complicated, and in order to reach a semblance of a solution one must look at both the relative and the absolute chronology of the documents.

The relative chronology of the documents can in many cases be established, as 157 of the documents carried dates. Most commonly these appear in their introductory formula, but sometimes dates also appear as notes after the text. This reckoning, a system native to the kingdom, normally gave years after the regnal years of the ruling king, followed by numerical months and days. In the case of the note-type dates the year or the reign are, however, most often omitted, giving only month and day as the year in question would have been obvious to those who used these documents. As such, they are rarely of much use here. The fuller dating formula on the other hand is most often encountered in official documents, such as contracts and legal documents, and gives the year followed by the monarch's royal style, his name and finally the month and day. A particularly exuberant example of this can be seen in document n.581 where the date is given as follows,

In the 6th year of the reign of the great king of kings (*maharayatirayaṣa*), the great (*mahaṃtaṣa*), the victorious (*jayaṃtaṣa*), the just (*dharmiyaṣa*), abiding in the true law (*sacadharmastidaṣa*), his majesty (*nuava*), the great king Aṃkavaga, son of heaven (*devaputraṣa*), in the 4th month, on 14th day...²⁸²

These many flattering titles have in most cases a clear western, primarily Indian, precedence and are particularly close to the titulatur used by the Kushan rules of North-Western India and Bactria. But many of the kings, including the king of document n.581 whose name is usually spelled Aṃgoka, also appear with a more standardized and concise list of titles, exemplified by document n.861,

²⁸² Translation by author based on Rapson et al, *Kharosthi Inscriptions*

In the 6th year, 1st month, 10th day of his majesty (*mahanuava*), the great king (*maharaya*) Jīṭumḡha Mairi, son of heaven (*devaputraṣa*) at this time the son of heaven heard in person the inquiry...²⁸³

From the ninety-three documents containing these types of dates in royal regnal years it has been possible to draw up a list of monarch whose order can be determined by looking at the genealogy of scribes appearing in them, such as Ramsotsa and his family. This possibility was first suggested by E. J. Rapson in 1929 who drew up a chronology of the Krorainan kings and their known regnal years as follows,²⁸⁴

Pepiya	3 rd year – 8 th year
Tajaka	3 rd year
Aṃgoka (Aṃkvaga, Aṃguvaka, Aṃgomka)	5 th year – 46 th (or 36 th)
Mahiri (Mahiriyā, Mairi, Mayiri)	4 th year – 28 th year
Vaṣmana	3 rd year – 11 th year

Following Rapson’s work, his list has been used, commented upon, and refined by several scholars. John Brough has pointed out that Tajaka was likely the predecessor of Pepiya, as Tajaka’s style of “*maharaja*” in his one known document n.422 is linguistically older than the form “*maharaya*” used by other kings.²⁸⁵ This argument has also been raised by Meicun Lin who furthermore has noted that document n.549 mention a place called “*toṃgraka maharayaṣa ayanammi*”²⁸⁶ or “in the village (*ayana*) of the great king Toṃgraka”²⁸⁷ and points to the existence of a king Toṃgraka whom he places before Tajaka.²⁸⁸ This king Toṃgraka has since appeared in a new

²⁸³ Translated by author based on Rapson et al, *Kharosthi Inscriptions*

²⁸⁴ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 322–28.

²⁸⁵ Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’, 594.

²⁸⁶ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 201. Baums and Glass gives the alternative reading Roṃgraka for the king’s name, see Baums and Glass, *Catalog of Gandhari Texts*, “Document n.549”

²⁸⁷ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 109.

²⁸⁸ Lin, ‘佉卢文时代鄯善王朝的世系研究 林梅村 (Genealogical Investigation and Study of Shan-Shan Dynasty during the Kharosthi Period)’.

document, n.808, excavated from ruin N.37 at the Niya site, thus confirming his existence as a reigning king. Lin was furthermore able to identify another king, named Sulica, from a new Kharosthi document allegedly found south of the Niya site in 1981, numbered as n.788 in the database. As this Sulica carried the same short form titulatur as the three last known kings, and since there was no room between them, Lin suggested that this new king had to be placed after king Vaṣmana.²⁸⁹ Finally, in Qing Duan and Tshelothar's translation of another new document, this one found in the collection of the Qinghai Tibetan Medical Culture Museum and published in 2016, yet another new king appears named Sa[k]ta though no comment is made on where in the royal line he might belong.²⁹⁰

That Rapson's basic royal chronology is sound is shown by the appendix V, which lists all known dated documents in chronological order with the appearance of both major officials and frequently reoccurring scribes, including known fathers and sons. The order of the three main kings; Aṃgoka, Mahiri, and Vaṣmana, is illustrated excellently by Ramṣotsa, his son Suḡuta, and grandsons Caṣgeya and Sunaṃta. Furthermore, that Pepiya and Tajaka's must have preceded Aṃgoka is shown by the two scribes, father and son, Tamaṣpa and Mogata.²⁹¹ This full listing also supports several of the later observations and helps clarify several uncertainties. Firstly, Brough's supposition that Tajaka proceeded Pepiya is supported by the chronology of major officials, such as Piteya and Karamtsa.²⁹² They both appear in Pepiya and Aṃgoka documents, but not in Tajaka where the only otherwise known actor is the scribe Tamaṣpa. Given that there is only a single Tajaka document know to date this conclusion cannot be final, but held together with the linguistic evidence the conclusion is a solid one. Further considering the careers of the official Piteya, it is noteworthy that he appears as a magistrate also in the lone document dated to the reign of Toṃgraka, namely n.808, together with a tasuca Cateya²⁹³ also known from the two documents n.495 and n.648 both dated to the 8th year of Pipeya. This would support placing Toṃgraka after Tajaka, but as there is much overlap between Pepiya and

²⁸⁹ Lin, 'A New Kharosthi Wooden Tablet from China'.

²⁹⁰ Duan and Tshelothar, *Kharosthi Documents Preserved in Qinghai Tibetan Medical Culture Museum*, 13.

²⁹¹ Actor n.705 and n.940.

²⁹² Actor n.330 and n.455.

²⁹³ Actor n.789.

Aṃgoka, and as Tomṅraka in n.808 too uses the linguistically older form “*maharaja*”, he must have proceeded Pipeya.

Some important points can also be raised regarding the supposed new king Sakta, as many known actors appears in his document n.857, the most important being the magistrate kala Karamtsa. As shown by the appendix V, Karamtsa was active in the early years of Aṃgoka and in Pepiya’s reign, his son appearing a little later in Aṃgoka likely after his father’s retirement or death. This means that a new king Sakta would have to proceed Aṃgoka. Further, as Karamtsa was only titled apsu, a lower title, in the reign of Pepiya, and became kala during the time of Aṃgoka the reign of Sakta would have to be placed between these two, as Karamtsa is called kala in document n.857. As document n.857 is dated to the 25th year of king Sakta, this would mean, however, that several actors became very old men indeed. Supposing for example that their first appearance in a document was in at earliest their 15th year, and in reality it was likely later, kala Karamtsa would have been at least 67 years old during his last appearance in the 24th year of Aṃgoka in document n.856, assuming that no king reigned longer than their last known document. The scribe Apgeya similarly would have been at least 68 years old when he wrote his last document in Aṃgoka 28, document n.419.²⁹⁴ The solution to this problem is however a simple one, for as suggested to me by Stefan Baums, the reading of the king’s name as “Sa[k]ta” is very uncertain. Instead he makes the tentative suggestion of reading “[aṃkva]ga [de>(*va)”, though stresses that this reading too has several problems.²⁹⁵ Yet dating this document to the 25th year of Aṃgoka (aṃkvaga) does resolve all the problems related to actors and age, and given that both Karamtsa and other known actors from the document n.857 mainly belong to the reign of Aṃgoka, this seems the only possible solution.

Finally, a few minor amendments to the lengths of the reigns of Aṃgoka and Mahiri can be made. As can be seen from Rapson’s list above the last year of Aṃgoka is not certain, as the year in document n.418 could be read either 36 or 46. Rapson

²⁹⁴ Actor n.685.

²⁹⁵ Stefan Baums, personal communication of the 04.05.2020.

tentatively gave 46 in his transcription, but both Burrow and Brough favoured 36.²⁹⁶ Looking at the chronology of the scribe Ramsotsa, from the 6th year of Aṃgoka to the 22nd of Mahiri, it is however clear that 36 must be the correct reading. For if the reading of the 46th year is used this would mean that Ramsotsa was at least 77 years old when appearing in his last document, again assuming that he signed his first contract at age 15. As first recognized by Kazuo Enoki, Aṃgoka's reign can however likely be stretched to the 38th year of an unnamed king in document n.676, as he is the only known king with a reign longer than 30 years.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, as noticed by Christopher Atwood,²⁹⁸ Mahiri's reign can also be extended, to at least 30 years, as document n.123 dated to the 30th year of an unnamed king contains Lýipeya, who was active between the 11th year of Mahiri and the 11th year of Vaṣmana. That this 30th year was Mahiri's, is made certain by the fact that Lýipeya in the document carries the title *ṣoṭhamga*, a title he carried between Mahiri 21 and Vaṣmana 9.

Taking these amendments into consideration one ends up with a relative royal chronology as follows in the table below, covering at minimum of 97 years but likely spanning a somewhat longer period of as much as around 120 years, assuming that the shorter reigns were about 10 years total on average.

Tajaka	3 rd year
Tomgraka	2 nd year
Pepiya	3 rd year – 8 th year
Aṃgoka (Aṃkvaga, Aṃguvaka, Aṃgomka)	2 nd year – 38 th year
Mahiri (Mahiriya, Mairi, Mayiri)	4 th year – 30 th year
Vaṣmana	3 rd year – 11 th year
Sulica	5 th year

²⁹⁶ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 84; Brough, 'Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism', n. 51.

²⁹⁷ Enoki, 'The Location of the Capital of Lou-Lan and the Date of the Kharosthi Inscriptions', 233–34.

²⁹⁸ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', n. 2.

The question of absolute chronology has however proven far more difficult. Given that the Kharosthi documents were found intermingled with dated Chinese documents, both at the Niya and the Lop sites, there has since Stein's first discoveries of the Kharosthi documents been a general consensus that they broadly date to sometimes between the third and fourth centuries CE.²⁹⁹

Beyond this broad period a number of suggestions have been made. The first and most important contribution towards establishing an absolute chronology for the Kharosthi documents of Kroraina came from John Brough, in his 1965 article, *Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism*. In a detailed discussion of the documents, he noted that in the 17th year of the king Aṃgoka there came about a sudden abrupt change in the royal titulatur of the kings of Kroraina, going from the lengthy and exuberant titles seen in the first quote on page.92 to the much shorter formula seen in the second quote. As shown by the title column in appendix V, the titulatur used also became more consistent, mainly confined to the four titles *mahanuava*, *maharaya*, *jitughā*, and *devaputraśa*. This change Brough attributed to some event of great political significance, and in particular, he took note of the introduction of a completely new title, namely *jitughā*.³⁰⁰ This title he showed was the Kharosthi transcription of a well-known Chinese title *shizhong* (侍中), meaning palace attendant, a title actually mentioned in a Chinese document found at the Niya site.³⁰¹ The document in question is N.xv.93.a,b, which should be read together with N.xv.73, and in the most recent translation by Taishan Yu, reads “The imperial edict for the Acting Palace Attendants (*shizhong*) and the Chief

²⁹⁹ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:370.

For the major views on the documents absolute chronology see Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’; Loewe, ‘Chinese Relations with Central Asia, 260–90’; Brough,

‘Supplementary Notes on Third-Century Shan-Shan’; Lin, ‘佉卢文时代鄯善王朝的世系研究 林梅村

(Genealogical Investigation and Study of Shan-Shan Dynasty during the Kharosthi Period)’; Nagasawa, 楼蘭王国史の研究 (*Research on the History of the Loulan Kingdom*), chap. 11; Enoki, ‘The Location of the Capital of Lou-Lan and the Date of the Kharosthi Inscriptions’, sec. 3; Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 304–8.

Due to the Covid-19 situation I have not been able to access the original works on the topic by Yong Ma 1979 and Fanren Meng 1995. Their views are however summarized in detail in Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia*, 1:346–50.

³⁰⁰ The word has several alternative spellings, including *Jituga*, *Citughi* and *Jitumgha*.

³⁰¹ Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’, 598–601; Brough, ‘Supplementary Notes on Third-Century Shan-Shan’, 43.

Commandants (*tatuwei*) of Jin, the Great Marquises of Fengjin and the Qinjin kings of Shanshan, Yanqi, Qiuci, Shule, Yutian has reached . . .”.³⁰²

Given this, Brough proposed that the title of *shizhong* was granted by the Jin dynasty to the Krorainan king Aṃgoka in his 17th year, as part of his submission to nominal Jin suzerainty, giving a possible anchor for the absolute chronology of the documents. He then considered various possibilities for the 17th year, starting with 283 CE, the year in which the *Jinshu* notes that the king of Shanshan sent his son to serve at the Jin dynasties court.³⁰³ However, Brough rejects this date as this would not fit with the weight of the Chinese documents found together with the Kharosthi documents of Aṃgoka, which primarily fell into the timespan 265-270 CE. Instead he supposed that the title might have been granted in a period closer to these documents and the rise of the Jin dynasty in 266 CE, settling on the year 263 CE. He chose 263 CE in part because counting from it would mean that the year 283 CE, when a hostage prince was sent to Jin, would fit well with the ascension to the throne of Mahiri, 19 years after Aṃgoka’s year 17. Furthermore, with Aṃgoka 17 as the year 263 CE the last known dates of Vaṣmana, being his 11th year in document n.760, would fit tolerably well with the last dates known from the Chinese documents between 320 and 330 CE.³⁰⁴

Brough’s dating has generally been accepted by the majority of western scholars working on the Krorainan materials, but two noteworthy alternatives have been proposed by Chinese and Japanese researches. Kazuo Enoki, in his article *The Location of the Capital of Lou-lan and the Date of the Kharosthi Inscriptions* agree with Brough on a number of points, but also made the important observation that the Krorainan king Vaṣmana’s name can in fact be identified in transcription in Chinese literary sources as Yuanmeng (元孟).³⁰⁵ This Yuanmeng, king of Shanshan (that is Kroraina), is mentioned in the biography of Zhang Jun (張駿) in the 86th chapter of the *Jinshu*. Zhang Jun (張駿) ruled the Former Liang (前涼) dynasty in the Gansu region

³⁰² Yu, *A Concise Commentary on Memoirs on the Western Regions in the Official Histories of the Western and Eastern Han, Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties*, 499.

³⁰³ Fang Xuanling et al, JS, 3

³⁰⁴ Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’, 601–5.

³⁰⁵ Enoki, ‘The Location of the Capital of Lou-Lan and the Date of the Kharosthi Inscriptions’, 253.

of Western China between 326 CE and 346 CE, the Former Liang being one of the so-called sixteen kingdoms that formed after the partial collapse of the Jin dynasty in the early fourth century. The passage that mentions Yuanmeng is short but interesting, rendered into English in Taishan Yu's commentary as follows,

Zhang Jun also sent his general, Yang Xuan, leading a mass of troops, to cross the Flowing Sands and launch an attack on Qiuci and Shanshan; [the states in] the Western Regions all surrendered. The king of the state of Shanshan, Yuanmeng, presented his daughter, who was called the Beautiful One. [Zhang Jun] built the Binxia Palace to accommodate her. The kings of the states of Yanqi, Nearer [Jushi], and Yutian all sent envoys to present their local products.³⁰⁶

A shorter version of this same narrative is also presented in the *Shiliuguo Chunqiu* (十六国春秋) or “Spring and Autumn Annals of the Sixteen Kingdoms”, compiled in the sixth century and surviving only as quotes in later sources. But crucially in that version dates are also given for these episodes, placing them in the years 330-331 CE.³⁰⁷

This means that Vaṣmana was alive in the 330s CE, giving a fixed point which to recon from, though Enoki himself did not go beyond noting the possibility of this connection. Yong Ma however took this point further in his 1979 article, arguing that Vaṣmana's 11th year, his last known date, should be around 330 CE, giving a fixed point to count back from and placing Aṃgoka's 17th year somewhere between 271-274 CE.³⁰⁸ As further evidence he points to three impressions of the same seal used on three Kharosthi documents from Niya, n.571, n.590, and n.640,³⁰⁹ a seal carrying Chinese characters. (See figure 9) The reading of this seal has been much debated, with Chavannas reading 鄯善郡印 “Seal of the Shanshan commandery (*jun*)” and

³⁰⁶ Yu, *A Concise Commentary on Memoirs on the Western Regions in the Official Histories of the Western and Eastern Han, Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties*, 505.

³⁰⁷ Cui Hong, SC, 7. For an English version see, Yu, 526.

³⁰⁸ See English summary in Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia*, 1:346.

Note however that Rhie wrongly quotes Ma on the year of the attack being 335 CE as noted by Ching, ‘SI 3662 and SI 3663 - Two Wedge-Shaped Kharosthi Documents from Niya in the Petrovsky Collection’, n. 29.

³⁰⁹ Stein marked them N.24.viii.74, N.24.viii.93 and N.37.i.2.

later suggestions of both 鄯善郡尉 “Shanshan commander (*junwei*)” and 鄯善都尉 “Shanshan general (*tuwei*)”, the last of which is the generally most accepted reading.³¹⁰ Ma favours the reading 鄯善郡尉 and based on the Chinese documents found at the Lop sites he suggests that the Jin dynasty had established a commandery, or *jun*, in Kroraina during the period covered by the majority of Chinese documents, ie from 265-270 CE.³¹¹ He then suggests that it was following the abolishment of this *jun* that the title of *shizhong* was given to the Krorainan king, as a means of keeping him allied to the Jin. Having lost its value, the *junwei* seal was simply left behind when the garrison left, only to be picked up by the local official who used them on the excavated three documents.³¹²

Following broadly similar arguments, Meicun Lin landed on the date 273 CE³¹³ for Amgoka 17 while Fanren Meng concluded with 269-270 CE.³¹⁴ A second and radically different opinion has however been raised by Kazutoshi Nagasawa who argues that since the majority of the Chinese documents found were from the early Jin dynasty, the Chinese presence was actually at its strongest during the preceding Wei dynasty, the documents representing but the last phase of occupation. Looking at the records of the Wei dynasty in the standard histories he notes that an emissary from Shanshan is said to have arrived in 222 CE bearing tribute, but Nagasawa doubts that this date could be Amgoka 17, as the Wei did not at this point have control over the Gansu region linking Central China with the Tarim Basin. Instead he suggests it must have happened sometimes shortly after 228 CE, the year in which Wei gained control of Gansu and the Hexi corridor.³¹⁵

Certainly, all these points of view have merits, yet all also suffer from significant problems. While Brough certainly is right to focus on the changes seen in

³¹⁰ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 230; Enoki, ‘The Location of the Capital of Lou-Lan and the Date of the Kharosthi Inscriptions’, 237–38; Loewe, ‘Chinese Relations with Central Asia, 260–90’, 98; Brough, ‘Supplementary Notes on Third-Century Shan-Shan’, 40–42; Sims-Williams and Bi, ‘A Sogdian Fragment from Niya’, 89–90.

³¹¹ The role of the Chinese garrison in the kingdom is discussed in section 4.1.3.

³¹² Summarized in Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia*, 1:346–50.

³¹³ Lin, ‘佉卢文时代鄯善王朝的世系研究 林梅村 (Genealogical Investigation and Study of Shan-Shan Dynasty during the Kharosthi Period)’.

³¹⁴ Ching, ‘SI 3662 and SI 3663 - Two Wedge-Shaped Kharosthi Documents from Niya in the Petrovsky Collection’, n. 29.

³¹⁵ Nagasawa, *楼兰王国史の研究 (Research on the History of the Loulan Kingdom)*, chap. 11.

titulatur in Aṃgoka 17, and that this change was likely the result of a close relationship with a Chinese imperial power, his equation of Aṃgoka 17 with 263 CE seem somewhat arbitrary, as no record exists of any such important event in this year. Equally however Ma's equation of Vaṣmana 11 to 330 CE is likewise entirely arbitrary. For it must be kept in mind that documents dated to the reign of Vaṣmana has only been found at the Niya site, and as such can at best only give a possible date for the abandonment of that site. In fact, there is no reason to believe that Vaṣmana 11 should be the last reigning year of Vaṣmana himself, nor is there any indication that the Former Liang's invasion should have caused his reckoning to stop or be interrupted. To the contrary, he appears to have managed to appease Zhang Jun of the Former Liang and, having offered a daughter, may even have become an ally or at least a protected tributary. Thus, there is no reason why Vaṣmana 11 should be equated with 330 CE, as all one can say for sure is that Vaṣmana did reign in 330 CE.

Ma's use of the 鄯善郡尉 seal as evidence for the establishment of a Jin dynasty commandery in Kroraina between 265 and 270 CE is also problematic, beyond the basic uncertainty of how to read the seal. All the three documents in question were contracts in which the presiding magistrates were the pair kitsaitsa Ṽarpa and kala Karamtsa, and as Ṽarpa was the senior official the seal was likely set by him. With this in mind, and given what is known of Krorainan sealing practises, the suggestion that kitsaitsa Ṽarpa had taken up the use of the seal after a Chinese official had discarded it seems nearly impossible. For as we have seen the use of seals as marks of authentication carried great importance, and as such the choice of seal was an important and likely personal decision. Furthermore, given the frequent contact between Kroraina and China, Ṽarpa and many around him would have been aware of at least the texts origins, and as it is likely some Krorainans knew Chinese script and language they likely also understood its meaning and significance. Thus, the suggestion that Ṽarpa had simply acquired and used the 鄯善郡尉 seal on a whim, as a sort of fancy trinket, is untenable.

Instead there are two more probable explanations for Ṽarpa's use of the seal, namely that it had either been given to him or that he had had it crafted. The first of these possibilities seems perhaps the easiest, given that Chinese histories repeatedly

mention the granting of “seals and ribbons” to foreign kings.³¹⁶ In fact, the Hanshu specifically mentions that an official seal was given to a king of Shanshan upon his instalment as king by the Han dynasty following the assassination of the previous king in around 77 BCE.³¹⁷ It is of course impossible that the seal used in the three documents could have been the same seal, but incidents such as these shows that such seals may similarly have been granted by the Jin dynasty to their allies. One can of course wonder why the seal would then have been given to kitsaitsa Varpa, whether directly from the Chinese or more likely from the Krorainan king.³¹⁸ But as he and Kala Karamtsa are described as “the magistrates administering the kingdom” in document n.582, such a grant would seem to be in keeping with his role if not necessarily his title. There is also the second possibility, that Varpa had the seal made locally. This too seems a very plausible explanation, as seals with Chinese characters or imitations of Chinese characters in styles and materials that seems to be local are known from several of the Lop sites, pointing to local production. An excellent example of this can be seen on document n.332, which carries an inscription that appears to be in Chinese, but which cannot be deciphered and thus is likely an imitation (See figure 10). Another good example would be the newly discovered bronze seal from southeast of the L.A site, which carried a Chinese inscription but was otherwise highly irregular, again suggesting local manufacture.³¹⁹

Stepping back from the individual theories and their problems it is quite clear, as concluded by Rhie, Padwa, and Ching,³²⁰ that a final resolution to the question of absolute chronology can only be reached if further material can be brought to bear. Of all the suggested dates for Amgoka 17, Brough’s equation with 263 CE does however appear to be the one that fits the known facts the best. Firstly, when calculating with Amgoka’s new reign length of 38 years the sending of a son as a hostage to Jin in 283

³¹⁶ Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia. The Early Stage: 125 B.C.-A.D. 23. An Annotated Translation of Chapter 61 and 96 of the History of the Former Han Dynasty*, n. 117; Loewe, ‘Chinese Relations with Central Asia, 260–90’, 98–99.

³¹⁷ Ban Gu, HS, 96 (91)

³¹⁸ Brough, ‘Supplementary Notes on Third-Century Shan-Shan’, 42. is notably sceptical of this suggestion.

³¹⁹ Wu, Tian, and Mu, ‘楼兰地区新发现汉印考释 (A Study on the Seal Newly Found in Loulan Area)’.

³²⁰ Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia*, 1:352; Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 304–8; Ching, ‘SI 3662 and SI 3663 - Two Wedge-Shaped Kharosthi Documents from Niya in the Petrovsky Collection’, n. 29.

CE would be just around the ascension of Mahiri to the throne, his first regnal year then being in 284 CE. And when counting with Mahiri's final known regnal year being his 30th this would place Vaṣmana's last known year (the 11th) in 225 CE, a reasonable fit with his appearance in Chinese chronicles in 330 CE. The span given by Brough's suggestion would also seem to fit well with the timespan given in the Chinese documents. Thus, while the above-mentioned uncertainties must be kept in mind, I will in both the following chapters, and in the database, give years after the assumption that Aṃgoka 17th equates to 263 CE.

3.4 The Kharosthi database

The Kharosthi material does as said number 880 individual texts identified to date, with more appearing regularly. The majority of these, 763 documents, were found during Stein's three first expeditions to the Krorainan sites. They have all been published in transcription across three volumes by A. M. Boyer, E. J. Rapson, E. Senart, and P. S. Noble, the last of which was published in 1929.³²¹ Thomas Burrow, who had been working with the Krorainan Kharosthi material across several years, published an excellent translation of the majority of these documents in 1940, as well as both a short grammar of Krorainan prakrit and the translation of the documents from Stein's 4th expedition in 1937.³²² The remaining 117 documents are however more scattered, with the majority having been found by the Sino-Japanese expedition and published with both transcriptions and translations into Japanese by Toshitaka Hasuike.³²³ A collection of the transcribed versions of all these documents, in many cases with updated or alternative readings, has however been collected in Baums and Glass's online dictionary and catalogue at Gandhari.org.³²⁴

Working with this very large corpus of documents is difficult, especially as many of the documents are quite long, making the search for individual topics or

³²¹ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*.

³²² Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*; Burrow, 'Further Kharosthi Documents from Niya'; Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*.

³²³ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1996; The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999.

³²⁴ Baums and Glass, *Catalog of Gandhari Texts*

words a difficult prospect. A key part of this project has therefore been to create a fully searchable digital database of all known Kharosthi documents in translation, and it is to this database that I refer when giving document or actor numbers. The database primarily utilizes Thomas Burrow's translations where available, and when quoting documents, I give his translation into English where possible. Thus, unless stated otherwise the translation in the database is that of Burrow. Burrow did however frequently leave repeated phrases out from his translation, marked as "etc", and I have in all cases filled these gaps with my own translations. Furthermore, I have also, where relevant to the argument, added the original Prakrit word in parentheses behind Burrow or other's translation. For the documents discovered after Burrow's time I have where available utilized English translations, primarily by Richard Salomon and Stefan Baums. For the remaining untranslated documents, I have provided my own provisional translations based on the available transcriptions and checked against available translations into other languages, with each entry into the database noting where the transcription was taken from. I have as far as possible sought to harmonize the word choice and style of the translation with that of Burrow. Documents were numbered following the scheme of Rapson et al, also utilized by Burrow, and Baums and Glass. Some of my numbers for the last documents in the collection do however differ from those given in Baums and Glass, as I have chosen to only include the documents from Kroraina and not those from other locations included in the Gandhari.org catalogue. The corresponding number in Baums and Glass will be noted in the database where differing.

The method of construction

The Kharosthi database was made using the database software Filemaker Pro and consists of three linked databases, one with the documents, one with the actors and one with the connections between these two. Looking first at the document database, a typical database card belonging to document n.1 can be seen in figure eleven. As seen from the figure the card contains the text of the document with the document's form and the text's placement on the document indicated, in this example split between the obverse of the cover tablet and the inside of the wedge itself. The card secondly

presents a number of other fields. It gives the document's number and any recorded date, both in the local reckoning and converted, following Brough, to the common era. It then gives the documents type, as discussed in the section of typology below, extracts any locations or resources mentioned from the documents, and gives the find site of the document where known. Finally, it gives a list of actors appearing, with their name, actor number, gender, title, and role in the document noted.³²⁵

This list of actors is then linked, through the third database, to the actor database, an example of which can be actor n.1 Tamjaka whose card is seen in figure twelve. The actor database card records the actor's number, in order of appearance, and his or her name with all common variations. It then gives their gender, usually identifiably either by context or by name, and any titles the actor carried, with indications of which documents gave which titles as relevant. The two large fields then give the actor's actions in documents and any extra noteworthy information, such as known relatives or group affiliation. Finally, the actor database too links back to the document database, listing all documents in which the actor appears, with their date, type and note fields transferred.

This system makes for an easily navigable database, especially as all sections are fully searchable. Such searches have formed the basis for much of the statistical material given in the following chapters and has been an invaluable tool for the analysis of the sources in general, especially as it allows easy comparison of documents dealing with similar topics. However, as with all forms of categorizing and ordering there is the danger that the methods used in creating the database might distort the results and superimpose some of the author's views on the sources. The typology adopted is naturally one possible example of this, as is the lists of resources or places into which only items viewed as relevant by the author have been added. These problems can likely not be entirely overcome, though such bias is a general danger faced by all historians when working with ancient sources. In order to mitigate such issues as much as possible however the information extracted into the various sections of the database has either followed a set of pre-determined rules, as in the case

³²⁵ It should be noted that I have not yet been able to fill in all the "List"-type documents nor link the list's actors with other known actors in the database, as this is a very involving task with little bearing on the questions here under consideration. In the untranslated lists I have however noted important titles, resources etc where relevant.

of typology and prosopographical information, or been extracted with the widest criteria reasonably possible. For locations, this has meant that in addition to all proper place names, I have also chosen to include both uncertain place names and also mentions of administrative divisions into the database, but I have not recorded individual farms, as these might have shifted hands frequently. In the case of resources, I have sought to include all items mentioned, in addition to all mentions of slaves, landed property, and even water resources, but I have excluded insubstantial resources such as labour dues or other obligations.

The typology

The problems mentioned above are acutely present when considering typology, as all such exercises in categorization naturally must contain an element of the author's choice. Yet, as already recognized by Stein, there is a basic typology inherent in the documents themselves, as different shapes, sealing methods and materials were used for different purposes. Stein noted that the wedge-shaped double tablets appeared to carry addresses, and as such were likely messages or orders, while the rectangular double tablets, being larger and more secure, were likely used for recording more important information. Similarly, the shape and writing on the oblong, stick-like, and other less uniform tablets indicated to Stein that they had been used as tablets for making drafts, memos and lists.³²⁶ This basic division, into wedge-shaped and rectangular tablets has also been shown by the translation of the documents to have been a typology in use amongst the Krorainans themselves. The wedge-tablets were referred to as “*kilamudra*”, that is to say “wedge and seal” document, and usually carried orders or instructions from the royal court. The rectangular documents were on the other hand known as either “*lihitaga*” or “*pravamnaga*”, both words simply meaning something like document.³²⁷

Although some scholars since Stein have discussed aspects of this basic morphology of the documents and its relations to a typology,³²⁸ there have been few

³²⁶ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:347–58.

³²⁷ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 83, 107; Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 100–104.

³²⁸ Nagasawa, 楼蘭王国史の研究 (*Research on the History of the Loulan Kingdom*), 301–6; Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 46–47.

attempts at creating a more finely meshed typology for the documents. The notable exception to this is Mariner Erza Padwa who in his PHD dissertation provides a more detailed typology, and crucially notes that such a typology is important, as it allows even very fragmented documents to be identified.³²⁹ This can in turn ease the process of deciphering their contents and allow us to understand otherwise completely incoherent documents. For Padwa the typology does however also serve another very important function, namely in facilitating the identification of the actor who ended up storing the document and thus allowing a connection to be made between a find site and specific actors.³³⁰ As such, Padwa's typology operates with four categories, namely Royal Memoranda, Personal and Official Letters, Contracts, and Lists. These broadly follow the Kroranian typology, as well as the typology suggested by the documents' shapes, the first being the wedge-shaped tablets, the two next the rectangular ones, and the last being represented by the smaller group of various irregularly shaped tablets. He does, however, separate two types, the Letters and the Contracts, based on content, as both these document types were written on rectangular tablets, and makes a further sub-division of letters into Official and Private Letters.

My typology broadly follows that of Padwa, but I have chosen to further separate some of his categories based on the content, and in a few cases the forms, of the texts. In total, the Kharosthi database operates with ten types, namely Royal Commands, Royal Decrees, Contracts, Legal Documents, Letters, Lists, Literary Pieces, Reports, Labels, and Inscriptions. These various types were identified based on the following criteria of form, address (if applicable), set formula, and purpose.

Royal Command (*kilamudra*)

1. Double wedge-shaped wooden tablet. (See figure 4)
2. Address on the obverse of the cover-tablet.
3. Orders from the royal court to local officials.
4. Starts with the formula "His majesty the king writes...." on the obverse of the under-tablet. Continues on the reverse of the cover-tablet if necessary.

³²⁹ Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', 105.

³³⁰ Padwa, sec. 5.3.

Royal Decree (Sub-type of Royal Command)

1. Folded leather document. (See figure 13)
2. Purpose and opening formula identical to the Royal Command.
In general however longer and more detailed.

Contract (*lihitaḡa/pravaṃnaga*)

1. Double rectangular wooden tablet. (See figure 5)
2. Summary of content and seals on the obverse of the cover-tablet.
3. Concerns exchange.
4. Follows a standard formula as explored in chapter five.

Legal Document (*lihitaḡa/pravaṃnaga*)

1. Double rectangular wooden tablet.
2. Summary of content and seals on the obverse of the cover-tablet.
3. Concerns a legal dispute.
4. Follows a standard formula as explored in chapter five.

Letter

1. Generally double rectangular wooden tablet. Sometimes wedge tablets or paper.
2. Address on the obverse of the cover-tablet.
3. Starts with a lengthy greeting formula on the obverse of the under-tablet.
Content semi-official and/or private in nature.

List

1. Various shapes of wooden tablets. (See figure 3)
Commonly appear on re-used or recycled tablets.
2. Sometimes contain short introductions or explanations, only rarely with a date.
3. Contains lists.

Literary piece

1. Commonly oblong or “takhti”-shaped wooden tablets. (See figure 3 and 6)
Commonly appear on re-used or recycled tablets.
2. No set formula or patterns.
3. Contains literary texts or scribal exercises.

Report

1. Various shapes of wooden tablets.
2. No set formula or patterns.
3. Miscellaneous text. Often notes, memos, or short reports.

Label

1. Ink on silk-strips.
2. Declares ownership and measures of cloth.
3. Labels of ownership and/or purchase.

Inscription

1. On stone, either carved or written with ink.
2. No set formula or pattern.
3. Miscellaneous texts giving an announcement or statement.

As can be seen from this list my six new types, compared to Padwa’s four, are all related to documents and texts that either were not included in Padwa’s study or were of little interest to it. The “Royal Decree” sub-type is merely there to distinguish the leather commands from those on wood, though given their difference in length and details the distinction seems justified. Of the remaining five new types two, the “Literary”-type and the “Report”-type are there primarily to encompass all those documents that does not fit into any other category, the “Literary” encompassing all the fragments of literary, mainly Buddhist, text and the “Report”-type containing all miscellaneous notes and memos. The last two, the “Label” and “Inscription” types, encompass those few texts written on either silk or as inscriptions on stones which

have not been included in earlier works. Finally, the separation of the “Legal”-type documents from Padwa’s broader category of Contracts makes sense when considering the difference in form observed between contract and legal settlements, as will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

It should be kept in mind that these categories are by no means definitive. There are for example some cases of overlap between the various types and it can at times be difficult to distinguish between Royal Commands and Letters, Contracts and Legal Documents, and especially Reports and the other categories, as many “Report”-type documents may simply be fragmentary pieces of other types. However, I would argue that this typology does capture the full breath of the Kharosthi material better than the simpler typologies already in existence, and as the following chapters will show this finer distinction can at times be highly useful in understanding certain documents.

The actors and prosopography

As also already recognized by Stein, some of the actors in the Kharosthi documents are re-occurring and given the large number of documents from a single find sites it is often possible to give a detailed account of individual lives and careers. The secure identification of a given individual is however very difficult with many potential pitfalls, and as such thorough prosopographical work is absolutely essential for any serious study of the Kharosthi material. A very thorough prosopographical work has been done by Padwa, covering the major re-occurring actors from the Niya site documents.³³¹ But as Padwa’s work does not cover all individuals in all Stein’s documents and does not include the newer documents in the corpus, I have had to conduct my own prosopographical work, though Padwa’s prosopography has been consulted throughout.

It would of course seem tempting to simply equate all people appearing at the same site with the same name with one and the same person, but this is obviously not a tenable position. Some names were very popular in Kroraina, and as such we are often faced with a situation where the same name is used by different individuals living in

³³¹ Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’.

the same area in the same period. An excellent example of this is the “Royal Command”-type document n.308, where cozbo Şamaşena and Pugo are instructed to solve a dispute involving another man named Şamaşena. In another dispute, in the “Legal”-type document n.436, the same cozbo Şamaşena sat judge in a case involving a Şamaşena from Saca.

Thus, in order to avoid incorrect identifications and to facilitate consistency I developed the following prosopographical criteria for use in the database, with each criterium strengthening the identification. The list goes from the strongest criterium to weakest. Ideally, at least two of the criteria should be fulfilled before a person can be identified as the same individual in two documents and only the first criterium is used by itself. The list of criteria runs as follows:

1. A person appears with the same title in both documents.
2. A person appears with another identified individual in both documents.
3. A person appears in two documents from the same archive/find-site.
4. A person appears in the same profession/role in both documents.
5. A person appears in two documents dated to the same year or close in time.

Thus, the *şoṭhamğa* *Lýipeya* of document n.7 can be identified with cozbo *Lýipeya* of document n.15 despite having different titles as they both 2. appear together with cozbo *Tamjaka* and 3. the two documents are both from ruin N.1.

3.5 Conclusion

Taken together, and despite some uncertainties of exact dating and details, the sources to the kingdom of Kroraina are remarkably rich and allows for a broad range of approaches and questions to be applied. Given that we have both Chinese secondary sources, as well as primary sources in a variety of languages, it is also possible to approach the Krorainan material from a number of angles and, as with the archaeological sources, the sources often reveals more when seen together. As shall be seen in the following chapter they give a detailed, though still much debated, picture of

the local socio-political landscape, and as the rest of the case study will endeavour to show, they furthermore allow for a detailed examination of the kingdom's economic system.

Chapter 4: The socio-political landscape of Kroraina

The preceding chapters have drawn up the background for this study and have discussed the sources from which it will draw, and it is now time to turn to the case study proper. This case study will seek to take a bottom up approach to the kingdom of Kroraina, starting with the kingdom's economic system and connections with the wider world before discussing to what extent it was a part of and might have played a role on the Silk Road exchange network. However, before tackling these questions of economy and connections it is necessary to lay their foundations. This chapter will therefore seek to place the late antique kingdom of Kroraina into its geographical and historical context. It is furthermore necessary to touch briefly upon three of the most frequently debated questions of Krorainan history, namely the influence of the Chinese and the Kushan empires upon the kingdom, questions regarding the kingdom's geography, and the internal socio-political layout of the kingdom, all questions of relevance to the later discussions.

This chapter will start with a short overview of the political history of the Tarim Basin region, focusing on the Kingdom of Kroraina. Secondly, it will present the kingdom's geography and deal with the questions of how individual archaeological sites can be identified with sites mentioned in both Chinese and Kharosthi texts. Finally, it will give a brief outline of the kingdom's socio-political structures, with emphasis on its spatial and social organization, as these topics are important to clarify before starting the discussion on economy. It is however important to stress that while this chapter will seek to raise and discuss many much-debated topics of Krorainan history these questions are in many cases worthy of a dissertation of their own. As such, given the limited space available, the following discussions will remain brief, and will focus on the sides of the debate with most immediate relevance to this dissertation.

4.1 A brief political history of the kingdom of Kroraina and the Western Regions

The Tarim Basin area, known as the Western Regions (Xiyu, 西域) in Chinese sources, has a long history of human habitation, stretching far back into prehistory. It was already inhabited during the Stone Age, with implements and sites dating back as far as ca 8000 BCE having been found in the north-eastern Turfan depression.³³² Many sites and regions within the historic bounds of the kingdom of Kroraina have also yielded Stone Age artefacts, including many examples of worked flint from the Lop desert.³³³ By the second millennium BCE the Tarim Basin oases, river-valleys, and highlands were inhabited by a number of more or less interlinked and largely sedentary Bronze Age cultures.³³⁴ In the Krorainan area of the South-Eastern Tarim Basin this period is represented primarily by cemeteries, such as the Xiaohe cemetery n.5 (Ördek's Necropolis) and the earliest parts of the Zaganluk cemetery mentioned in chapter two. As already discussed, these cemeteries, though their customs did change over time, share many characteristics and show a certain cultural unity across the Southern Tarim Basin region. Some sites, such as both Xiaohe and Zaganluk, also showed a long continuity of use running all the way down to the Krorainan period, further suggesting settlement and cultural continuity in the region across time.

By the fifth century CE, walled towns and small cities started appearing in the Tarim Basin, seen for example at the walled Djoumboulak Koum site along the Keriya river.³³⁵ This process likely accompanied the earliest state formation processes in the region and it is likely that both phenomena progressed slowly from around the first millennium BCE when both horse riding and iron technology reach the Tarim Basin.³³⁶ The details of these processes remain largely unknown, but it is clear that they lead to

³³² Jiang et al., 'Ancient Plant Use at the Site of Yuergou, Xinjiang, China: Implications from Desiccated and Charred Plant Remains', 129.

³³³ Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 31–37.

³³⁴ For a good, if somewhat old, overview of these cultures in English see, Chen and Hiebert, 'The Late Prehistory of Xinjiang in Relation to Its Neighbors'.

³³⁵ Debaine-Francfort and Idriss, *Keriya, Mémoires d'un Fleuve: Archéologie et Civilisation Des Oasis Du Taklamakan*, 120–225.

³³⁶ Høisæter, 'Politics and Nomads: The Emergence of the Silk Road Exchange in the Tarim Basin Region during Late Prehistory (2000–400 Bce)'.

the development of small but organized polities by the second century BCE, at the point when the Tarim Basin entered into recorded history.

The Western Regions between the Han and the Xiongnu

Early Chinese texts were aware of people living beyond the Chinese heartlands of the Central Plains, perhaps as far away as Gansu and the Tarim Basin, yet the information presented is vague and often mythical. Rather it is in the *Shiji* (史記, Scribal Records), written by court astrologer Sima Qian (司馬遷) of the Han court in 94 BCE, that firm historical knowledge of the Western Regions first appears. Kroraina, transcribed as Loulan (樓蘭), is first mentioned in the 110th chapter, the “Account of the Xiongnu”, in which is quoted a message sent by Chanyu Modun to the Han court in 176 BCE. Modun was the ruler of the Xiongnu empire, a tribal confederacy of primarily semi-nomadic and nomadic people from what is now Mongolia that controlled most of the areas north of China and that was the primary adversary of the Han dynasty throughout its history. In his message Modun reports his destruction of the Yuezhi polity to his west, an event that resulted in the conquest and submission of no less than twenty-nine polities, mostly in the Tarim Basin, amongst which are mentioned Loulan (Kroraina).³³⁷ (See map 1)

Exact details of what occurred and how Kroraina was involved is not given, but it is clear that the polities of the Tarim Basin became the subjects of and likely paid tribute to the Xiongnu Empire. Following a disastrous defeat at the hands of Modun and the Xiongnu in 200 BCE, even the Han empire were forced to send brides and paid regular tribute to the Xiongnu rulers as part of the *heqin* (和親) peace treaties, a state of affairs that persisted throughout most of the second century. However, following the ascension of Emperor Wu to the Han throne this changed, and open warfare between the Han and the Xiongnu was renewed in the 130s BCE. Through the next centuries, this conflict between the Han and the Xiongnu would play an important role in the Tarim Basin as local polities were frequently dragged into this conflict, as allies, tributaries, or as targets for attacks.³³⁸

³³⁷ Sima Qian, SJ, 110 (169)

³³⁸ Ban Gu, HS 96A (81-88)

Kroraina's involvement in this conflict is especially noteworthy and the *Hanshu* gives a detailed account of the difficult balancing act the kingdom attempted to strike between its two mighty neighbours. Around 110 BCE the Han attacked Kroraina, and the king was taken prisoner after aiding the Xiongnu between 104-101 BCE. From this point onwards, the kings of Kroraina appear to have regularly sent sons as hostages to both the Han and the Xiongnu, in an effort to remain on good terms with both sides. This state of shifting alliances came to an end however around 77 BCE with the assassination of a Krorainan king named Angui (安歸),³³⁹ an incident that the *Hanshu* describes in detail. King Angui had served as a hostage to the Xiongnu and upon ascending the throne he refused to come to the Han court to pay homage, and later went on to aid the Xiongnu against the Han. His brother, called Weituqi (尉屠耆), had served as a hostage to the Han and it was apparently upon his urging the Han court sent the courtier Fu Jiezi (傅介子) with a group of men to assassinate king Angui. The plot was successful and Angui's head was brought back to the Han capital at Chang'an to be mounted upon the walls. The Han court then made Weituqi king, granting him an official seal, many precious gifts, and a wife from the imperial palace. The Chinese name for the kingdom was also changed from Loulan, which was a Chinese transcription of the same word as Kroraina, to Shanshan (鄯善) and allegedly upon Weituqi's urging a Chinese garrison was set up at a place in the kingdom called Yixun (伊循).³⁴⁰

This incident seems to have cemented the Chinese control over Kroraina, which continued until the collapse of the western Han regime in 9 CE and the following wars of the Wang Mang interregnum that lasted until 23 CE. As related in the *Hou Hanshu* Wang Mang's usurpation of the throne led to the "rebellion" of the Western Regions, that is to say that they ceased to pay homage to the Chinese court and shortly thereafter they soon started fighting amongst themselves. By the mid-first century CE the kingdom of Yarkand (Suoju) under king Xian (賢) established a brief hegemony in the

³³⁹339 The king's name is also given as Changgui (嘗歸) in some parts of the text. See Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia. The Early Stage: 125 B.C.-A.D. 23. An Annotated Translation of Chapter 61 and 96 of the History of the Former Han Dynasty*, n. 115.

³⁴⁰ Ban Gu, HS 96A (pp.88-92)

Tarim region, invading Kroraina and many other kingdoms, but was soon after defeated by a coalition led by Khotan (Yutian).³⁴¹ This was however only the first in a long series of frequent wars between the Tarim kingdoms, often involving the Chinese or the Xiongnu as well, and despite its re-establishment in 23 CE the Later Han dynasty did not manage to re-exert its power over the Western Regions to the same extent as under the Former Han dynasty. Several attempts were made, and Han overlordship was periodically restored, first in the 90s CE following the brilliant campaigns of Ban Chao and later in the 120s CE after the campaigns of his son Ban Yong. Other Chinese generals were also sent, and attempts were made to re-establish old garrisons. Yet, as is evident by the account of the *Hou Hanshu*, the control they achieved was always precarious and short lived, and the local polities, if provoked, were quick to betray the Han forces for the Xiongnu or simply attack them.³⁴² By the mid-second century CE the Han dynasty's military and political influence in the Tarim Basin appears to have almost completely vanished. It is indeed quite telling that one of the last recorded event from the region in the *Hou Hanshu*, a punitive expedition against Kashgar (Shule) in 170 CE, not only ended in failure but was in fact almost entirely carried out by forces from allied Tarim kingdoms.³⁴³

Yet despite the picture drawn up by the *Hou Hanshu* of a region descending into war and chaos, clearly the situation as seen from Han court's point of view, the polities of the region appear to have prospered in this period. As well as being the period in which many innovations were likely introduced to the region, seen for example in the production of Sino-Kharosthi coins at Khotan,³⁴⁴ it was a period of consolidation during which the larger Tarim polities conquered and incorporated their neighbours. This was also the case for the kingdom of Kroraina, which is said to have annexed no less than four neighbouring kingdoms, namely Xiao Yuan, Jingjue, Ronglu and Qiemo. By doing so the kingdom gaining control of the entire South-Eastern Tarim Basin, from the shores of Lop Nur in the east as far west as the Niya river.³⁴⁵ Khotan, called Yutian in the Chinese accounts, similarly is reported to have conquered

³⁴¹ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (pp.32-41)

³⁴² Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (pp.2-13)

³⁴³ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (pp.44-45)

³⁴⁴ These coins will be treated in section 9.5.1.

³⁴⁵ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (pp.2-3)

both the polities of Qule and Pishan, its closest neighbours, as well as the kingdom of Jumi by the Keriya river, thus expanding its territory to the frontiers of Kroraina.³⁴⁶ One must therefore be careful in fully accepting the Chinese accounts of a war-torn and chaotic Tarim Basin, as we in fact know very little of the nature and impact of these wars on the local polities.

This leads into a second point regarding the Chinese narratives of the political history of the Tarim Basin. As shown by this brief summary of Tarim and Krorainan political history from the second century BCE to the second century CE, the Chinese accounts do give a good overview of Krorainan political history in relation to foreign powers. They do however almost exclusively describe major events, or at least such events as involved the Han Empire in some way. This is quite natural, given the sources available to the Chinese historians and the intentions behind their works, but it does mean that we do in fact know very little about the local and internal politics of Kroraina or other Tarim polities. No account is for example given of Kroraina's annexation of its neighbours and whether it happened through military or other means. Nor are any coherent accounts given of the dynastic and administrative history of Kroraina, and as such we know next to nothing about how the Krorainan kingdom functioned and developed in this period.

The Western Regions and Kroraina in late antiquity

Despite their limitations, the historical accounts of the Western Regions in the *Hanshu* and *Hou Hanshu* are rich and detailed compared with the very limited information available for the following four hundred years. After a period of growing turmoil and weakness the Han dynasty fell in 220 CE and China entered a long period of political instability that lasted until the re-establishment of a large and stable empire under the Tang dynasty in the seventh century. These nearly four hundred years of disunity was a period of major and often rapid change in Chinese history, characterized by smaller, short lived and often weak states, a powerful and often rebellious nobility, as well as the migration of many peoples from the north into China proper. It was in other words a chaotic period in Chinese history during which Chinese dynasties rarely were able to

³⁴⁶ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (pp.2-3 and 14-17)

project power into foreign lands in a meaningful way and for very long. As such it is no surprise that far fewer historical accounts of the Western Regions have survived from this period, those that do often appearing in later compilations, and that the information they provide only rarely concern events not directly linked to the Chinese dynasties themselves.

Consequently, most of what is related about the Western Regions in the period here under consideration, being the third and fourth centuries, comes in the form of occasional mentions of diplomatic contact as well as short notices on events considered important. The first such notice on Kroraina is found in the *Sanguozhi* and notes that Kroraina come with tribute to the Cao Wei court in 222 CE.³⁴⁷ Kroraina is then not mentioned again before the time of the Jin dynasty and the already mentioned record from the *Jinshu* of a Krorainan prince having arrived as a hostage to the Jin court in 284 CE.³⁴⁸ In neither case is the intent nor effects of this diplomatic contact further elaborated, nor is Kroraina given its own section in the chapters on the Western Regions in either the *Sanguozhi* or the *Jinshu*, though the latter does describe Yanqi (Karashar) and Qiuci (Kucha). The *Jinshu* does however contain two further events involving Kroraina, in both cases interacting with states that sprung up in northern China following the Jin dynasty's partial collapse and flight southwards. The first of these instances is the already mentioned attack upon the kingdom in 330 CE by the Former Liang,³⁴⁹ while the second describes an alliance between Kroraina and the ruler of the short-lived Former Qin dynasty in 382 CE.³⁵⁰

Later, in 435 CE, the *Weishu* reports that the king of Kroraina paid tribute to the Northern Wei dynasty that by then dominated north China. However, despite its initial submission the kingdom quickly got embroiled in the Northern Wei's war against the Northern Liang state in Gansu, a conflict that ended with the invasion and defeat of both the Northern Liang and Kroraina. The Krorainan king fled to Qiemo (Charchan oasis), only to later surrender, and the Wei installed one of its generals for a period as king of Kroraina.³⁵¹ After this there is only one recorded event concerning Kroraina

³⁴⁷ Chen Shou, SGZ, 2

³⁴⁸ Fang Xuanling et al, JS, 3

³⁴⁹ Fang Xuanling et al, JS, 86

³⁵⁰ Fang Xuanling et al, JS, 113-114 (pp.517-524)

³⁵¹ Wei Shou, WS, 102 (pp.578-583)

appearing in both the *Zhoushu* and the *Beishu*, both works that like the *Jinshu* was produced by later scholars of the Tang dynasty, and both simply notes that in 542 CE the elder brother of the king of Kroraina brought his people to submit to the Western Wei court.³⁵² It must have been around this time, if not before, that the kingdom of Kroraina collapsed completely, and by the time of the famed monk Xuanzang's return to China through the Southern Tarim Basin in 645 CE he found a land of ruins, almost completely uninhabited.³⁵³ What might have caused this collapse is not recorded in any surviving source and remains a mystery. It does however seem likely that it was a combination of different factors, including changing climatic conditions, repeated military invasions by outside forces, and possibly a shift in trade routes that together brought the kingdom down, though untangling this difficult problem this is a topic for another project.

Yet these uncertainties about as important an event as the kingdoms collapse, underlines how little information the Chinese sources give for the history of Kroraina and the Tarim polities during the period from the Han to the Tang dynasty. Luckily, as already laid out in the proceeding chapter, the locally produced documents do allow for the construction of a better picture, although from a very different perspective. But before delving into the geography and socio-political landscape of Kroraina as presented through these documents, there are however two important questions concerning the political history of Kroraina that must be addressed, namely the somewhat interlinked questions regarding Chinese and Kushan influence in the kingdom.

The nature of the Chinese presence in Kroraina during the third and fourth centuries

Despite the very scarce mentions of Kroraina in historical sources for both the Wei and the Jin dynasty it is evident from the Chinese documents found in Kroraina itself that there did in fact exist a close relationship between the kingdom of Kroraina and its mighty eastern neighbours in this period. Much of the evidence for this Chinese

³⁵² Linghu Defen et al, ZS, 50B (pp.678); Li Yanshou, BS, 97 (pp.801)

³⁵³ Xuanzang, DTXJ, 22 (pp.325)

presence, such as the Chinese documents themselves and the various Chinese seals, has already been presented in detail in the preceding chapter three. This material has furthermore already received much attention by a number of scholars, much of which is summarized in Kazutoshi Nagasawa's *Research on the History of the Loulan Kingdom*,³⁵⁴ and as such only a short overview and a few important points will be raised here.

There was a Chinese military garrison stationed at the Lop site L.A, and possibly also at other sites like L.E and L.K, during parts of the third and fourth centuries. This garrison appears to have been a typical *Tuntian* (屯田) garrison of farming soldiers who were expected to produce their own supplies, a system common in China since the Han dynasty. This is shown by the many Chinese documents from the Lop sites that take the form of ration lists for soldiers or administrative documents related to the soldier's farming activities.³⁵⁵ A large officer corps were in charge of them and the running of the garrison,³⁵⁶ and as shown by the many reports and letters found they were in communication with Chinese officials at Dunhuang and through them the imperial government further east.³⁵⁷ Document W.107, dated to 270 CE, even specifically mention reports being sent together with a private letter to Dunhuang. Many of these officers and some of the soldiers were Chinese, but several soldiers are specifically said to be otherwise, described as *hu* (胡) or *zhihu* (支胡), both terms referring to western barbarians.³⁵⁸ Furthermore, as shown by both Brough and Enoki, there are several identifiably Krorainan names transcribed into the Chinese documents.³⁵⁹ Some of these names belonged to soldiers, seen for example in the small wooden slip Cn.892 from the L.B site that reads “兵支胡菅支” meaning “The soldiers, the *zhihu* Jianzhi”.³⁶⁰ Brough points out that the original reading of the name would have been something like *kan-cie*, which appears to be a transcription of the

³⁵⁴ Nagasawa, *楼蘭王国史の研究 (Research on the History of the Loulan Kingdom)*, chaps 5–6.

³⁵⁵ See for example Cn.729 and 731 for lists of grain handed out and Cn.753 for a report concerning cultivation.

³⁵⁶ Nagasawa presents a very thorough overview of the various Chinese officers and even traces some of their careers. Nagasawa, *楼蘭王国史の研究 (Research on the History of the Loulan Kingdom)*, 197–202.

³⁵⁷ See for example p.11 and p.12, both letters that themselves mention the sending of letters.

³⁵⁸ See for example Cn.763, 804, 846.

³⁵⁹ Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’, 606; Enoki, ‘The Location of the Capital of Lou-Lan and the Date of the Kharosthi Inscriptions’, 245.

³⁶⁰ I have followed Brough amended reading of 菅 as 菅.

same Krorainan name as the well-attested Kharosthi Kamci.³⁶¹ That many of the soldiers were local mercenaries, either from Kroraina or elsewhere in the Tarim Basin, is quite natural, especially given the frequent use of local troops when campaigning in the Western Regions described in the *Hanshu* and *Hou Hanshu*.³⁶²

But while its documents reveal quite a lot about the nature and makeup of the garrison, they say less of its role in the kingdom of Kroraina and for how long it functioned. It is noteworthy that the dated Chinese documents, as discussed in section 3.2.1, fall into two periods, one from 263 CE to 270 CE and one from 310 CE to 330 CE. Of these, the former contained about two-third of the dated documents, making it likely that the majority of undated too belong to this period. This gap of nearly 40 years could of course be the product of mere chance, but it seems reasonable to assume that it might represent a gap in the garrison's operation. In fact, as pointed out by Loewe, Liang province, the western part of the Jin dynasty's domain covering roughly modern Gansu, rebelled in 270 CE and was thereafter very unstable. Liang province controlled the routes between the Jin heartland and the Tarim Basin, and as such this rebellion may have disrupted the running of the garrison and possibly led to troops being ordered away to secure Liang province.³⁶³ It thus seems likely that the Chinese garrison was set up at the end of the Wei dynasty in about 263 CE, if not sometime before as suspected by Nagasawa,³⁶⁴ only to be abandoned around 270 CE, probably as troops were needed elsewhere. It was then only re-occupied after the Former Liang's rise to power in Gansu and their subsequent advance westwards as described in the *Jinshu*.³⁶⁵

This also explains the clear limits of Chinese influence in Kroraina during the period, as reflected both in Chinese and Krorainan documents. For there are very few mentions of Chinese in the Krorainan documents in general, and none that indicates a large Chinese presence or one that exerted any form of direct control over the Krorainan population.³⁶⁶ Even at the likely headquarters of the garrison, in the

³⁶¹ Brough, 'Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism', 606.

³⁶² See for example the expedition to Kashgar mentioned on page.117 above.

³⁶³ These events from the *Jinshu* are summarized in Loewe, 'Chinese Relations with Central Asia, 260-90', 96.

³⁶⁴ Nagasawa, 楼蘭王国史の研究 (*Research on the History of the Loulan Kingdom*), 184-85.

³⁶⁵ Fang Xuanling et al, JS, 97 (pp.503)

³⁶⁶ See the discussion of Chinese in Kroraina in section 7.4.3.

buildings L.A.2 and L.A.3, were found Krorainan administrative documents intermingled with the Chinese ones, a clear indication that the local administration functioned in parallel with the Chinese presence. In fact, despite the presence of the garrison and one mention of a delivery of tribute, the relations between Kroraina and the Jin dynasty were clearly one of alliance, if an unequal one, rather than pure dominance. This is shown by the already mentioned Chinese document N.xv.93.a.b/73 from N.5 at the Niya site. This document, parts of an edict surviving on two wooden slips, reads “晉守侍中大都尉奉晉大侯親晉鄙善焉耆龜茲疏勒 // 于賓王寫下詔書到”, translated by Taishan Yu as “The imperial edict for the Acting Palace Attendants (侍中) and the Chief Commandants (大都尉) of Jin, the Great Marquises of Fengjin (奉晉大侯) and the Qinjin (親晉) kings of Shanshan, Yanqi, Qiuci, Shule, Yutian has reached”.³⁶⁷ In particular it is worth noting the two last titles used, namely great marquises of Fengjin and Qinjin kings, that according to Yu meant marquis “honouring Jin” and king “enjoying friendly relations with Jin”. As also emphasised by Yu these were terms of honoured allies rather than subjects,³⁶⁸ and the relation between Kroraina and the Jin was thus one of alliance, although Kroraina clearly was the weaker and subservient party. Such a relation would also go a long way in explaining the use of a Chinese official seal by kitsaitsa Varpa, as discussed in the preceding chapter, since this seal is likely best understood as a gift from the Jin to the rulers of Kroraina.

Finally, it is worth briefly examining the difference between the Chinese presence at the Lop sites and at Niya. For while there clearly was an official Chinese presence at Lop, at least during certain periods, there does not seem to have been such a presence at Niya. This is seen in the nature of the Chinese documents found at Niya, for unlike amongst the Lop documents there are no lists or reports of an administrative nature nor are there mentions of soldiers. Instead the majority of the documents are fragments of edicts, letters and pass-slips, all documents that were likely carried to

³⁶⁷ Yu, *A Concise Commentary on Memoirs on the Western Regions in the Official Histories of the Western and Eastern Han, Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties*, 499.

³⁶⁸ Yu, 499.

Niya rather than being produced there.³⁶⁹ This, held together with the complete absence of a Chinese official presence in the Kharosthi documents from Niya, would suggest that the Chinese military presence in the kingdom of Kroraina was limited to the eastern parts.

Indian influences and the question of Kushan dominance

Another strand of foreign influence was however present not only at the Niya site but across the wider Tarim basin, namely the heavy Indian and also Hellenistic influence observable from Khotan in the west and Kucha in the north, to the Lop sites in the east. The questions surrounding what brought this influence into the Tarim Basin are difficult and much debated ones, and a full exploration of this lies beyond the scope of this work. The following debate will therefore, in the interest of the dissertation, necessarily remain brief, but given that Gandharan and Bactrian culture had a profound impact upon the kingdom of Kroraina I find it necessary to address this issue. The Indian impact is seen in the adaptation of Buddhism, both the Prakrit and Sanskrit language, as well as the Kharosthi script, and both techniques and motifs associated with Gandhari art, itself inspired by Hellenistic art, all factors that left both a visual as well as an structural mark upon Krorainan culture. Furthermore, as shall be discussed in more details in later chapters, the western influences went deeper still, and many Krorainan administrative practises and elements of law, seen for example in contract use, has clear parallels in Bactrian material from modern Afghanistan. It is generally accepted that much of this influence must have been mediated through the Kushan empire, a realm that at its height ruled a vast area encompassing Bactria and most of Northern India from the first to the early third century CE. There are indeed many examples of almost direct borrowing between Kroraina and the Kushan domain. This is seen for example in the titlature of the early Krorainan kings such as that of Am̐goka in document n.581 that reads, “the great king, the king of kings, the great, the victorious, the just, abiding in the true law, his majesty, the great king Amkvaga, son

³⁶⁹ See the Niya Chinese documents N.19-28, 42 for pass-slips and N.1, 11-14, 16-17, 29-33, 35 for fragments of letters and reports in Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:537-42.

of heaven”.³⁷⁰ These are titles with direct parallels, often word for word, to those of Kushan rulers such as Kanishka I, who is called both the great king, king of kings and son of god/heaven in his inscriptions,³⁷¹ and who in the longer Rabatak inscription is also called “the righteous, the just, the autocrat, worthy of divine worship”.³⁷²

The importance of this cultural impact from the south-west, primarily but not only from India, was as previously mentioned recognized already by Stein, and following his first discoveries of Kharosthi documents at Niya he suggested two possible scenarios for its spread,

... there seemed enough in the first day’s discoveries to justify the conclusion that, with the Kharosthi script transplanted from the extreme north-west of India, an early form of Indian speech had also been brought into use within the territories of ancient Khotan, probably from the same region. Such a fact could be accounted for only by historical events of far-reaching importance, or else by ethnic movements little suspected hitherto.³⁷³

Already here Stein raised the two primary theories that has dominated the thinking on how these many cultural innovations made it to the Tarim Basin, namely a migration theory and a domination theory.³⁷⁴

The theory that has received the most attention in recent scholarship is what can be described as the migration theory, already discussed briefly in the section one the Krorainan scribes.³⁷⁵ This theory, as the name implies, suggests that the various cultural innovations were carried to Kroraina and the wider Tarim Basin by way of migrants from North-Western India. Meicun Lin has proposed a mass migrant of thousands arriving while Valerie Hansen have given a more conservative estimate of smaller groups of a few hundreds, both suggesting that these migrations took place

³⁷⁰ Titles translated by author.

³⁷¹ Falk, *Kushan Histories*, 111.

³⁷² Sims-Williams, ‘The Bactrian Inscription of Rabatak: A New Reading’, 55.

³⁷³ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:321.

³⁷⁴ Brough, the first proponent of the domination theory, even appears to draw his inspiration from Stein’s thinking on the problem, although from a different passage in Stein’s text. Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’, 590.

³⁷⁵ See section 3.3.1.

sometimes after 175 CE and before 220 CE.³⁷⁶ But these migration scenarios face several problems, in the form of the strong local continuity seen in Kroraina, the fact that the Krorainan scribes were in almost all cases certainly locals as discussed in section 3.3.1, and the general lack of support for such a migration scenario in both the local Krorainan sources and in historical works from elsewhere. As I however have dealt with these problems facing the migration scenario, and why it is untenable, elsewhere, it does not warrant further discussion here.³⁷⁷

Instead I will here primarily address the “domination theory”, that suggests that the western influence seen in Kroraina and other Tarim polities were brought into the region by a period of Kushan occupation. The first clear proponent of this theory was John Brough in his *Comments on the Third-Century Shan-shan and the History of Buddhism* (1965), though many scholars have adopted his view and argued for such a theory, most prominently Edwin G. Pulleyblank in *Chinese Evidence for the Date of Kaniska* (1968).³⁷⁸ A more recent proponent is Douglas A. Hitch who in the two articles *Kushan Tarim Domination* (1988), from which I have taken the theories name, and *The Special Status of Turfan* (2007), has further updated this view.

As described by Brough the proposed domination took the form of a period of direct occupation and control that saw Kushan administration imposed in the Tarim region and Kroraina, a process that left behind the many religious, cultural, and administrative practises that we see borrowed.³⁷⁹ Brough does however stress that this process did not necessarily involve the movement of many people, as he indeed points to the fact that there is little evidence for migration,³⁸⁰ nor did it necessarily last very long.³⁸¹ As evidence is primarily cited the western influences themselves, which it is stressed must have been the result of direct control.³⁸² Both Brough and Pulleyblank do however also note the existence of a Buddhist tradition linking the Kushans and the

³⁷⁶ Lin, ‘Kharosthi Bibliography: The Collections from China (1897-1993)’, 188–89; Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 26, 44–45.

³⁷⁷ Høisæter, ‘Migrants or Monks. The Problems of a Migration Scenario in First to Fourth Century Caḍota by the Niya River’.

³⁷⁸ See also Cribb, ‘Sino-Kharosthi Coins of Khotan. Their Attribution and Relevance to Kushan Chronology, Part 2’.

³⁷⁹ Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’, 597.

³⁸⁰ Brough, 605.

³⁸¹ Brough, 598.

³⁸² Brough, 597; Pulleyblank, ‘Chinese Evidence for the Date of Kaniska’, 254.

Tarim Basin, in particular Khotan.³⁸³ This tradition survives in two sources, the first a Tibetan text concerning Khotan called “*The Prophecy of the Li Country*” (*Li Yul Lun-bstan-pa*) written in the eight century³⁸⁴ and the second being the Chinese monk Xuanzang’s work “*Great Tang Record of the Western Regions*” (大唐西域記) recording his journeys between 626-645 CE.³⁸⁵ The episode in “*The Prophecy of the Li Country*” took place during the reign of a king Vijaya Kirti of Khotan at an unspecified date,³⁸⁶

Originally, King Kanika and the king of Gu-zan and the Li ruler, King Vijaya Kīrti, and others led an army into India, and when they captured the city called So-keḍ, King Vijaya Kīrti obtained many relics and put them in the stūpa of Sru-ñō.³⁸⁷

As noted in Hitch’s “The Special Status of Turfan”, John Hill has suggested that this Gu-zan is likely Kucha,³⁸⁸ and the story seem to suggest that both the Khotanese and Kuchean kings sent armies to aid the Kushan king Kaniskha I in India. This is quite a different tale from the one related by Xuanzang, a story that was presented to him in an Indian country called Zhinapudi (至那僕底),

From the earlier memoirs I have learned that anciently King Chia-ni-se-chia 迦膩色迦 (Kaniṣka) of the country of Ch’ien-t’o-li 犍陀羅 (Gandhara), whose majesty spread over the neighbouring kingdoms and whose transforming (influence) penetrated the far-away regions, led his troops to enlarge his territory (even) to the east of the Ts’ung-ling (Pamirs). (The rulers of) the

³⁸³ Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’, 589; Pulleyblank, ‘Chinese Evidence for the Date of Kaniska’.

³⁸⁴ Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan*; de la Vaissière, ‘Silk, Buddhism and Early Khotanese Chronology’, 85.

³⁸⁵ Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World, Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629)*.

³⁸⁶ The text does in general not provide dates, though de la Vaissière has attempted to date some of the kings described within in de la Vaissière, ‘Silk, Buddhism and Early Khotanese Chronology’.

³⁸⁷ Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan*, 19:46–47.

³⁸⁸ Hitch, ‘The Special Status of Turfan’, 12.

frontier tribes in the region “West of the (Yellow) River” (Ho-his) stood in awe of him and sent (their sons as) hostages to him.³⁸⁹

Yet despite their differences both pious tales appears to associate the greatest Kushan ruler Kaniska I with the Tarim Basin and point to his overlordship of these regions, something that Pulleyblank in particular emphasises as evidence for Kushan control over the Tarim polities, including Kroraina.³⁹⁰

While the various proponents of the Kushan domination theory has generally agreed on the nature and the form of the influence that brought the many southern and western elements to Kroraina, there has been much debate on the timing of this supposed occupation. Most early proponents of the theory, including Brough and Pulleyblank, recognized that such a major event as a direct Kushan rule over the Tarim Basin ought to have been noted in the Chinese sources, and as such they both propose to place the occupation into a period of silence in the Chinese histories. Such a period would however clearly have to be before the time of the Krorainan documents in the mid-third century, as these make no mention of the Kushan, and since the Kushan empire had been much weakened by that point.³⁹¹ Both Brough and Pulleyblank therefore preferred a period towards the end of the Han dynasty in the late second century when Chinese records become completely silent regarding the Tarim Basin,³⁹² with Pulleyblank giving a possible interval as 175-202 CE.³⁹³ These views were however formulated before the now general consensus on the date of the Kushan Era starting in the first year of king Kanishka I, a date which Harry Falk has shown to start in ca. 127 CE³⁹⁴ rather than a later date as argued by Pulleyblank.³⁹⁵ This re-assessment of the reign of Kanishka I has led Hitch, who originally argued for an occupation in the period 90-125 CE,³⁹⁶ to propose that the Kushan occupation must

³⁸⁹ Falk, *Kushan Histories*, 115.

³⁹⁰ Pulleyblank, ‘Chinese Evidence for the Date of Kaniska’, 254.

³⁹¹ Rezakhani, ‘From the Kushans to the Western Turks’, 202–5.

³⁹² Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’, 597.

³⁹³ Pulleyblank, ‘Chinese Evidence for the Date of Kaniska’, 257.

³⁹⁴ Falk, ‘The Kanishka Era in Gupta Records’; Falk, *Kushan Histories*, 111.

³⁹⁵ Pulleyblank, ‘Chinese Evidence for the Date of Kaniska’.

³⁹⁶ Hitch, ‘Kushan Tarim Domination’, 190–91.

have started at latest in 127 or 128 CE, though he does not preclude Kushan control before this time.³⁹⁷

Yet even with Hitch's updated dates the Kushan domination theory faces many problems, the first and biggest of which is the absence of corroborating evidence in the *Hou Hanshu* or other Chinese chronicles. The *Hou Hanshu* only gives one episode in which the Kushan empire, known to the Chinese as the Da Yuezhi (大月氏), were militarily involved in the Tarim Basin. This is recorded in the biography of the Chinese general Ban Chao, chapter 47, and relates that a massive Kushan army tried to invade the Tarim region in 90 CE, only to be successfully repulsed by Ban Chao.³⁹⁸ Hitch argues that the absence of Chinese records regarding a possible Kushan occupation of the Tarim Basin is not in itself evidence against such an occupation, as the historians compiling the works might not have had access to information about, or simply chosen to omit for political reasons, such an event.³⁹⁹ This might be true, especially when considering that no record existed of the Chinese garrison at Kroraina either, but equally the lack of a mention in Chinese sources is not evidence for such an occupation to have occurred. Furthermore, it should be noted that Fan Ye in compiling the *Hou Hanshu* was generally not shy about mentioning Han defeats and the *Hou Hanshu*'s chapter 88 on the Western Regions reads just as much a litany of military failure as it does success, with Han generals, garrisons and officials repeatedly being defeated and killed.⁴⁰⁰ Yet even if one believes that some defeats were redacted from the narratives for political reasons it is simply unbelievable that as momentous an event as the occupation of Kroraina by the Kushan should have gone unnoticed and unmentioned, as this would have brought the Kushan empire to the very borders of Han territory at nearby Dunhuang.

Nor are the two Buddhist tales of Kanishka particularly convincing evidence for a Kushan domination theory, presenting as they do stories of a legendary king, and being themselves separated by some five hundred years from the original events. In

³⁹⁷ Hitch, 'The Special Status of Turfan', 12–14.

³⁹⁸ Fan Ye, HHS, 47. See Chavannes, 'Trois Généraux Chinois de La Dynastie Des Han Orientaux', 232–33.

³⁹⁹ Hitch, 'Kushan Tarim Domination', 172–76.

⁴⁰⁰ Consider for example the killing of the Protector General Chen Mu by Karashar and Kucha in 75 CE, or the general "rebellion" against the Chinese in 105 CE during which two other Protector Generals were repeatedly attacked and driven out.

fact, even if they are accepted to contain a kernel of truth, which is quite possibly the case, neither speak directly to a military occupation of Kroraina by the Kushan. Xuanzang's tale does admittedly appear to describe some form of military exploits and territorial gains east of the Pamir, but no polity is said to have been conquered and they are instead described as submitting hostages, as one might expect of tributaries or vassals. Surely, neither a tributary nor vassal scenario would involve Kushan administration moving into the Tarim region. The story from the "*Prophecy of the Li Country*" is even less supportive of such a domination scenario, as the two Tarim kings bringing their armies to aid Kaniskha appear as allies rather than as subservient subjects. One is therefore left with only the presence of the imported elements as evidence for the supposed domination. Naturally, this evidence is by itself not sufficient to prove a Kushan occupation of the Tarim Basin any more than the adaptation of Buddhism as well as Chinese language, script, city-planning, court dress, and much more into Heian period Japan is evidence of a Chinese occupation there.

It would however be instructive to look to other similar historic examples of innovations, such as writing systems or organized religions, being borrowed from one culture into another in which these innovations did not exist. The adoption of Buddhism and Chinese state practises into the early state formation of Japan would seem one such instructive comparison, as would the similar adaptation of Christianity, the Latin language, the alphabet, and many accompanying roman practises into the early state formations of central, northern, and eastern Europe, as exemplified by large parts of Germany and also Scandinavia. In these far better understood cases conquest and occupation played only a minor role, if at all, and instead various forms of interaction appears to have been enough, mediated through missionary activities, kinship ties, diplomacy, or trade. In fact, as shown by examples such as Japan or Norway it was often the local elites themselves who travelled to the more developed centres which they, upon their return home, sought to emulate.

Thus, rather than a domination theory I would propose a Kushan influence theory, in which the prestige and influence of the Kushan empire caused the Tarim polities, who were part of their sphere of influence, to import and emulate their culture. I believe that it fits very well with the evidence discussed above, something

which can be illustrated by at least two points. Firstly, such an influence scenario would seem to fit perfectly with the later Buddhist tradition concerning Kanishka, as the Tarim polities in both cases appear to be independent, yet in the Kushan sphere of influence. Consider for example the story from the “Prophecy of the Li Country” where Khotan and possibly Kucha sent armies to aid Kanishka’s conquests, a practise that they would have been familiar with from Chinese claims to overlordship. Secondly, such an influence theory furthermore has the advantage of doing away with the difficult search for a gap in the Chinese historical accounts, as there is no reason why the Tarim polities could not have been part of both a Chinese and a Kushan sphere of influence, but largely independent of both. In fact, Kushan indirect influence over the Tarim Basin is recorded the *Hou Hanshu*’s chapter 88 in the section about Shule (Kashgar). There is related an episode taking place sometimes between 114 CE and 120 CE, in which the king of Kashgar exiled his maternal uncle called Chenpan (臣磐) to the Kushan domain. The same king then died childless and the king’s mother, together with the local nobles, placed the king’s nephew on the throne. Chenpan then petitioned the Kushan ruler for aid, and with their support he returned to Kashgar where he deposed the previous king’s nephew and made himself king. In 127 CE however the same Chenpan is said to have sent envoys with offerings to the Han, something he repeated twice more, showing that he was clearly independent from the Kushan empire.⁴⁰¹

A full exploration of this problem, and a possible influence theory, must be left for another time, though this view of events will generally be adopted for the following discussions. Summarising the above it should be clear however that very little is in fact known from outside historical sources related to the history of Kroraina and other Tarim polities, especially following the withdrawal of the Han dynasty in the second century CE. This has, as previously mentioned, often led to this period being seen as a “Dark Age”, both for the Tarim Basin polities as well as for the Silk Road as a whole. When held up against the local sources however, this view is a problematic one, as the following shall endeavour to show.

⁴⁰¹ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (pp.42-45)

4.2 The physical and human geography of Kroraina

The Tarim Basin region is a place of both climatic and geographic extremes. Aptly named Innermost Asia by Stein⁴⁰² the region is an internal-drainage basin hemmed in on nearly all sides by great mountain ranges, with the Altai to the north-east, Tianshan to the north, the Pamir to the west, the Karakoram to the south-west, and the Kunlun to the south and south-east. It only opens towards the east where it meets the great Gobi Desert, and the basin itself is entirely dominated by the Taklamakan Desert.⁴⁰³ (See map 2-3) The kingdom of Kroraina lay in the south-eastern part of this Basin, an area bound to the north by the Kuruk-tagh mountains and to the south by the Kunlun. The region is extremely arid, especially the Lop desert at its centre, but watered by a number of rivers. The largest used to be the Tarim river that runs down from the mountains in the western part of the Tarim Basin and then runs along the northern rim of the basin before emptying out into the lake Lop Nur in the east. Due primarily to human use and damming the river ceased to reach Lop Nur in the 1950s, but at the time of the kingdom of Kroraina it must have run far larger and formed a delta where it reached the lake Lop Nur. In addition to the Tarim a number of smaller rivers runs into the basin from the Kunlun mountains, the most important of which in the south-east are the Charchan river, the Endere river, the Yar-tungaz river, and the Niya river, all running northwards before disappearing into the desert.

These rivers carry large amounts of sediments down from the surrounding mountains, and due to these sediments the oases of the region are highly fertile, seeming like islands of green amongst a sea of brown and yellow when seen on a satellite image. It is clear that during the period under consideration here the Tarim Basin was going through a climatically wetter period that brought far more water into the south-east, its rivers reaching further into the desert and the Tarim river itself reaching all the way to the Lop sites before emptying into the lake Lop Nur.⁴⁰⁴ The details of the changes the region has undergone is still a matter of some debate, but

⁴⁰² Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*.

⁴⁰³ Alitto, 'Takla Makan Desert'.

⁴⁰⁴ Qin et al., 'New Evidence of Agricultural Activity and Environmental Change Associated with the Ancient Loulan Kingdom, China, around 1500 Years Ago'; Li et al., 'Oasis Landscape of the Ancient Loulan on the West Bank of Lake Lop Nur, Northwest China, Inferred from Vegetation Utilization for Architecture'.

these changes explains why most of the Krorainan archaeological sites now lies deep in the desert, in areas that once were thriving oases.

Through the Chinese histories and Kharosthi documents the rough extent and topography of the kingdom is rather well-known, but several problems persist. The first and most debated of these are the problems of the kingdom's name for itself, as well as the connected debate about the name and location of its capital. Secondly, though the major oases have all been identified, a number of toponyms in the Kharosthi material remains unknown and the exact borders of the kingdom, especially in the north, remains uncertain. These are all questions with some bearing on the following discussions, primarily those in chapter seven, and as such a brief presentation of these problems and the solutions adopted here will follow.

The question of the kingdom's name

As already seen the kingdom of Kroraina was known to the Chinese originally as Loulan (樓蘭), a transcription of the same word as the Prakrit Kroraina or Krorayina, but was later named Shanshan (樓蘭), a name seemingly without parallels in the Kharosthi material. Both these Chinese terms have often been adopted by historians, as has the Kharosthi name Kroraina used here. However in the Kharosthi documents, Kroraina is not used as the name for the kingdom as a whole but rather as a place name referring to a specific area.⁴⁰⁵ This is seen for example in document n.277, n.370 and n.383, where people are said to be “of Kroraina”, clearly in contrast with being from the Niya site, were the documents were produced.

Instead it has long been unclear what the local name for the kingdom might have been. This problem was however recently solved by Diego Loukota in his article “*A New Kharosthi Document from Kucha in the Hetian County Museum Collection*”, original published in Chinese in 2016 and later in English in 2020.⁴⁰⁶ This article concerns a newly re-discovered document likely produced in the kingdom of Kucha, written in Kuchean Kharosthi and dated in the reign of a king of Kucha. It concerned a

⁴⁰⁵ See document n.370, 383, 678, 696, 706,

⁴⁰⁶ Loukota, ‘和田博物馆藏源于龟兹国的一件佉卢文木牍 (A Kharosthi Document from Kucha in the Hetian Museum)’; Loukota, ‘A New Kharosthi Document from Kucha in the Hetian County Museum Collection’.

man named Sagamovi who is described as *nuaviya*, that is to say “Nuavan”.⁴⁰⁷ The word Nuava, the location that the man Sagamovi hailed from, does as Loukota points out also appear in the Krorainan Kharosthi material, more specifically in one of the titles of the Krorainan king discussed previously, namely *mahanuava*. This title perplexed the original translators of the Kharosthi documents, Burrow commenting that it was either a form of the word *mahanubhava*, meaning “of great majesty”, or an independent non-Indian title.⁴⁰⁸ In his translations he chose to give it as “majesty” and it occurs with great regularity in the configuration “*mahanuava maharaya*”, that is “his majesty the great king”, both in dating formula and opening “Royal Command”-type documents. As pointed out by Loukota however both the Kuchean and Khotanese kings known from Kharosthi material headed their dating formula “*Kuci maharaya*” and “*Khotana maharaya*”, meaning “the great king of Kuci” and “the great king of Khotan” respectively. This formula clearly parallels the Krorainan “*Mahanuava maharaya*”, as does most of the remaining dating formula, and as such the Krorainan title should certainly be similarly read as “the great king of Mahanuava (Greater Nuava)”.⁴⁰⁹

That Loukota’s re-interpretation of Nuava as the name of the kingdom of Kroraina is correct is conclusively proven by another newly discovered document from Kroraina, namely the “Legal” document n.861, though Loukota does not comment upon it. In this document, dated to the reign of king Mahiri and heard at the royal court with the king in attendance, the combination “*Nuava rajammi*” or “in the kingdom of Nuava” is used, as a contrast to “*Kuci rajammi*”. The context is that people came back to the kingdom of Nuava from the kingdom of Kuci, and astonishingly the person primarily concerned in the legal document, and the one that came back from Kucha, is a man named Sagamovi. This Sagamovi, actor n.1069, is in fact very well-attested and was a man hailing from the Niya site who fled to Kuci with another man’s wife only to later return to the kingdom of Kroraina and receive the king’s blessing to resettle with his family. This seeming coincidence is likely to be

⁴⁰⁷ The -i suffix making a noun into an adjective is well known from Krorainan Kharosthi, seen also in Cadoti and Parvati meaning “Cadotan” and “Parvatan/From the Mountains” respectively. Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 30.

⁴⁰⁸ Burrow, 101, 111.

⁴⁰⁹ Loukota, ‘A New Kharosthi Document from Kucha in the Hetian County Museum Collection’, 102–5.

explained by the find site of the Kuchean document discovered by Loukota, namely in the regional museum of Khotan (Hetian). Where the museum had acquired the document is not known, but it seems exceedingly likely that it too was found at the Niya site, as most other new Kharosthi documents in the Hetian museum's collection have come from there. As suggested by Loukota it was likely found in the ruin N.29 from which the majority of Sagamovi's Krorainan documents have come, and the man must certainly be the same individual in both cases.⁴¹⁰

It is at any rate clear that the kingdom's name was the kingdom of Nuava, and the king's title was great king of Greater Nuava. However, as Loukota's discoveries and this name is not well-known by the wider scholarly community, I have chosen to retain the more common kingdom of Kroraina, which at any rate is not entirely wrong given that both the Chinese and the Sogdians knew the kingdom by this name. But Loukota's discoveries do have something of a bearing on another much-debated question regarding Krorainan toponyms, namely the name and location of the kingdom's capital.

The problem of the kingdom's capital

The debate about the location of the capital of the kingdom of Kroraina was launched by Kazuo Enoki, who in his paper "*The Location of the Capital of Lou-lan and the Date of the Kharosthi Inscriptions*" (1963) gives a lengthy argument for identifying the capital of Loulan (Kroraina) with the L.A site.⁴¹¹ This has gained widespread acceptance,⁴¹² but has also been challenged. Yung Ma, in a similar vein to an older idea of Stein,⁴¹³ proposed instead, based on Chinese sources, that the Krorainan capital must have been in the Charklik oases while the L.A ruin represented a Chinese outpost.⁴¹⁴ This view was also recently adopted by Padwa, who discuss it briefly in

⁴¹⁰ Loukota, 92.

⁴¹¹ Enoki, 'The Location of the Capital of Lou-Lan and the Date of the Kharosthi Inscriptions'.

⁴¹² Brough, 'Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism', 591–92; Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia. The Early Stage: 125 B.C.-A.D. 23. An Annotated Translation of Chapter 61 and 96 of the History of the Former Han Dynasty*, n. 77; Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)'; Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*.

⁴¹³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 342–45.

⁴¹⁴ Due to the Covid-19 situation I have not been able to access the original works on the topic by Yong Ma 1979. His views are however summarized in detail in Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia*, 1:329–30.

relation to the Kharosthi material.⁴¹⁵ Meicun Lin has alternatively proposed another view, namely that the original capital of Kroraina lay at the L.E site, but was later moved south to the Charchan river. This Lin bases partly on the change of the kingdom's name from Loulan to Shanshan, the latter toponym reflected in the modern name Charchan.⁴¹⁶ But since Loukota's recent work has shown that the name Shanshan was not related to the native name for the kingdom, this argument would seem to weaken. The debate about the capital's location is at any rate a complex one, attempting to trace the political development of Kroraina over time, based on very limited sources. A full examination of this problem lies beyond the remit of this discussion and we will therefore stick only to the question of where Kroraina's capital might have been situated in the third and fourth centuries, the part of the question relevant to the following discussion. This is a much easier problem to address, as the Kharosthi sources provides a quite clear picture.

The capital of the kingdom and the seat of the royal court is referred to in the Kharosthi documents in two ways, either as the great city (*mahaṃta nagara*) or as the capital (*kuhani/khvani*).⁴¹⁷ That these two terms both referred to the seat of the royal court is made explicit in several documents, for example n.155 and n.530. In n.155 is given a date for the document at “the king's court in the great city (*mahaṃta nagara*).”⁴¹⁸ while in document n.530 the king writes to his officials that “Sugnuta reports that Kuṃyaya received corn from him here in the capital (*iṣa kuhaniyaṃmi*) (to the extent of) three milima.”⁴¹⁹ Thus, the two words clearly referred to the same city, namely the capital housing the royal court. Furthermore, it is quite clear that the great city was called Kroraina in the Kharosthi documents, a fact made evident by document n.678, that Enoki relies heavily upon. The document in question is a “Contract”-type document written on a rectangular tablet and concerns the sale of a plot of land described as being “land with a capacity (for seed) of three milima (situated) in

⁴¹⁵ Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 66–67.

⁴¹⁶ Lin, ‘On the First Capital City of the Loulan Kingdom (楼兰国始都考)’.

⁴¹⁷ *Mahaṃta nagara* appears in document n.5, 155, 296, 469 and 864. *Kuhani* and its variations appear in document n.162, 250, 291, 431, 478, 489, 505, 506, 526, 530, 637, 660, 663 and 795.

⁴¹⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 28.

⁴¹⁹ Burrow, 105.

Kroraina, on the south side (*dachina sityammi*) of the great city.” (*Kroraimnammi mahamta nagarasa dakšina sityi-yammi bhuma kurora tre milimi pramanna*).⁴²⁰ This same association between the king’s location, and thus the capital, and Kroraina is likewise made in document n.706, a “Royal Command”, where the king states that a group of people had been granted “By me the great king in Kroraina” (*mayā maharayena Kroraimnammi*).⁴²¹ Given, as explored above, that the kingdom’s name in the Kharosthi documents were Nuava and not Kroraina this line would seem to refer to the king’s location, namely the city or oases of Kroraina. Thus, contrary to Padwa’s suggestion,⁴²² the name of the capital of the kingdom is known and was Kroraina, also referred to with the alternative terms “Great City” and “Capital”. But where was this oasis-city of Kroraina located?

There has been a general consensus that the place name Kroraina in the Kharosthi documents referred to the L.A site and its environs and with good reason, for this finds support in both the Kharosthi and Chinese documents found there. Only seven Kharosthi documents mention Kroraina by name and of these three were found at the Lop sites, namely n.678, n.696 and n.706. This might seem like a low number but considering that only fifty-two Kharosthi documents have been found across the Lop sites this is in fact rather frequent, and if these fifty-two are taken alone Kroraina is also the most frequent toponym found within. Turning to the content of the documents, n.678 discussed above is again of great use. It was a “Contract”-type document found in the building L.A.4, a structure that Stein noted carried the hallmarks of Krorainan architecture as seen at Niya. “Contract”-type documents are a form of document that in general were either found stored or discarded in rubbish heaps, and as observed by Stein n.678 had originally been stored on a shelf in the passage L.A.4.ii from which it has subsequently fallen.⁴²³ It is therefore highly likely that the buyer named Yapgu resided at the L.A site, and given that he bought a plot of farmland in Kroraina the most reasonable explanation would be that the plot of land

⁴²⁰ Translated by author based on Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 678.

⁴²¹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 141; Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 266.

⁴²² Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 67.

⁴²³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 378–79.

lay near the L.A site, likely on the southern side as indicated by the document. In fact, large areas of farmland have recently been documented by Qin et al near the L.A site, mainly on the eastern and south-eastern side,⁴²⁴ and to the south-east Stein explored the ruins of an ancient farmstead at L.D.⁴²⁵

Turning to the Chinese material from Kroraina the picture is the same, with Loulan (樓蘭) being the most common toponym followed by Dunhuang (敦煌), the first major Chinese town eastwards.⁴²⁶ Most of these occurrences of the name are in letters, given as the origin or the destination. Which of the two is not always clear and one could of course object that this means that Loulan might have been the origin and thus elsewhere. But as some of the letters have very clear destinations, such as W.107 bound for Dunhuang and sent from Loulan, this is not feasible.

As such we can conclude that the Krorainan material shows quite clearly that in the third and fourth centuries CE the capital of the kingdom was called Kroraina, known to the Chinese as Loulan (樓蘭). This was the location indicated by the terms “Great City” and “Capital”, and the oases-city was centred on the L.A site, though it might have encompassed some of the other central Lop sites such as L.B and L.D.

Places and place-names in Kroraina

With Kroraina the capital thus placed we can turn to the other toponyms found in the Kharosthi documents and as shown by table one there are quite a few. Many of these were administrative units within the oases-towns of Kroraina, such as the many *avana* or *kilme* in the list, and many others are mentioned but once or twice, making them very difficult to place. But the more frequently mentioned locations can in many cases be identified with known oases and even archaeological sites, as the documents often indicate their position in relation to each other.⁴²⁷ In this regard document n.14 is

⁴²⁴ Qin et al., ‘New Evidence of Agricultural Activity and Environmental Change Associated with the Ancient Loulan Kingdom, China, around 1500 Years Ago’.

⁴²⁵ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 218.

⁴²⁶ See document Cn.754, 907, 922, P.2, 5b, 15b-c, 19g, 20b, W.2, 34, 107, 117 and Mn.207, 227.

⁴²⁷ This was noticed already by Rapson, who made the connection for most of the major oases, and has later also been elaborated upon by both Brough and Padwa. Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 324–25; Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’, 591–93; Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, chap. 3.2.

particularly useful, as it traces the movement of an envoy from the capital to neighbouring Khotan going east to west through the kingdom,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbo Bhimaya and ʃoṭhaṅga Lýipe

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs cozbo Bhimaya and ʃoṭhaṅga Lýipeya as follows: ʃameka informs us that he went as an envoy to Khotan. From Calmadana they gave him a guard and he went as far as Saca. From Saca they gave him a guard and he went as far as Nina. From Nina to Khotan a guard should have been provided from Caḏota. As far as Khotan [.....]. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, the hire of a guard from Nina to Khotan is to be handed over according as it was formerly paid, along with an extra sum. A decision is to be made according to the law.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Of ʃameka⁴²⁸

As seen above the envoy ʃameka, moving from the capital at Kroraina westwards towards Khotan passed three major centres, namely Calmadana, Saca, and finally Caḏota, the administrative centre in charge of Nina. Starting in the west Caḏota, in which the addressed officials resided, refers to the Niya site, a fact made clear by numerous documents all addressed to Caḏota and the fact that Caḏota is by far the most common toponym in the documents from the Niya site.⁴²⁹ As suspected by Rapson and concluded by Brough this was the same toponym transcribed as Jingjue

⁴²⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 3–4.

⁴²⁹ For some examples see document n.31, 362, 367, 386 and 584.

(精絕) in the *Hanshu*.⁴³⁰ Calmadana can likewise be confidently placed somewhere along the Charchan river and the name is the same as that transcribed into Chinese as Qiemo (且末). Its exact location in the Charchan region cannot be ascertained as no major site has been found there, though it seems likely that it inhabited the same area as the modern oasis-town of Charchan, in which both traces of ruins and a large cemetery has been found. These two identifications also fit well with the information provided by the *Hou Hanshu*, discussed above, that the kingdom of Kroraina expanded in the first century and annexed four other kingdoms, including both Qiemo and Jingjue. This leaves Saca, a site that finds no ready equivalent in Chinese sources. But as shown by document n.14 it lay between Caḍota and Calmadana, or in other words between the Niya and Charchan rivers, leaving only the Endere river as a reasonable proposition as concluded by Rapson.⁴³¹ Whether or not the Endere site can be equated with Saca is a more difficult question, but given that no other major site is known from the area, and the fact that the Endere site yielded both many stupas and fortifications, it seems a reasonable proposition. In summary the major oases centres of the kingdom of Kroraina were Caḍota (Jingjue) at the Niya site, Saca likely at the Endere site, Calmadana (Qiemo) in the Charchan oases and Kroraina (Loulan) at the central Lop sites.

As for the many other less frequently mentioned place names the situation is more obscure, and only in a few cases can a location be suggested. Nina, seen in document n.14, lay close to and was administered from Caḍota, as shown by both document n.14, n.189 and n.848. As shown by Brough it can on etymological grounds be equated with modern Niya,⁴³² and thus lay south of Caḍota along the Niya river. The place called Parvata, literally the mountain, likewise appears to have been close to Caḍota, though it is quite possible that the term simply referred to the entire mountain range south of the kingdom of Kroraina. Furthermore, the places called Masina, Bhagasa, and Tsaga all appear to have been villages close to and administered by

⁴³⁰ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 325; Brough, 'Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism', 592.

⁴³¹ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*.

⁴³² Brough, 'Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism', 593.

Caḍota,⁴³³ in the case of Masina laying somewhere to the north as shown by document n.831. Remena, mentioned in four documents,⁴³⁴ also lay close to Caḍota and as shown by document n.214 it lay between Caḍota and Saca, likely located along the smaller Yar-tungaz river. Finally, Navote, appearing in two documents, was likely in the eastern part of the kingdom and possibly close to the capital Kroraina as a list of people in Navote was found at the L.A site.⁴³⁵

It is of course quite possible that some of the other less well-known place names in the Kharosthi material might have referred to known archaeological sites. One would especially suspect that the Miran site might hide behind one of the Kharosthi names, given that some of the stupas found there were clearly raised during the time of the kingdom of Kroraina. Similarly, one would expect to find the Charkliq area, and possibly even the Xiaohe and Yingpan areas, covered. These have all yielded archaeological material that were culturally the same as the Krorainan sites, including a small fragment of a Kharosthi letter from one of the Yingpan graves. Nothing in the material found to date, nor the Chinese material, indicates the extent of the kingdom of Kroraina in the north and north-west however, and as such it is uncertain whether or not the Xiaohe and Yingpan finds were in the kingdom or an adjacent one. For the purposes of this dissertation however they will not be treated as part of Kroraina.

In conclusion the kingdom of Kroraina stretch from the Niya river in the west to the shores of Lop Nur in the east, bound by the Kuruk-tagh mountains to the north and the Kunlun mountains to the south. Its capital Kroraina lay at the L.A site with the three major centres westwards being Calmadana in the Charchan oases, Saca by the Endere river, and Caḍota by the Niya river. In the following chapters I will refer to the oases-towns of the kingdom by the names appearing in the Kharosthi documents, but when specifically referring to the archaeological site I will use the sites designation to avoid the uncertainty of some identifications such as Saca.

⁴³³ For Masina see document n.278, 374, 589, 777 and 865. For Bhagasa see document n.195, 608, 726 and 726. For Tsaga see document n.68, 80, 90 and 255.

⁴³⁴ See document n.214, 251, 376 and 518.

⁴³⁵ See document n.351 and 754.

4.3 The political and social structures of Kroraina

With this basic outline of Krorainan geography in mind we turn to the final topic of this introductory chapter, namely a brief sketch of the political and social structure of the kingdom. As the Kharosthi documents were largely the product of the kingdom's administration, they provide a rich source for studying the socio-political landscape of Kroraina. They do however use a broad range of specialized and often local vocabulary related to social and political organisation, a fact that has made translating and understanding the relevant documents quite difficult. This has led to two primary schools of thought on the socio-political organisation of the kingdom, namely a "feudal" model and a kinship model. This section will sketch out these two positions and discuss them briefly, before presenting the view on the socio-political landscape of Kroraina that will be adopted here.

Kilme: Feudal estates or kinship groups

The debate about the socio-political organisation of the kingdom of Kroraina is centred on the interpretation of a number of administrative terms. Two terms in particular are the key to this issue, namely the words *avana* and *kilme* both often used with the native Krorainan suffix *-e(m)ci* or *-i(m)ci* meaning "belonging to x".⁴³⁶ Neither word has a clear etymology and both appear to be native Krorainan words, though *kilme* finds a parallel in Tocharian A *kalyme* "district, direction".⁴³⁷ Thomas Burrow, who first translated the Krorainan documents, was naturally uncertain about their meaning, and his translations of them were primarily based upon what made the best sense in the context of each individual document. *Avana* mostly appears as parts of toponyms and in such cases Burrow usually left it untranslated.⁴³⁸ In a few cases, however, he chose to translate it as "village",⁴³⁹ a meaning he likewise proposed in his dictionary where he noted that it was clearly an administrative term.⁴⁴⁰ With *kilme* on the other hand Burrow was far less consistent, giving it sometimes untranslated, sometimes as

⁴³⁶ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 31.

⁴³⁷ Burrow, 83. Baums and Glass, *A Dictionary of Gandhari*, "Kilmemci"

⁴³⁸ For just a few examples see document n.10, 32, 37, 42, 422 and 468.

⁴³⁹ See document n.193, 549, 696 and 713.

⁴⁴⁰ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 77.

“district”, sometimes as “estate”, and sometimes as “domiciled”.⁴⁴¹ *Kilmeci* was similarly inconsistent, sometimes left untranslated and sometimes rendered as “native”, “tenant”, “dependant”, or “resident”.⁴⁴² Burrow freely admits to the difficulty of translating this word in his dictionary entry for it, but notes that it might have meant something like a feudal estate, given that many *kilme* were said to be “the *kilme* of so-and-so”, in all cases men with important titles.⁴⁴³

This latter thread was picked up by Christopher Atwood who in his 1991 article *Life in Third-fourth Century Cadh'ota* provided the first in depth discussion on the socio-political organisation of the kingdom.⁴⁴⁴ In Atwood's view *kilme* should be understood as “appanage”, paying taxes to the aristocracy, while *avana* was a “county”, paying taxes to the royal treasury, and the *kilmeci* associated with both were to be understood as “serfs”.⁴⁴⁵ Over these lorded the aristocracy with their many titles and the offices in the royal administration, as well as a lower rank of “half-free” officials including scribes, animal overseers and the like, all exempt from taxation.⁴⁴⁶ Therefore, as Atwood puts it “the essential social cleavage was between the officials on the one hand and the serfs on the other”.⁴⁴⁷

Mariner Erza Padwa has however sharply disagreed with this view in his 2007 dissertation, pointing out that a closer reading of the Kharosthi documents shows that Atwood's interpretation of the terms *kilme* and *avana* are incorrect. Instead, after a very thorough examination of the Kharosthi documents, and especially the evidence related to marriage and kinship systems, Padwa concludes that *kilme* referred to a large kinship group. Membership of these kinship groups went through patrilineal decent,

⁴⁴¹ *Kilme* in document n.519, 621, 632 and 639. District in document n.46, 152, 209, 254, 256, 271, 276, 307, 331, 338, 532 and 585. Estate in document n.358, 374, 393 and 482. Domiciled in document n.422.

⁴⁴² *Kilmeci/Kilmeci* in document n.16, 278, 381, 468, 474, 713 and 734. Native in document n.297 and 581. Tenant in document n.358. Dependant in document n.437. Resident in document n.495.

⁴⁴³ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 83.

⁴⁴⁴ R.C. Agrawala has also published several articles on the Kharosthi documents through the 1950s, but he does not try to re-construct the Krorainan socio-political organisation in detail, which is why I have not included him in this discussion. He does however comment upon many aspects of the documents, including some socio-political aspects, some of which clearly informed Atwood's views. For discussions touching upon socio-political organisation see Agrawala, ‘Position of Slaves and Serfs as Depicted in the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan’; Agrawala, ‘Some Aspects of Indian Culture in the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan’.

⁴⁴⁵ Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, n. 14.

⁴⁴⁶ Atwood, 175–85.

⁴⁴⁷ Atwood, 175.

and Padwa argues that they likely traced their roots far back into pre-history and the pre-state period. *Avana* on the other hand was a term designating a territory that Padwa shows was linked to one or more specific *kilme*.⁴⁴⁸

There is no room here for a full treatment of this complicated question, but as suggested by Padwa a close reading of the Kharosthi documents shows that Atwood's interpretations of *avana* and *kilme* does not work. Firstly, the interpretation of *kilmeci* as serfs does not stand up to scrutiny, shown perhaps best by document n.279 where a *kala* Acuñiya was said to be *kilmeci* in *Yaye-avana* (*yatha Yayeayanaṃmi kilmeci kala Acuñ[i]yaṣa*). The title *kala* was a high title,⁴⁴⁹ repeatedly applied to men said to be sons of the king,⁴⁵⁰ and the *kala* Acuñiya is otherwise addressed politely as master (*bhaṭaraga*) in the "Letter"-type document n.278, hardly the way one would address a serf. As such the term *kilmeci* cannot possibly be understood as serf based on document n.279.⁴⁵¹ In fact, if looking closer at some of the other contexts in which *kalas* appear it is also noteworthy that they appear together with ordinary untitled men in several tax lists.⁴⁵² As such Atwood's assertion that there existed an aristocracy exempt from taxation is likewise shown to not hold true.

I will therefore in the following generally adopt Padwa's interpretation of the terms *kilme* and *avana*. It is also important to stress that almost all the Kharosthi documents have been found at the Niya (Caḍota) site. This means that most of what we know of the socio-political organisation relate to the situation at Caḍota, and though the conclusions below appear to generally hold true for the entire kingdom there may have been some variation.

The spatial organization of the kingdom

The kingdom of Kroraina was broken up into administrative units on three levels, namely into different *raja*, towns and finally *avana*. *Raja* literally means kingdom and was in some cases used to refer to the kingdom of Kroraina as a whole, but it was

⁴⁴⁸ Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', chaps 7–8.

⁴⁴⁹ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 82.

⁴⁵⁰ See document n.307, 331, 622 and 634.

⁴⁵¹ The reason for Atwood's oversight of this document likely lay with Burrow's translation, as Burrow in this case gave *Yayeayanaṃmi kilmeci* as "of the district of *Yaye-ayana*".

⁴⁵² See document n.169, 181, 210, 467 and 615.

mostly used in the meaning of “province” with both Caḍota and Calamadana being called *raja*.⁴⁵³ These *raja* appear to reflect the older polities said to have been conquered by Kroraina in the first century as described in the *Hou Hanshu*, and was centred on major oases that in turn controlled smaller settlements around them. Thus, as discussed above, Caḍota administered settlements to both its north and south in the form of Masina and Nina. The *raja* of Caḍota was generally headed either by a pair of officials, one of which were either a kitsaitsa or a cozbo, or in some periods by a great cozbo (*mahacozbo*) alone.

Within each *raja* were several oases-towns and smaller villages under the administration of the central oases. Based on the archaeological remnants, these oases-towns, with the exception of Kroraina itself, were not closely packed cities within a walled area, but were rather settlements dispersed over a large, primarily rural, landscape with several denser clusters. Some of these oases-towns might have been referred to by the term *nagara*, literally city, as seen in for example the place name Bothi-nagara.⁴⁵⁴ Yet in most cases *nagara* seems to have referred to a specific site inside the oases themselves, possibly a fortified one.⁴⁵⁵ The exact relationship between the smaller oases-towns and the central oases is furthermore rather difficult to grasp. From the surviving documents it is not entirely clear who headed these various smaller oases-towns such as Nina, though possibly some of them too were headed by cozbo official given the large number of such officials that appear to have been active at the same time.

Finally, within the oases-towns were several *avana*, a territorial unit that as shown by Padwa was closely tied to the *kilme* structure and might have had its roots in kin-based villages.⁴⁵⁶ This close tie is seen in the many actors described as being *kilmeci* in so-and-so *avana*.⁴⁵⁷ This was as will be recalled the case of kala Acuñiya in document n.278 and similarly Ramšotsa, the owner of the secret archive in ruin N.24, was also said to be *kilmeci* in Yaye-avana in document n.581. That *kilme* was a term

⁴⁵³ See document n.342 and 415.

⁴⁵⁴ See document n.69.

⁴⁵⁵ See in particular document n.272. See also section 9.2.2.

⁴⁵⁶ Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 204–11.

See also document n.32, 46, 254, 279, 295, 334, 366, 474, 481, 532, 573, 817, 848 and 861.

⁴⁵⁷ See document n.10, 37, 46, 110, 137, 181, 297, 422, 431, 468, 474, 495, 532, 581, 632, 713, 848 and 861.

denoting kinship groups is made clear by its frequent invocation in connection with marriages, as a marriage between *kilmes* from different *avana*'s created an obligation of reciprocity.⁴⁵⁸ Yet despite its importance also in this context the *avana* was primarily an administrative unit, administered by royal officials and closely connected to the kingdom's system of taxation and courts, as will be explored in the next chapter.

It is however unclear if all the larger oases-towns of Kroraina, like Calmadana or Saca, also had *avana*. Cađota had perhaps as many as ten *avana* within the oases-town but no other *avana* are known from the documents, and as such this could have been a purely Cađotan phenomenon. It does however seem likely that this organization was used across Kroraina, given that the *vasu* officials that played a central role in administering the *avana* are also found in documents from the L.B site.⁴⁵⁹

The social organization of the kingdom

This takes us to the socio-political organisation of the kingdom with its many officials. Given the re-interpretation of *kilmeci* as clansman or kinsman, Atwood's "essential cleavage" between aristocracy and serfs falls away, but this does not mean that he was wrong in recognizing a clear social hierarchy within the kingdom of Kroraina. Instead the picture is a complex one and our understanding is hampered by the many words that remain untranslated. Broadly speaking however one can distinguish at least four groups in Krorainan society as known through its documents, namely the elite of high officials, the majority of freeborn landholders, a rather amorphous group of "half-free" of various kinds, and finally slaves, complicated further by the presence of a Buddhist monastic community.

Judging by the available sources it would appear that the majority of the population were freeborn landholders of various degrees of wealth, ranging from the very richest of office holders to the relatively poor. These are the most frequently occurring actors and are especially well represented in tax lists, where their varying degrees of wealth is reflected in the uneven amounts being paid. It is however uncertain to what extent this reflects the reality of Kroraina, for Krorainan society was

⁴⁵⁸ Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', chap. 7.

⁴⁵⁹ See document n.706 and 707.

also one where chattel slavery was widespread. Slaves only appear in a total of forty-two documents, giving the impression that they were not in the majority, though this is likely not an accurate reflection of the ratio between freeborn and slaves, as the slaves in general could not act alone as legal subjects nor do they generally appear in tax lists. The conditions of the slaves too seemed to have varied, as some slaves were given land to hold by their owners from which they paid rent, though it could be withdrawn at any time.⁴⁶⁰ This land it appears they could even sell, although this required their master's permission.⁴⁶¹

In many of these cases of landholding slaves however their exact legal status is unclear, and rather than being legal non-subjects there appear to have been various forms of “half-free” people. Particularly interesting and well-documented is the case of the so-called *palayamnaga*, which Burrow gives as “refugees” or “fugitive” depending on the context.⁴⁶² These were people who had fled their native kingdom and arrived in neighbouring kingdoms. The best-known example of such a *palayamnaga* is Sagamoya who as discussed above fled from Caḍota to Kuci, only to return to Kroraina after six years in exile. As made clear by document n.861 there existed royal law that stipulated that fugitives from other kingdoms became the property of the Krorainan king upon arrival, and in the case of Sagamoya he was promptly granted to the kala Puṃṇabala as his *daza*, that is slave. Kala Puṃṇabala then gave Sagamoya his farm in Caḍota to run, and through a series of letters we learn of various commands given to him.⁴⁶³ Yet despite being called “my slave” by the kala, Sagamoya was still a legal subject and appears entirely independent both in two “Legal”-type documents and in one “Contract”-type document,⁴⁶⁴ making him a clear case of a “half-free” man.

A further complicating factor in the Krorainan social landscape were the Buddhist community (*saṃgha*) and the many people entitled monk (*śramana*) in the documents. As many as seventy-three different monks appear in the Kharosthi material in all manner of contexts, ranging from documents discussing marriages to documents

⁴⁶⁰ See document n.450.

⁴⁶¹ For examples see document n.327 and 574.

⁴⁶² Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 104.

⁴⁶³ See document n.862 for the grant of land and document n.622, 634 and 635.

⁴⁶⁴ See document n.834 and 861, as well as the contract n.833.

dealing with exchange.⁴⁶⁵ The community were headed by elders and appears to have enjoyed some legal independence in internal matters, as shown by document n.489, where the community of monks at the capital Kroraina handed down regulations from the king to the community in Caḍota. Yet despite this seeming level of organisation there has been found no monastery proper at the Niya site and many of the monks were themselves landholders and had families.⁴⁶⁶ On the other hand, some monks were themselves slaves, making it difficult to speak of monks as a separate social group in Kroraina.⁴⁶⁷ Rather the Buddhist community as a religious organisation appears to have transcended the older social classes and drawn members from all of Krorainan society.

The political organization of the kingdom

Things are hardly easier when considering the upper part of Krorainan society, constituted by the many men carrying titles in the documents. A bewildering array is found throughout the source corpus and there is no room nor need here for even an attempt at an exhaustive discussion of these titles, though an onomasticon of the more frequent titles appear in appendix III. Two points about the Krorainan political elites ought to be noted however, namely the problem of separating titles from offices and the division between magistrates and officials.

It has generally been assumed that most of the titles carried by people in the Krorainan documents referred to specific offices, and this does hold true for most of them. Some, especially amongst the highest titles, do however appear not to be associated with any specific role in the documents, but is rather simply used to denote the person's high status. This is notably the case with the title of *kala*, who appears in a broad range of roles, and with the title *ogu*, who often headed *kilme* and furthermore often carried other titles as well.⁴⁶⁸ No solution to this problem will be proposed here,

⁴⁶⁵ For the former see document n.418 and 474. For the latter see document n.130, 322, 330, 419, 425, 437, 519, 546, 549, 582, 652, 655 and 782.

⁴⁶⁶ For the former see document n.419, 549, 582, 652, 655 and 782. For the latter see document n.418, 419, 425, 621 and 861.

⁴⁶⁷ See document n.152, 358 and 506.

⁴⁶⁸ See also Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 80–82.

but this possibility is useful to keep in mind when considering the various Krorainan titles.

Secondly it is worth noting that there existed a clear separating between what might be termed low or local and high officials, described in the documents as officeholder (*dramḡahara*) and magistrate (*mahatva*). Most of the local officials were *dramḡahara*, including such titles as the often encountered *vasu* and *ṣoṭhamḡa*, and were generally appointed by the provincial governors, in most cases a *cozbo*. These were largely local men, and while some as shall be seen were quite rich and influential, they were not the true elite of Krorainan society. This true elite were represented by those titles and offices called magistrates or *mahatva*, and it is noteworthy that it was usually only those titled magistrates who could hold a legal court. Exactly which titles were considered magistrates is difficult to say for certain, but based on their occurrences in lists heading legal cases a number of such high offices can be identified and listed as follows,

1. Ogu/Guśura
2. Suveṭṭha
3. Tuguja
4. Caṃkura
5. Kori
6. Cuvalayina
7. Tasuca
8. Kitsaita
9. Kala
10. Cozbo.

This order presented above is not a random one but was rather a set order in which these titles were listed, a fact already noted by Burrow.⁴⁶⁹ As suspected by him their relative hierarchy can likely also be inferred from this order, something that generally appears to hold true and will be assumed in the following discussions.

4.4 The socio-political landscape of an oasis kingdom

The above discussions represent but a brief sketch of the complex socio-political landscape of the kingdom of Kroraina and the often shrouded history of the Tarim Basin polities. The relative lack of readily available sources, and in particular the lack of information in Chinese sources, has often led to the kingdom and its region being relegated to brief mentions in larger works on both Asian history and the Silk Roads.

⁴⁶⁹ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*. Mentioned in various entries to titles.

Yet as can be glimpsed from the above the kingdom of Kroraina and its neighbours were by the third and fourth centuries well-developed polities controlling large territories through a complex bureaucracy.

In addition to providing a sketch of the socio-political landscape, I have in the above argued for four important points. Firstly, I argue that the Chinese presence in the kingdom of Kroraina during the third and fourth centuries CE was a limited one. It was centred on a garrison in the capital Kroraina that was likely only maintained for a limited period in the 260s CE and then resurrected in the 320s CE, and does not appear to have had a notable influence on the local Krorainan administration. Secondly, I have argued that the western and southern influences on the kingdom of Kroraina did not come about as the result of either migration or a period of direct Kushan rule. Instead I argue that the many cultural, technological, and religious innovations were the result of Kushan influence and prestige in the region, as well as local attempts at emulation. Thirdly, I have shown how the Kharosthi documents make it clear that in the third and fourth centuries the capital of the kingdom of Kroraina was situated at or near the L.A. site and from this it is also possible to identify the other major oases of the kingdom. Finally, I have argued for following Padwa's interpretation of the Krorainan term *kilme* and shown how the "feudal" model proposed by Atwood is not supported by a closer reading of the Krorainan documents. These points in particular ought to be kept in mind in the following, as these interpretations have a certain bearing on the following discussions.

Chapter 5: The economic landscape of Kroraina

This chapter will turn to the case study and will start by looking at the basic economy and economic system of the kingdom of Kroraina. While, as has been shown, serious scholarly efforts have been devoted to clarifying many aspects of the Krorainan kingdom, especially with regards to the site of its capital, the nature of its people, and the chronology of its kings, very little has been written about the kingdom's economy. This is somewhat surprising, given the wealth of information on economic matter contained within the Krorainan material. Over half, for example, of all the "Royal Command" type documents, 143 out of 258, mention some resource or commodity, primarily in connection with taxation or legal disputes. This "Royal Command" is the document type that most frequently pertains to economic matters, but such matters are also frequently the purpose of most "List" type documents and are regularly the topic of many "Letter"-type documents as well. The Krorainian material furthermore contains sixty-three "Contract"-type documents and fifty-two "Legal"-type documents, nearly all of which deal with economic matters or the exchange of goods in some form. The Krorainian written sources are, in other words, rife with economic activity, on the level of the polity, in the form of the royal administration, and at the individual level.

A few specialised studies of specific aspects of the Krorainan economy exist, most notably some of Kazutoshi Nagasawa's chapters dealing with agriculture and taxation, and in his chapters on Krorainan history he furthermore briefly presents an argument for the kingdom of Kroraina initially being founded on jade-trade.⁴⁷⁰ There is also an article by Yanling Li on agricultural production, though he relies heavily upon Chinese documents and Atwood's "feudal" model for the kingdom's socio-political structure, as well as Helen Wang's discussion of monetization and exchange.⁴⁷¹ Yet in English there are only two studies considering economic activity in Kroraina as a whole, namely the article *Life in Third-fourth Century Cadh'ota* from

⁴⁷⁰ Nagasawa, 楼蘭王国史の研究 (*Research on the History of the Loulan Kingdom*), chap. 2.3, 13-14, 18.

⁴⁷¹ Li, 'The Study of Agricultural Production in the Oasis Kingdoms of the Western Regions in the Third and Fourth Centuries: Case Study of the Shanshan Kingdom Based on Kharosthi Documents'; Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*.

1991 by Christopher Atwood and chapter one of Valerie Hansen's *The Silk Road: A New History* from 2012. Atwood's study, which attempts to give an overview of the political, social and economic situation in Kroraina based only on the written sources, discusses economy on the local, political, as well as commercial levels. Atwood himself indeed emphasises the wealth of information available in the sources, but in his discussion on economic matters, he focuses mainly on the role of the Krorainan officialdom in the local economy, pointing to their prominence and connecting this primarily to their ability to tap into state resources. While he notes that commercial trade appears to have been limited, Atwood does point to commercial links with China and especially the role of silk as a commodity.⁴⁷² Valerie Hansen similarly emphasizes the predominantly local nature of the Krorainan economy, though her discussion on the kingdom's economic activity mainly centres on the question of its connection to, and the nature of, the Silk Road. Drawing upon both written and archaeological sources, Hansen concludes that there are practically no signs of private commerce in the Krorainan material. Silk and coins, she notes, were mainly the purview of outsiders, especially the Chinese.⁴⁷³ Perhaps most notably, Hansen repeatedly emphasises that only in one Krorainan document is the word "merchant" used, which she claims testifies to the very limited presence of private commercial activity.⁴⁷⁴

The two studies are strikingly different, not only in terms of focus but also in how they envisioned economic life in Kroraina. Atwood describes the Krorainan economy in feudal terms, with a workforce made up of serfs working appanages. His description reflects his view on the social structure, and he put great emphasis on the royal court, in other words, the state, as a driving force in both the kingdom's local and "international" economy. Hansen, meanwhile, though she does not go into much detail on the local economy, appears to view it mainly as a subsistence-focused system in which the "evidence for private commerce is slight".⁴⁷⁵ In other words Atwood sees the Krorainan economy as a top-heavy "feudal" system, while Hansen describes it as a small-scale subsistence economy with limited room for more advanced economic

⁴⁷² Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 185–92.

⁴⁷³ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 48–51.

⁴⁷⁴ Hansen, 50 and 237.

⁴⁷⁵ Hansen, 51.

behaviour. Yet while both these studies raise several interesting points about the economic activity traceable in the Krorainan sources, neither scholar seems to take into account the full breadth of the material available. In the years since Atwood's article, several major discoveries have been done at Niya by the Sino-Japanese expedition, and as Atwood himself stresses, his article but demonstrates the wealth of information discernible in the Krorainan written record and does not include the archaeological findings.⁴⁷⁶ Hansen, for her part, only briefly discusses the economic activity of the kingdom, and her conclusions are in keeping with her minimalist views on the Tarim Basin's economy, as discussed in the introduction.

This is unfortunate, given the wealth of information on the economy of the kingdom available in the Krorainan written sources and the rich archaeological record of the Niya, Endere, and Lop sites. Based on these sources, I believe a detailed sketch of the economic activity in the kingdom of Kroraina can be drawn, and this chapter will attempt to do just that. The first part of this chapter will discuss the substance basis of the Krorainan oases and the taxation system that underpinned the polity itself. The second part of the chapter will then move beyond subsistence, discussing the more advanced forms of economic behaviour evident in the Krorainan documents and the institutional framework that made this behaviour possible. In order to avoid getting lost in individual documents and details, however, this chapter will adopt an institutional approach as a methodological framework to guide the chapter's discussions.

5.1 The institutional approach

The following approach and analysis of the economy of the kingdom of Kroraina draws its inspiration and direction from the New Institutional Economics (NIE) within the field of economics, introduced in chapter one. Though NIE is primarily interested in modern history or current economics, it argues that in order to understand any given economic system, it is crucial to understand its underlying structures and practices, that is, its institutions. Institutions, as defined in this dissertation and following North's

⁴⁷⁶ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 193.

definitions, are the “rules of the game”, the many norms, beliefs, conventions, and formal rules which constrain an individual’s behaviour. Thus, individuals within a given system are free to make choices but are still, to a large degree, informed and steered by the systems, practices, and habits of thought prevalent in their society.⁴⁷⁷

The common habits and social rules that make up many of these institutions can be somewhat opaque and difficult to detect in a historic context, given the limited sources. However, Hodgson suggests that in the context of understanding the economic system of a given society, there are two primary types of institutions that warrant further investigation, namely the provisioning institutions and the legal institutions. The provisioning institutions, related to production, distribution, and acquisition, are naturally the groundwork of any economic system, but functional economic systems also require a legal component, as concepts and guarantees of such things as property rights and price must necessarily be in place before meaningful trade can occur. Thus, he suggests that the best way of describing and understanding a given economic system is through an analysis of its institutions.⁴⁷⁸

Inspired by this view, the following chapter will focus on uncovering the underlying habits and institutions as evidenced by the Krorainan material, starting from the subsistence or provisioning level and then moving into more complex economic institutions. This will, in turn, make it possible to situate the later chapters’ discussions within a concrete economic landscape of Kroraina. This is important, because more than just providing individual examples, as has so often been done, this makes it possible to say something of which economic behaviour, at least as a general rule, was and was not possible within the Krorainan context.

5.2 The economic landscape of an oasis town

If a traveller reached the oasis town of Cađota in antiquity, a vista today dominated by rising sand dunes, shrivelled trees, and tamarisk cones, he would have encountered an

⁴⁷⁷ Hodgson, *How Economics Forgot History: The Problem of Historical Specificity in Social Science*, chap. 19; North, Wallis, and Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, 14–15.

⁴⁷⁸ Hodgson, *How Economics Forgot History: The Problem of Historical Specificity in Social Science*, 256–57, 308.

ordered landscape of small farms, fields, and orchards. It would have been a verdant and green environment with rows of poplar trees planted along rush-fenced lanes, themselves running between orchards rich in a variety of fruit trees. The entire oasis town would have been kept green with water drawn from the river to the south but brought into the oasis by man-made channels and stored in water tanks. These too would have been lined with trees, planted to provide shade and to bind the surrounding soil. (See figure 1-3) In appearance, it would likely have been very similar to small towns in modern Xinjiang, which in many respects, are similarly laid out. Though there is still much controversy concerning the word *kilmemci* and the exact nature of Kroraina's socio-political structure, all authors agree that the economic landscape of Kroraina would have been largely agrarian, as concluded by both Atwood and Hansen.

The majority of the fields would have been growing grain crops (*aṃna*), which was the staple of Kroraina. The importance of these grains is shown by the frequency of grain being mentioned in the written sources, with 91 out of 153 mentions of such products compared to other agricultural products. Grain was used as payment for work, given out in food parcels, and as will be discussed, much of the taxes levied on the population were also to be paid in grain.⁴⁷⁹ Though the specific type of grain is rarely given, the documents reveal that at least three different grain crops were grown, namely barley, wheat, and an unidentified grain crop called *aḍimni*.⁴⁸⁰ Based on the appearance of related words meaning millet in Dardic dialects, Bailey has suggested that this *aḍimni* must have meant millet.⁴⁸¹ Millet (粟) and a variety called black millet (黑粟) furthermore appear in the Chinese documents from the Lop site, making it likely that it was cultivated in the region.⁴⁸² This is further supported by archaeological evidence, as fox-tail millet has been attested archaeologically both in the graves of

⁴⁷⁹ An excellent example of grain as salary or payment for duties can be seen in document n.25. In this document both a guard's ration and wage are paid in grain. See also n.462 and n.532. For examples of grain paid in tax see document n.59,131,151,152,207,210,225,291, being just some examples.

⁴⁸⁰ For barley see document n.83, 572, 658, 683. For wheat see n.72, 83, 683, 718. For *aḍimni*, also spelled *aḍim* and *aḍini*, see n.83, 222, 579, 722.

⁴⁸¹ Bailey, 'Irano-Indica', 332.

⁴⁸² See Conrady, *Die Chinesischen Handschriften- Und Sonstigen Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in Lou-Lan*. Paper n.19,3 and 19,6. Wood n.51,63,64,70,89 and 90.

Çađota⁴⁸³ and in the nearby Keriya valley.⁴⁸⁴ This makes a good case for *ađimni* having referred, either specifically to fox-tail millet or to millet species in general. In addition to differentiating these three grain crops, the Krorainans possessed a range of words denoting different qualities of the crops, such as *pañcarayina*, “for use as fodder”, or *kuvana*, a word related to taxation.⁴⁸⁵ Naturally, being much concerned with agriculture, the Krorainan material also frequently mentions different units of farmland. Here too a detailed technical vocabulary was employed, which is still only partly understood, distinguishing between different types of land such as *miši*-fields and *akri*-fields.⁴⁸⁶ The majority of land plots discussed in the documents were, however, clearly crop-fields, for the seed capacity of each plot is often denoted, especially in contracts and legal documents.⁴⁸⁷

While grain crops were clearly the most important plants for the sustenance of the local population, the trees would have visually dominated the landscape of Çađota. Planted near and around the farmhouses, these orchards or arbours are still visible in the landscape today, some of them still hedged by their original fences woven from rushes.⁴⁸⁸ Some of these enclosures would have functioned as arbours or “*Bostān*”, a shaded space for social gatherings. This type of garden was common in the region during Stein’s travels and still visible in rural parts of the Tarim Basin today. However, most of the tree-enclosures appear to have been orchards. Stein’s local diggers immediately identified a number of shrivelled fruit trees near ruin N.4, for example, including peach, apricot, and mulberry trees.⁴⁸⁹ In the graves found at Çađota, the Sino-Japanese team furthermore identified both dates and pears, which had been placed in trays with the deceased.⁴⁹⁰ None of these fruits are attested in the

⁴⁸³ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:105 and 143.

⁴⁸⁴ Debaine-Francfort, Debaine, and Idriss, ‘The Taklimakan Oases: An Environmental Evolution Shown Through Geoarchaeology’, 196.

⁴⁸⁵ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 102. and Baums and Glass, *A Dictionary of Gandhari*, “*kuvana*”. In many cases however the meaning of these epithets is not understood.

⁴⁸⁶ The exact meaning of these terms remains unclear though *akri* likely meant “fallow”. See Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 71 and 111.

⁴⁸⁷ For some examples see document n.422 and n.495.

⁴⁸⁸ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:337.

⁴⁸⁹ Stein, 1:337.

⁴⁹⁰ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:105.

written material, though they could possibly be identified with some of the undeciphered words, such as *ogana* mentioned in document n.154, n.207 and n.714.⁴⁹¹ Four documents do, on the other hand, mention pomegranates, either as having been paid in tax or as being in arrears, in one case as many as six jars worth.⁴⁹² Furthermore, three contract and one legal document concern land with trees, though it is not specified if they were fruit trees.⁴⁹³ The most important fruits grown, however, and the most important agricultural produce aside from grain, appear to have been grapes. Grapes were grown extensively and used primarily to make wine. This can be seen not only in the frequency of wine being mentioned, in forty-two separate documents, but also in the word for vineyard “*masuśaḍa*”, meaning literally “wine enclosure”.⁴⁹⁴ But though wine was the primary purpose of grape production, there are several types of *masu* mentioned, some of which may have denoted grapes used in other ways.⁴⁹⁵ Wine of various sorts, together with grain, was the most common commodity used to pay taxes, appearing both on tax lists as well as being demanded in royal documents.⁴⁹⁶ It further appears as part payment in contracts and is given out together with food as rations.⁴⁹⁷ Eight documents, mostly contracts, further mention the vineyards in which the grapes were grown, their size usually measured in rows (*apacira*).⁴⁹⁸

The second pillar of the Krorainan economy was animal husbandry. Judging from the frequency with which animals appear in the written material, it could even be argued that husbandry played an even more important role than agriculture, as nearly a third of all documents, 233 to be precise, mention animals. This importance of animals and animal husbandry is additionally reflected in their central role in the culture of Kroraina. Notably, a very large vocabulary of largely native words existed to describe various qualities of animals, especially camels. Furthermore, animals were regularly

⁴⁹¹ Burrow connects the word to Tocharian *oko* meaning “fruit”. Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 81.

⁴⁹² See document n.207, 252, 295 and 617.

⁴⁹³ See document n.482, 571, 574 and 586.

⁴⁹⁴ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 111.

⁴⁹⁵ Burrow discusses this possibility for *śuka masu* that might be understood as dry grape. See Burrow, 125–26. The Sino Japanese team also found dried grapes in the tomb 95MN1M3.

⁴⁹⁶ For examples see document n.173 for a tax list and n.272 and n.329 for a royal command.

⁴⁹⁷ See for examples the contracts n.571, 574 and 587, all involving the scribe Ramšotsa, and the list n.619.

⁴⁹⁸ As pointed out already by Stein *apacira* likely denoted rows in which the grape-plants were grown, a phenomenon still seen in the modern Tarim Basin. See Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 74.

included in funerary contexts, where both equine burials and mutton placed on trays as offerings have been recorded,⁴⁹⁹ and in sacrificial contexts, where cows, sheep, and camels are mentioned.⁵⁰⁰ As seen from the table, (see table 1) the most frequently mentioned animals in the written sources were camels, followed by horses, sheep, cows, and goats. Whether or not this actually reflects the prevalence of these species in Kroraina, however, is hard to determine. Judging from the archaeological record of Cađota, sheep appear most frequently, especially in tombs.⁵⁰¹ In addition, a survey of the faunal remains from the older (roughly mid first millennia BCE) Djoumboulak Koum site along the neighbouring Keriya River shows an almost inverted list, compared with table 1: goat and then sheep are the most prevalent species, followed by cows, camels, and equids.⁵⁰² Though possibly a reflection of changing trends in the animals kept, it seems far more likely that this discrepancy reflects the value attached to the various species, with the more valuable animals playing a larger role in the written documents, as they were more frequently exchanged or disputed.

Sheep, cows, and goats were kept for both meat and by-products, though out of the three, sheep appear to have been by far the most common animal. Sheep were regularly paid as taxes, given as payment in contracts,⁵⁰³ and appear in very large numbers in some documents, with as many as 230 in the short document n.369. In the two documents, n.204 and n.609, sheep were set as a fine, together with a number of strikes, for men who fail to turn up for corvée labour. This, together with the numbers in which they appear, would seem to suggest that even ordinary farmers commonly owned sheep. Sheep were also a central part of the local diet, at least for those of means, judging by both document n.478, where sheep were provided as rations to military personnel, and by the many graves, where mutton is present in bowls or small trays, prepared as meals for the deceased.⁵⁰⁴ Cows, on the other, hand appear to have

⁴⁹⁹ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:30–33.

⁵⁰⁰ See document n.157, 195, 383 and 637.

⁵⁰¹ For examples, see *The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:105. Unfortunately no complete survey of animal remains are presented by the Sino-Japanese team.

⁵⁰² Debaine-Francfort, Debaine, and Idriss, ‘The Taklimakan Oases: An Environmental Evolution Shown Through Geoarchaeology’, 195.

⁵⁰³ For examples of sheep in tax lists see document n.131 and 151. For contracts see doc.581 and 589.

⁵⁰⁴ See the Sino-Japanese expeditions report for multiple examples, such as tomb 95MN1M3 and 97MN1M1.

been rarer and of greater value, for while the tally in document n.117 does mention a total of thirty cows, almost all other documents speak of either one or two cows. Cows appear in contracts as payment for land, in legal cases as fines, and in two cases cows have been stolen and eaten.⁵⁰⁵ Notably, whereas sheep were regularly paid in tax, only one document mentions a cow being paid in tax, appearing in arrears in document n.207. Rather, it appears that cows were kept primarily for milk used to make ghee, which was one of the most common secondary products included in tax payments. Eighteen khi of ghee is, for example, given in the previously mentioned document n.207. The by-products of sheep appear regularly as well, in the form of cloth such as felt and carpets, regularly paid in tax, and possibly in the form of cheese.⁵⁰⁶

Camels and horses, however, the two most frequently mentioned types of animals in the written sources, served economic functions quite different from the other animals mentioned in the Krorainan material. They do, of course, appear in many similar contexts along with sheep, cows, and goats, frequently as the object of legal disputes for example,⁵⁰⁷ or in the case of camels, being both sent as tax⁵⁰⁸ and sacrificed.⁵⁰⁹ However, nowhere in the written material are they consumed, nor are by-products extracted from them. Instead, the camels and horses were mainly used as beasts of burden or as mounts. Camels, in particular, appear as the primary beast of burden, while horses are only described as carrying goods in one document, namely wine in n. 333. In the few cases when the process of transporting goods is described, it is usually by camel.⁵¹⁰ For example, document n.329, a “Royal Command” document in which the king writes to the local governor, cozbo Somjaka, on taxed wine. Therein he stipulates,

⁵⁰⁵ For contracts see document n.186 and n.327. For fines see n.345 and n.482. For cases concerning stolen cattle see n.1, 56 and 676.

⁵⁰⁶ Burrow proposes that the word *curoma/cuorma* could mean sheep or goat cheese, as document n.264 mentions two *curoma* sheep.

⁵⁰⁷ Horses appears in six documents as the objects of disputes, camels in as many as twenty-one cases. For some examples, see documents n.62 and 545 for horses, 187 and 219. See n.33 and 226 for examples with both.

⁵⁰⁸ See documents n.16, 70, 165 and 387.

⁵⁰⁹ See documents n.195 and 637.

⁵¹⁰ See document n.200, 291, 329 and 665.

And now the business of the wine has come up at Calmadana. When this letter of command shall arrive there, forthwith wine (capable of being carried) by five camels is to be sent here in the hand of this Caulgeya.⁵¹¹

In document n.291 an even higher number of camels, fifty-five in total, are to be loaded with grain and wine to be brought to the capital. Moreover, it was not only the royal administration that utilized camels for transport. In document n.200, a group of neighbours were asked to give back grain given to them. The sender, a Catgila, stipulates that three milima of grain should be carried on a camel belonging to a man called Tami, while the remaining three should be loaded on a camel belonging to him. Camels were also frequently hired out to people who needed something transported, and several documents deal with situations where the correct hire had not been paid.⁵¹² Some documents even give a price for hiring camels, which varies significantly from three *muli* in document n.382 to thirteen in document n.505, though this was likely due to either the length of hire or the quality of the camel in question. Finally, two documents found in the same room of ruin N.24., n.531 and n. 544, give lists of people owning camels and end by noting that these camels were taken to the border. In the case of document n.531, it is specified that the animals were used for carrying wine. The hire for horses is similarly mentioned in two documents, n.213 and n.223, though in both cases, the horses were hired as mounts for envoys or travellers.

It was in this role that horses were more frequently employed. For example, in both documents n.223 and 367, the king instructed his officials to supply horses for envoys travelling to Khotan. Yet even as mounts, camels appears to have been the primary animal used, as most such envoys were in fact given camels.⁵¹³ One document, n.484, also mentions a military (*seni*) camel, though one would imagine horses to have been the dominant mount in times of war. They were certainly the preferred mount for hunting, as three documents mentions horses being taken out during hunting.⁵¹⁴ One of the documents, n.509, even specifies that the horse in

⁵¹¹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 62.

⁵¹² See documents n.83, 382, 401, 468, 505 and 516.

⁵¹³ See document n.22, 64, 135, 253, 306, 367 and 557.

⁵¹⁴ See document n.13, 156 and 509.

question was used when hunting stags. It would seem likely that this scarcity of horses actively employed for various activities is more a reflection of the relative worth and scarcity of these animals as opposed to camels. However, both camels and horses were highly valued animals, seen both through their role in exchange as shall be discussed below, though perhaps even more through the evidence of wheat being fed to both camels and horses.⁵¹⁵

In summary, it is clear that the economic basis of Krorainan society was agropastoralism, with a mix of agriculture and animal husbandry forming the basis for subsistence. This is the type of economic activity with which the written sources are primarily concerned, reflecting that such was also the primary concern of the people, primary royal officials, that created them. This interest in the subsistence economy raises several interesting points, showing both the importance of these activities to the local community as well as the importance that local elites attached to their landholdings and herds. Perhaps most clearly, however, it reflects the Krorainan state's interest in these activities – activities that were crucial for sustaining it.

5.3 Royal tax and tributes

The royal bureaucracy's involvement with the basic economic activities of agropastoralism were manifold, from regulating the use of water to solving legal disputes over animals and herds. Yet judging from the many officials and documents concerned with matters of tax and tribute, it is clear that one of the primary purposes of the royal bureaucracy was the regular extraction of tax from the local population on behalf of the king of Kroraina. This is of interest when considering the economy of the kingdom, as the extraction of tax and tribute from the population of Kroraina and their transfer to the state constitutes the primary transfer of resources in the written material. Yet, though discussed both by Atwood and by Nagasawa,⁵¹⁶ no full outline of the Krorainan taxation system has been made to date. As such, it is worth exploring in

⁵¹⁵ See document n.531 and 544.

⁵¹⁶ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 185–90; Nagasawa, *楼蘭王国史の研究 (Research on the History of the Loulan Kingdom)*, chap. 14.

some detail and in the following, I will attempt to draw up an “ideal” model for the taxation practices of ancient Kroraina.

In the Kharosthi material, there are two words describing royal dues, namely *palýi* and *harga*. However, the latter term appears in only six documents, and as such, the sketch below will concern itself primarily with the type of dues called *palýi*. *Palýi*, the Krorainan form of the Sanskrit word *bali* meaning tax, appears in thirty-eight documents, and both Burrow, and Baums and Glass, give the translation as tax.⁵¹⁷ This translation holds good for almost all the attested cases of the word, though as also pointed out by Padwa, the term appears in some cases to mean more generally tribute or dues owed.⁵¹⁸ One example of this would be the “Letter” document n.450 in which a man named Lýipana had confiscated the house and land of a family. The reason for this was that they had failed to pay him the *palýi* owed him, apparently as tenants or slaves on his land. The *palýi* in question, which Lýipana the addresser of the letter describes as “my” (*mahi*) *palýi*, is clearly best understood as dues or perhaps even rent owed. Thus, while in the following I will primarily discuss *palýi* as a form of tax, it would be good to keep this wider meaning in mind.

Palýi is discussed in a variety of contexts and document types. Primarily the term appears in the “Royal Command” and “Letter” documents, though some lists likewise explicitly mention the term. (See table 2) Several documents furthermore discuss issues related to the gathering of *palýi*, from goods in arrears to the appointment of the correct officials, without the term appearing directly. Finally, a large number of the extent lists should likely also be connected with taxation, for though they rarely mention tax explicitly, many of the lists record commodities received by “tax officials”, from individual households and administrative units. As such, the corpus of texts discussing *palýi* goes beyond the documents directly mentioning the term and is of a sufficient size to allow a detailed reconstruction of the taxation practises of Kroraina.

⁵¹⁷ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 104. Baums and Glass, *A Dictionary of Gandhari*, “bali”.

⁵¹⁸ Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niyā)’, viii and 214-215.

Royal tax and tributes: The “ideal” system

The *palyi* of the kingdom of Kroraina was a tax paid annually to the royal treasury, as made evident by a number of documents discussing this or that year’s *palyi*.⁵¹⁹ The delivery appears to have taken place sometimes during autumn, presumably following harvest, as two documents, n.211 and n.309, state that letters complaining about missing goods were sent during winter. Secondly, it was a tax levied, not upon individuals or landowners, but collectively upon groups. The primary group the *palyi* was levied upon was the *kilmemci* of the various *avana*.⁵²⁰ As evidenced by the many documents referring to arrears, the *kilmemci* paid together as an *avana* rather than as individuals, partly from individual holdings and partly from royal lands (*rajade*), which were likely worked communally.⁵²¹ This sometimes appears to have caused friction between the different *kilmemci*, as some of the documents note both accusations of powerful *kilmemci* abusing their power as well as individuals complaining that they had to pay too much, compared to others.⁵²² Yet judging from the many tax lists, it would seem as if most *kilmemci* paid roughly the same. In addition to the *kilmemci* of the *avana*, several other groups also appear to have been subject to taxation. The most common one was the *palyi* on the so-called *vega-kilme* women that, as discussed by Padwa, had to be paid on behalf of the original *avana* of the women in question.⁵²³ Another group, called the *kilyigamci*, were subject to a *palyi*, though as they only appear in one line of document n.164, nothing is known about their identity. Finally, a number of special types of *palyi* tied to different types of grain appears, called *koyimamḍhi*, *kuyana*, *kvemamḍhina*, *samarena*, and *tsamghina*.⁵²⁴ These were seen as different from regular taxes, as evidenced by document n.164, and appear not to have been levied upon the *avana* but rather gathered from the entirety of the province. This was at least the case with the

⁵¹⁹ See documents n. 42, 57, 70, 141, 165, 206, 211, 374, 468 and 714.

⁵²⁰ For just some examples see doc.42, 162, 164 or 165.

⁵²¹ See document n.374.

⁵²² For the former case see doc.468, for the latter doc.713.

⁵²³ For a detailed discussion see Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, chap. 7.

⁵²⁴ Most of these terms are not understood. But as proposed by Brough the word *tsamghina* might be a loan word from Chinese, meaning granary and thus giving granary grain. Brough, ‘Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism’, n. 76.

*koyimaṃḍhi*⁵²⁵ and the *kuyana*⁵²⁶ taxes, which may have represented a form of poll tax levied on the entire population of the province. Notably, no form of tax appears to have been levied as tolls, nor is there any indication that a tax was levied on crafts or sales. This might be due to a weakness of the sources, as no documents from the royal offices have so far been discovered, or it might be that such forms of taxation are meant by some of the more obscure terms mention above. Yet as none of the extent administrative documents nor any of the contracts describe such a form of taxation, it would seem as if it did not exist within the *pal̥yi* system of Kroraia.

Pal̥yi in the kingdom of Kroraia was not paid in any standardised form, such as money or bolts of silk, but rather as a wide variety of goods. A number of the documents discussing *pal̥yi* directly mention the goods taken as tax, with measures of grain, cloth, or ghee as the most common forms. (See table 3) Two particularly good examples of what a single *avana* could be expected to pay exists in documents n.207 and n.714, which both relate to Ajiyama-avana in Caḍota. The shortest list is found in document n.714, a “Letter” document, sent by a *cozbo* to admonish the officials in charge of the *avana*.

Rectangular Under-tablet. Obv.

The *cozbo* Takra sends health to the *vasu* Opgeya and Tgaca, much, immeasurably. Hearing that I am healthy you should also be pleased. And thus I write: I have sent this Tsugeta there concerning the state of the taxation (*pal̥yi*) in Ajiyama-avana. Just as formerly the tax (*pal̥yi*) was assessed in Ajiyama-avana (as follows, namely): ghee, sheep, *kośava* (rugs), *arnavaji*, carpet (*thavastae*), *raji*, felt (*naṃmatae*), *caṃdri*, and *kaṃmaṃta*; in addition, *maḱa*, *ogana*, and *croma* (?), and all the rest of the tax (*pal̥pi*); so now it is quickly to be sent here all complete in the hand of the *ageta* Lýipeya and Tsugeta. The tax (*pal̥pi*) of the *vega kilme* women is to be demanded all complete. Also in the rainy season (*varśavasammi*) you *vasus*, *agetas*, and *yatmas* must come here in the fourth month from the exterior provinces and the central kingdom (?). There

⁵²⁵ See document n.309

⁵²⁶ See document n.236, 291 and 292,

is an investigation into the conditions of taxation (*palýi*). He who really does provide his tax (*palýi*) (well and good); he who does not is to be removed. Also you have a yearly deficit in your tax (*palýi*) returns. If you again send the tax (*palýi*) short, you will certainly pay from your own establishment. Just as formerly provisions were given to messengers so now they are to be taken by Tsugeta. You have cut off the tax (*palýi*) from your own farm year by year.⁵²⁷

This detailed list is, as shown by the many untranslated words, still ill-understood and many of the terms for goods assessed, such as *camdri* or *maka*, have not been identified. Yet considering the words that are known, they all appear to be either primary or secondary products of the agro-pastoral economy. A similar, but more detailed, picture is provided by document n.207, a “Report” document that gives a detailed reckoning of the arrears from the *avana*,

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

The arrears of tax (*palýi*) in Ajiyama-avana.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

[..... *ayona* ... *naša*]

[.....] 30 in all

is to be sent to the feet of his majesty.

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Rev.

(1) [.....] [mili]ma 2 [*tha*.....]

(2) Another parcel belonging to Kalýigeya 3 milima, [..]khi.

(3) Another twenty-six [.....] was in arrears. Pomegranates [.....] 1 *sap.ğa*, 6 milima of *ogana*, 6 cloths, 1 cow, ghee [.....

(4) Another parcel belonging to Tsugelva is 2 milima of corn; by Kalýigeya [.....

⁵²⁷ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 143.

(5) The sum of the arrears is: The new and the old ghee 18 khi, 1 *asamkharajiya* (?), 6 rugs (*košava*), 1 *akišdha*, 5 pieces of cloth (*thavamnae*), 16 *kamuṃta*, 3 sacks, 3 baskets, 1 sheep, 1 milima 5 khi of wine *potgoñena*⁵²⁸, 16 milima of corn, 1 cow.⁵²⁹

Though the under-tablet and thus the main content is missing, and despite parts of the document being highly fragmented, the final summary of arrears gives another very clear testament to the breadth of goods paid by an *avana*. The two lists are strikingly similar, both mentioning sheep, ghee, and *košava* rugs, and again the discernible products are the product of the local agricultural economy. That similar products were also paid by other *avana* is supported by the other documents discussing *palyi*, as summarised in table three, and by the many lists which tend to list just these types of goods. (Table 4) Indeed, it would seem that even the numbers in document n.207 give a fairly accurate picture of what an average *avana* might be assessed at, given that document n.468 states that the grain paid in *palyi* from Yave-avana came to fifteen milima, just short of Ajiyama-avana's sixteen milima. It should, however, be kept in mind that some lists give a far higher total, such as twenty-seven milima, fifteen khi of grain as well as twenty-two sheep in document n.131, which may indicate that some *avana* paid more. Certainly, in the case of the *koyimaṃdhi* and *kuyana* taxes, though a different form of taxation, the total for the entire province of Caḍota was significantly higher. For of the *koyimaṃdhi*, we learn from document n.309 that in the time before cozbo Soṃjaka's rule, it stood at 150 milima per year, while the *kuyana* tax sent to the royal court was measured at 346 milima in document n.292 and 350 milima in document n.291. If split between the ten known *avana* of Caḍota, this would amount to far more than the 15 milima of Yave-avana, again reinforcing the view that these must be seen as separate types or systems of taxation.

In summary, the *palyi* of Kroraina, at least as paid by the *avana*, would have consisted almost entirely of either primary or secondary produce from the agro-pastoral economy. It would be paid mainly in grains, wine, fruits, animals, and their

⁵²⁸ Henning suggests an identification of masu *potgoñena* with Persian *maipuxte*, a form of sweet grape-juice seasoned with spices. Henning, 'The Date of the Sogdian Ancient Letters', n. 3.

⁵²⁹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 38.

by-products, such as cloth, felt, and ghee. This is noteworthy, for while several craft goods, such as cloth and rope were included, no goods commonly envisioned as trade goods, such as precious metals or fine textiles, were taxed. This fact too would appear to support the conclusion above that no tax was levied on merchants or craftsmen, as such individuals and such taxes would presumably have been paid in their wares or else in coins or similar forms of money. Again, given that no documents from the royal archives and offices themselves have been uncovered to date, any conclusion on this matter must remain tentative however.

Its seemingly limited scope aside, however, the Krorainan *palyi* system was clearly of great importance to the state, and a complex bureaucracy was in place to ensure that it was collected and delivered. First, the basis for extracting *palyi* was assessed by royal officials in each *avana*.⁵³⁰ The details of this process remains obscure, and only a few documents mentions the assessments more than in passing. It appears, however, that the assessment was supposed to be carried out fairly frequently, possibly on a yearly basis, though in document n.275 the king complains that no assessment had been carried out in Ajiyama-avana for twenty years. The assessment was conducted primarily by local officials and possibly supervised by higher-ranking officials, such as the *tuguja* Sudaršana in document n.374. From the same document, we furthermore learn that the assessment was done on two types of land, namely that of the *kilmemci* and royal land. Once complete, these assessments were sent to the royal court, which used them as a basis for drawing up account documents and demanding the correct amount of *palyi*.⁵³¹

Once a demand for *palyi* had been sent, collection started within each *avana*. This began with the *dašavida* and the *śadavida* officials, who were in charge of the actual collection of goods from the people in their tens (*daša*) or hundreds (*śada*), respectively.⁵³² The hierarchy between these two groups, if one existed, is not stated clearly, though list n.173 situates the *dašavida* within the hundreds. These two types of officials appear, however, to have primarily been responsible for different goods, with the *dašavida* primarily involved with the collection of grain and only occasionally with

⁵³⁰ See document n.42, 57, 275, 291, 317, 374 and 714.

⁵³¹ See document n.275 for a mention of these account documents.

⁵³² This is evidenced by a large number of lists, listing goods gathered by these officials.

wine and sheep. The *śadavida*, meanwhile, appear to have been in charge of *palyi* in the form of animals, such as camels and sheep, as well as ghee and wine – in other words, goods and products probably only possessed and produced by some members of the *avana*. Both these types of officials were, however, under the *vasu*, who were the officials primarily in charge of the *avana* and its taxation.⁵³³ Once gathered in the *avana*, the *palyi* appears to have been collected centrally in the province, a process described in the “royal decree” document n.272, which states,

When this letter of instruction reaches you, quickly thereupon last year's *suka*-wine and this year's wine is to be collected all complete, and is to be poured together in one place. Also just as there the *yatma* Parkuta collected and deposited the *kuyana*, *tsamghina*, and *koyimaṃḍhina* corn in all the offices of the city, even so now let the *kuyana*, *tsamghina*, and *ko[yimaṃḍhina]* corn be collected and [.....] in the city.⁵³⁴

This central collection appears to have been the norm, at least with some goods, such as the special types of *palyi* grains seen above as well as on wine, for which a wine department existed,⁵³⁵ though it is possible that some of the *palyi* from the *avana* was sent directly to the capital. Whether gathered centrally or sent directly, the collection and transportation of tax was the domain of the *yatma* and *ageta* officials. These two classes of officials were closely connected in this matter, and documents concerning the movement of tax regularly state that it was the the *yatma* and *ageta* officials who were to transport it.⁵³⁶ Their responsibilities in these matters is made particularly clear in document n.307, a “Letter” document with instructions on taxation, which in the final lines notes that, “Particular instructions must be given to the *yatma* and *ageta*, that nothing must be short and also to the *yatma* and *ageta* each of whom have to go in front.”⁵³⁷ In other words, the *yatma* and *ageta* were in charge both of collecting the right amount and of conveying it to its destination. A few cases exist,

⁵³³ This is shown by several documents, for example n.42, n.725 and in particular n.714.

⁵³⁴ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 49–50.

⁵³⁵ See documents n.272 and n.567.

⁵³⁶ See document n. 59, 275 and 307.

⁵³⁷ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 55.

however, where only either a yatma or an ageta were sent,⁵³⁸ and in one case a single official in charge of transportation was said to be both yatma and ageta.⁵³⁹

Furthermore, as shown by examples such as n.272 above, the yatma held primacy in the collection of grain, a point further emphasised by one yatma specifically being yatma of the *kuyana* grain.⁵⁴⁰ In addition to these two, a third class of officials, the *toṃgha*, played a role in transportation of the taxed goods. Atwood describes these officials as “transport officials”⁵⁴¹, but the *toṃgha* is in fact probably best understood as a sort of military rank who provided escort and security together with their attendants.

Thus, tax was collected from the tens and the hundreds by locally embedded officials, or notables, gathered at the *avana* level by the *vasu* before being transported onwards by the yatma, ageta, and *toṃgha* officials. A further group of officials, the *šoṭhamṅa*, were however also involved in the majority of this process. The *šoṭhamṅa* is usually translated as tax collectors, primarily as the same word appears in Tocharian A as *šoṣtānkāñ* meaning tax collector.⁵⁴² Yet rather than being purely tax collectors, the office of the *šoṭhamṅa* was filled by scribes, and the office’s primary purpose was the production of documents. Thus, it was likely the office of the various *šoṭhamṅa* who drew up the many tax lists and accounting documents produced by the *palyi* system of Kroraina. At least in some cases, the *šoṭhamṅa* also appears to have been involved with the storage of some of the *palyi*. A particularly good example of this is document n.567, where a *šoṭhamṅa* was accused of having wasted royal wine stored in his house. This complaint was sent by the royal court to the local *cozbo*, who oversaw the entire system. As the heads of the provinces and regions within the kingdom, the *cozbo* were ultimately responsible for the lower officials and both appointed and sanctioned the officials of the *palyi* system.

A further layer of oversight was, however, imposed by the royal court and its offices in the capital, and the majority of the “Royal Command” documents which

⁵³⁸ For yatma, see document n.291, 305 and 374. For ageta, see document n.42 and 714.

⁵³⁹ See document n.275.

⁵⁴⁰ The yatma in question was Bhimasena, actor n.721. See document n.430 and 439.

⁵⁴¹ Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, 176–77.

⁵⁴² Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 127–28.

discuss the *palyi* system do so in response to some irregularity. Firstly, as is made clear by a number of documents, detailed accounts were drawn up and goods in arrears were duly recorded by the royal offices.⁵⁴³ These accounts were then used, when tax went missing or in arrears, to make demands of the provincial officials. Should these demands fail to produce the missing tax,⁵⁴⁴ the royal court would threaten with sanctions, both financial as well as with the loss of office. Examples of this can be found in three documents, n.165, n. 211, and n. 714. Document n.165, in particular, provides a telling example of the financial repercussions an unfaithful official could face,

Rectangular under-tablet Obv.

To cozbo Kranaya and sothamgha Lýipeya of pleasant aspect, the ogu Kirtiśama presents inquiries as to health, again and again, many, immeasurable, and thus (writes), namely: First of all I have sent from here a letter and a present in the hand of Magena and Pago; from that you must become acquainted (with the state of things). Also in Peta-avana the arrears of last year's tax (*palyi*) and the tax (*palyi*) of this year is to be sent here all complete with those same people (?). If you send it either earlier or later than then and it gets plundered on the way, you, sothamgha Lýipeya, will pay it from your own farm, parcel for parcel. Also with the corn newly (harvested) from the land, a large quantity of ghee is to be bought and sent here. The tax (*palyi*) of the *vega-kilme* women and corn newly harvested from the land is to be sent here complete. Also a tax (*palyi*) camel is to be sent here along with it. Do not keep back the camel from the tomghas. Concerning that camel a detailed letter of instruction written with the king as witness went there. To you cozbo Kranaya I write. You must pay attention to this matter. This Lýipeya pays no attention to it. What affairs of yours there shall be in the future, I shall be able to do them for you. Whatever news there may be there of good or bad, a letter about it is to be sent here in the hand of a letter-carrier. What news there is here you will learn from Lýimsu.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ For some examples see documents n.42, 207, 275 or 725.

⁵⁴⁴ Particularly strongly worded examples of this can be found in document n.211 and 315.

⁵⁴⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 32.

The document is of the “Letter” type and was, as evident by the content, not an official document from the royal court but rather a semi-official admonishment by a senior official. It describes the repercussions awaiting the *ṣoṭhaṃga* *Lýipeya*, should *Peta-avana*, the *avana* for which *Lýipeya* was also *vasu*,⁵⁴⁶ fail to deliver its *palýi*, namely that the entire amount would be demanded from his landholdings. The same punishment is similarly threatened in the latter half of document n.714 quoted above,

..... Also in the rainy season (*varṣavasammi*) you *vasus*, *agetas*, and *yatmas* must come here in the fourth month from the exterior provinces and the central kingdom (?). There is an investigation into the conditions of taxation (*palýi*). He who really does provide his tax (*palýi*) (well and good); he who does not is to be removed. Also you have a yearly deficit in your tax (*palýi*) returns. If you again send the tax (*palýi*) short, you will certainly pay from your own establishment. Just as formerly provisions were given to messengers so now they are to be taken by *Tsugeta*. You have cut off the tax (*palýi*) from your own farm year by year.⁵⁴⁷

Again, the threat is made that, if the tax were in deficit, the *vasu* officials in charge would have to pay from their own lands and stores. Furthermore, this document also raises the threat of removal from office. However, the most interesting part of document n.714 is the description of an investigation to be conducted into the conditions of taxation. Such summons of officials for investigation do not appear to have been very common, appearing only in the documents n.211 and in detail only in document n.714, but it was likely the ultimate sanction imposed by the royal court on unfaithful officials.

Thus, functioned the ideal model of the *Krorainan palýi* system, but the reality did not always match this model. As evident from the many systems of supervision and the documents carrying complaints or threatening repercussions, the officials

⁵⁴⁶ This is well attested in the document n.32, 42, 46, 124, 162 or 164.

⁵⁴⁷ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 143.

themselves often failed to run the system as intended. In some cases, such as in document n.713, officials were accused of mismanagement, to say nothing of the cases where officials were accused of outright corruption. The individual actions of corrupt officials aside, however, the system was further confused by a mixing of both roles and a blurring of private and official affairs. The first is seen in the overlapping roles of many officials who simultaneously held several titles. The prime example of this is Lýipeya, our well-documented actor n.8, who primarily appears in the documents as a *šoṭhaṅga* but who simultaneously served as the *vasu* in Peta-avana. Later, as he attained the rank of *cozbo*, he also appears to have retained his previous offices. Similarly, Bhimasena, actor n.420, is in document n.546 and n.740 called *vasu oḡu Bhimasena*, while in document n.254 and n.532, he is *vasu suyeṭha*. Furthermore, as seen from documents such as letter n.165 above from an *oḡu Kirtiśama* to *cozbo Kranaya* and *šoṭhaṅga Lýipeya*, matters of taxation were not purely official. Rather, the *palýi* system, as with the rest of the Krorainan state apparatus, was embedded in systems of kinship and social relations, where formal roles and hierarchies appear to often have been set aside in favour of informal ones.

Royal tax and tributes: The *harga* and other forms of taxation

In addition to these discrepancies in the *palýi* system, our understanding of taxation within the Kingdom of Kroraina is further complicated by the existence of other forms of taxes and dues. The full extent of these are difficult to determine, as they appear only in a few of the written documents and are often hard to distinguish, but at least three categories existed, namely *harga*, public duties and individual duties or offices.

The greatest difficulty is encountered in trying to grasp the term *harga*. This word only appears in six documents, and as such, remains far more obscure than the more common term *palýi*. The word itself is Iranian, as already pointed out by Burrow,⁵⁴⁸ and appears in both Middle Persian and in the Bactrian documents from Northern Afghanistan.⁵⁴⁹ In the Krorainan context, the word appears in some cases to

⁵⁴⁸ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 133.

⁵⁴⁹ Sims-Williams, *Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan, II: Letters and Buddhist Texts.*, 272.

be synonymous with *palyi*, as in document n.295, and the two terms are used interchangeably in document n.206 quoted below.

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be opened by *ṣoṭhaṃgha Opgeya*.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

(Faint traces of writing. Unreadable.)

Rectangular Under-tablet. Obv. & Cov.-tablet. Rev.

To his dear father, beloved by gods and men, who has a worthy lifespan of hundreds of divine years, *ṣoṭhaṃgha Opgeya*, of a pleasant aspect. The *ṣoṭhaṃgha Dhamapala* inquires about the health of your divine body, much, hundred thousand ten million times, immeasurably, and thus (writes): A letter went from here (with instructions that) your son *Apita* was to bring the wine here along with *Sujata*. *Sujata* came here, but you kept this *Apita* back there; the wine and the rest of the tax (*harga*) you did not send here. They are causing *Sujata* a great deal of trouble here on account of *Aputa*. Also they wanted to search for this *Aputa* here. I made an appeal at the feet of his majesty. As a result he was allowed (?). Now indeed it is to be made ready. The year's tax (*palyi*) in *Ayamatu Vasa* is to be brought here by him. If it is kept back further in *Ayamatu Vasa*, let not (?), do not blame me.⁵⁵⁰

In the document, the wine and other items that were not sent are first described as *harga*, but in the second to last line it is the year's *palyi* that is to be sent. One could perhaps read the document to the effect that the *palyi* was to be sent in addition to the *harga*, but given the wording of the preceding lines, this hardly seems likely. Even more confusingly, the two terms are used together in document n.141 as *palyi harga*, though as the document is very fragmented, the context of this combination cannot be deciphered.

⁵⁵⁰ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 37–38.

Based on these three cases, it would seem that *palyi* and *harga* were interchangeable terms. However, the two last documents, n.677 and n.696 from the Lop sites, complicate the matter further, as in both documents the term *harga* appears closely tied to land. The clearest example is n.677, a contract, in which a woman named Kosenaya acquired crop land that “has neither *seni* nor *ničiri* tax (*harga*).”⁵⁵¹ Though neither term are clearly understood,⁵⁵² it would appear from this document that *harga* was something paid or owed directly on privately owned land, rather than collectively, as was commonly the case with *palyi*. Something similar seems to be the case in document n.696, a letter sent from a son away serving his father. There it is stated that “Also the royal dues (*harga*) from this village (*avana*) were granted to us from the feet of his majesty. Now the authorities are causing much pain to the slaves.”⁵⁵³ While *harga* here would appear to mean the dues from an *avana*, as Burrow translates it, the dues in question appear to have been extracted from slaves, rather than landholders, as was the norm. Thus, *harga* should perhaps be taken to mean dues owed in terms of labour, rather than dues owed in goods. This would certainly fit the sense in which *harga*, or *vap̄yo*, appears in the slightly younger Bactrian documents. There, in Sims-Williams’ translation, *vap̄yo* is a due owed on land sometimes in goods but often also in services or labour.⁵⁵⁴ Though the very limited material on *harga* does not allow for a satisfactory conclusion, it would seem that while the term had a meaning very similar to *palyi* and might have been interchangeable, it also carried a technical meaning referring to a different form of dues.

Certainly, dues owed in labour, in the form of imposed duties and corvée-like systems, appear to have been part of what the royal court could extract from its subjects. Most of these public duties were tied to the *kilme* and *avana* systems, but as shown by document n.46, they were conducted at the level of the *śada* or “hundred”.

Also he reports that men of Peta-avana are not performing the public duties in the “hundred” (*śataṃmi*) of Koñita and Maṣḍhiga. The former custom has been

⁵⁵¹ Burrow, 139.

⁵⁵² *Seni* might mean military, as in *seniye* “soldier”.

⁵⁵³ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 140–41.

⁵⁵⁴ Sims-Williams, *Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan, II: Letters and Buddhist Texts.*, 68–69 and 156–157. See also pp. 272.

that men perform the public duties in the hundred (*śataṃmi*) and that women do not perform the public duties of the *kilme*.⁵⁵⁵

It is not entirely clear from document n.46 what sorts of duties were meant by public duties (*dharma kareṃti*), nor is further information provided in the only other document using this term, namely n.387. However, a small number of documents do appear to show this system in practise.⁵⁵⁶ These documents deal primarily with maintaining communal infrastructure, such as the *pirova* (fort)⁵⁵⁷ or the *potge* (a water store/reservoir), duties that required pooled manpower. Particularly the *potge* seems to have been important, as in document n.701 from the Lop site, a list of some 137 people is said to have guarded the *potge*, all of them drawn from various *śada* units. Similarly, a list of people receiving payment in relation to work with the *potge* appears to be provided in document n.204. Many similar lists exist that give names and end in summaries of people, who may well represent people drawn up for other public duties not specified. This seems likely to have been the case in document n.609, where twelve people of *daśavida Jivarachi* were threatened with a fine of one sheep and thirty strokes if they failed to appear. The same punishment was also imposed upon two men in document n.204 mentioned above. If connected to the public duties mentioned in document n.46, however, some of these lists further seem to indicate that those called upon were provided a form of wage in recompense. This certainly was the case with those appointed herders, as shown by document n.19, where it is said that according to the old law of the kingdom, clothing, food, and wages were to be given to the herder.

In addition to these communal duties, seemingly imposed upon the *kilme* or *avana* as a whole, a number of official roles or duties were imposed upon individuals. It is sometimes difficult to tell which titles or offices were seen as duties and which were not, but certainly some were imposed duties. Some of the roles imposed upon Bhimmasena, actor n.721, such as *arivaga* (guide), keeper of royal herds (*valaga*), and even the office of *yatma* certainly seem to have been considered duties, given that

⁵⁵⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 11.

⁵⁵⁶ See document n.120, 204, 397 and 701.

⁵⁵⁷ For the discussion of the meaning of *pirova*, for which many suggestions have been made, see section 9.2.1.

Bhimmasena complained that too many offices had been imposed upon him.⁵⁵⁸ The role of frontier guard or watchman (*spāsavana*) too appears to have been a state duty, as evidenced by document n.520,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbo Soṃjaka

Cov.-tablet. Rev. & Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs the cozbo Soṃjaka as follows: Suḡiya complains that he is a *šoṭhaṃgha*, also a scribe (*divira*) in the royal administration, and that again he is performing the duty of frontier-guard (*spāsevamna*) along with Salve. Salve does not hold any other offices. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, forthwith you must make careful inquiry in person whether he really holds two offices and on top of that is performing the duty of frontier-guard (*spāsavamna*). A decision is to be made in accordance with the law of the land.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Frontier-guard Suḡi employed in the royal administration.⁵⁵⁹

It is unclear which of these duties were truly labour owed and which were duties imposed but accompanied by a salary or compensation. Certainly some of the communal work, such as guarding the potge, appears not to have included a salary, while most of the offices, such as royal herdsman or frontier-guard, did. Yet all these duties, whether salaried or not, were clearly imposed by the state and controlled by officials at various levels. Thus, in addition to regular taxation in the form of the *palyi*-system, the Krorainan state also imposed several duties upon its subjects, both at a communal and an individual level.

⁵⁵⁸ See document n.430, 438 and 439.

⁵⁵⁹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 102–3.

Royal tax and tributes: The economic role of taxation

In his article *Life in third-fourth century Cadh'ota*, Atwood gives a brief but good overview of the Krorainan taxation system. He goes so far as to suggest that the entire tax gathering apparatus of the Krorainan kingdom existed purely to serve royal needs and describes the royal ideal of the economy as a “perfect non-market economy existing only for the state’s needs”.⁵⁶⁰ Both these statements are something of an exaggeration, the first ignoring the same administration’s role in mediating disputes or maintaining public infrastructure and the second attributing a view of abstract economy to a royal court of which no literary or theoretical texts remain. However, this his statement serves to highlight an important point, namely the tremendous importance of the different types of *palyi* taxation levied upon the Krorainan population as the basis of the entire kingdom’s finances. As we have seen, its collection was both a sophisticated and complex undertaking, the weight of the written documents from Kroraina being a by-product of this process. It was also a large-scale undertaking, as illustrated by the share volume of some of the yearly *palyi* deliveries expected from Cadota, which easily constitutes the largest transfer of resources in the Krorainan written material.⁵⁶¹

Atwood, however, suggests a further role the Krorainan taxation system played in the local economy, namely as a source of wealth for local elites to tap into. In Atwood’s discussion, he focuses on two ways the local elites could utilise tax resources: through outright theft or corruption and through loans. The first issue was, as discussed in the previous section, a problem recognised by the royal court, and Atwood highlights some of the most blatant cases. These include, for example, document n.524, where a tomgha official in charge of royal mares was accused of simply selling the animals. The second issue Atwood suggests was more widespread, as the officials would lend out parts of the goods taken in taxation and upon it being

⁵⁶⁰ Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, 185.

⁵⁶¹ Consider for example document n.291 and 292 where very large quantities of grain are discussed.

repaid would keep the interest. As examples, he mentions documents n.244 and n.387.⁵⁶²

There are notable problems with Atwood's treatment of some of the sources he bases these assertions upon, the main problem being that he does not distinguish between documents concerning tax lent out and those concerning private business.⁵⁶³ Other documents that he uses are fragmentary and can hardly be taken as conclusive evidence, n.244 for example lacking an addresser and not even mentioning *pal'yi*, while n.387 is torn and has large fragments missing from the section Atwood utilises. Nevertheless, his suggestion that local elites and officials tapped into the royal tax appears to be fundamentally correct, if only because such appropriation and theft of tax was viewed as a problem by the Krorainan court itself.⁵⁶⁴ The extent to which this happened is hard to ascertain, as successful cases would not have generated any written mention in the administrative records. Yet some documents, like the short "Royal Command" n.275 quoted below, might suggest something about the possible scale of such undertakings.

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs the cozbo Somjaka as follows: Since formerly from there the year's tax (*pal'yi*) in Ajiyama-avana was assessed, twenty years have gone by. You have appropriated this tax (*pal'yi*) there. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, forthwith this tax (*pal'yi*) - we have sent an account-document from here - with that account-document this tax (*pal'yi*) is to be quickly sent here complete by Lepata, the yatma and the ageta; it is not to be kept back, it is not to be sent short.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

In Ajiyama-avana.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶² Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 185–88.

⁵⁶³ See for example his treatment of document n.100 or n.622, 634 and 635 in Atwood, 188.

⁵⁶⁴ This is shown by a number of documents as discussed above, for examples see page.170-171.

⁵⁶⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 50.

Atwood seems to read this document to the effect that no taxes had been paid from Ajiyama-avana in twenty years and that the tax had been taken by the local official.⁵⁶⁶ This does not quite seem to be the case. Rather the document states that no assessment (*cimtitaga*) has been carried out, which should suggest that the tax that was appropriated was the presumable growth that had taken place since the last assessment. Whichever way one interprets this point the appropriation by cozbo Somjaka had gone on for twenty years and thus likely involved considerable sums. It is also noteworthy that even high-ranking officials such as the cozbo Somjaka, the governor of the province of Caḍota, was involved.

Therefore, while the scale on which it happened might be debated, it is clear that the Krorainan elites and officials benefited from the taxation systems on the side, either through direct corruption or indirectly via their control over the collected resources.

5.4 Beyond subsistence

Thus was the basic economic landscape of the Krorainan kingdom, dominated by an agro-pastoral economy, which provided the subsistence basis for the society and from which the royal court extracted the resources that formed the economic basis of the kingdom itself. This fundament served as the basic provisioning institutions of Hodgson,⁵⁶⁷ and given their importance to life in Kroraina, their primacy in the written records of the local administration should come as no surprise. Yet as has been glimpsed already in the two previous sections, these were not the only forms of economic activity described in the Kharosthi sources. Take, for example, the hiring out of camels or the loaning out of tax-grain as mentioned above. These were clearly economic activities that went beyond mere subsistence and rather aimed at serving other needs or even at generating wealth. One of the most apparent examples of such activities is found in document n.140, which will serve as the starting point for this discussion.

⁵⁶⁶ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 188.

⁵⁶⁷ Hodgson, *How Economics Forgot History: The Problem of Historical Specificity in Social Science*, 283–86.

Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be opened at the feet of the master and mistress soṭhaṅga Lýipeya and Sarpinae.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

Also there they are looking for gold. The gold [.....]. I have sent Tolayana of the Mountain there. By you, Lýimsu, attention is to be paid to this matter and according to how much the price of gold is there, this is to be sold.

Under-tablet. Obv. & Rev. and Cov.-tablet. Rev.

To the feet of the masters, dear to men and gods, respected, of pleasant aspect, whose life is a hundred years long of divine years suited to them, dear brother-in-law sothamgha Lýipeya, dear sister Sarpinae and Sugita and Lýimsu, Kupṣimta pays respect and asks after their good health and divine body, again and again, much, immeasurable; and first of all I am pleased to hear that your divine body is in health; I also am well through your favour and thus I address you: In Lýimsu's hand there is some corn of mine on loan. As regards the previous (lot) of corn, the *vaṣḍhigaiṃ* (lot) which we received here, you know the reckoning of it. The second lot is from the ploughed field (and) you know the reckoning of it. It is in Saṃghaṣena's hand. The amount of that corn which has been used up or given to others, has been entered on a tablet. The amount of corn remaining from that is five milima ten khi. That corn is to be demanded of Saṃghaṣena along with interest. As regards the *vaṣḍhigaiṃ* corn, and the corn from the field, reckoning is to be made separately. The corn from *panimcana* is ten khi. A reckoning of that is to be made along with the interest. As regards the previous corn, reckoning is to be made in detail for each year individually. As regards last year's corn in Campe's hand, Kuteya knows how much came off the threshing floor. Also a reckoning is to be made of the corn Campe has. Also you know the reckoning of the wine which Kole has. Now there is room for

some wine from him. I have sent a present as token of remembrance, for you a *leśpa*, three *sira* for each of you, and one *vatu* for Sarpinae.⁵⁶⁸

This document was found in ruin N.1 that, as will be recalled, was the home of Lýipeya (n.8), who is also the addressee of the letter.⁵⁶⁹ Kupşimta, as the document notes, was the brother-in-law of Lýipeya through his sister. Furthermore, document n.83 reveals that Kupşimta was a resident at the king's court in the capital. This "letter" document is in many ways a typical letter sent between relatives in the Krorainan elite. It starts with a lengthy and polite greeting of all members of the recipient household, including wishes of good health and a reassurance of one's own health. It then proceeds to make a request for aid and gives instructions regarding several related problems, in this case concerning mainly the handling of farm produce. Finally, the letter ends by mentioning the typical inclusion of presents. What makes this letter so interesting, however, is the breadth of economic activities, practises, and institutions mentioned. The brother-in-law appears to have entrusted the running of his own land to his sister's family, whom he instructed on reckoning and storing the wealth accumulated from the produce of this land. They were further to demand on his behalf a significant amount of grain on loan, including the accumulated interest.⁵⁷⁰ Finally the document, in a note added on the obverse of the covering tablet, discusses an opportunity for selling gold, should the price be good.

These are economic activities that clearly go beyond the mere subsistence or fundamental level, and in mentioning loans and the fluctuation of price, document n.140 also seems to indicate the presence of several advanced "institutions" in the Krorainan economy. As discussed in the introduction, identifying such institutions is of crucial importance when trying to understand the economic system of Kroraina. The following section will therefore discuss the evidence for and against the presence of three "institutions" in the Krorainan economy, namely exchange and contracts, usury, and monetization, in addition to discussing the extent to which the Krorainan economy

⁵⁶⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 25–26.

⁵⁶⁹ Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', 130.

⁵⁷⁰ Five milima of grain was a significant quantity, considering that the tax from all of Yave-avana in document n.468 was in total fifteen milima.

was structured by a legal framework. First, however, it is necessary to discuss which persons in Kroraina participated in this wider economic landscape and the relationship between wealth and the Krorainan elite.

The wealth and wealthy of Kroraina

As should be clear from the discussion so far, Krorainan society was far from egalitarian and it is clear that there existed a stratum of wealthy families above the rest of society. This can be seen very clearly in our example document n.140, where one encounters not only members of this elite, such as *Lýipeya* and *Kupşimta*, but also people somehow subservient to them or in their pay, for example *Campeya* actor n.150. Yet what was the basis for the wealth of these elites? This is a surprisingly difficult question to answer, for while the Krorainan documents provide a multitude of glimpses into various people's affairs, they hardly provide a full picture, and no full account is ever given of a single individual's wealth. By looking broadly at the documents, however, two types or sources of wealth seem to be reoccurring, namely ownership of land and animals.

The ownership of agricultural land appears, as shown by *Kupşimta*'s concern in the letter, to have been one of the most important sources of wealth in Kroraina. A number of letters of a similar type to those sent by *Kupşimta* supports this. In fact, it was one of the most common topics in all the letters found. In them, landowners away from home gave detailed instructions to relatives, servants, and even friends about how their land was to be looked after.⁵⁷¹ Of particular note are the instructions given on reckonings to be made and kept, as seen for example in document n.140 above.⁵⁷² While this speaks to the scale of the production, it is also noteworthy, as it meant a scribe would have to be employed. Whether a member of the household or a hired man, this would certainly have been an expensive service. Disputes over land and land ownership was furthermore a very common topic in royal commands, and several documents show that careful measuring and reckoning was done on land borders.⁵⁷³ Only one document, n.482, mentions a fine for taking from another man's land, in this

⁵⁷¹ For prominent examples see n.164, 278, 307 and 721.

⁵⁷² See in particular the three letters of *Kupsimta* n.83, 100 and 140.

⁵⁷³ See for example document n.37, 90 and 124.

case on cutting down another man's trees. The fine is however notably steep, set at one horse if a whole tree was taken, while cutting branches resulted in the fine of a cow. Yet perhaps the best indication of the importance of land is seen when considering the contracts found in Kroraina, as more than half of all contracts uncovered concerned the buying of land. (See table 5) It is likely that the prominence of land in excavated contracts reflects the importance of being able to prove one's ownership of the land over time, as opposed to animals who would die. Although, this only goes to show how important land ownership was in Kroraina.

An equally interesting point to make from table five, however, is the fact that while only a few contracts exist for animals purchased,⁵⁷⁴ animals, primarily camels and horses, were the most common commodity used in payments. (See table 6) This seems in keeping with ownership of animals being the second pillar of Krorainan wealth, and it seems that the richest in Kroraina possessed large herds indeed. The prime example of this is the royal herds owned by the Krorainan kings. While both royal sheep- and cowherds were kept,⁵⁷⁵ it was the royal camels and horses that appear to have been the most important.⁵⁷⁶ In document n.180 dated to 297 CE, for example, a reckoning was done of the royal camel herds and 133 animals are mentioned, eighty-four of them female, two male, seventeen young, twelve Khotanese, and eighteen unspecified. Document n.383 mentions a total of twenty-eight camels of the herd that had died for various reasons, including animals that were sacrificed or ran away. The royal horse herd is known in less detail, though it was likely far smaller as document n.600, the only document to talk about more than one royal horse, only mention three mares of the royal stables.

It is unlikely that many Krorainans, let alone any of the inhabitants of Caḍota, could match this wealth of animals. However, several Caḍotans did own a few camels and horses,⁵⁷⁷ in some cases as common property by two families,⁵⁷⁸ and in some cases enough to provide one or two for governmental service.⁵⁷⁹ Certain men in Caḍota, like

⁵⁷⁴ See document n.420, 421 and 661. It should be noted however that the latter was written in Khotan.

⁵⁷⁵ See document n.725.

⁵⁷⁶ See the document n.40, 55, 180, 182, 248, 349, 350, 383, 392, 509, 524, 562 and 600.

⁵⁷⁷ See document n.277, 304, 442, 531, 544, 681 and 684.

⁵⁷⁸ See document n.71, see also lists n.277 and n.304.

⁵⁷⁹ See document n.531 and n.544.

for example Ramṣotsa, appears to have owned significantly larger herds, however. In Ramṣotsa's case, he possessed enough animals to exchange six horses and three camels for land and slaves throughout the 260s CE, as shown by his numerous contracts.⁵⁸⁰ These animals, especially the horses and camels, were not only an important way to store wealth. As shown by their repeated use in contracts, they were also the most important form of movable wealth, as they could be readily rented out or exchanged. Their importance as a medium of exchange in the local economy of the southern Tarim Basin might further be reflected on the Sino-Kharosthi coins of Khotan, the only native coins minted in the region, which display camels and horses on their obverse.

Atwood, however, appears to suggest that the primary source of wealth and economic power in Kroraina lay in connections to the royal court and holding official posts.⁵⁸¹ In a certain sense, this appears to be true, as the wealthy often held official posts, and as shown by the discussion of tax appropriation in the previous section, often used this to their advantage. Three documents also mention land received from the king, likely as a reward for loyal service, though only two of the three were officials.⁵⁸² One might, however, well argue that it was wealth that led to official positions and not the other way around. This would certainly fit with the pattern of wealthy officials themselves being sons of wealthy officials. There are at any rate no indications that officials were paid in return for their public duties. To the contrary, some documents suggest that individuals sought to avoid certain offices. One such individual was Bimmasena, who complains of having been made *yatma* in document n.430. Thus, while many offices certainly carried prestige and likely afforded considerable powers to the holder, there is nothing to indicate that official advancement was a source of wealth in and of itself. This further undermines Atwood's quasi-feudal model of Krorainan society, where both wealth and status flowed directly from the king and the state apparatus. Rather, the elite of Krorainan society was not a homogenous group, but one where some were seemingly closely

⁵⁸⁰ See doc.571, 580, 582, 586 and 590.

⁵⁸¹ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 189–90.

⁵⁸² See document n.24, 160 and 696.

connected to the royal court and others less so. In many cases, it can furthermore make sense to distinguish between the local elites of Caḍota and the “true” Krorainan elites of the royal court, even if these were also connected, as documents such as n.140 show.

When considering economic elites and participation in the wider economic landscape, a number of different groups appear to have played a role. Indeed, the available sources would seem to suggest that much of the economic activity was conducted by people lower down on the socio-political hierarchy, as indicated by the lack of official titles amongst buyers and sellers in the surviving contracts (See table 6). This is likely more a reflection of the origin of the sources, mostly found in smaller private homes in Caḍota, than the actual economic reality of Kroraina. What the Krorainan sources make clear, however, is that while the elites of the royal court certainly were wealthy, members of the local elites of Caḍota too played an active role in the wider economic landscape. This seems to have been the case with the *ṣoṭhaṅga* *Lýipeya* of document n.140. Yet the best example of this comes from the uniquely well-documented case of the scribe *Ramṣotsa*.

A question of scale: The Case of *Ramṣotsa*

Ramṣotsa (actor n.380) and his family, or at least his descendants, inhabited ruin N.24 and are amongst the best-documented people in the Krorainan documents. This is primarily because of the discovery by Rustam, one of Sir Aurel Stein’s diggers, of the large hidden archive in what was once likely an office or archive of N.24.⁵⁸³ Of the nineteen documents that mention *Ramṣotsa*, all of them contracts or legal documents, fourteen were part of this archive. Being dated contracts, they give a unique insight into both *Ramṣotsa*’s business, career, and lifespan. *Ramṣotsa* was a Caḍotan by birth and was *kilmeci* in *Yave-avana*.⁵⁸⁴ He first appears as a buyer in a contract from the 6th year of king *Amgoka* (252 CE) and his last appearance, giving a gift together with his children and grandchildren, dates to the 22nd year of king *Mahiri* (306 CE).⁵⁸⁵ Thus *Ramṣotsa* lived at least fifty-four years, though given that he must almost certainly

⁵⁸³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 227.

⁵⁸⁴ See document n.581.

⁵⁸⁵ See document n.581 and n.222 respectively.

have been an adult at the time of the first document, it is likely that he lived a very full life of seventy or even eighty years. Ramṣotsa was the son of Signaya, a scribe known independently from only one document where he gave land to a Kuñita, seemingly a neighbour and family friend.⁵⁸⁶ Ramṣotsa was himself a scribe, though in three documents, n.580, n.582, and n.587 dating from 265-267 CE, he is entitled *ṣoṭhaṃga*. He appears to have lost this position or resigned from it, for by 270 CE, he is once more referred to only as scribe.⁵⁸⁷ Ramṣotsa only had one child known in the documents, a Suguta (n.381) who himself was a scribe. He furthermore had three known grandchildren by Suguta, a monk Sodaya (n.830), Caṣgeya (n.384), and another scribe called Sunaṃta (n.386).⁵⁸⁸ This family was a typical family of scribes, where the father likely taught his sons the craft, and no known members of the family rose higher in the official hierarchy than Ramṣotsa's short tenure as *ṣoṭhaṃga*.

Yet as is evidenced by the twelve contracts and two legal disputes in which Ramṣotsa was involved, he was a man of means.⁵⁸⁹ A typical example of such a contract, and the one in which the largest transfer took place, is document n.582,

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

This receipt concerning land of the monk Yipiya is to be carefully kept by the *ṣoṭhaṃga* Ramṣotsa.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

This is the seal of the *ogu* Jeyabhatra, the *caṃkura* [...] and the *cozbo* Soṃjaka.

Rectangular Under-tablet Obv. & Cov.-tablet. Rev.

In the 20th year, 4th month, 22nd day of the reign of his majesty the great king Jitugha Aṃgoka, son of heaven, there is a monk called Yipiya resident in Caḍota. He arose and sold land to the *ṣoṭhaṃga* Ramṣotsa (consisting of)

⁵⁸⁶ See document n.572. Signaya appears however in two documents as the father of Ramṣotsa. Kunita also frequently appear in documents acting together or standing witness for Ramṣotsa and his family.

⁵⁸⁷ See document n.715

⁵⁸⁸ For Suguta and Ramṣotsa's relationship see n.591. For Suguta's sons see n.519 and n.524. For the whole family appearing together see document n.222. See also Padwa, 'Persons and Places within the Niya Oasis: Some Basic Associations'.

⁵⁸⁹ See document n.222, 571, 574, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 586, 587, 589, 590 and 592.

twenty-five *kuthala* in the *miṣi*-land. Formerly this land was *miṣi* but after that this land fell *akri*. From the *ṣoṭhaṃga* *Ramṣotsa* the monk *Yipiya* received as price of the land three horses (?) valued at fifteen. This was received by *Yipiya*. They agreed on equal terms. From now on in that land *Ramṣotsa* has ownership, to sow, to plough, to give as a gift to another, to exchange, to do whatever he likes with it. Witnesses to this are the community of monks at *Caḍota*, the magistrates administering the kingdom *kitsaitsa* *Varpa* and *kāla* *Karamṭsa*, the *yasu* *Acuṇiya* and *Caḍhi*, the *cozbo* of *Calmadana* *Suryamitra*, *Kurageya* and *Vukiṃna*. Whoever at a future time informs, disputes, or disagrees about this land, his bringing up again of the matter shall be without authority at the king's court. This document was written by me the scribe *Mogata*, son of the scribe *Tamaṣpa*, at the command of the magistrates. Its authority is as long as life. It was written at the request of the monk *Yipiya*.

The *yasu* *Caḍhi* cut the string.

(Postscript written in blacker ink)

In the 4th year, 2nd month, 28th day in the reign of his majesty the great king *Jitugha Mahiriya*, son of heaven, the *ogu* *Jeyabhatra*, the *caṃkura* *Cataraga*, the *cuyalaina* *Tiraphara*, and the *cozbo*s *Soṃjaka* and *Vanaṃta* examined a dispute (on this matter) in *Caḍota*. This field was sown by an act of force. Now the *yasu* *Vugica* and the scribe *Ramaṣto* have brought an action. This written tablet (*ṣulga lihidaga*) was the authority. A quarter of the seed is to be taken as his own by *Vugica*, the rest of the corn and the land is to be taken by *Ramaṣto*.⁵⁹⁰

As the contract shows, *Ramṣotsa* must have been a wealthy man, being able to pay three horses in return for a significant amount of land. The exact meaning of *kuthala* is not known, though it seems reasonable to assume, as suggested by Burrow, that it might have meant a strip or area and referred to a specific type of land.⁵⁹¹ That the amount in question was significant, is however clear, both from the price paid as well

⁵⁹⁰ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 120–21.

⁵⁹¹ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 83–84.

as the fact that it is more than double the amount of any other *kuthala* parcels mentioned in other documents.⁵⁹² How much of this wealth Ramṣotsa inherited from his father cannot be known, though as his father gave ten *kuthala* for growing barley away as a gift in document n.572, he was himself a man of some means. Only considering the resources acquired or expended to the extent documented, however, Ramṣotsa bought a total of twenty-five *kuthala* of land, land capable of receiving three milima *juṭhi* seed, one milima ten khi *aḍini* seed, seven khi *sahini* seed, two milima one khi of unspecified seeds, two vineyard, and an arbour. He furthermore gave away land capable of receiving 5 khi of *aḍini* and bought three female slaves. As payment for the land, slaves and to settle legal disputes he used a total of five camels, five horses, thirty sheep, carpets totalling fifty-two hands long, and two Khotanese rugs as well as grain and wine. As such, Ramṣotsa through his life acquired large tracts of arable land and kept substantial herds of animals. He also had access to, or possibly even produced at his farm, large quantities of carpets and even imported wares from Khotan. Though most of the measures used remain obscure, there can be no doubt that this represented large sums and significant wealth in the local economy.

What then does the case of Ramṣotsa tell us of the Krorainan economy, beyond the fact that some individuals were wealthy? Firstly, it is noteworthy that Ramṣotsa was not a high official by any definition, having been a scribe, the position which Atwood describes as the lowest rank of the administration, practically his entire life.⁵⁹³ He does appear to have been on good terms with some important officials, primarily cozbo Somjaka to whom he gifted land in document n.222, but he himself never ascended to such lofty ranks. Thus, any notion that wealth and high office in Kroraina was intrinsically linked should be dispelled. Secondly, the case of Ramṣotsa shows that some individuals within Krorainan society actively sought to accumulate wealth and generate a profit through exchange. Indeed, Ramṣotsa's case even contains some examples of almost predatory economic behaviour, as his first two contracts chronologically, n.581 and n.589 regarding land and a slave respectively, were made during a drought. In the first case, Ramṣotsa acquired a vineyard during a time of

⁵⁹² See document n.90, 327, 419, 536, 572,

⁵⁹³ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 176.

famine in exchange for a carpet, an item of clothing, two sheep and some grain,⁵⁹⁴ compared to the horse he paid for a vineyard in document n.586. Similarly, the female slave bought during the famine cost him a camel valued at forty, compared to the two camels valued in total at seventy and two carpets paid for a woman in document n.590. Though the cases are somewhat difficult to compare, given that we do not know the exact values of the land and the slaves, it still appears that Ramšotsa paid a far lower price for his acquisitions during the time of famine. Thus, it would seem that Ramšotsa was completely aware of the strength of his position during these hard times and actively used the situation to his advantage. Indeed, given that they are his first contracts, one could even wonder if this is how he first made his fortune, though as the surviving documents are likely but a sample, this is hard to say for certain. What is for certain, however, is that the case of Ramšotsa furnishes yet another example of economic activity beyond the subsistence level in Kroraina and the presence of economic institutions in Krorainan society. In particular, the documents making up Ramšotsa's case raises several interesting points regarding the practices of exchange, the use of contracts, and notions of price in Kroraina.

Property rights, exchange, and contracts

As discussed in the introduction, one of the major problems with the characterisations of the Krorainan economic landscape presented in earlier studies, whether the state focused “quasi-feudal system” of Atwood or the limited subsistence economy described by Hansen, is the lack of attention given to the presence of legally enshrined institutions in the Krorainan economy. Yet as evidenced by cases such as Kupšimta's letters or Ramšotsa's contracts, several such institutions were clearly established in Kroraina, the most fundamental of which were notions of property rights.

Communal ownership was not uncommon in Kroraina. This is shown by documents such as n.366, where property was granted to the people of an *avana* in common and appears to have been part of the reason for the communal payment of taxes from the *avana*, as discussed previously. Yet co-existing with, and in most cases seemingly taking precedence over, such communal patterns of ownership were the

⁵⁹⁴ See document n.581.

rights of private property (*tanu*). Such rights are repeatedly mentioned in the sources, the clearest example of this being the many contracts that regularly include a formula of ownership along the lines of the one seen in document n.582 above.⁵⁹⁵ It says that Ramṣotsa, the buyer, “has ownership, to sow, to plough, to give as a gift to another, to exchange, to do whatever he likes with it.”⁵⁹⁶ Such standardised phrases are found in nearly half the contracts, with only minor variations. The equivalent phrase on the sale of a slave for example was, “From now on the scribe Ramṣotsa has ownership of that woman, to beat her, to bind her, to sell her, to give her to others as a present, to exchange her, to pledge her, to do whatever he likes with her.”⁵⁹⁷ These property rights were protected and enforced by law, as evidenced by a multitude of royal commands and legal rulings.⁵⁹⁸ These laws and rights also extended to inheritance rights, where a partible inheritance with equal shares was practised, though admittedly only three cases are known.⁵⁹⁹ Furthermore, the legal protection of property extended to the *palayamnaga*⁶⁰⁰ (refugees/fugitives) and to property owned by slaves, though seemingly the claims of slaves had to be pressed by their masters.⁶⁰¹ It even extended to cases where officials had attempted to appropriate property from individuals, as evidenced by the “Royal Command” document n.482. In it, a man named Śaka complained that the *śadavidas* and *karsenavas* had encroached upon his land and cut down his trees. The royal court, in its command, noted that it was not right for people to cut down other people’s property and referred to the law (*dhama*) for punishing those who did with heavy fines. The extent to which these rights truly prevailed against royal demands is difficult to ascertain, and there certainly existed institutions, primarily the various forms of *palyi*, that allowed the royal court to extract resources from the local population. These were, however, legally enshrined and formalised institutions, and there is very little evidence to suggest that the members of the royal

⁵⁹⁵ See the contracts n. 549, 568, 571, 572, 579, 580, 581, 582, 586, 587, 589, 590, 591, 592, 652, 654, 655, 656, 661, 677, 678 and 715.

⁵⁹⁶ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 120–21.

⁵⁹⁷ Document n.590. Burrow, 125–26.

⁵⁹⁸ See for some examples document n.24, 33, 36, 49, 318 and in particular n.235 and n.326.

⁵⁹⁹ See document n.187, 256 and 474. Document n.326 also contains an inheritance dispute, between an individual and an *avana* group.

⁶⁰⁰ See document n.149 and n.471.

⁶⁰¹ See document n.33 and n.49.

court could simply requisition or appropriate resources, as suggested by Atwood.⁶⁰² Indeed the only example of this is document n.431, where it is noted that the queen came and asked a golden stater from the people of Yave-avana. The document however gives no further information and its context is very unclear, meaning that one could just as well interpret it in a context of taxation or simply as a request for aid.

Instead, when something was unavailable but had to be acquired, instructions were usually given to acquire it through exchange.⁶⁰³ Just how and where such exchange took place in Kroraina is unclear, as not a single mention of a market or similar organized fora for exchange appears. Document n.696, a “letter” document found at the Lop site, does mention a camel having been taken somewhere and there having been no buying or selling, possibly hinting at a market-like location, though this might of course just as well refer to something else. A single contract, n.419, refers to the authority of the *bhikṣusamgha*, the community of monks at Caḍota when laying down the rules of the agreement. The *bhikṣusamgha*, as mentioned in section 4.3.3, appears to have enjoyed some legal independence as this would also suggest, but document n.419 is the only contract to refer to the Buddhist community as its authority. Rather the local court and its royal magistrates appear to have been the institution that regulated and structured exchange in Kroraina. This is shown throughout the contracts, which regularly refers to the royal magistrates of the local court as the regulating authority.⁶⁰⁴ Some contracts even suggest that the exchange itself, the negotiations of the terms and so on, were agreed before the magistrates, document n.579 stating: “They made this buying and selling in front of the magistrates”.⁶⁰⁵ This could perhaps suggest that the local court was the primary arena for conducting exchanges, as a number of contracts carries similar statements,⁶⁰⁶ or perhaps that the market and the court was located in the same area. It does, however,

⁶⁰² Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, 190. Atwood uses document n.637 as his example, taking it to be a list from the treasury of Caḍota. This however ignores the documents content and find context, which rather suggests it to be a list associated with Vasu Sagamoya and the landholdings of a Kala Pumnabala that he appears to have administered.

⁶⁰³ See document n.307, 448, 622 and 633.

⁶⁰⁴ See document n. 322, 327, 415, 422, 495, 549, 569, 571, 572, 573, 579, 580, 581, 582, 586, 587, 589, 590, 592, 598, 648, 652, 654, 655, 656, 715

⁶⁰⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 118–19.

⁶⁰⁶ See document n.327, 495, 571, 579, 580, 581, 586, 587, 589, 648

seem more likely that these statements refer to the contracts themselves being drawn up before the magistrates, as indeed stated in document n.592: “This was written in front of the magistrates”.⁶⁰⁷ Thus on the whole, we have no indication that an independent institution like a market with its own rules, set market days and so on, which could rule and structure exchange, existed in Kroraina. That is not to suggest that no markets or similar fora for exchanging goods might have existed – it almost certainly did – but rather that it was the Krorainan state and its courts that provided the rules and framework within which this exchange happened.

The court’s primary tool for structuring exchange was the contract. The use of contracts was well-developed in Kroraina and generally followed a standardised pattern. Contracts were generally written on rectangular wooden double-tablets with a statement of content on the cover, a seal, a statement giving the owner of the seal below it, and a main body of text on the inside of the tablets. A standardised set of legal statements and formulations existed, repeated throughout the contracts with only slight variations, many with predetermined places within the text. It usually started with a short summary of content and a statement on the ownership of the seal or seals on the outside. The main body of the text on the obverse of the under-tablet then commenced with a dating formula before giving the participants and outlining the content of the exchange. Following this were usually statements of equality, statements of authority, statements of ownership, and sometimes statements of completion. The witnesses would then usually be listed, followed by a penalty clause for renegading or disputing the agreement, the name of the scribe, and a final statement of validity. At the very end, some contracts noted who “cut the string”. As shown by table seven, not all these elements were always included. Some elements, such as the dating formula and the list of witnesses, were present in almost all complete contracts, while others, such as the “string” phrase, were rarer. This basic anatomy was, however, prevalent across Kroraina, with examples having been found at all three major sites of the kingdom. To illustrate how these elements were used, the following contract by Ramṣotsa, n.571, has been number-coded,

⁶⁰⁷ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 127.

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

1) This receipt (*pravamnaga*) concerning *miši* received from Koñaya is to be carefully kept by the scribe Ramṣotsa.

Rectangular Under-tablet Obv. & Cov.-tablet. Rev.

2) In the 15th year of the reign of his majesty the great king Jiṭugha Aṃguvaka, son of heaven, in the 12th month, 8th day, there is a man called Koñaya. He sold *mišiya*-land along with trees to the scribe Ramṣotsa. The price taken was one camel two years old priced at fifty. Koñaya received it. Other *atga muli* (supplementary payment) received was ten khi of wine. Koñaya received in all a price of sixty from Ramṣotsa. In that land the capacity for seed is three *milima juṭhi*. 3) They agreed on equal terms. 4) In that *miši*-land Ramṣotsa has ownership to plough, to sow, to give to another as a present, to exchange, to do anything he likes with it. 5) Whoever at a future time shall bring the matter up before the *yasus* and *agetas*, his bringing up again of the matter shall be without authority at the king's court. So they agreed in front of the magistrates. 6) Witnesses to this are the kitsaita *Varpa*, the kala *Karamṭsa*, the *kuhaneci* cozbo *Kuviñeya*, the *yasus* *Acuñiya*, *Caḍhiya*, and *Yapika*, the *apsus* *Śāmcā* and *Pitga*, the *tomgha* *Karamṭsa*, *Tamcgo*, the *agetas* *Lýipatga*, *Kuuna*, and *Kuviñeya*, and the *yatma* *Kuviñeya*. 7) Whoever shall bring up the matter a second time shall receive a fine of one gelding and seventy strokes. 8) This receipt has been written by me the scribe *Mogata*, son of the scribe *Tamaśpa*, at the command of the magistrates. 9) Its authority is a hundred years, as long as life. It was written at the request of Koñaya. 10) The *tomgha* *Śāmcā* by name cut the string.⁶⁰⁸

This document n.571, one of the larger contracts of Ramṣotsa, is a typical example how a Krorainan contract was structured. On the front, that is the obverse of the covering tablet, was a short summary of its content (1). These summaries identify the involved parties, the object of the contract, and crucially they state who were to keep

⁶⁰⁸ Burrow, 114.

the contract. Next would normally come a statement on the ownership of the seal, but as can be seen, this document however carried no legible statement, although it was originally sealed with the seal carrying the Chinese characters “鄯善都尉” mentioned in chapter three.⁶⁰⁹ The main body of the text, on the inside, started with a dating formula (2), giving the year, month, and day of the reigning king, following the standard format for dating in the Krorainan documents. Next it detailed the exchange itself, noting participants, the object of the exchange, what was paid in return, and their value. As was commonly the case, the payment was divided into a main payment, usually an animal, and a secondary payment called “*atga muli*”, usually paid in either agricultural products or textiles.⁶¹⁰ Next came a statement of equality (3), almost always a variation upon the phrase “*same same sarajitamti*”, that is in Burrow’s translation “they agreed on equal terms”. This should not be taken to imply equality between the parties, as document n.587 uses the phrase in an exchange between a slave and Ramšotsa, but rather it meant that both parties had agreed to the same terms and thus bound themselves to the content of the contract. The statement of ownership (4), discussed above, then followed before a statement of authority (5) was given. This usually stated that the agreement had been agreed before the magistrates, sometimes naming them by name, and is in this case preceded by a statement that the authority of the contract could not be legally challenged in court. This last element, usually included after the list of witnesses, was of crucial importance as it confirmed that the contract was legally binding, the reality of which will be discussed later.

The other crucial element of the contract was the list of witnesses (6), which as seen from table seven, was included in nearly all complete contracts. There appears to have not been any requirements as to the number of witnesses, as this number fluctuated quite widely between different contracts. The highest recorded number in any contract was fourteen witnesses in document n.571 above, but documents n.186, n.209, and n.327 only had three witnesses, and n.568 and n.573 only gave two. Presumably, however, a higher number was better, as more witnesses meant more people to vouch for the contract’s validity, and for this reason most contracts had

⁶⁰⁹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 260.

⁶¹⁰ See document n.327, 571, 580, 591 and 592.

between five and ten witnesses. Similarly, there were no clear patterns on who could stand as a witness, though the vast majority were men with official titles and presumably some standing, as was the case in our example n.571. Women could, however, also stand witness to exchange, as seen in document n.420, where a camel was exchanged for a number of unknown items, and many men without titles also stood witness.⁶¹¹ As such, there appears no clear criteria by which witnesses were selected. Many of them, especially the officials mentioned, were likely members or attendants of the court or perhaps even just individuals who happened to be present. It is, however, noteworthy that in Ramṣotsa's contracts a number of individuals, for example the *vasus* Acuñiya and Caḍhiya, seen above,⁶¹² reappear as witnesses in many contracts over the span of many years. This could, in some cases, be due to continuous service at the court, but it could also be an indication that they stood witness at the behest of Ramṣotsa as friends, clansmen, or headsmen of his *avana*. Ramṣotsa is, however, the only individual for whom more than one contract is extant, and as such, it cannot be determined if this is merely a coincidence or an actual pattern. Even more so than the statement of authority, however, the list of witnesses was central to cementing the contracts' validity and authority, since the use of witnesses was a central part of Krorainan legal practise, as shall be discussed further below.

The next element following these crucial statements of authority and witnesses were statements on the punishment that faced those who broke with or disputed the contract (7), usually called *aviṃdhama*⁶¹³ and sometimes *daṃḍa*. As can be seen from table seven far from every contract included this element, indeed most did not. As for context, fines were included in contracts on everything from slaves,⁶¹⁴ land,⁶¹⁵ sheep,⁶¹⁶ camels,⁶¹⁷ and a pot.⁶¹⁸ As such, there is no apparent reason for why some contracts carried a statement on possible penalties and others did not. In some cases,

⁶¹¹ See document n.209, 415, 569 and 572 for just some examples.

⁶¹² For Acuñiya, actor n.929, see document n.571, 582, 586, 287 and 592. For Caḍhiya, n.930, see n.571, 579, 582, 586 and 589.

⁶¹³ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 78. A related form is also found in later Manichean Sogdian documents. Bailey, 'Irano-Indica II', 123.

⁶¹⁴ See document n.209 and n.591.

⁶¹⁵ See document n.419, 571 and 580.

⁶¹⁶ See document n.568.

⁶¹⁷ See document n.661.

⁶¹⁸ See document n.348.

such as document n.580, the reason for including a penalty clause appears to have been that the exchange had already been challenged and the challenge rejected in court. A similar addition of a penalty to an already existing contract appears to be laid out in the “legal” document n.437, where a contract had been disputed and then judged by the court, which added a penalty for further challenging their ruling. Yet there is no indication that such a process had occurred in any of the other contracts that contain a penalty statement, and as such, the addition or lack thereof of a penalty clause was in many cases likely down to the judgement of the court and parties involved at the time of agreement. The latter, a penalty agreed upon by the involved parties, was certainly the case in contract n.209 regarding the sale of a slave, which states: “On that point they agreed to a like penalty”.⁶¹⁹ The same document also notes that the penalty was the same for both parties, being a horse and seventy blows just like in our example document n.571. This similarity is interesting, for while the inclusion or not of a penalty clause seems to have been more or less voluntary, the nature of the fine was largely standardised. Of the seven documents that explicitly mentioned a penalty for renegading on a contract, four of the cases set a horse as a fine, usually gelded or castrated, accompanied by fifty or seventy blows. Strikingly, this matches the penalty of one horse for cutting down another man’s trees, set in document n.482. In two of the remaining cases, n.348 and n.419, length of silk and cloth respectively was set as the fine, in the latter case accompanied by corporal punishment. These were all steep fines, far steeper than those given for failing to attend a public duty,⁶²⁰ and as such, show the importance attributed to protecting contracts by the participants and the Krorainan courts alike.

After the penalty clause, the scribe (8) identified himself by name and often also gave the name of his father, who was likewise usually either a scribe, as in our example n.571, or a *ṣoṭhamga*. After naming himself, the scribe would additionally usually note both on whose authority the contract had been drawn up and who had commissioned it, which in most cases was the responsibility of the selling party.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 39.

⁶²⁰ See document n. 204, 462, 489 (monastic community), 517, 554 and 609.

⁶²¹ See document n.419, 571, 580, 582, 586, 587, 590 and 591. Both parties are cited in document n.652, while the buyer commissioned document n.677.

Immediately after giving their name, and often as the last line of the contract proper, would come a statement of validity (9) that specified how long the contract was legally binding. As shown by table eight, three phrases were used for this, either “a thousand years”, “a hundred years”, or “as long as life”, with the latter statement often being mixed with one of the other two, as seen in n.571. There is no clear pattern in the usage of any of these statements except for the first, “for a thousand years”. This phrase is only used on land contracts, all except one of which date to before 260 CE.⁶²² This is, however, likely more of a coincidence in the available sources, as several well-known scribes such as Mogata use all three formulas in various contracts.⁶²³ Rather than literal and separate statements of validity, these various phrases should rather be understood as meaning essentially the same thing, namely forever. Such an understanding is supported by contract n.419, which towards the end states, “Thus carefully (its) authority (is fixed). There is no end”.⁶²⁴ Finally, a notice of who had “cut the string” (10) was sometimes added to the very end of the contracts. This statement, which only appears in some of the contracts, referred to the strings used to seal the documents. The one who cut the string does not however, as one might think, refer to someone opening the contract, since many contracts with this phrase were discovered sealed. When documents had been opened, this was instead noted in full, as shown by document n.582 discussed on pages 186-187. Rather the “cutting of the string” likely referred to the official or court attendant, who prepared the strings that originally sealed the contract, and the statement should be seen as a guarantee that the document had been correctly sealed.

It is important to note here that contracts were, at least judging by those known (table 5), generally employed only when exchanging certain resources, primarily land or slaves. With the exception of the pot of contract n.348, no known contract was made for what can be termed everyday goods, such as food, wine, or textiles, though these do appear as parts of the payments. Such goods were however exchanged, as shown by documents such as n.343, where cozbo Larsu sold a jacket in order to buy

⁶²² See document n.419, 579, 581, 654 and 655.

⁶²³ See the documents n.580, 581 and 582.

⁶²⁴ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 84–85.

food for the monastic community.⁶²⁵ Such exchange likely took place outside of court, and it was obviously not necessary to draw up contracts over such smaller-scale and likely very frequent exchanges, especially as the goods in question would often quickly be consumed. Little is said of how such exchange outside of court was undertaken in the documents, yet an important indication is found in document n.568.

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

Concerning sheep from Kapgeya, to be kept by Suḡuta.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

This is the seal of the cozbo Somjaka.

Rectangular Under-tablet Obv. & Cov.-tablet. Rev.

In the 11th year of the great king Jiṭuga Mairi, son of heaven, in the 2nd month, 9th day, in this reign. Suḡuta and Kapge made an agreement outside (the court). I Kapgeya give ten sheep to Suḡuta as his property. Suḡuta shall have ownership over the sheep, to do what he likes with them. Whoever at a future time raises the question (again) of these sheep [he shall be without] authority, and a penalty will be incurred. Witnesses to this are the tomga Vugato, the vasu Opgeya. (It was written) at the request of Kapgeya. Its authority is as long as life.⁶²⁶

This document was found in ruin N.24, belonging to Ramṣotsa and his family, and the receiving party was Ramṣotsa's son Suguta, who being a scribe quite possibly wrote the document himself. As can be seen from the document, this was not strictly speaking a contract, carrying no statement of authority, but rather describes a gift given as part of an agreement made outside of court. Yet in spite of this, the language and structure of the text still closely adhere to the basic principles of the Krorainan contract, as represented by documents n.582 and n.571 seen above. A dating formula,

⁶²⁵ For further examples see also document n.307, 448, 622 and 633.

⁶²⁶ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 112.

a statement of ownership, and even a short list of witnesses are given, yet no mentions are made of the magistrates or the courts. Therefore, though but a single document, n.568 does indicate that even smaller-scale exchanges, and even the giving of gifts, followed the basic principles of exchange laid out in the Krorainan contracts, as these were institutionalised principles likely embedded in Krorainan tradition and habit.

Seeing the Krorainan contracts as a whole, it is remarkable that though the length, level of detail, and exact composition of the standardised phrases varied, likely based on a number of factors such as time, place, the value of the exchange, and most of all the scribe himself, the basic principles and composition of Krorainan contracts remained the same. These basic principles likely also permeated smaller-scale exchange. This is important, as it shows that far from being entirely a private matter or left to the whim of local officials, the practice of exchange and drawing up contracts in Kroraina was an institutionalised process, drawing upon fixed practises and legal procedures. Though these were based upon local tradition and precedence, it was the Krorainan state that ultimately provided and shaped this institutional framework through its legal system.

Lending, debts, and interest

Turning to the second “institution” hinted at by Kupṣimta’s letter to his brother-in-law, namely the existence of loans, debts, and even concepts of interest, one will also find that there existed a well-established framework in Kroraina for such practices. Both debts, incurred for various reasons, and loans are concepts widely attested in the Krorainan sources, the former usually referred to as *ṛna* and the latter as *avamicae*.⁶²⁷ These terms appear in several letters and royal commands, in addition to being the subjects of some legal documents. A typical example of a debt is provided by the letter of Kupṣimta, n.140, which as stated before included the lines,

The amount of corn remaining from that is five milima ten khi. That corn is to be demanded of Saṃghaṣena along with interest. As regards the *vaṣḍhigaim*

⁶²⁷ See document n.6, 24, 35, 113, 130, 272, 357, 370, 494, 570, 576, 588 and 629, for the former and n.59, 100, 140, 142, 244, 345, 378, 387, 622 on the latter.

corn, and the corn from the field, reckoning is to be made separately. The corn from *panimcana* is ten khi. A reckoning of that is to be made along with the interest.⁶²⁸

Grain, as discussed here, was the most common form of goods lent and owed (see table 9), though also wine appears frequently, in addition to a few occasions of more valuable commodities, such as camels, horses, and silk.

Atwood asserts that loans were primarily based on taxes that the tax-collecting officials used as capital to lend to others, keeping the interest for themselves once the debt was recovered and the taxes paid.⁶²⁹ As discussed in section 5.3.3 above, there are reasons to believe that such activity might have occurred, but there is little evidence to suggest that this was the norm. Rather, out of the twenty-two documents to discuss debts and loans, seventeen of them concerned purely private affairs, while only three concerned the royal government.⁶³⁰ Moreover, there is no evidence to support that most of these drew capital for the loans from the royal taxes. Rather, there are multiple examples of the resources explicitly being taken from their own land, as described for example in Kupṣimta's letters n.100 and n.140. Thus, lending and debt appears to primarily have been a matter between individuals and based on private property, though they could also be inherited, as shown by document n.420.⁶³¹ However, even if nearly all the debts discussed in the Krorainan sources were private affairs, the "institution" itself was part of Krorainan law and regulated by the courts. Document n.24 and n.494, as well as the fragmented n.130, referred specifically to laws governing questions of loans and debt. In the case of the former, the king explained that it was not lawful for a master's property to be taken in return for his slave's debt, showing that debts could not be transferred from slave to owner. Furthermore, in n.494 the king informs his officials that no debt from before a Khotanese sack of Caḍota could be claimed. These documents, however, tell us little beyond their specific topic

⁶²⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 25–26.

⁶²⁹ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 186–89.

⁶³⁰ For private affairs see document n.6, 24, 100, 130, 140, 142, 272, 345, 357, 370, 378, 494, 570, 576, 588, 622 and 629. For official affairs see document n.59, 244 (?) and 387. For unknown cases see document n.35 and 113.

⁶³¹ Possibly also seen transferred from grandfather to grandson in document n.113, though this document is fragmented and the meaning unclear.

of the rules and practices surrounding loans and debts in Kroraina, though on the whole it appears that they shared much of the legal language and mechanisms employed by contracts. Loan agreements did, like contracts, employ witnesses to vouch for the content of the agreement, witnesses that could make testimonies and swear oaths if called upon.⁶³² Disputes over loans and debts could also, again much like contracts, be brought before the local court, if one of the parties claimed a breach of the agreement.⁶³³ One could further expect loan agreements to have been written down, much like contracts, though only one possible example of such a document exists, namely n.500.⁶³⁴

Oblong tablet. Obv.

In the 17th year of his majesty the great king Jitughā Mahiri, son of heaven, in this reign, at that time, there is a man of Nina called Narasaka. He arose, and received 2,800 *māṣa* from the monk Mokṣāpriya. They fixed the time. In the ninth month [.....]⁶³⁵

The document, though written on an oblong tablet unlike most contracts, is in its form otherwise strongly reminiscent of a contract. It starts with a dating formula before getting into what appears to be an exchange of sorts. However, instead of Narasaka of Nina receiving land or slaves, as in most contracts, he received a large number of coins.⁶³⁶ The line, after which in most contracts would have noted what he gave in return, then states that a time was decided upon or fixed (*kalaga thavitaṃti*). As the document then breaks off, one cannot know exactly what this meant, though it seems a reasonable reading to take the sum of money as a sum lent and the fixed time and the following date as referring to the time when the debt had to be repaid. Below the third

⁶³² See document n.6 and n.576.

⁶³³ See document n.570 and n.576.

⁶³⁴ A newly discovered loan contract was published in the book *Non-Han Literature Along the Silk Road* by Jingjing Fan in April 2020, but due to delays in delivery caused by the Covid-19 pandemic I have not been able to incorporate this document in the discussion above.

Jingjing, 'Four New Kharosthi Documents Kept in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum'.

⁶³⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 97.

⁶³⁶ A full discussion of *māṣa* follows in the next section.

line, however, the tablet is unfortunately broken, and as such, the full content of the document, whether it details an exchange or a loan, is lost.

This dearth of surviving loan agreements is surprising, as one would expect that at least larger loans were recorded in a written agreement. Not only would this have been a natural thing to provide security for the lender's claim, but it would also be in keeping with common Krorainan practices, as exemplified by the contracts. Such loan contracts are furthermore well-known from many comparable contexts, including the slight later Turfan and Bactrian documents,⁶³⁷ and from more distant societies like the Roman Empire.⁶³⁸ It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that such written agreements on loans existed, and the reason why they do not appear in the Kharosthi corpus is likely linked to their usage. The loan agreement would, after all, expire when the loan was either returned or a claim pressed, after which the document would serve no further purpose. The document would therefore likely have been discarded or reused, the latter practice being well known, both of which could have caused the document to disappear.

Yet whether or not loan agreements were recorded as contracts, they were most certainly remembered, and being a debtor was a precarious position, as debts were often ruthlessly pursued,⁶³⁹ and in some cases, those who defaulted stood in danger of losing even their land. Such a claim on land in return for a debt was made by the creditor in document n.24, though the royal court denied him this. It was likewise the main topic of document n.473, where a man named Yapgu had mortgaged⁶⁴⁰ a vineyard and a field before seemingly defaulting on his debt. It is again difficult, based on the scattered references in the documents, to ascertain exactly how common this practice was, though two contracts on land mention the right to mortgage in their statements of ownership.⁶⁴¹ Furthermore, the adopter in the legal document n.331 was banned from selling or mortgaging the adopted girl, as one could presumably legally do with a slave. Mortgaging of land and slaves thus seems to have been a common, if

⁶³⁷ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 79–82; Sims-Williams, 'Bactrian Legal Documents from 7th- and 8th-Century Guzgan', 19.

⁶³⁸ For an example and a good overview of Roman lending practises see Andraeu, *The Economy of the Roman World*, chap. 4.

⁶³⁹ See document n.272 and n.357.

⁶⁴⁰ The original phrase is *bamdhava thaviti*, literally something like "deposited a bond".

⁶⁴¹ See document n.587 and n.678.

from the royal court's point of view, an undesired form of security. In addition to these dangers of confiscation if the debtor defaulted, some of the recorded loans carried interest. The word used for this was *Ayogena* that denoted, as discussed by Burrow, an additional sum to be paid when paying someone back, similar to interest. Yet as stressed by Burrow, the meaning did not always specifically apply to loans.⁶⁴² In document n.14, for example, a hire that an official had had to pay out of his own pocket was to be returned to him with an additional *ayogena* sum, and in both document n.437 and n.530, an *ayogena* price was added on exchanges where one party had failed to pay the full price. Sometimes it was similarly accrued on the *pal'yi* tax, as shown by document n.211. Yet, as seen in the excerpt from Kupṣimta's letter n.140 above and as also discussed in his letter n.100, *ayogena* could mean an interest accrued on loans. These are, however, the only two documents to mention an *ayogena* sum accrued on a loan, making it hard to judge how common such interests might have been. Indeed, based on the scarce evidence, Burrow suggests that such usury was limited and only happened on delayed payments on a small scale.⁶⁴³ This last point appears however, as also noted by Atwood,⁶⁴⁴ to ignore the evidence of document n.142,

Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbo Tsmaya and ṣoṭhaṃga Lýipeya

Cov.-tablet. Rev.

Lýipeya lent food (to. the extent of) one milima one khi. According as formerly they pay there double what they receive here by that arrangement the food is to be repaid to the ṣoṭhaṃga Lýipeya.⁶⁴⁵

The document is missing its under-tablet, and as such, much of its text, and it does not contain the word *ayogena*, which may be why Burrow did not include it in his

⁶⁴² Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 76.

⁶⁴³ Burrow, 76.

⁶⁴⁴ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 188.

⁶⁴⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 26.

discussion. Yet as seen above, it discusses the repayment of a loan of food to Lýipeya with an interest set at a hundred per cent, according to a pre-existing arrangement. This did not, of course, necessarily apply to all loans, and as the under-tablet, which would have carried the main body of the text is missing, we do not know the circumstances of Lýipeya's loan. But the heavily fragmented document n.539 does appear to mention a similarly high interest rate,

Tablet made from a cleft stick. Obv.

[.....]pgeya and Ap[e]na received 8 khi of wine, 3 milima of corn, and 1 sheep.

[...] in autumn 4 khi of wine was received, and a second 4 khi was interest on the wine.

The interest (*ayogena*) on the corn is [...] 2 khi and 3 milima of corn. [...]

The whole amount of the price is 19. In autumn, in the tenth month

[.....]

Tablet made from a cleft stick. Rev.

[.....] the price of 10 khi to be given to [.....]

(Rev not translated by Burrow. Translated by author based on Boyer, Rapson and Senart 1920)⁶⁴⁶

Though fragmented, the document appears to be discussing some form of exchange or loan, on which interest was incurred. Again, the interest rate appears to have been hundred per cent, as four khi of wine resulted in four khi extra having to be paid as interest (*ayogena*). It should again be stressed that it is impossible to tell if this constituted a norm or law on interest in general, based on just two examples. Yet given that, for example, Kupşimta dealt in loans of five milima, ten khi worth of grain, a third of one year's *palýi* in Yave-avana,⁶⁴⁷ even a far lower interest rate would have

⁶⁴⁶ Burrow, 106.

⁶⁴⁷ See document n.468.

represented significant sums. It is thus hard to accept Burrow's suggestion that usury only took place on a small scale.

Another compelling argument for the prevalence of aggressive lending and usury is the fact that the Krorainan court clearly viewed these as social ills. In the lengthy "Royal Decree" n.272, written by the king to the ruling cozbo Somjaka, he notes amongst a number of other important topics, that "Also it is heard that the people of the kingdom there are harassing each other on account of old debts. These well-to-do people are to be prevented from persecuting the debtor people."⁶⁴⁸ A similar general statement is also repeated in document n.357 and is discussed in detail in the documents n.473 and n.494, where the royal's order is to protect the debtors from the demands of their creditors. The royal court was, as such, seemingly negatively disposed towards the aggressive lending practises of some individuals, generally describing their claims as *viheḍemti* (troubling or harassing). It is also interesting to note that the conflict is described as being between the "well-to-do" people, *samṛdhae jamna*, and the debtors, suggesting that the economic elites of Krorainan society were the ones engaged in lending. This description can certainly be said to suit Kupṣimta, Lȳipeya's brother-in-law, who as revealed by his letters, both owned significant properties and lived at the royal court. It would also have suited the scribe Ramṣotsa and his family, and amongst their rich cache of documents is in fact some indication that in addition to commercial activities, Ramṣotsa's children and grandchildren were also engaged in lending. In document n.570, Suguta, son of Ramṣotsa, was owed a debt repaid in a camel, and his sons Sunamta and Caṣgeya were repaid debts in both document n.561 and n.576. The latter is an especially interesting case, as it is a "Legal" document,

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

This document concerning twenty *muli* and nine sheep (received) from the caru Ciniga and Platga is to be carefully kept by the scribe Sunamta and Caṣgeya.

⁶⁴⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 49–50.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

This is the seal of the cozbos Yitaka and Vukto.

Rectangular Under-tablet Obv. & Cov.-tablet. Rev.

In the 21st year of his majesty the great king Jiṭugha Mayiri, son of heaven, in the 12th month, 23rd day, in this reign, the caru Ciniga and Platga had a dispute with the scribe Sunamta and Caṣgeya. An oath was to be sworn by Suḡuta, the scribe Sunamta, Kuñita, and Caṣgeya. Ciniga and Platga stopped them from taking the oath. They voluntarily admitted their debt. They placed a sum of twenty in the hand of the caru Kungeya and Ogala. In addition nine sheep are to be paid by Ciniga and Platga and received by Caṣgeya. Witnesses to this are (of the) nobles, the cozbo Namarasma, the ṣoṭhamgha Keniga, the attendant on the King, Lýimsu and the ṣoṭhamgha Lýipeya. It was written at the command of the cozbos Yitaka and Vukto by me the scribe Socara. It has authority in all places.⁶⁴⁹

In addition to underlining the scale of some debts, this case stands as an excellent summary of several of the points raised above. It highlights yet again the private nature of lending in Kroraina, as opposed to lending being the business of tax officials proposed by Atwood, since neither Sunamta nor Caṣgeya were tax officials. Secondly, and most importantly, it also highlights the role of the courts in structuring, arbitrating, and enforcing the rules of these lending practices. We see again the striking similarities with the institutions and practices governing exchange, as the dispute was to be settled by witnesses swearing an oath, and the ensuing legal document produced for the case contains a seal, a date, a witness list, name of the scribe, and a closing statement of authority. A final interesting point of document n.576 is the type of debt owed, for it is said to be a price or sum (*muli*) of twenty as well as nine sheep. What form did this price take, though? This question led us to the third institution to be discussed in this section, namely the question of monetisation and a concept of abstract value in the Krorainan economy.

⁶⁴⁹ Burrow, 117.

Monetisation and *Muli*

So far, this section has focused on the accumulation of wealth, practices of exchange and lending, and the important institution of the contract, which in the Krorainan economic landscape structured many of the exchanges. Yet given the relative sophistication of these aspects of the Krorainan economy, it is perhaps somewhat surprising that there is but limited evidence for the use of money in Kroraina, whether in the form of coins or other standardised forms of payment. This is a point that has been stressed by several scholars, including both Hansen and Atwood, often to emphasise the local and limited nature of the Krorainan economy.⁶⁵⁰

From the Kharosthi sources, Helen Wang, in her very thorough survey of money and their use in the Tarim Basin in antiquity, notes three words that might have denoted coinages, namely *sadera*, *trakhma*, and *maṣa*.⁶⁵¹ The first two of these, *sadera* and *trakhma*, appear in seven and two different documents, respectively,⁶⁵² and are a transcription of the Greek terms stater (στᾶτήρ) and drakhme (δραχμή) as given by Burrow. This would seem to point to a Hellenistic coinage from the Indo-Iranian world. Especially the stater, the most frequently mentioned of the two, is of interest, as it is regularly described as *suyarna* that is golden or made of gold, something that could be taken to refer to the gold staters struck by some of the Greco-Bactrian or Kushan kings. Such an interpretation is problematic, however, as the list on the reverse of document n.702 gives stater and drachma as units of measure for spices, together with a third measure: *dhane*.⁶⁵³ Based on this, Atwood concludes that these terms were purely used as measures and did not denote coinage at all.⁶⁵⁴ This his statement is perhaps somewhat brash and a reference to coinage should not be entirely ruled out.

⁶⁵⁰ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 48–49; Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, 190.

⁶⁵¹ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 65–74.

⁶⁵² See document n.12, 324, 419, 431, 702, 808 and 866 for *sadera/satera* and n. and 702 for *trakhma/drakhma*.

⁶⁵³ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 99; Bailey, ‘Irano-Indica II’, 129.

Argiwala offers an alternative interpretation of the list as an order, where the measures are taken as coin names, but this is not convincing. Both he and Wang (Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 67.) appears to believe that the letter and the list in document n.702 are part of the same text. This is uncertain, however, as the list is on the reverse of the under-tablet which was never used when writing letters. Rather the list likely represents a later re-use, as a note or a draft, after the letter had been received and read.

Agrawala, ‘Numismatic Data in the Niya Kharosthi Script from Central Asia’, 224–25.

⁶⁵⁴ Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, 190.

As pointed out by Wang, gold is also mentioned several times without the measure *sadera*, which could perhaps indicate that *suyarna sadera* referred specifically to minted gold.⁶⁵⁵ Yet despite these considerations, it appears most likely that *sadera* and *trakhma* primarily denoted measures and not coinage, as was certainly the case in later Central Asian document corpora, such as the Bactrian documents.⁶⁵⁶ That these terms did not refer to actual currency, might be further supported by the fact that only two “Indo-Iranian” coins have been found archaeologically, in the form of a bronze tetradrachm of the Kushan king Wima Kadphises from the Lop (Kroraina) site and a bronze coin of the king Wima Takhto from the Endere (Saca) site.⁶⁵⁷

The third term, *maṣa*, in documents n.149, n.500 and n.661, however, is more promising, as it appears only in very large quantities, 2,500, 2,800, and 8,000 respectively. This would seem to indicate some form of currency, or else some goods kept in very large quantities, though unfortunately no conclusive linguistic explanation has so far been found for the word. Several suggestions have been made, including both a weight of gold as proposed by Konow⁶⁵⁸ and a form of Indian silver coinage, as suggested by Agrawala.⁶⁵⁹ Yet as pointed out by Wang, the amounts given would seem too high for such precious commodities.⁶⁶⁰ Rather, Wang makes the excellent suggestion that *maṣa* referred to Chinese cast bronze coins, which were of low individual value and thus commonly used in large quantities, including in strings of a thousand coins.⁶⁶¹ This seems to be matched by Kuchean documents that also use the term *maṣa* for coins counted in their thousand,⁶⁶² and such use of thousands of Chinese copper coins is at any rate well attested in the area, seen for example in the slightly earlier wood slips from Dunhuang and later Sogdian documents from Khotan.⁶⁶³ This

⁶⁵⁵ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 67.

⁶⁵⁶ The Bactrian documents refer for example to the payment of fines in struck golden dinars despite no such currency being in circulation. Sims-Williams, ‘Bactrian Legal Documents from 7th- and 8th- Century Guzgan’, 14–15.

⁶⁵⁷ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 33.

⁶⁵⁸ Konow, ‘Note on Khotani Saka and the Central Asian Prakrit’, 237.

⁶⁵⁹ Agrawala, ‘Numismatic Data in the Niya Kharosthi Script from Central Asia’, 228.

⁶⁶⁰ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 67.

⁶⁶¹ This same conclusion is also reached by Yutaka Yoshida in Yoshida, *コータン出土 8–9 世紀のコータン語世俗文書に関する覚え書き (Notes on the Khotanese Documents of the 8th-9th Centuries Unearthed from Khotan)*, 155.

⁶⁶² Ching, ‘Reanalyzing the Kuchean-Prakrit Tablets THT4059, THT4062 and SI P/141’, 61–64, 86.

⁶⁶³ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 54–56; Bi and Sims-Williams, *Sogdian Documents from Khotan in the Museum of Renmin University of China (中国人民大学博物馆藏和田出土粟特语文书)*, 55–60.

furthermore fits the archaeological evidence, as Chinese coins, primarily the “*Wuzhu*” (五銖), have been found at both Niya and Endere in limited quantities, in addition to over five hundred coins across the Loulan sites.⁶⁶⁴ The bronze *wuzhu*, or five *zhu*, coins were first issued in 118 BC and remained the primary Chinese coin in use until the Tang dynasty of the seventh century. The *wuzhu* is likewise the coin most commonly found throughout the Tarim Basin, especially from sites in the southern part, and some finds have yielded large hoards. The site of Mailike’awati for example, south of the oasis of Khotan, yielded a hoard of *wuzhu* measuring 45 kg and containing thousands of coins, showing that relatively large numbers of these coins circulated in the Tarim.⁶⁶⁵ Indeed, the *wuzhu* was so common in the region that it was even made locally in the kingdom of Qiuci (Kucha).⁶⁶⁶

One should naturally be very careful when considering coins as archaeological evidence, as interpreting both the find and the lack of coins can be difficult. The absence of gold and silver coins from the Krorainan sites could, for example, be due to these coins being repurposed either by the local population or by the Krorainan state. Similarly, gold and silver coins would be far more likely to attract treasure hunters, who as we have seen have long frequented the Krorainan sites. It could therefore be that the prevalence of copper coins in the archaeological context of Kroraina is mere chance. However, examined together with the written sources, especially those from neighbouring Tarim sites such as Dunhuang or Khotan, it appears likely that Chinese coins were the primary form of coinage circulating in the Tarim region, making it highly likely that the term *maṣa* referred to Chinese bronze coins, primarily the *wuzhu*.

Money in the form of Chinese copper coins and set measures of gold were thus known in Kroraina. Their use, however, appears to have been limited. As said, no golden coins and only two bronze drachma have been attested archaeologically. Chinese bronze coins have been found in larger quantities, especially the *wuzhu* as noted above, yet given the long period of circulation of these coins and the lack of dates for individual findings, these hardly seem to have constituted a basis for the

⁶⁶⁴ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 25–26, 68.

⁶⁶⁵ Wang, 24–25.

⁶⁶⁶ Wang, 39–40.

monetization of the Krorainan economy. Rather, as shown by the written sources, such forms of standardised money appear only infrequently, the relevant terms being used at most in ten different documents. In addition, there are no clear patterns as to who used money in Kroraina (see table 10), though presumably most of them were people of means. Both Hansen and Atwood have suggested that money in the Krorainan economy was mainly the purview of outsiders and travellers,⁶⁶⁷ based on the three foreigners and two monks who used money in the documents. This is an interesting observation and it holds some merit, suggesting perhaps that money was the best medium for exchange for travellers, as proposed by Atwood.⁶⁶⁸ Yet it is also somewhat erroneous, since there is, as discussed in section 4.3.3, no reason to believe that most monks were foreigners or travelled extensively. Furthermore, as shown by table ten, many local people without any stated titles were also involved with money, such as in the possible loan contract n.500, discussed previously, where a Narasaka of Nina received 2,500 *maṣa* from a Caḍotan monk. The fact that Narasaka acquired this sum presumably meant that he could use it, if not at Caḍota or Nina, then at least at the capital or the neighbouring Khotan, and thus it shows that money was of some use also in the Krorainan economy. It is quite possible that the available sources somewhat skewer our view on the use of coins in Kroraina, given that many smaller everyday transactions appears not to have been recorded and that most were produced in the relatively small oasis of Caḍota. Pending further discoveries, however, one must conclude with Hansen that the Krorainan economy was only partially monetised, at least if money is understood strictly as coins. The conclusion drawn by Hansen, partly based on this limited evidence for coins, that the evidence for exchange and private commerce in Kroraina was slight is, however, doubtful.⁶⁶⁹ While very few actual coins, or monetary equivalents, appear to have circulated in the Krorainan economy, this does not appear to have hampered exchange, as the Krorainan sources show a clear conception of price and value.

⁶⁶⁷ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 190–91; Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 48–49.

⁶⁶⁸ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 191.

⁶⁶⁹ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 50–51.

These concepts were generally expressed with the term *muli*, from Sanskrit “mūlya” denoting price or value,⁶⁷⁰ translated in most instances as either “price” or “sum” by Burrow.⁶⁷¹ This sense of “price” or “sum”, as in a “price paid” or a “sum to be paid”, was as shown by table eleven, the most common meaning expressed with *muli*. From this meaning a range of more or less set terms were also constructed, including “*atga muli*” meaning an “additional price” and “*pimḍa muli*”, referring to the sum of several items. Typical examples of such use can be found in many of the contracts, for example n.571 discussed in detail above, which states,

He sold *miṣiya*-land along with trees to the scribe Ramṣotsa. The price (*muli*) taken was one camel two years old priced (*muliyena*) at fifty. Koñaya received it. Other *atga muli* (supplementary payment) received was ten khi of wine. Koñaya received in all a price of sixty (*muli*) from Ramṣotsa. In that land the capacity for seed is three *milima juṭhi*.⁶⁷²

Muli in this document expressed the price or sum to be paid in exchange for the land that Ramṣotsa sought to buy. But as shown above, *muli* had a number of other uses and was not merely a term denoting a price to be paid, but actually served as a unit or measure of value in and by itself. This is seen in the second sentence, where *muli* is used as a measure to express the value of the camel, and in the fifth sentence, where it is a unit expressing the total sum paid.⁶⁷³

This last usage of *muli* as a unit of value is encountered in a large number of documents (see table 11), most of which are lists summarising amounts in *muli* either gathered or given out.⁶⁷⁴ Most of these documents do not mention what is being measured in *muli*, which could lead one to believe that *muli* represented a form of coinage. This has indeed been suggested by Lin Meicun who, in a discussion of a Khotanese text, proposed that *muli* referred to bronze coins as well as price, in the

⁶⁷⁰ Baums and Glass, *A Dictionary of Gandhari*, “Muliya”

⁶⁷¹ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 111.

⁶⁷² Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 114.

⁶⁷³ The prakrit reads “*pimḍa muli 20 20 20 Ramṣotsaṣa paride Koñayena giḍami*”.

⁶⁷⁴ See document n. 81, 102, 105, 118, 199, 210, 337, 343, 345, 382, 393, 411, 419, 437, 539, 576, 615, 628 and 631.

same way Chinese *qian* meant both coin and price in general.⁶⁷⁵ Yet, such an interpretation of the Krorainan term *muli* as a bronze coin seems unlikely for at least two reasons. Firstly, in order for *muli* to reflect a form of bronze coinage, these coins would have had to be individually very valuable, given that the values in *muli* recorded for items rarely exceeds a hundred *muli*. (See table 12.) Such a high value was generally not the case, however, with the cast bronze coins, such as the *wuzhu* of China. Consider for example the price for a horse, given as 4,000 coins per horse in the Han era documents from Juyan in nearby Gansu, as summarised by Wang,⁶⁷⁶ compared with the 30-40 *muli* for a horse in the Krorainan sources.⁶⁷⁷ These are of course not contemporaneous examples, and it seems reasonable that bronze coins might have been rarer and thus more valuable at Kroraina, but a thousand-fold increase in worth, or else an exceedingly low price for horses, seems highly unlikely. Secondly, given the many lists recording amounts in *muli* together with all manner of local names and titles, the possession of and ability to pay in *muli* was widespread in Caḍota.⁶⁷⁸ Take for example document n.105 where ordinary people from Peta and Ajiyama-avana were listed with sums in *muli*, or document n.118, where a number of men and women with and without titles were similarly listed with similar sums. If *muli* in these lists represented bronze coins, these must have been fairly common in Caḍota, and one would therefore have expected more to have appeared archaeologically than the meagre total of 32 Chinese bronze coins found by Stein at the Niya site,⁶⁷⁹ though again one must be careful in placing too much weight on the archaeological evidence of coins. Together these two points do, however, make it highly unlikely that *muli*, when used as a unit of value, represented a coin.

To the contrary, it almost certainly did not, because one *muli* had a direct equivalent in one milima of grain, which appears to have been the basis for the measure. This was noted first by Burrow in a short comment upon the “list” document n.210.

⁶⁷⁵ Lin, ‘新疆和田出土汉文于阗文双语文书 (On the Sino-Khotanese Bilingual Documents Unearthed from Hotan Xinjiang)’, 97.

⁶⁷⁶ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 63.

⁶⁷⁷ See document n.495 and n.580.

⁶⁷⁸ See document n.81, 102, 105, 118, 199, 210, 337, 382, 393, 615, 628 and 631.

⁶⁷⁹ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 137–38, 182.

Stick-like tablet. Obv.

Column A

(1) Of [va]su Kaṃjaka three muli, (2) Of Dhirpiga one muli, (3) Of apsu Calmasa one muli.

Column B

(1) Of Rukitaya five khi of corn, (2) Of Yitaya and Śudra five khi, (3) Of Suḡikoa five khi.

Column C

(1) Of Cināma and Šāyaṃma five khi of corn, (2) Of Pgiya five khi of corn.

Column D

(1) Of Mochākama five khi, (2) Of Svaya five khi, (3) Of Soneya five khi.

Column E

(1) Of Yitaka five khi, (2) Of Paṃcina five khi, (3) Of kala Rutraya five khi.

Column F

(1) Of Avigo five khi, (2) Of Jeyaka's Taṃjaka five khi, (3) Of kala Kunagena five khi.

Column G

(1) Of Lešpara five khi, (2) Of Mogi and Kuñita five khi.

Stick-like tablet. Rev.

Column A

(1) Of Sagapeya five khi, (2) Of Cugapa five khi, (3) Of Cimaka five khi.

Column B

(1) Of Arkatga five khi, (2) Of Opimta five khi, (3) Of Koñita five khi.

Column C

(1) Of ari-kargate Šarsena five khi, (2) Of kušaṃta Kolyisa five khi, (3) Of Budhapala five khi.

Column D

(1) Of āršagi Āpeṃna five khi, (2) Of koltarša Salveta five khi, (3) Of Mogiya five khi.

Daśavida Leśpara and Āvigo, twelve *muli*.⁶⁸⁰

Burrow did not give a translation of the document, which consists of names with units of *muli* and khi of grain and a final summary giving 12 *muli*, but he noted that added together, the various entries give 5 *muli* and 140 khi. This would give 20 khi to a *muli*, the same ratio as observed between khi and milima.⁶⁸¹ A similar summary of 20 khi of grain, thus a milima, as one *muli* is also made in the list of document n.613. Burrow's observation is further supported by other types of documents. In contract n.549, for example, a rug and 5 milima of grain made 15 *muli* and given that rugs were in other documents valued at either 5 or 10 *muli*,⁶⁸² it would seem that 5 milima of grain was worth 5 *muli*. *Muli* even appears to be used interchangeably with milima in the short document n.343, which gives 16 *muli* and 15 khi of food. This could, of course, be taken as a measure of price but given that it concerned food and that khi was used together with it, it would appear that *muli* in this document simply replaced milima, because they corresponded. *Muli* then, when used as a unit, was not a coin but a standardised unit with a value equivalent to one milima, a weight of grain.

Based on this standard, the term *muli*, as an instrumental *muliyena* or locative *muliyami*, was also used as a measure of value, which, at least for this discussion, is the most important usage of *muli*. This was mainly used in contracts, and as seen in Ramšotsa's contract above, gave a value in *muli* for something exchanged, such as "one camel two years old priced (*muliyena*) at fifty."⁶⁸³ Primarily through these evaluations given in contracts, the value in *muli* of a large number of items can be known, as summarised in table twelve. Adult slaves for example, the most valuable commodity traded, were worth in the region of a hundred *muli*,⁶⁸⁴ while both horses and camels increased in worth by about 10 *muli* for each year of age.⁶⁸⁵ Notably the values given in *muli* are highly consistent, with both cases of *viyala* camels valued around 40 *muli* and both *amklatsa* camels valued at exactly 30 *muli*.⁶⁸⁶ Similarly, all

⁶⁸⁰ Not translated by Burrow. Translated by author based on Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 82–83.

⁶⁸¹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 39.

⁶⁸² See document n.222, 327 and 592.

⁶⁸³ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 114.

⁶⁸⁴ See document n.345 and 590.

⁶⁸⁵ See document n.571 and 587 for camels and n.495 and 580 for horses.

⁶⁸⁶ See document n.437, 590 and 592.

three of the slave girls with a stated value were valued at around 40 *muli*, with the taller one worth an additional 5 *muli*.⁶⁸⁷ This consistency also holds true across time, at least to the extent that the admittedly few dated documents can support, with the dated contracts of the three girls ranging from 257 to 280 CE, for example.

This usage of *muli* and the consistency in its use are crucially important, as it shows that much of the exchange in Kroraina was not simply a matter of bartering one item for another in an arbitrary manner. Rather, at least when larger transactions were concerned, the items of exchange were evaluated and assigned an abstract value with which their worth could be compared and an equal price established. Given the consistency seen both across different exchanges and across time, these values were not arbitrary either but based upon a common system and presumably a fixed authority. Who this authority was is not revealed by the sources, though it certainly seems probable that both local traditions and the local courts were involved. Yet no matter the authority behind it, this usage of *muli* shows that abstract concepts of value and price existed, allowing for decisions based on these and thus sophisticated economic behaviour. This abstract usage of *muli* also brings us back to letter n.140, sent from Kupṣimta to his brother-in-law Lȳipeya, as that document contained one of the few explicit examples of such sophisticated behaviour,

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

Also there they are looking for gold. The gold [.....]. I have sent Tolayana of the Mountain there. By you, Lȳimsu, attention is to be paid to this matter and according to how much the price of gold is there, this is to be sold.⁶⁸⁸

Here Kupṣimta brings the news that gold was being prospected at some undisclosed location and that one of his people were involved with this activity. He then asks his nephew to supervise the matter and to have the gold sold. It is, however, to be sold “according to how much the price of gold is there”, “*keti tatra suyarna-muli tena vidhanena eda vikridavo*”⁶⁸⁹ in the original. This shows not only an awareness of the

⁶⁸⁷ See document n.437, 589 and 592.

⁶⁸⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 25–26.

⁶⁸⁹ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 55–56.

possible difference in price at different locations, but also more broadly a conception of such a thing as a price of gold, its fluctuations, and the possibility to profit from this. Thus rather than just asking for the gold to be sold, Kupşimta had in this case made a conscious, and presumably informed, decision to have the gold sold where Lyimsu currently was, rather than having it brought to him at the capital, as the price would presumably be better.

Thus, it is clear that while coins, whether gold, silver or bronze, played an only limited role in the Krorainan economy, sophisticated economic behaviour was still made possible by the existence of the institution of *muli*. Certainly not all exchanges that took place in ancient Kroraina made use of this institution, and more informal forms of barter were likely common. This institution's existence is still crucial, as the concept of *muli* was certainly necessary in order for other economic activities, such as contracts or lending practises, to function.

5.5 The legal foundation

The legal system: The law

Thus was the lay of the economic landscape of Kroraina, predominantly an agrarian landscape in which most worked their fields and tended to animals, paying taxes from their produce to the royal court and its officials. Yet instead of the almost absolute monarch whose officials ruled arbitrarily over a population of slaves and serfs envisioned by Atwood, the Krorainan economy was one of landholders who, while affiliated with a *kilme* and obliged to it, had rights of property. Some of them accumulated significant wealth, possibly in part through connections to the royal court but in many cases by other means, and in particular by accumulating arable land and animals. Parts of this wealth could then be used both to conduct exchange and lend out, often in the effort to acquire yet more wealth, both practises underpinned by sophisticated institutions such as contracts and the *muli* system. As a fundament for all this, and in some cases even protecting the population from the royal officials themselves, were the twin institutions of law and court. As has already been shown by many of the examples above, the Krorainan socio-economic order was fundamentally a legalised one, with both its social and economic institutions to a large degree

structured by laws both ancient and royal, and courts, both local ones and the royal court.

The Krorainan material carries abundant references to laws, expressed with the prakrit word *dharmā* and variations upon it, appearing in well over a hundred documents. The word *dharmā* is complex, and in addition to being used in a Buddhist context, also expressed concepts such as duty, yet in the overwhelming majority of cases referred to the concept of law. The descriptions of this law are in the documents often ephemeral, such as in the common phrase “This dispute must be carefully investigated by you in person and a decision made according to law”⁶⁹⁰ found in document n.1. This phrase appeared particularly often in the “Royal Command” documents, as this phrase or variations upon it was one of the most common instructions given by the king to his officials.⁶⁹¹ In some of these cases, this use of the term law appears to have referred more to the concept of law than to any specific and concrete law, thus encouraging the officials to act justly. For example, such good and lawful judgment stood in opposition to unlawful judgements, which the king cautioned against,⁶⁹² or arbitrary judgements based on the “law of the people’s mouth” mentioned in document n.134, which the officials under no circumstances should heed. Yet many, if not most, of the references to the law and laws in the Krorainan material are far more concrete, clearly referring to a specific legal tradition. In document n.19, for example, the king refers to a law stipulating that herders were to be provided with clothing, food and wages, while document n.24, provided above, refers to a law prohibiting a slave’s debt being claimed from his master’s property. Though several examples exist,⁶⁹³ few are as detailed or as concrete as the one mentioned in document n.482 discussing a case where trees had been illegally felled,

The former legal arrangement is that whoever cuts down trees with the roots is to be prevented (as regards) the trees (still) existing, and the penalty is (a fine

⁶⁹⁰ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 1.

⁶⁹¹ For other examples and variations of this phrase see n.3, 7, 10, 11, 14 and 24.

⁶⁹² See document n.364 and 638

⁶⁹³ For other examples of specific laws see document n.11, 17, 297, 403, 413, 435, 439, 474, 492, 494, 638, 639, 661 and 713.

of) a horse. If he cuts off the boughs (*lada*) of a tree, he is to be punished by the fine of a cow.⁶⁹⁴

Here the term that Burrow translates as “former legal arrangement”, *purva dhamma*, could alternatively be translated as “old law” or “existing law”, translations that Burrow himself gives in other documents.⁶⁹⁵ This law or arrangement stipulated very specific fines in animals for those who cut a tree or bough on another man’s property, clearly referring to a concrete legal code known to both the king and the local officials. Another document, the short “Royal Command” n.38, which even instructs the officials to apply the appropriate law (*anurupa dhammena*), pointed again to a concrete corpus of laws from which the correct law for the case should be chosen. As shown by table thirteen the range of topics which these laws are said to cover in the documents were vast indeed, spanning from family law concerning adoption and marriage to criminal cases and economic disputes.

It is therefore quite clear that there existed an established legal code in Kroraina that could be referred to. Yet how these laws, or legal traditions, were established, what their basis was, and how they were conveyed is not as clear. Some hints, however, as to the origin and legal basis of the different laws can be found in the many epithet and characteristics added to the word *dharma*, which as seen in table thirteen, gives a number of different types of laws, including the “old law” seen above. Judging from these, most laws were either on the one hand “*purva dharma*”, “*rajadharmā*” or “*pruva rajadharmā*”, or on the other hand, general laws presumably for all of Kroraina. The first of these two, the old laws, the laws of the kingdom, and the old laws of the kingdom, appear to have been based on older legal traditions and precedents. The “laws of the kingdom”, sometimes translated as “law of the land” by Burrow, appear also to have been specific to the province of Caḍota, again harkening back to local precedents. A number of different fields were covered by these laws, including the rights of herders, as seen in document n.19, as well as the rights of new householders and laws governing adoptions.⁶⁹⁶ The second group of unspecified laws,

⁶⁹⁴ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 94.

⁶⁹⁵ Burrow, 3, 54, 133.

⁶⁹⁶ See the document n.638 for the former and document n.11 and n.31 for the later.

which is also the most common group, is somewhat more difficult, and some of the fields covered by such laws appear to overlap with the “old laws of the kingdom”, such as in the case of adoption.⁶⁹⁷ It is thus possible that some of these unspecified laws in fact referred to “old laws of the kingdom”. Yet many, if not most of them, were likely what document n.492 terms “*rayakadharmā*” or “royal law”, that is laws established by the king for the entire kingdom. That these laws were created by the king and the royal court is even implied in some of the documents, such as n.494, which states, “The established law here is that what has been given or received before the plundering of the kingdom by the Khotanese, cannot be the object of a legal dispute.”,⁶⁹⁸ a statement also echoed in document n.17.

Yet whether drawing upon older traditions or established by royal decree, it is entirely unclear how these laws were conveyed and transmitted. No written form of the law code, on tablets or otherwise, has been found nor is it ever mentioned, and no reference is made to an oral tradition or law specialists either. It is, however, implied by the many royal instructions to make judgements in accordance with the law that the officials themselves were versed in the legal code, at least those whose duties were connected with the courts, as in Kroraina the practise and enforcement of the law was given over to the officials connected to the courts.

The legal system: the courts

Information regarding the legal processes and operations of the courts in Kroraina is based mainly on two document types: primarily the fifty-two “Legal” documents, produced by the courts and the legal processes themselves, and secondly from many of the “Royal Command” documents that frequently discussed disputes and legal matters. Based on this material, an ideal model of the Krorainan legal process and court system can be drawn up. A legal case would invariably start when an official complaint or accusation was made, or else when two parties sought the arbitration of the royal court, usually described with either the term *garahadi*, “complains”, or *vimñavedi*, “informs/reports”. In the ideal model, such complaints should be brought in person to

⁶⁹⁷ See document n.564.

⁶⁹⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 96.

the royal court, where it would first be heard by the vasu and the ageta officials, a process often expressed in the penalty clause of contracts. These, as can be recalled, often contained statements like, “Whoever at a future time shall bring up this matter again before the v́asus and ágetas, their bringing up again of the matter shall be without authority at the king's court,” or variations thereof.⁶⁹⁹ These officials were then to report the matter to the king's court, who would hear the case, call any necessary witnesses, and decide the matter in accordance with the relevant law. Finally, a “Legal” written document would then be produced to act as authority and proof of the judgement made.

Unsurprisingly however, the real system in practise was far more complex, with deviations in both how the complaints were delivered and which court heard it. That many plaintiffs did, in fact, frequently travel in person to the royal court at the capital to voice their complaint is made clear by the many statements to this effect in the “Royal Command” documents, which frequently open with stating that “so-and-so has made a complaint here”.⁷⁰⁰ That this actually meant that the plaintiff had travelled to the royal court, is shown by examples like the peculiar “Legal” document n.298, in which three men prepare to bring a lawsuit before the royal court,

Lath-like tablet. Obv. & Rev.

In the 17th year of his majesty the great king Jiṭuṃgha Mairiya son of heaven at this date in the 4th month, on the 17th day Caku, Mogi, and Aṣena made a lawsuit. Caku took it upon him to do the farm work, (while) Aṣena and Mogiya undertake to make the complaint at the king's court. Those ploughed fields of the farm which have been ploughed are to be properly watered and looked after. Both the internal and external cultivation is to be properly looked after.⁷⁰¹

Here two of the three men set out for the king's court, while the third pledged to look after their farms and fields while they were away. That such travel was undertaken is

⁶⁹⁹ See document n.437, 587, 715 for examples mentioning the vasu and agetas.

⁷⁰⁰For just some examples see document n.1, 9, 11, 20, 21, 26, 29, 36, 49, 54, 56, 106, 124, 212, 262, 286, 312, 339, 340, 359, 364, 433, 436, 437, 491, 516, 520, 524, 546, 569, 621, 719, 742, 750, 751 and 767.

⁷⁰¹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 54.

further underlined by document n.83, another letter from the previously encountered Kupṣimta to his brother-in-law Lyipeya, and the fragmentary document n.201.

In other cases, the complaint was brought before the royal court by a representative on behalf of the plaintiff, as described in the short letter n.829,

Unspecified shape tablet.

Dear to gods and men, dear *manasu* (?) Suḍimae. Cakvarata pays his respect and asks your health, much, immeasurably, and thus I write: There is information concerning you (and) at the royal court all was conveyed. So the full (extent) of the evil you may have suffered is to be spoken of by Cozbo Tamjaka.

(Last line uncertain.)⁷⁰²

The case in question is not specified, but as the “Letter” document makes clear, the Suḍimae case had been brought before the royal court by cozbo Tamjaka. Several explanations can be imagined for why the cozbo was the one to bring the case forth. Perhaps he was going to the capital in any case, or perhaps he was somehow involved on Suḍimae’s side. Yet the most likely explanation is that, as cozbo, he had more authority than the woman Suḍimae, and as such, his petition would carry more weight. This certainly would fit with many of the other cases of representatives being sent, as these often carried official titles and thus presumably had more authority.⁷⁰³

Yet another possibility appears to have existed, for many of the “Legal” documents indicate that complaints were also frequently brought before the local officials.⁷⁰⁴ This is even stated explicitly in some documents, such as n.436, where a complaint was brought to the kitsaitsa of Saca and n.437 where the complaint was made to a caṃkura heading the local *kilme*. Furthermore, in the majority of the legal cases described in the “Royal Command” documents, the king’s court had not reached a

⁷⁰² Translated by author based on Hasuike, ‘西域南道と西域北道のカロシユテイー文字資料の比較 (A Comparison of the Kharosthi Material from the Southern and Northern Road of the Western Regions)’.

⁷⁰³ See document n.366, 393, 639, 822, 848 and 849.

⁷⁰⁴ See document n.401, 434, 436, 437, 506, 570, 577, 578, 582, 584, 676 and 770.

ruling, but rather the king ordered the local official to hold a local court and investigate the matter locally. A typical example of such an order is found in document n.11,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbo Yitaka and the tomga Vukto

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs cozbo Yitaka and tomga Vukto as follows: Lyipeya complains that he has a dispute about a child Apisae adopted from Kungeya. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, forthwith you must carefully inquire in person with oath and witness. According to the law of old recompense is paid for a child adopted, and thus a decision is to be made. If it is different and no understanding can be reached there, then they are to be sent here in custody to the royal court.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Sothamga Lyipe, Kunge⁷⁰⁵

As seen in this case, the king delegated the judgement to the local cozbo, who was ordered to investigate the matter in person and make a decision according to the old law (*purva dhamma*). Given the frequency with which such orders were given in the “Royal Command” documents and the fact that out of the fifty-two “Legal” documents known only four were the products of the royal court in the capital, it would seem that such local court procedures were the norm rather than the exception. This is, however, difficult to conclude, as a “Royal Command” document ordering a local investigation would of course only be produced if a judgement was not made at the royal court. Judgements made at the royal court did, in other words, not produce the same paper trail in Caḍota, where the majority of the sources have been found, and as such, we have few ways of knowing how frequently judgement was passed at the royal court.

⁷⁰⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 3.

What is clear, however, is that in practice there were two levels on which courts operated in Kroraia, namely the *dvara* or courts held locally and the *rayadvvara* or royal court held by the king himself.⁷⁰⁶ There was a clear hierarchy between the two, as cases that could not be solved locally were invariably to be taken to the royal court, as also seen in document n.11, and the ruling of the royal court was repeatedly ordered to be enforced locally.⁷⁰⁷ In legal terms, however, both appear to have been considered the same “royal court”, representing the royal judgement, and as shall be seen shortly, both operated along the same lines. Yet one further legal institution appears to have existed in Kroraia, for as already mentioned in section 5.4.3 on contracts, a few cases exist to indicate that the Buddhist *bhikkhusamghas* (community of monks) operated with some legal independence. Document n.506, itself a legal document produced by a court in the capital, mentions a legal case heard and decided by the community of monks in Caḍota. Similarly, the Caḍotan *samgha* stood as the authority in contract n.419. Both these cases, however, involved only members of the monastic community, and as such, the legal independence enjoyed by the *samgha* was strictly internal and was also based on rules stipulated by the Kroraian monarch.

Where the possible routes for getting a complaint to court appears to have been varied, the court proceedings themselves were on the other hand highly structured, and in most cases, rather uniform. The central elements of the legal process were regularly summarised in the royal orders to hold court, as exemplified by document n.11 above, where the official in question was to conduct the inquiry “with oath and witness”. These elements are reflected in the text and format of the “Legal” documents that the court produced, which much like the contracts above, followed a highly standardised format (See table 14). Document n.577, found in the hidden archive of the Ramṣotsa family and involving his son Suguta and grandson Sunamta, provides an excellent example of this document type and the court proceedings it described,

⁷⁰⁶ The *dvara* is mentioned in document n.295, 345 and 568. The *rayadvvara* in document n.3, 5, 7, 8, 35, 45, 46, 63, 68, 83, 124, 155, 159, 175, 180, 201, 216, 217, 246, 250, 256, 272, 296, 297, 298, 312, 344, 347, 356, 357, 358, 364, 387, 392, 399, 403, 423, 437, 471, 484, 494, 518, 540, 545, 549, 556, 561, 571, 572, 575, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 586, 587, 590, 591, 592, 600, 606, 654, 715, 734, 736, 738, 739 and 788.

⁷⁰⁷ See document n.7, 45, 46, 63, 297, 312 and 788.

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

A) This document concerning two camels from Raśpara, and concerning one horse and a beating and whatever else has been falsely (? *muṣa* = *mṛṣā*) taken from one another is to be carefully kept by the scribe Suḡuta and Suḡamta.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

This is the seal of the cozbo Ṣamaṣena.

Rectangular Under-tablet Obv.

B) In the 20th year of his majesty the great king Jitugha Mayiri, son of heaven, in the 10th month, 3rd day in this reign, C) the cozbo Ṣamaṣena examined a dispute. Raśpara and the scribe Suḡuta and Sunamta brought an action on a question of payment. D) We decided that Suḡuta, Sunamta, the woman Sahiroae, and Kuñita should swear an oath (lit. "eat an oath"). Raspara arose and stopped (this). He made a statement (*samñati*) and did not allow them to swear the oath. From now on concerning the two camels and the horse and whatever else has falsely been taken from each other, and concerning the beating, neither shall be entitled to any payment from the other. E) Witnesses to this are the apsu Vugto, the yasu Mogiya, the ṣoṭhamgha Cakola, the korara Suḡita, the ekhara Motgeya, the aḡeta Sugiya, and the ari Śaraspa. G) This was written by me the scribe Socara at the command of the cozbo Ṣamaṣena. H) Its authority is as long as life.⁷⁰⁸

As will be seen above, and much like the very similar "Contract" documents, the document described, according to a standardised pattern, the processes and elements of the court proceedings. Like contracts, "Legal" documents were almost always written on rectangular double tablets, with some less standardised exceptions. They would, like the contracts, carry a short summary of the content (A) on the obverse below, which would be affixed the seal or seals of the lead magistrates. The document proper

⁷⁰⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 117.
Points added by the author.

would then commence with a standardised dating formula (B), giving the date on which the court was held. The text would then move into the court case itself, as the next section would give the full list of the presiding judges (C). This was clearly of great importance, as it legitimised the decision that followed, and as such, both titles and names were given for all judges involved. Some cases were heard only by a single official, as in the example of cozbo Šamasena above, but most cases had at least two judges and some, such as the case of document n.709 held before the king at the royal court, were heard by as many as twelve judges. The presence or lack thereof of judges appears to have been more or less based on who was present at the time and the location in which the court was held. Thus, cases heard locally in Cađota often had fewer judges, while courts held before the king himself had a higher number. Different types of cases do not appear to have required specific numbers of judges, though more serious disputes and accusations, such as the violence quarrel judged in document n.709, generally had more judges. Not all officials could sit as judges in court, however, as this was the domain of the so-called “magistrates” (*mahatva*). The term magistrate, as discussed in section 4.3.4, referred specifically to the upper strata of the Krorainan officialdom and nobility, and as seen in table fifteen, it was almost invariably men with such titles who presided at court. Of these, the cozbo appears to have been the lowest ranked, though likely due to their role as local governors they were the most common judges in the surviving documents. The only exception to this rule is the appearance of men named carapuraša, “spy” or “intelligence agent” in Burrow’s translation,⁷⁰⁹ amongst those who heard cases. These men appear only in four documents, however, and as these were all smaller local cases heard only by the local cozbo, the carapuraša are likely best thought of as “detectives” or “aides” of sorts, rather than full judges.⁷¹⁰

Following the presentation of the presiding magistrates, the text would proceed to describe the case itself, whom had brought it, and usually also a short summary of what was disputed or complained about. In some of the seemingly clear-cut cases, a decision would then be reached by the magistrates based on the information they

⁷⁰⁹ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 89.

⁷¹⁰ See document n.507, 569, 593 and 820.

received, as was for example the case in document n.318 concerning a theft where the stolen goods had been found with the thief.⁷¹¹ In some cases, the parties also came to an agreement themselves, both in and outside of court, and the magistrates merely ratified their agreement.⁷¹² Yet in cases where no ready agreement or solution could be found, the legal proceedings would move on to the most important judicial mechanism in the Krorainan judicial system, namely the hearing of oaths and witnesses (D). The centrality of this element to Krorainan judicial practice is illustrated by the frequent inclusion of the phrase “with oath and witness” (*śavatha sasakṣiyena*) in royal orders to hear legal cases⁷¹³ and also in the near mandatory inclusion of witness lists in almost all complete examples of contracts and legal documents. (See table 7 and 14) Indeed, document n.492 even appears to suggest that it was part of the royal law that cases should be investigated with oaths and witnesses, stating in Burrow’s translation “(The question) must be examined with oath and witness according to the king's law.”⁷¹⁴ As was the case in the contracts discussed above, there seems to have been no set rules on who could appear or stand as witnesses, and indeed as seen in our example n.577, women could also be called upon to stand witness along with men. In many cases, it appears that the witnesses could be anyone who knew of the case in question. In document n.506, for example, an accused monk called Tatiga swore “along with five people of his household”, and document n.503 notes that “suitable” witnesses should be called. The use of witnesses was also not limited to a specific type of legal case, for as shown by table sixteen, the witness oath was used in all manner of cases from violence to economic disputes.

A number of specific cases furthermore exist which attest to the “power” of the witness oath as a judicial mechanism, as seen for example in document n.577 above. Here the mere “threat” of assembling witnesses to swear oaths by one party caused the other party to give in and accept a compromise, a course of events mirrored in

⁷¹¹ For other examples see also document n.187, 401, 434, 437, 570, 575, 582, 593, 676, 709 and 770.

⁷¹² See for example document n.345, 578, 583 and 588.

⁷¹³ See document n. 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 36, 37, 49, 53, 54, 56, 71, 124, 223, 262, 286, 297, 308, 356, 364, 366, 375, 400, 403, 433, 482, 492, 503, 509, 526, 528, 538, 540, 542, 551, 584, 636, 643, 720, 734, 751, 769

⁷¹⁴ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 96. It should however be noted that, like the translation, there is some ambiguity in the original wording of the document, and it could perhaps be taken to mean that the judgement should be according to royal law.

document n.527 and described even more clearly in document n.576, where “Ciniga and Platga stopped them from taking the oath. They voluntarily admitted their debt.”.⁷¹⁵ Similarly, the lack of witnesses to swear for a given party would be disastrous for their chances of winning the case, as exemplified by the “Legal” document n.326,

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

This document concerning the house and farm of the people of Traşa-avana [.....] and the house and farm and land of Kamaya is to be carefully preserved by the cozbo Şamaşena.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

This is the seal of the ogus Paṃcatva and Conakara and of the cozbo Bhimaşena.

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Rev.

.....] and Picga complained concerning the house and farm and land of Kamaya. The vasu Vugaca and the yatma Yipicga [.....] the farm and house and land of Kamaya belongs to Traşa-avana. On that point there were no witnesses. The cozbo Şamaşena made a representation (saying): The farm and house of Kamaya is our inherited property. There many old people of Caḍota came out as witnesses. Considering that the house and farm and land of Kamaya is the inherited property of the cozbo Şamaşena, we have decided that this house and farm and land, along with everything on it belongs to the cozbo Şamaşena. There shall be no payments or receipts on the part of the people of Traşa-avana, the matter has been cleared, a decision has been made.⁷¹⁶

The document is unfortunately missing its under-tablet, and thus the majority of the text, which explains why it carries no date or list of judges and which might also

⁷¹⁵ Burrow, 117.

⁷¹⁶ Burrow, 61.

explain the lack of a witness list. It does, however, explain how cozbo Şamaşena won his case because the people of Trasa-avana, led by their vasu, could not produce any witnesses to support their claim, while Şamaşena himself had several witnesses willing to support his claim.

This example again underlines the crucial role of witnesses in the Krorainan legal system, and this importance also explains the frequent (see table 14) presence of the next element in the complete “Legal”-type documents, namely witness lists E). As was the case with the “Contract”-type documents, these lists were given in order to secure the validity of the document and provide a pool of witnesses from which oaths could be heard in future disputes. In form and composition, these lists too followed the patterns observed in the contracts, with a tendency for lists to contain men with official titles but with no clear limits as to whom could stand witness. The two last elements of document n.577, G) “scribal identification”, H) “statement of authority”, as well as a third F) “penalty clause” not present in n.577, was included only infrequently in the “Legal” documents (See table 14). In all three cases they conformed closely to the pattern of these statements seen in the “Contract”-type documents, as discussed in section 5.4.3. There are only two notable differences here, namely the severity of the F) “penalty clause”, and the wording of the H) “statement of authority”. The first difference is admittedly based on only three of the “Legal”-type documents, as only three included “penalty clauses”, stating what penalty would ensue if someone challenged the ruling. Yet all three cases set notably steep penalties. Both documents n.345 and n.437 have penalties ranking alongside the highest of those found in the contracts, with fines set at 30 rolls of silk and, a four-year old horse and fifty blows respectively. Document n.788, a document settling a divorce, is of the greatest interest however as it set the brutally high penalty of 110 strokes as well as a four-year old horse in fine, making it the most severe “penalty clause” in any of the surviving sources. The second difference, found in the “statements of authority” that often closed contracts and legal documents alike, is seen in the use of the phrase “has authority in all places”, as opposed to the given timespan that was common in the contracts. This phrase is used in four out of five “statements of authority” in the “Legal”-type

documents,⁷¹⁷ all apart from our example n.577, clearly indicated that while heard and judged in Cađota, the ruling had authority in the entire kingdom of Kroraina and all its provinces.

Both these differences are of some interest, as they show how the Krorainan court system sought to enforce their decisions. The use of severe penalties, admittedly based on only a small number of sources, appears to indicate that the court sought to prevent disputes to its authority. Furthermore, with the modified “statement of authority”, they simultaneously underlined the reach of the court, namely as carrying authority in the entire kingdom. These final points again highlight the ordered and legalised nature of the Krorainan legal system, where a ruling made in Cađota would be authoritative within the entire kingdom and could not be challenged. This is typical of the entire Krorainan legal system that was, as seen through the legal procedures and documents described above, far from arbitrary and instead rather highly organised, predictable, and structured.

The legal system: A fundamental institution

Thus functioned the judicial institutions of the Krorainan laws and courts, and the importance of such ordered legal institutions cannot be understated. As argued in the introduction, any form of sophisticated economic behaviour and interaction relies upon such legal institutions, as these were necessary to provide security and predictability in the economic system. These observations certainly appear to hold true in our Krorainan case, as the court was a vital institution that to a large degree underpinned and made possible the economic institutions of private property, contract systems, and loan systems described previously in this chapter. The importance of this interrelationship can be seen in at least two ways. Firstly, as already discussed, the structures of the economic institutions appear to have been largely provided by the legal system, especially in the case of contracts. Yet more than mere structuring, there are also a multitude of examples which show that the Krorainan legal system actively protected and enforced these economic institutions, including property rights, inheritance, contracts, loan agreements, and even exchange.

⁷¹⁷ See document n.507, 575, 576, 577 and 788.

Turning to the sources, the 104 “Royal Command” type documents concerned with legal matters and fifty-two “Legal”-type documents provide a good overview of the type of cases dealt with by the Krorainan courts, as represented by table seventeen and table eighteen. Unsurprisingly, much of the surviving material describing the Krorainan courts in action deals with the conflicts and crimes of a small rural society, ranging from conflicts over herding-duties and marriage disputes to cases of brutality and violence. This can be exemplified by cases such as in document n.32, where an Opaḃa had promised his sister in marriage to one man but then married her to another, or in document n.540, where the previously encountered Sunamta, grandson of Ramṣotsa, complained of having been beaten, grabbed by the testicles, and had his hair cut off without “good cause”. In fact, these types of “social” disputes make up just more than half of the cases known from the “Royal Command” type documents. Notably, however, such “social” cases are far less prevalent amongst the “Legal”-type documents. This can, of course, partly be attributed to the shortcomings of the sources, constrained both by the more or less random survival of individual documents, but also by the selection of some documents for preservation and others for re-use made by their owners. Yet, while these lists might not be able to tell us which type of cases were most frequently brought to court in Kroraina, they do show that economic cases were very common.

Of these “economic” cases, the most common ones were disputes over property rights and accusations of damage to the same property.⁷¹⁸ Animals, in particular camels and horses, were often disputed, seen for example in the disputes over shared animals in document n.62 and n.71 or the violent dispute over both horses and camels in document n.577, discussed above. Similarly land too, the other pillar of the local economy, were often disputed, with claims of encroachment or appropriation of land seemingly quite common.⁷¹⁹ The court’s power to enforce property rights is, by extension, also seen in the several cases of disputes over inheritance, of which there are eight cases in the sources.⁷²⁰ These disputes, in particular, appear to often have

⁷¹⁸ See the “Royal Command”-type document n. 13, 21, 33 (?), 47, 49, 62, 71, 156, 212, 219, 308, 312, 339, 356, 364, 386, 509, 516 and 606, and the “Legal”-type document n. 401, 437, 527, 570, 575, 577, 578, 582, 584 (?), 593 and 767.

⁷¹⁹ See document n.37, 90, 124, 235, 366, 482, 503, 734 and 740.

⁷²⁰ See document n.37, 124, 187, 235, 326, 366, 482, 503, 734, 740 and 770.

been contentious, with multiple individuals and groups claiming parts of the inheritance, as seen in document n.326 above. These various disputes over property rights, though certainly often very complicated, were clearly taken seriously at court and the rights of property holders were attempted enforced. This is illustrated particularly well by the harsh fines for encroaching on another's land and property in document n.482, as discussed on page 217, or document n.676, a case concerning the theft and consumption of a cow, where the offenders had to pay back three times the cow's worth, in addition to receiving fifty blows each. The frequency with which disputes over property were brought to court would also indicate that the people who brought these cases believed that the court would indeed enforce their rights. Though this did not necessarily always hold true, it shows that, at least in the minds of the plaintiffs and likely the Krorainan population at large, the courts were the upholders of property rights.

Contracts were likewise legally enforceable in Kroraina and their authority upheld by the courts. The trust in this system is indicated by the fact that both "Legal" and "Contract" documents were stored, as best seen in the secret archive of the Ramšotsa family described in section 2.3.4. This was clearly done because the documents represented a legal guarantee, and indeed the presentation of a document, whether a contract or a legal document, repeatedly appear in the judicial "Royal Command" documents as a way of proving one's case with the same, if not greater, authority than with witnesses. The authority of the written document in legal matters is in particular underlined in document n.359 on a dispute over a missing payment for a camel, stating: "You must carefully inquire, and according as is written in the document, so you must now adjudicate in accordance with the law."⁷²¹ This case appears to refer to a "Legal" document written at the royal court, but one particularly interesting example from the "Contract" documents, n.582, also shows that contracts were consulted in the same fashion. N.582, a standard "Contract"-type document from the collection of Ramšotsa quoted in full on pages 186-187, carried a postscript written in a different ink and by a different hand,

⁷²¹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 71.

(Postscript written in blacker ink)

In the 4th year, 2nd month, 28th day in the reign of his majesty the great king Jitugha Mahiriya, son of heaven, the ogu Jeyabhatra, the caṃkura Cataraga, the cūyalaina Tiraphara, and the cozbos Soṃjaka and Vanamta examined a dispute (on this matter) in Caḍota. This field was sown by an act of force. Now the vasu Vugica and the scribe Ramaṣtso have brought an action. This written tablet (*ṣulga lihidaga*) was the authority. A quarter of the seed is to be taken as his own by Vugica, the rest of the corn and the land is to be taken by Ramaṣtso.⁷²²

As described in this postscript, a dispute had arisen over the plot of land transacted in the contract itself, with the vasu Vugica seemingly putting it to use without permission. The matter was brought before the court by the owner Ramaṣtso, and he presented the contract document itself as proof of his ownership. This was duly recognised and the land affirmed as his as well as parts of the planted grain as a fee. A postscript was then added to the document before it was resealed with the seals of three of the presiding magistrates. Further examples of this practise appear to be evident in both document n.570 and n.787, which as noted by Salomon, had both been resealed with a new seal added to the reverse of the under-tablet.⁷²³ Document n.570 did not carry a post-script, however, while document n.787 has not yet been opened, meaning that the exact purpose and result of their re-examinations cannot be known. It is, however, highly likely that they were re-examined in connection with a court case, similar to document n.582, given that both new seals had been set by officials. Document n.582 is thus not entirely unique, but it is still uniquely interesting as it shows, beyond any doubt, that contracts could in fact be enforced at the Krorainan court.

The same applied to loan agreements. As seen in table eighteen, there are four examples of this in the “Legal” documents, n.576, n.588, n.820, and n.859. It is not entirely clear if n.588 was actually adjudicated at court, as no magistrates are mentioned and the document was sealed by a mere vasu official. Document n.576,

⁷²² Burrow, 121.

⁷²³ Salomon, ‘Two New Kharosthi Documents from Central Asia’, 104–5.

previously mentioned on page 205-206 is, however, a fully-fledged “legal” document dealing with the recovery of a debt,

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

This document concerning twenty *muli* and nine sheep (received) from the caru Ciniga and Platga is to be carefully kept by the scribe Sunamta and Caṣgeya.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

This is the seal of the cozbos Yitaka and Vukto.

Rectangular Under-tablet Obv. & Cov.-tablet. Rev.

In the 21st year of his majesty the great king Jitugha Mayiri, son of heaven, in the 12th month, 23rd day, in this reign, the caru Ciniga and Platga had a dispute with the scribe Sunamta and Caṣgeya. An oath was to be sworn by Suḡuta, the scribe Sunamta, Kuñita, and Caṣgeya. Ciniga and Platga stopped them from taking the oath. They voluntarily admitted their debt. They placed a sum of twenty in the hand of the caru Kungeya and Ogala. In addition nine sheep are to be paid by Ciniga and Platga and received by Caṣgeya. Witnesses to this are (of the) nobles (*azade*), the cozbo Namarasma, the ṣoṭhamgha Keniga, the attendant on the King (*rayavaṭayaga*), Lylimsu and the ṣoṭhamgha Lýmipeya. It was written at the command of the cozbos Yitaka and Vukto by me the scribe Socara. It has authority in all places.⁷²⁴

Here the creditors are seen actively and effectively pursuing the debt by use of the court system, a state of affairs also seen in several of the “Royal Command” documents.⁷²⁵ These attempts were not always successful at court, and as discussed in section 5.4.4, there are indeed several documents such as n.24 and n.494 which suggest that the court would protect debtors against unreasonable demands. Yet the fact that creditors repeatedly attempted to pursue debts through the courts, and at times

⁷²⁴ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 117.

⁷²⁵ See document n.6, 24, 35, 142, 393, 473 and 494.

succeeded, nevertheless shows that it was the courts that acted as the final arbitrators on debts as well.

Notably, there is no indication that these agreements had been written down in the form of contracts, showing that the protection of these institutions afforded by the courts extended beyond only those with contracts written at court and covered agreements made more generally. In fact, there are even examples of the Krorainan court protecting and enforcing exchange and transactions done without contracts. These examples cover a number of different transactions and disputes, including exchanges in cloth, animals, and even silk,⁷²⁶ but the most interesting examples are the “Royal Command” documents n.526 and n.530, which both concern the same dispute brought by Suguta, son of Ramšotsa. As neither document is dated it is not possible to tell in which order they were produced, though as document n.530 mentions that several years have passed, it seems likely that it was produced later. Both documents deal with a dispute between Suguta and a Kuyaya, best described in document n.530 as follows,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbo Somjaka

Cov.-tablet. Rev. & Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs the cozbo Somjaka as follows: Sugnuta reports that Kuyaya received corn from him here in the capital (to the extent of) three milima. They agreed on a *putgetsa* camel as the price (mulu). From that time many years have elapsed and he has not given (the camel). When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, forthwith careful inquiry is to be made in your presence. If its really so, a camel is to be given after making allowance for the years that have passed, or else the corn is to be given (back) along with interest (*ayogena*). A decision is to be made according to law. If it is not clear there, they are to be sent to the royal court under custody.

⁷²⁶ See document n.3, 226, 433, 492 and 551.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Sugnuta⁷²⁷

Following the standard pattern seen in the “Royal Command” documents dealing with judicial matters, the complaint, as reported, is described before the king gives orders for a court to be held and a judgement to be made according to his directions and the law. The dispute in question concerned a transaction of grain, bought by Kuvaya from Suguta, where the price had not been given. Notably, the directions given by the royal court do not simply instruct to have the price paid. Rather, in the case that the accusation should prove correct, the price (*muli*) should be paid “after making allowance for the years that have passed”, i.e. with interest. Thus this case of Suguta not only shows a willingness on the part of the Krorainan court system to enforce exchange agreements, but also an awareness on the part of the court of the systems of interest and price.

Seen together, these many examples of the court adjudicating disputes around the various economic institutions of Kroraina, and the enforcement of their rules and structures, serves again to underline the court’s central role as an institution in making economic activities possible. Thus far from both a simple subsistence system or an arbitrary “feudal” system, the Krorainan economic and social landscape was fundamentally structured by a legally enforced framework of institutions.

5.6 An institutionalized economic system

Seen in this new light, Kupṣimta’s letter n.140, quoted above on pages 180-181, becomes clearer. He was not a man operating on a small scale in a subsistence economy but rather a large-scale landowner residing at the royal court who ran his lands through his in-law family and his servants. His lands generated a significant surplus and this surplus he lent out with interest, clearly with the intention of further increasing his wealth. Not only that, however, but as shown by his instructions to acquire gold and then sell it at the best possible price, he was also interested in the

⁷²⁷ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 105.

possibilities of generating wealth through trade. This was all sophisticated economic behaviour, made possible by the legal and institutional framework of the kingdom of Kroraina.

I would therefore suggest that the economic activities of the people of Kroraina went beyond mere subsistence, and trade certainly existed on the local level within an economy that was to a large extent both institutionalised and regulated by laws. Yet all the economic activity discussed so far was very clearly limited to a local level, conducted primarily within the confines of the oasis-rayas, such as Cađota, or at furthest between these oases. Thus, in order to explore the wider connections of the Krorainan economy, we must turn to other sources and other approaches.

Chapter 6 – Commodities from beyond the kingdom

So far, this dissertation has sought to situate the kingdom of Kroraina in its historical context and to explore both its socio-political and economic landscape. The preceding chapter has shown that the economic activities of the people of Kroraina went beyond mere subsistence, and that trade certainly existed on the local level within an institutionalized and legally regulated economy. Yet while the preceding chapter certainly speaks to the existence of and possibility for trade and profit seeking activities within the kingdom, we have so far encountered little in the way of economic activities with regions beyond the kingdom, activities which we might link to the Silk Road phenomenon under consideration. This chapter, in my case study of the Krorainan kingdom's economy and trade relations, will therefore turn away from the internal affairs of the kingdom and consider the evidence for long-distance trade.

Both Atwood and Hansen address this question in their respective works on the Krorainan economy and both appear to draw similar, though not identical, conclusions. Hansen, who as will be recalled only touches briefly upon the local economy, provides a detailed discussion of long-distance trade in the kingdom of Kroraina. Exploring both the Chinese and the Kharosthi material, as well as the numismatic evidence, she ends her section on economy by concluding that what she terms the overland “Silk Road” trade was indeed minimal, and furthermore, that the evidence for private commerce is slight.⁷²⁸ She bases this partly on the lack of monetisation of the Krorainan economy and partly on the lack of commercial activity in the documents. The little that exists, she suggests, was primarily the domain of outsiders, either Chinese or possibly Sogdians working for the Chinese authorities. In particular, she makes much the fact that the word for merchant only appears in one document (document n.35),⁷²⁹ and that these merchants are Chinese at that.⁷³⁰

Atwood, for his part, writes only briefly on trade and what he termed the “peripheral economy”, and though he does not seem to believe it was uncommon, he

⁷²⁸ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 50–51.

⁷²⁹ For a full discussion of this important document and its interpretations see section 6.7.1.

⁷³⁰ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 48–51.

suggests that long-distance exchange in Kroraina was largely centred on the capital itself. As discussed previously in section 5.4.5, he too notes the lack of monetisation of the local economy, proposing that gold for example was almost exclusively used as a currency by the merchants, which he suggests were predominantly Chinese, and by monks, both groups which Atwood terms travellers. Atwood, much like Hansen, views these travellers, primarily the Chinese merchants, as the only major group engaged in what he terms “international commerce” in Kroraina. These Chinese, he suggests, were mainly traders in silk, in exchange for which he proposes they might have sought precious stones from the rivers of Kroraina.⁷³¹

Thus, while not entirely in agreement over the scale of long-distance trade in Kroraina, the two scholars broadly agree that trade of this type was, in the southern Tarim Basin of the third and fourth centuries, limited, if at all existent, and overwhelmingly the domain of outsiders. I find this conclusion untenable when considering the rich evidence for the presence of imported goods⁷³² from abroad in Kroraina, items that very clearly show that Kroraina must have been connected with far distant places. Some of this is archaeological material, with which Atwood explicitly did not engage, though Hansen frequently refers to it, but more can also be found within the Kharosthi documents themselves. The following chapter will therefore take a closer look at imported goods in the Krorainan sources. It will start by discussing the archaeological and textual evidence in turn, and provide two sets of exemplary cases that highlight both the large quantities and wide breath of imported goods in the Krorainan material. Having thus established its presence, the next two sections will discuss the provenance of some of these items, followed by a discussion on the frequency with which such imported goods might have reached the kingdom and what the kingdom might have offered in return. After a discussion on how such foreign goods were used and integrated into the local socio-political and economic

⁷³¹ Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, 190–92.

⁷³² A wide variety of terms are often applied to these sort of items in the literature, from “luxuries” to “prestige goods”, and a number of these would certainly fit the material under discussion. However, to avoid, at least initially, any assumptions on the purpose of these items, inherent in the term “prestige goods”, and any a-priori judgements on how they reached Kroraina, which such terms as “trade goods” would contain, these items will in the following be referred to as “imported goods”. This is also done in order to emphasise their foreign origins, the trait that makes them of interest to our discussion.

landscape of Kroraina, this chapter will then end by addressing the often-mentioned document n.35 and the problem of the lack of merchants in the written sources.

6.1 Evidence for imported goods in Kroraina

Turning to the archaeological sites of the kingdom of Kroraina, as touched upon in the introduction, they have yielded vast amounts of archaeological material from a variety of contexts, ranging from the many random surface finds, material found scattered about farmhouses, and larger walled structures, to items purposefully placed into hidden archives, stupas, and tombs. All of these contexts have yielded material that could fall into our category of imported goods, examples from surface finds and houses including fragments of a lacquered bowl from ruin N.5 and the silk dress of a doll discovered in ruin N.22.⁷³³ The wealth of Kharosthi documents uncovered is similarly broad, with 888 texts known to date, 461 of which mention some form of goods or resources. Here too are many examples of goods that could certainly be described as prestige goods, such as the gold to be sold in Kupṣimta's letter n.140, and much of this might have been imported goods, for example the two jewels he sent along with his letter n.109. Though the following will attempt to give an overview of all the relevant evidence from Kroraina, it is for the sake of clarity, given this wealth of material available, necessary to provide some concise and exemplary cases for the presence of "imported goods" in Kroraina. Four cases have therefore been selected: from the archaeological material, the two tombs M3 and M5 from the cemetery 95MN1 at the Niya (Caḍota) site, and from the written sources, two documents dealing with cases of theft from ruin N.5 and ruin N.24 of the same site.

As shall be seen shortly, the most abundant of the imported goods in these Kroraina cases were silks, and as such it is useful already here to give a short introduction on the terminology of Chinese silks. By the fifth century there were at least three different types of silks produced by different weaving techniques known in China, and all three of these have been uncovered across the Krorainian sites. Selbitchka summarises them as follows:

⁷³³ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:410; Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 254.

1. *Juan* 絹: simple tabby cloth built by interlacing warp and weft threads.
2. *Qi* 綺: technologically sophisticated, monochrome, patterned, damask-like weave
3. *Jin* 錦: even more complex polychrome, patterned, warp-faced, compound tabby weave⁷³⁴

These standard terms are used throughout the Chinese and Sino-Japanese excavation reports and will consequently also be used here.

The archaeological evidence: Cemetery 95MN1

The two tombs M3 and M5 are both part of the excavated cemetery area designated 95MN1 by the Sino-Japanese team, though as discovered after strong winds moved the drift-sand in 1997, the field was only a part of a far larger cemetery, including another excavated cemetery area designated as 97MN1. This larger cemetery was, in turn, itself only one of twelve cemeteries or graveyards (墓地) uncovered at the Niya (Caḍota) site in the course of the 1990s excavations.⁷³⁵ (See map 11) The cemetery 95MN1-97MN1 lies in the northern part of the Niya (Caḍota) site, due north of ruin N.8, which is the closest, and south-east of the cluster N.13-17. The 95MN1 excavated area covered 10x10 metre square, while the excavations designated 97MN1 were scattered over a larger area to the west of the initial site, stretching north some 50 metres. In the 95MN1 cemetery, a total of nine tombs were uncovered, six of the so-called “boat”-shaped type and three of the “box”-shaped type. In the 97MN1 area, another six “boat”-shaped ones were found, most in a good state and with no signs of having been disturbed. Based on stratigraphy, at least two layers of burials could be discerned, with our examples M3 in the upper and M5 in the lower layer. Moreover,

⁷³⁴ Selbitschka, ‘Genuine Prestige Goods in Mortuary Contexts: Emulation in Polychrome Silk and Byzantine Solidi from Northern China’, 22.

⁷³⁵ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999. See GPS appendix for all sites found.

near the grave M1 in the 97MN1 area, two complete horse skeletons were uncovered.⁷³⁶ (Figure 1 and 2)

There is some disagreement as to the dating of the Krorainan burial sites in general, including the ones at the Niya (Caḍota) site, and their exact dating is generally very difficult.⁷³⁷ In the case of 95MN1-97MN1, the excavation report suggests that the date of tomb M3 should likely be placed during the period in which the Later Han dynasty partly controlled the Tarim region, set liberally between 70-170 CE. This conclusion was reached primarily based on the stylistic elements of several of the items in the tomb, particularly the silk cloth and mirrors that were of clear Chinese provenance and whose style belonged to the Later Han dynasty period. The report argues that these items must have reached the Niya (Caḍota) site by way of the Silk Road from the Han dynasty.⁷³⁸ Consequently, the lower layer with tomb M5 and M8, the latter found partly below M3, was dated slightly earlier during the middle Han period.⁷³⁹

This dating to the turn of the first century CE seems a little early in my opinion. The identification of goods produced in China during the time of the Later Han dynasty only provides, at best, a *terminus post quem* for the interment of the deceased but says nothing of how late it might have occurred. And certainly all of the burials must have taken place at a time after the arrival of the Kharosthi script and Prakrit language in Kroraina, for in both tomb M1 of the upper layer and M8 of the lower layer, small strips of silk with Kharosthi writings on them were found.⁷⁴⁰ When exactly Kharosthi started to be used in Kroraina is not known, but based on the available documents it would not seem to go as far back as the first century CE. As such, a safer date range for the lower layer of burials would in my opinion be from the mid-second to mid-third century CE. This also fits very well with the, admittedly limited, C14

⁷³⁶ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:100–101; Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:29–31.

⁷³⁷ Selbitschka, *Prestigegüter Entlang Der Seidenstrasse? Archäologische Und Historische Untersuchungen Zu Chinas Beziehungen Zu Kulturen Des Tarimbeckens Vom Zweiten Bis Frühen Fünften Jahrhundert Nach Christus*, chap. 8.

⁷³⁸ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:124–25.

⁷³⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:138.

⁷⁴⁰ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:133 and 145.

dating done on reed from M8, which gave a range of 205+-60 CE.⁷⁴¹ As shall be seen, the content of the tombs also fits very well with both the goods and resources described in the written material and with surface finds. This means that while the tombs might represent an assemblage of the second or early third century, they are still fairly representative of the imported goods that were available in Kroraia in the third and fourth centuries.

Some methodological considerations regarding the use of burials

Burial contexts, such as 95MN1, have proven the richest source of goods that might fall into our category of imported goods amongst excavated areas the Kroraian sites. Due to their rich and diverse assemblage, they provide excellent examples of the diversity of imported goods found across Kroraia. Naturally, there are some potential methodological problems in using tombs as exemplary cases for the types of assemblage and goods available in a given region or culture. Which parts of the population were, for example, represented in our available sample of tombs? To what extent can a tomb assemblage be taken as a reflection of the type of items and goods available in that culture more generally? Finally, to what extent does a tomb assemblage reflect what the interred person might have used and worn in life?

Part of the challenge raised by issues such as these, at least those relating to differences amongst social groups, will in our exemplary cases be partly addressed by the two tombs chosen. As will be recalled from the discussion in section 2.6.4 on the Kroraian tombs, the excavated graves can, in most cases, be divided into two types, namely the so-called “boat”-shaped tombs and the “box”-shaped ones. The two types are, as discussed earlier, partly distinguished by the richness of the assemblage buried with the deceased, with the “boat”-shaped tombs thought to be more representative of the average Kroraian burial. Our cases will consequently draw one example from each type in a bid to show, not only the imported goods available to the uppermost elite of Cadota, but also what might have been available more widely. The question of how common some of the imported goods found in the tombs was in Kroraia will also be addressed in detail in later sections of this chapter.

⁷⁴¹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:151.

More importantly, though, while these types of questions are certainly problems that we ought to keep in mind in the following discussions, they are for our purposes less of a methodological challenge. The purpose of these exemplary cases is, after all, to show what sort of imported goods made it to Kroraina, regardless for the time being of both how they got there and how they were then used. As such, I have purposefully selected the two tombs for the richness and variety of their assemblage rather than attempting to find the tombs most representative of the average Krorainan burial. Neither M3 nor M5 were, however, unique in the wealth of imported goods they contained, as a quick look at the table one of grave goods in the tombs of 95MN1 will show.⁷⁴²

The two tombs: M3 and M5

We will start with the tomb M5 from the lower layer, likely the oldest of our two case burials. It was a typical example of the so-called “boat”-shaped tombs, perhaps better described as a canoe or log-shaped tomb, located in the north-western part of the excavated area 95MN1. (See figure 3) The hollowed log that served as the coffin had been placed in a pit and then covered with reeds and soil, and the grave had originally been marked with standing wooden posts.⁷⁴³ The wooden coffin contained the body of a single young woman in her twenties, measuring 161 cm, dressed in finery, and wrapped in a large felt blanket. Next to her had been placed a wooden bowl with food, including a leg of lamb, and by her waist she had received an assortment of tools for “womanly” pursuits. The young woman had been interred in her finest, as is generally observed across the Krorainan burials. Her deep red hair having been braided into eight long braids woven with beads, she carried a large decorated headgear and wore an assortment of colourful and fine clothing made from wool, cotton and silk.⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴² For a larger and more thorough survey of the Krorainan burials, both at the Niya site and beyond, see Selbitschka, *Prestigegüter Entlang Der Seidenstrasse? Archäologische Und Historische Untersuchungen Zu Chinas Beziehungen Zu Kulturen Des Tarimbeckens Vom Zweiten Bis Frühen Fünften Jahrhundert Nach Christus*.

⁷⁴³ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:140.

⁷⁴⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:139–42, 189.

Here we encounter the first and most common of the “foreign imported goods” evident in the Krorainan burials, for in the young woman’s inventory of clothing and textiles, silk had been used in abundance, with a total of ten out of nineteen textile items listed in the report incorporating silk in some manner. (See table 1) The majority of the silks found in grave M5 were *juan*-weaves that had been put to a large variety of uses. In many of the garments, silk had been used as a decorative element, with the shoes of the interred for example adorned with a band of yellow silk along the top, while little strips of red, blue, white, and brown silk had been attached like frills to the woman’s woollen pouchette.⁷⁴⁵ Yet she also possessed garments and items made almost entirely out of *juan*-silk. Amongst these were her upper tunic-like garment, made out of four sheets of grey tabby silk with decorative elements in crimson silk, and a piece covering her chest and shoulders made from the same material.⁷⁴⁶ Even her small “scent bag” was predominantly worked in silk, with a fine piece of *jin*-silk across the front woven with plants and Chinese characters, and her pillow was entirely made of such polychrome *jin*-weave, with beasts in red, blue, and white as well as more Chinese characters.⁷⁴⁷ (See figure 4) As shall be seen, there is some discussion as to whether or not silk was in fact produced in the Tarim Basin polities. These last pieces, however, made with the very fine *jin*-silk and carrying both typical Chinese designs as well as well-wishes in Chinese characters, are of particular interest, as these items almost certainly must have hail from the Chinese heartlands and thus must be understood as imported goods.

The silks of the young woman in grave M5 were, however, not her only precious item with their likely origins in China, for inside a “makeup” bag placed by her waist were found a bronze mirror together with a powder pouch and ribbons. The cast bronze mirror was, as all those found across Kroraina, of a typical Chinese design, round with a central knob surrounded by two circular patterns. The outer circle carried a simple cloud design, while the innermost circle displayed four beasts, identified in the report as a dragon, a tiger, a bear, and the so-called “vermillion bird”, a creature

⁷⁴⁵ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:147–48.

⁷⁴⁶ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:146.

⁷⁴⁷ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:147–48.

from Chinese mythology.⁷⁴⁸ At least three of these, the dragon, the tiger, and the “vermillion bird” are commonly associated with the “Four symbols” of Chinese astrology, often appearing together and representing the cardinal directions, the elements, and the seasons. This fine bronze mirror was thus also likely of Chinese origins and yet another example of imported goods.

Yet amongst the young woman of M5’s ornaments were also a small element of even more distant provenance. The young woman, despite her rich inventory of silks, had not been buried with many purely ornamental pieces, these being limited to two ear ornaments and her headgear. The ear ornaments were large, the top-attachment worked in bronze and hung with strings of glass beads and two black stones. Though beautiful and of fine craftsmanship, the ear ornaments are overshadowed by the intricately worked headgear. (See figure 4) It consisted of a tall hat in felt and silk, with long silk flaps covering the ears, and topped by a protruding “horn” described in the report as *houtou* (鳳頭), that is “bird-headed”, though alternatively it could perhaps be described as a horse’s head. Either way, it was of a very intricate design made with felt and silk⁷⁴⁹ and set with beads, amongst which a worked piece of crimson coral was identified. This final little element must have been from a far distant place indeed, for no coral can be found in the deserts of the Tarim Basin, and it goes to show the breath of imported goods available even in the “simpler” Krorainan graves. The term “simpler” is in this case justified, for while by no means poor, the inventory of tomb M5, when held up against the contents of tomb M3, pales in comparison.

M3, found above tomb M8 in the upper layer of the cemetery 95MN1, was one of three “box”-shaped tombs found in the cemetery and located in the south-eastern part of the excavated area.⁷⁵⁰ The coffin had been placed in a pit walled-off with a large rectangular log fence set with stout wooden posts and had been covered with carpets. The “box”-like coffin itself was well made with solid wooden planks and so smoothly put together that almost no sand had entered before it was opened by the excavators. Within they found the bodies of a man in his forties measuring 178 cm and

⁷⁴⁸ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:143.

⁷⁴⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:147–48.

⁷⁵⁰ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:100.

a woman in her thirties measuring close to 162 cm, side by side and fully dressed. As noted by the excavation team, it seems highly likely that the woman had been killed in order to join her husband, or possibly master, in death.⁷⁵¹ What immediately greeted the excavators was, however, the spectacularly beautiful blanket covering the couple, made entirely from *jin*-silk. (See figure 5) As was common in Nauvan graves they had been provided with platters and trays with food in the form of porridge, sheep meat and fruits, and both had been interred with an inventory of equipment. The man was clearly marked out as a warrior, having been provided with a large bow, arrows, and daggers, while the woman had been provided with tools for making cloth as well as a rich “make-up” box. Notably, with the exception of the wood- and earthenware containing the food, almost all the items found in tomb M3 were what must be described as luxurious, of obvious fine craftsmanship, and many made of or incorporating materials foreign to Kroraia.⁷⁵²

As with tomb M5, the best example of this is the truly vast inventory of silks contained within the grave M3, by far the most commonly used type of textile in the tomb, even though both cotton and wool pieces were also found. (See figure 6) Nearly every piece of clothing possessed by the deceased was made of or incorporated silk in some manner, as many as twenty-four out of twenty-nine textiles, including kaftan-like jackets, pants, mittens, shoes, headgears, belts, and even a fish “toy” of silk.⁷⁵³ (See table 1) Some of these merely incorporated silk alongside other materials, as was commonly seen in tomb M5, for example the leather shoes worn by the man carried both *juan*- and *jin*-silk as decoration though the shoe itself was worked in leather.⁷⁵⁴ Yet the majority of their clothing was, in fact, made mostly or entirely out of silks, and they had both been buried in several layers of silk clothing, a full three layers in the case of the woman. She had been interred wearing a blouse-like inner garment in plain white *juan*-silk, with sleeve decorations made from red pieces of such silk. Over this, she wore a tunic made of a pale red *juan* decorated with green, brown, and yellow elements of the same material, including silk strings. (See figure 7) Finally, as the

⁷⁵¹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:120.

⁷⁵² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:103–4, 186–87.

⁷⁵³ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:110–19.

⁷⁵⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:118.

outer garment, she wore the spectacularly colourful long-sleeved kaftan-like garment seen on figure six, with the inside made of *juan*-silk and cotton and the outside entirely out of polychrome *jin*-silk.⁷⁵⁵ This kaftan was amongst the woman's finest items, woven in blue and yellow with motives of dancers and a large variety of twisting animals, including tigers, lions, leopards, and dragons. It also carried a woven inscription in Chinese characters, reading 世母極錦宜二親伝子孫, which though somewhat difficult, appear to have formed a well-wish upon future generations.⁷⁵⁶ Yet while exquisite, this last piece of hers was by no means unique, as the very same *jin*-silk textile had been used for both the man's gloves and his arm cover, and in total the excavation team identified thirteen different *jin*-silk textiles of various designs and inscriptions that had been used across the clothes of the assemblage. Furthermore, given that *jin*-silk had been used in some of the largest textiles found in the tomb, such as the kaftans and blanket, it is clear that *jin*-silk was available to the interred in fairly large quantities.⁷⁵⁷

Yet while certainly the most obvious and spectacular specimen, the silks of grave M3 were far from the only imported goods of likely Chinese provenance in the tomb. For, much like in tomb M5, the woman of M3 had been buried with an inventory of “make-up” items, in the case of M3 contained within a black lacquered box. The box itself had almost certainly been imported from China, or at least the material and technique for making it, for it was made of bamboo and had been lacquered black on the outside and red on the inside in typical Chinese fashion. Inside it was a bronze mirror placed in a *jin*-silk mirror bag, a bamboo comb in a felt bag, four small scent pouches in silk, a spindle with silk-thread still on it, and various leftover pieces of textiles, including *jin*-silk of the same type as used for her kaftan. From the same *jin*-brocade had also been fashioned a mirror bag, which held her bronze mirror. This too was distinctly Chinese, with the characteristic central knob, an inner design showing a curling dragon and an outer “saw-tooth” pattern.⁷⁵⁸ The man of

⁷⁵⁵ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:114–17.

⁷⁵⁶ Sheng, ‘Chinese Silks That Circulated among People North and West: Implications for Technological Exchange in Early Times?’, 113.

⁷⁵⁷ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (*Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China*), 1999, 2:111–12.

⁷⁵⁸ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:108.

tomb M3 was also found with a similar silk mirror bag, similarly made from the same type of *jin*-silk, seemingly indicating that such fine mirrors were suitable goods for both genders, though no mirror was found in it at the time of the excavation.⁷⁵⁹

Textiles and items of silk aside, however, the man's assemblage contained fewer items with links to China, but it did on the other hand contain an item with clear links towards the north and the west in the form of an intricately worked dagger sheaths. (See figure 8) The sheath was found together with a knife sheath, both still suspended from a leather belt that had been hung around a Y-shaped stick placed together with the man's other war gear, such as his bow and arrows. The sheath itself was made of lacquered wood and had belonged to a long dagger, estimated to have measured 22 cm, probably worn as a sidearm. The red lacquer on the front carried a cloud and chevron design, and notably the sheath had been outfitted with four lobe-like protrusions with metal fastenings, through which the sheath had been suspended from the belt and strapped to the thigh.⁷⁶⁰ This design of dagger sheath which the report described as part of the "Ordos" culture and which in the English literature commonly called "four-lobed" sheaths, are well known from a range of archaeological contexts and depictions ranging from Anatolia in the west to Mongolia in the east. The first known examples of these dagger sheaths are from the Pazyryk culture and date as far back as the fourth and early third centuries BCE, while the most spectacular example of a "four-lobed" dagger is known from the Tiliya Tepe treasure likely of the first century CE. As such, though the dagger sheath from M3 itself could well have been produced locally, it drew on a design current across both the steppe and the Iranian world.⁷⁶¹

Finally, there were in M3, just as in M5, several small pieces of jewellery made from materials of a clearly distant origin, in this case in the form of small pearls. Of the two buried in tomb M3, only the woman had been provided with jewellery, but compared to the younger woman of M5, she carried far more, having been found with a necklace, a bracelet on each arm, as well as two ear ornaments. (See figure 9) All

⁷⁵⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:110.

⁷⁶⁰ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:107.

⁷⁶¹ Brosseder, 'A Study on the Complexity and Dynamics of Inter-Action and Exchange in Late Iron Age Eurasia', 222–26.

three types of ornamental items were made mostly with beads, including both glass and rock beads, with metal used for the fastenings and attachment. Both the necklace and the ear ornaments did, however, incorporate pearls. The necklace, which was primarily made up of beads crafted from red silk, had at one end been furnished with twenty small pearls on a string, hung near where the necklace could be tied closed. In the two ear ornaments, the pearls had been given a more prominent position, however, as below a “mushroom” shaped metal piece topped with a small bead hung four small strands of pearls ending in gold leaves.⁷⁶² The report does not give the number of pearls per strand, describing them only as “pearl skewers” (真珠串), though presumably that would mean at least more than one pearl per strand. As such, though the pearls were individually small, the number of pearls used in the grave is notable, as it must have exceeded thirty individual pearls. This is a high number, considering that these must have hailed from some distant lake or ocean, and as shall be argued later, most likely from the Indian Ocean world.

The two tombs in context

Such then was the wealth of some members of the Krorainan society, for the tomb M3 and even the more modest tomb M5 cannot be described as anything but wealthy. Yet this naturally raises the intertwined questions of how representative these two cases are for the Krorainan burials as a whole, as well as whom the interred might have been, and what part of Krorainan society they might have represented.

As far as representativity goes, it is not within the scope of this dissertation to provide a full overview of all the Krorainan burials, and as such, a conclusive answer to this question cannot be given, though a full survey of the other graves of 95MN1 is provided in table one for comparison. Yet considering only the items of interest to this discussion highlighted from tomb M3 and M5 above, the silks, Chinese mirrors, the lacquered box, the four-lobed sheath design, and the ornaments incorporating corals and pearls, a little more can be said. As discussed in detail by Selbitschka in his dissertation and his 2018 article, silk of various kinds has been found in the majority of

⁷⁶² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:109.

Krorainan burials uncovered to date, though as he rightly cautions, very few graves contained as rich a material as that seen in M3.⁷⁶³ None of the other items have proven as common, though neither are any of them unique. Chinese mirrors, for example, appeared at the Niya (Caḍota) site in two more graves from 95MN1, namely the “box”-shaped M4 and M8,⁷⁶⁴ from the nearby “boat”-shaped graves M1 and M6 in 97MN1,⁷⁶⁵ as well as several broken specimen found in ruins or as surface finds.⁷⁶⁶ Examples of mirrors from the Lop (Kroraina) site include an intact mirror and fragments found by Stein amongst the L.A and L.B ruins, as well as two intact specimens from the problematic L.C burial pits.⁷⁶⁷ Similarly, several surface finds of lacquered wooden objects have been made, both at Niya (Caḍota) and the Lop (Kroraina) sites, including similar red-and-black lacquerware to those which M3 yielded in the ruins N.5, N.19 and L.M.1.⁷⁶⁸ Two more four-lobed dagger sheaths in an even better state of preservation, made from wood and covered with red leather painted with a floral design, were further uncovered from tomb M8 (95MN1), which also yielded a large coral pendant.⁷⁶⁹ The tombs M1, M5 and M8, together with a number of ruins at the Niya site, did in fact yield a total of sixty-two pieces of coral during the Sino-Japanese expedition.⁷⁷⁰ Further examples of ornamental beads made from corals, pearls, and cowries have also been gathered from structures near the stupa, such as the collection marked MF0027 that contained a large cowry, pearls, and

⁷⁶³ Selbitschka, ‘Genuine Prestige Goods in Mortuary Contexts: Emulation in Polychrome Silk and Byzantine Solidi from Northern China’, 13. For his survey of silks see Selbitschka, *Prestigeüter Entlang Der Seidenstrasse? Archäologische Und Historische Untersuchungen Zu Chinas Beziehungen Zu Kulturen Des Tarimbeckens Vom Zweiten Bis Frühen Fünften Jahrhundert Nach Christus*.

⁷⁶⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:129, 134.

⁷⁶⁵ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:33, 43.

⁷⁶⁶ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:414–15; Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:70.

⁷⁶⁷ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 430, 441, 449; Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 221, 248.

⁷⁶⁸ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:410; Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 253; Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 201.

⁷⁶⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:133–34.

⁷⁷⁰ Wu, ‘ニ遺跡出土の珊瑚および関連問題 (The Relationship between Coral and Its Environment as Found at the Niya Site)’, 346.

coral beads.⁷⁷¹ As these examples show, it would be wrong to treat out two cases, M3 and M5, as exceptional examples when it comes to their content of imported goods. Rather, they are excellent examples of the wide range and types of imported goods found across Kroraina, especially tomb M3 with its particularly rich grave goods.

Such riches do of course raise the question of whom the interred might have been and what strata of Krorainan society they might have filled. The excavation team proposed in their report that M3 and the other “box”-shaped tombs represent the graves of Kroraina’s ruling class of nobles. This conclusion they base on the sumptuous inventories of grave goods found in these graves, as exemplified by M3, which certainly seems a natural explanation.⁷⁷² This interpretation is further strengthened by the martial nature of the male grave goods in the “box”-shaped tombs. This is not to say that the “boat”-shaped tombs did not contain weapons at all, as both the middle-aged men in tomb M1 had been buried with bows. Yet it is notable that all the men in the “box”-shaped tombs of 95MN1, M3, M4 and M8, had been buried with a full complement of war gear in the form of bow and quiver as well as sidearms, such as the daggers once held by the “four-lobed” sheaths. (See figure 10.) These daggers, in particular, are unique to the “box”-shaped tombs and given their length as judged by their sheaths, were likely intended as weapons and for use in warfare. The design of the “four-lobed” sheath too would point in this direction, as the design made them ease to wear on horseback or during rapid movement. Given their number and quality, these weapons were clearly meant to mark these men out as warriors of rank, a role which the Kharosthi documents associate closely with the Krorainan elite. The “army people” from the capital in document n.478, for example, counted amongst their ranks one *gušura*, a *cuvalayina*, and a *cozbo*, all amongst the higher-ranking titles.

Hansen even makes the suggestion that the deceased men of M3 and M8 might have been local kings of the earlier Jingjue (精絕) kingdom described in the *Hanshu*,

⁷⁷¹ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China), 3:74–75.

⁷⁷² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China), 1999, 2:120–21.

an interpretation also supported by Lillian Lan-ying Tseng.⁷⁷³ She bases this suggestion on two of the items from the tombs, namely the *jin*-silks blanket from M3 and a clay spout jug from M8. The *jin* piece in question, primarily found in the form of the beautiful blanket that covered the couple of M3, carried the inscription “王侯合昏千秋万歳宜子孫”⁷⁷⁴ that Hansen translates as “kings and lords shall be married for thousands of autumns and tens of thousands of years; it is right that they shall bear sons and grandsons”.⁷⁷⁵ (See figure 11) The spout jug from M8, on the other hand, had the Chinese character *wang* (王), meaning king, drawn on it in ink. (See figure 12) Given the presence of these Chinese characters, Hansen proposes that the items were most likely gifts from the Chinese authorities to the local kings.⁷⁷⁶

Though certainly not inconceivable, this explanation has several problems. Firstly, it relies upon a very early dating for the tombs, at latest the end of the first century CE, and this explanation would seem less likely if the graves were to be dated to the second century as here argued, a time after the Han dynasty lost most of its influence in the Tarim Basin. Furthermore, her theory disregards the possibility of the items having moved within the local society after they were given to the king of either Jingjue or Kroraina, for example as gifts to valued officials or warriors. Finally, her explanation relies on there indeed having been given such a state gift from the Han dynasty to local Tarim Basin polities such as Jingjue in the first place, something which as noted by Selbitschka is not recorded in any known source.⁷⁷⁷ Both items are, in truth, also fairly weak evidence for any connection to kingship. The *jin*-silk, after all, contained what should likely be seen as a generic well-wish rather than one specifically made for a king. The jug is also of a type found in several other graves from Niya (Caḍota), and it is therefore more likely that someone merely added the Chinese character to the jug in Caḍota itself, rather than it being a gift from the Chinese state, perhaps as a novel form of decoration.

⁷⁷³ Lan-ying Tseng, ‘Decoration, Astrology and Empire: Inscribed Silk from Niya in the Taklamakan Desert’, 92–93.

⁷⁷⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡學術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡學術調査報告書* (*Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China*), 1999, 2:112.

⁷⁷⁵ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 40.

⁷⁷⁶ Hansen, 39–41.

⁷⁷⁷ Selbitschka, ‘Early Chinese Diplomacy: Realpolitik versus the So-Called Tributary System’.

Yet the most convincing argument for the identification of the interred in M3, and possibly also M5, as part of a ruling elite rather than rulers themselves, is found in the Kharosthi documents. In fact, there are several documents showing that the riches possessed by those interred in tomb M3 were not merely a faded past only representative of a Han-era “Silk Road” and entirely beyond the Krorainan elites of the third and fourth centuries. Rather, they show that the tombs discussed above reflect a reality that was still current at the time the documents were written. Of these, two of the most telling examples are our cases in documents n.318 and n.566.

The textual evidence: Two thieves

Documents n.318 and n.566 are quite different in form, the first being a “Legal” document and the second a “Royal Command”, but both deal with the same issue, namely accusations of theft. What makes them both such apt examples are that as part of the discussions on thefts, both documents provide detailed list of all the items said to have been stolen, a common occurrence in documents dealing with such disputes, and in both cases the lists hold some striking parallels to the grave goods of tomb M3 and M5.

The first exemplary case, document n.318, was a “Legal”-type document dated to the 9th year of king Vaṣmana, translatable to ca. 323 CE. It was found in the large rubbish heap of ruin N.5, seemingly having been discarded, but states that its keeper would have been a man named Larsu. This Larsu, victim of the theft described within, is well attested in the Kharosthi documents as actor n.385, and he was a prominent member of the Caḍotan elite during the latter part of the period covered by the documents. He can be securely attested in at least seven separate documents, four of which date to the 320s CE. Larsu was himself the son of an important official, cozbo Ṣamaṣena,⁷⁷⁸ and by ca. 320 CE Larsu had acquired the same title as his father, namely that of cozbo. Furthermore, he appears in documents n.343 and n.345, dated to ca. 322 and 323 CE, as a patron to the local Buddhist community, donating food and settling debts in order to acquire merit. As such, he was certainly an influential member of Caḍotan society and part of the ruling elite of the kingdom. Finally, he was also a

⁷⁷⁸ See document n.243.

wealthy man, as shown by two lists of items either owed him or stolen from him, described in document n.345 and also our example case n.318,

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

This document concerning a theft by Kacano (slave) of Saṃgila is to be carefully kept by Larsu.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

This is the seal of the cozbos Iṃdrasena and Kirtiśamma.

Rectangular Under-tablet Obv. & Cov.-tablet. Rev.

In the ninth year of his majesty the great king Jiṭugha Vaṣmana, son of heaven, on the 19th day of the 3rd month, at this date the ogus Asuraga, Piteya, Rohana, Jayaśa, Kirtiśamma, and Ldaṣa, the cozbo Takra, the caṃkura Purnadana and the cozbo Mitrapala heard (a case). Larsu reported, "property of mine was lost and was recovered from Kacano, slave of Saṃgila." (The property consisted of): One embroidered *vidapa*; a jacket made of white silk; a *ṣamiṃna*; a *lyokmana* of many colours; a yellow-coloured *kuyana*-garment; a jacket made of hempen cloth; a *kharayarna* garment; an embroidered *lyokmana*; a *kremeru*; a *paliyarnaga* garment; four golden *dare*; one *varṣaga*; five *hasta* of woollen cloth; two blue-dyed *kigi*. These objects are valued at [.....] all the property has been recovered.⁷⁷⁹

Following the standard opening of a "Legal"-type document, the text gives a report by the plaintiff Larsu, who lists all the items stolen from him and retrieved from the accused. Then follows an impressive inventory of fine textiles, as well as some items in gold, in such amounts that one must wonder how the accused could have managed to make off with it all. As can be garnered from the many untranslated words, such as *vidapa* or *ṣamiṃna*, the exact nature of many of these items remains elusive. The

⁷⁷⁹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 59.

nature of some, such as *šamiṃna* and *kremeru*,⁷⁸⁰ are simply unknown.⁷⁸¹ However, most of the remaining items can be identified as textiles, either because of how they are described or because they are explicitly called “garments” (*prahuni/prahoni*). In some cases, something of their nature might even be known. Two of the items stolen were, for example, described with the word *kaṃculi*, meaning jacket, one made of white silk and one made of hempen or possibly woollen cloth (*umnathavanagamae*). The silken jacket would certainly fit very well with the inner garments worn by both the interred in the tombs M3, especially the innermost garment of the woman that had been made of plain white silk. (See figure 7) A little more can also be said of the *varsaga*, as it appears in three other documents as an item sent as a gift, described there as *hastavarsaga*, i.e. a hand *varsaga*.⁷⁸² A *varsaga* then must likely have been an item of clothing that could be worn on the hands, or at least an item that in a slightly modified form was used on the hands, suggesting perhaps a mitten or glove of sorts.

It is naturally far more difficult to judge the provenance of the items mentioned in document n.318, compared with the physical samples from tombs, such as M3. It is likely that many of the items of Larsu’s inventory would have been made in Kroraina, the product of the local textile tradition. The hemp or woollen jacket and the lengths of woollen cloth would, for example, almost certainly be examples of this. Yet it also appears likely that some of these items included materials with their origins from beyond the kingdom. These might include the two embroidered pieces, described as a *vidapa* and a *lyokmana*, and the coloured garments, such as the many-coloured *lyokmana*, the yellow *ku’ana*-garment, or the two blue *kigi*. Especially when considering that amongst the textiles from both tombs, silk had been employed extensively, both for whole garments and as decorative elements, it seems likely that some of these garments might also have incorporated silk. The *lyokmana*, for example, described as either embroidered or as many-coloured, might have incorporated, or even been wholly made out of, the famously colourful silk. We certainly know that

⁷⁸⁰ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 85 and 126.

⁷⁸¹ It is noteworthy however that in the only other document in which *kremeru* appears, n.660, it is also mentioned together with various textiles. As suggested to me by Nicholas Sims-Williams the word seems likely to be the same as Armenian *karmir* “red” and thus *kremeru paliyarnaga* should likely be understood as red/vermillion-dyed *paliyarnaga*. For *karmir* see Korn, ‘Arménien Karmir , Sogdien Krm’yr et Hébreu Karmīl « rouge »’.

⁷⁸² See document n.311, 338 and 370.

such textiles were not beyond Larsu's ability to procure, given the jacket made from white silk which he possessed and because in the other list of his stolen belongings in document n.345, twelve lengths or rolls of silk are mentioned. Should such an interpretation of the embroidered and many-coloured pieces hold true, then certainly Larsu inventory in n.318 alone would nearly be enough to furnish a grave like the smaller M5.

Whether they were made of silk or not, it is at any rate clear that these textiles were very valuable. The final statement on the value, marked as [.....] in the text, is unfortunately lost.⁷⁸³ In document n.343, however, recording a donation made by Larsu to the monastic community of Caḍota, the price of a jacket is given,

Takhti-shaped tablet. Obv.

In the eighth year of the great king Jiṭuḡha Vaṣmana son of Heaven, on the ninth day of the twelfth month, at this date the cozbo Larsu bought food for the order (*saṃghabhata*) for the price of a jacket. Received was muli 16, khi 15, and distributed. One muli remained over.⁷⁸⁴

This short "Report" document, found in the same garbage heap in ruin N.5 as document n.318 and quite possibly written by the monks themselves, recorded that then cozbo Larsu bought food for the price of a jacket to the community (*saṃghabhata*, community brothers?).⁷⁸⁵ The jacket appears to have been sold for 17 muli, 15 khi, presumably converted into grain, as Burrow suggests. Nothing is said in the document of the material or workmanship of this jacket, though presumably it would at best have been as valuable a piece as the silk jacket from document n.318, and more likely it would have been made of felt or wool. This then would mean that each of the two jackets of n.318 alone would have been worth more than a cow,⁷⁸⁶ and

⁷⁸³ Baums furthermore propose a different reading for the final line, saying "*eda vastu mul. na[ṭhaga] sarva danu ladha*" or "These objects of lost value, all the property has been recovered". See Baums and Glass, *Catalogue*, 318.

⁷⁸⁴ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 65.

⁷⁸⁵ The document itself does not actually mention any food but rather states that a "jacket's value" was given. Burrow's assumption that it was given in the form of grain or food does however appear sound, given that 1 muli was the equivalent of a milima of grain.

⁷⁸⁶ See document n.327.

would have been enough to cover the yearly *palpi* tax of Yave-avana.⁷⁸⁷ Even assuming that the other textiles were worth less, this inventory of fine cloth and the golden *dare* alone would have been worth as much as an adult slave,⁷⁸⁸ or several plots of land,⁷⁸⁹ the most expensive commodities known in the Krorainan material.

Furthermore, unless we assume that Larsu was robbed, which the document does not indicate, the stolen items would not have represented his entire wealth. In fact, as the other list of owed and stolen items from document n.345 totalled a hundred muli, and given that Larsu had the means to give away almost 18 muli for donations in document n.343, he was probably a very wealthy man indeed. As such, it is not inconceivable that a man like Larsu could have furnished a tomb such as M5 for a beloved daughter or wife, or perhaps even been buried in something approaching the wealth of M3.

The second of our exemplary cases further supports this last point, for whereas Larsu's inventory remains somewhat difficult to interpret and therefore equate with the inventories of M3 and M5, a far more direct link can be established between these and document n.566. The document itself was of the "Royal Command" type and undated, found in the same "office-room" of ruin N.24 that had also contained Ramṣotsa's archive. It was, however, not found as part of this archive but thrown into a corner and laying on the surface of the original floor.⁷⁹⁰ Given this findspot, and the appearance of cozbo Tamjaka as the addressed official, its date can be confidently placed in the latter part of the period covered by the documents, likely to the early fourth century.

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs the cozbo Tamjaka as follows: Kupṣuta and Tilutamae inform us that they have lost seven strings of pearls (*mutilata*), one mirror, a *lastuga* made of many coloured silk, and a *sudī* ear ornament. The tsamghina Moṣḍhaya, when apprehended before the magistrates (*mahatvana*) spoke thus: It is true that I stole these objects from Kupṣuta and Tilutamae. I

⁷⁸⁷ See document n.468. See also section 5.4.5 for a discussion of the relationship between milima and muli.

⁷⁸⁸ See document n.345 and n.590.

⁷⁸⁹ See for example document n.571 where a plot of misi-land was valued at sixty muli. See also chapter 5, table 12.

⁷⁹⁰ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 227.

sold them to Konumae. I have received no payment (*muli giḍemi*). When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you there, forthwith this dispute [...]

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Of Tilutamae and Kupṣuta.⁷⁹¹

As can be seen above, the document unfortunately lacks its cover-tablet, and thus both the address on the obverse and the final part of the document on the reverse. The main issue is, however, clearly presented on the under-tablet's obverse, where the king instructs his official to look into an accusation of theft made by a man Kupṣuta and rather uncommonly a woman, in all likelihood his spouse, Tilutamae. The accusation again opens by listing the allegedly stolen goods and like in document n.318, it is a rich inventory that is listed. Notably, the items were of a type generally associated with females in the Krorainan graves, being mostly jewellery, a fact that likely explains why Tilutamae appears together with Kupṣuta as the accusers. Yet unlike document n.318, with its many difficult terms, the nature of the items of document n.566 are all quite clear, and when compared with the tombs M3 and M5, one cannot help but see the striking similarities.

The first type of stolen items were the seven strings of pearls. These were in all likelihood comparable to the string carrying twenty small pearls attached to the necklace of the woman buried in M3, though the exact number of pearls per string or their size can only be guessed at. (See figure 9) Similarly, the stolen mirror was almost certainly a Chinese mirror, the only type of mirror known from any Krorainan context, and it too was in all likelihood comparable to the finely wrought mirrors contained in the “make-up” boxes and pouches of the woman of M3 and M5. Identifying the *lastuga* of polychrome silk and the *suḍi* ear ornament is slightly more difficult, as the nature of a *lastuga* and the word *suḍi* is not entirely clear. *Lastugas* appear in five documents, including n.566,⁷⁹² and in all other instances they are mentioned as presents sent along with letters as “tokens of remembrance” to both male and female

⁷⁹¹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 112.

⁷⁹² See document n.161, 184, 288 and 585.

recipients. As pointed out by Burrow, they were likely small pieces, being sent as gifts and called “a small thing” in document n.184,⁷⁹³ and as only document n.566 mentions them being of silk, they could likely be made of a variety of textiles. Given this, it would seem likely that the *lastuga* could be equated with something like the small bags holding mirrors or combs found in both grave M3 and M5, in both cases incorporating polychrome and patterned jin-silk.⁷⁹⁴ (See figure 13) This would certainly seem likely, given the other items of document n.566, as one could easily imagine the mirror being stolen while still contained within its silken bag. As for the *sudi* ear ornament, it is harder to say, as the word *sudi* does not appear in any other document. Yet given the ear ornaments known archaeologically from Kroraina, such as those worn by the woman in based on both M3 and M5, it likely incorporated some form of beads, whether stone, glass, or perhaps even pearls, as was the case in M3. Together, Tilutamae’s stolen items are strikingly similar to the jewellery and “make-up” items of the woman in M3 and M5, and much like them, most of these items would at least have incorporated “imported goods” in their designs. In the case of the pearls and the mirror, though, they were almost certainly wholly imported.

Thus, much like in the case of Larsu in document n.318, it is a valuable inventory that was recorded. Though unlike the case of Larsu, we unfortunately know very little about Kupṣuta and Tilutamae, as they only appear in document n.566. Furthermore, as they are mentioned without any titles, little can be said of their social standing. It seems highly likely, however, that they must have been part of, if not the political, then at least the economic elite. They were almost certainly wealthy, given that we must assume, as with Larsu’s stolen items in document n.318, that the stolen items of document n.566, all of them seemingly a woman’s luxury items, were not the only items possessed by Kupṣuta or Tilutamae. Furthermore, given the likely worth of that small inventory, consisting only of luxurious pieces with little practical value, they must have had wealth to spend. Given their single appearance in the mostly Caḍotan database of documents, it is furthermore quite possible that they in fact did

⁷⁹³ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 115.

⁷⁹⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:108–9, 147–48.

not live in the oasis at all, but rather somewhere else in the kingdom or possibly in the capital Kroraina. The reason why their document was found in ruin N.24 seems, at any rate, to do with the scribal office there rather than with any form of affiliation to that ruin or Ramṣotsa's family. Indeed, the only actor in the document with any possible affiliation to Caḍota, except the official cozbo Tamjaka, was the woman Konumae said to have bought the stolen goods. She could possibly be the same Konumae as appears in document n.46 and whose avana affiliation was the centre of a dispute between Peta-avana and Catisa-deviyae-avana.⁷⁹⁵ As such, one could perhaps imagine that the rest of document n.566 ordered this Konumae interrogated or apprehended, which would explain its appearance in Caḍota, although this cannot be verified unless the missing tablet is recovered.

The two thefts in context

The issues of translation and interpretation, notwithstanding these two cases of theft, provide excellent examples of both the wealth and breadth of imported goods evident also in the Kharosthi documents. Yet here too, one must address the question of how representative these two cases are for the document collection as a whole.

As illustrated in table two, our two exemplary cases, documents n.318 and n.566, were not unique in mentioning items that might have been “imported goods”. Silk as both a textile counted in rolls and as clothing does for example appear, sometimes in quite significant quantities. A good example of this would be the “List”-type document n.660, found at the Endere (Saca) site, that mentions at least fifteen roles of silk of a variety of types.⁷⁹⁶ Amongst these were one roll of so-called “royal silk”, a term likely denoting a particularly fine textile. Another commonly reoccurring example of possible “imported goods” would be items of jewellery, appearing often as gifts, being made of gold and silver, or sometimes even more exotic materials.⁷⁹⁷ Document n.585, a letter addressed to the great cozbo Somjaka, even mentions pieces of carved antler and cowry, likely included as gifts with the letter, the latter of which

⁷⁹⁵ It should be noted however that none of our prosopographic criteria for identification are met, and as such, they have been registered as two separate actors in the database.

⁷⁹⁶ See document n.3, 35, 225, 316, 318, 345, 348, 489, 566 and 660.

⁷⁹⁷ See document n.109, 113, 149, 566 and 585.

would be of distant provenance. However, on the whole and especially compared with the richness of the burials, it is noteworthy, as also indicated by table two, that the number of mentions of such fine and possibly imported goods in the Kharosthi documents is quite low.

On the other hand, this is perhaps not entirely surprising for at least two reasons. Firstly, one must keep in mind that the meaning of a large number of the terms used to describe gifts in the Kharosthi documents is simply unknown, and as such, impossible to identify. In fact, as many as sixty-seven documents mention some unidentifiable item or resource, and although not nearly all of these are likely to hide mentions of imported items, some of them almost certainly do. One very good example of this is provided by the “Letter” document n.140 sent by Kupṣimta to his brother-in-law ṣoṭhaṃga Lýipeya, quoted in full on pages 180-181, at the end of which he mentions a number of items sent along with the letter as gifts for his in-laws. “I have sent a present as token of remembrance, for you a *leşpa*, three *sira* for each of you, and one *vatu* for Sarpinae.”⁷⁹⁸ The nature of these three commodities, the *leşpa*, *sira*, and *vatu*, is entirely unknown, yet there is very good reason to believe that they were both easily portable, having been sent along with a letter, as well as valuable. This last attribute was at least the norm in other gifts whose commodities can be identified. (see table 3 and 4) Furthermore, given Kupṣimta’s position of serving at court and owning large properties, it seems likely that his gifts would at least have been the equal of those sent by Lýipeya’s son Lýimsu in document n.109, amongst which were both spices and jewels. As such, part of the reason why so few imported items appear in the Krorainan written sources is simply because we cannot, at least at present, identify them.

However, the second, and doubtlessly primary reason for the scarcity of imported goods in the written sources compared with the wealth of such commodities amongst the grave goods of Kroraina, lies in the nature of the sources and the purpose of their creation. These documents do not necessary provide a balanced glimpse of life in the kingdom. Rather, the document corpus is overwhelmingly the product of the royal Krorainan bureaucracy and courts, with only a small portion of the documents

⁷⁹⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 25.

representing text produced by the kingdom's citizens outside of official settings. Added to this skewering effect caused by the type of documents available, is furthermore the point that the vast majority of the available documents were uncovered at the Niya (Caḍota) site, far removed from the political and likely also economic centre of the kingdom. As such, it should come as no surprise that, while the available sources tell us much about the practices of taxation, the enforcement of royal law, and the many quarrels of the population, they say less about the inventories or luxuries owned by private individuals. The inventories of the Krorainan tombs, on the other hand, with their rich assemblages of grave goods, were created for very different reasons. One of these was almost certainly to display the wealth of either the deceased themselves or their immediate relatives. It should therefore come as no surprise that these sources yielded a far richer harvest of imported goods than was generally available, since such items almost invariably would be costly and thus amongst the best displays of wealth available. As such, when studied in isolation, neither the written nor the archaeological material from Kroraina, give a particularly balanced or representative view of the presence and use of imported goods in the kingdom as a whole.

Tombs and thefts: Conclusion

Fortunately, in the case of the kingdom of Kroraina, we have both much written and archaeological material available, and it is when seen in relation to each other that these sources become truly informative. As shown by our two sets of exemplary cases, there are striking parallels between them. Furthermore, when read and analysed as a whole, these sources show that whatever the nature of long-distance exchange or trade in Kroraina, we can at least be sure that "imported goods" made it to the kingdom in significant quantities. Although we know little about their general availability, the elites of Kroraina, at least from the time of the first Niya tombs to the end of the time of the documents, amassed significant quantities of these "imported goods". Thus, whatever the nature of the exchange that brought it there, it can hardly be described as "limited".

Having established a view of which “imported goods” can be attested from the kingdom of Kroraina in the period from the second to the fourth centuries, we turn to look at some of them in more detail and explore what they can tell us of the nature of the exchange that carried them to Kroraina. In some cases, it is also worth discussing their provenance, for while clearly drawing on techniques and designs with their origins beyond the oases of Kroraina, one can still question whether or not all these items were truly imported. The dagger sheaths, for instance, were clearly drawing on a design and stylistic language with roots in the northern steppe and current in much of Central Asia and the Iranian world, but the materials used were all distinctly local, and as such, one must ask whether it was the product of a local craftsman or truly an imported piece. Finally, one must wonder what role these items played in the local economy and social life. The following sections will therefore address these questions, starting with the questions of provenance and scale.

6.2 Import by bulk: Imported textiles in Kroraina

Of the many “imported goods” evident from our exemplary cases above, the most common and prolific were certainly textiles, to which we shall first turn. Both large quantities and a great variety of textiles were used and consumed in Kroraina, and in the written material, a wealth of different types and qualities are mentioned, with sixty-nine documents mentioning more than twenty-five different types of textiles. This is excellently illustrated by the two tombs and Larsu’s document n.318, discussed above. As will be recalled, amongst the many valuables stolen Lasu listed at least eleven identifiable garments made from a range of textiles, including amongst others a jacket of hempen cloth, five hands (*hasta*) of woollen cloth, one embroidered and one many-coloured *lyokmana* garment, and a jacket of white silk. This wealth of textiles, garments, and designs was, as has been shown, also reflected in the archaeological record. Even the smaller tomb M5 (95MN1) did, for example, contain cloth and textiles in cotton, silk and wool, in a range of qualities and with a large variety of designs.

Undoubtedly, most of these the textiles consumed in Kroraina were of local origins. The majority of the woollen and felt textiles used in Kroraina, for example,

were certainly local products, and as discussed in detail by Iyer, textile production was likely an economic and cultural pillar in ancient Kroraina.⁷⁹⁹ The local production of textiles is also regularly attested in the Krorainian documents, where various forms of textiles, especially rugs and lengths of felt, were used to pay taxes (*palyi*) together with other local produce.⁸⁰⁰ The same local origin is undoubtedly true for some of the more luxurious textiles, such as Larsu's embroidered *lyokmana* described above, although some of the materials used to make these garments might have originated from outside the kingdom. Unfortunately, in most cases the origins of the textiles described in the documents are hard to ascertain accurately, and the same remains the case with most of the archaeological material. Imports of textiles from two sources outside the kingdom can be discerned, however, namely from Khotan and China.

Documents n.549, n.583, and n.592, all found in together in the building N.24 and in the two latter cases dated to ca. 278-279 CE, describe textiles with the epithet *Khotaniya*, that is Khotanese. All three textiles in question are called *kojava*, which Burrow gives as rug or fleecy counterpane,⁸⁰¹ and the rug in document n.549 is also said to be *alena*, which Burrow suggests might mean blanket.⁸⁰² Since Kroraina itself, as mentioned above, produced rugs locally, it is likely that these Khotanese rugs were particularly fine and valuable since they were noted as being specifically Khotanese. This is supported by the context of the documents, as the rugs were used as parts in the payment of land and a slave girl respectively in documents n.549 and n.592, and to settle a legal dispute in document n.538. In fact in document n.549, the Khotanese *alena* rug and five *milima* of grain was the payment for a plot of arable land valued at fifteen *muli*. If, as seems likely, the rug itself was valued at ten *muli*, it would have been worth as much as a cow, priced at ten *muli* in document n.327, or a third or fourth of a camel, depending on its type.⁸⁰³ (See tablet 5.12) One could therefore suppose that some of the very fine woollen carpets found in the 95MN1 tombs, such as the beautifully coloured and lozenge-patterned carpet that covered the lid of the coffin of

⁷⁹⁹ Iyer, 'A Weft-Beater from Niya: Making a Case for the Local Production of Carpets in Ancient Cadhota (2nd to Mid-4th Century CE)'.

⁸⁰⁰ For examples of rugs and felt being used as tax see document n.151, 173, 207, 382, 668 and 728.

⁸⁰¹ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 84.

⁸⁰² Burrow, 77.

⁸⁰³ Burrow, 111–12.

M3 (see figure 14), might have been of Khotanese craftsmanship. Yet while the Khotanese rugs appear to have been a valuable commodity, they were not necessarily worth more than their Krorainan counterparts. In two other contracts, rugs of unspecified and thus likely local origins are used as payment, one valued at ten and the other at five *muli*.⁸⁰⁴ Thus, while some of the very fine woollen carpets found in the Krorainan tombs may well have been of Khotanese origins, it would seem arbitrary without further evidence to equate the Khotanese textiles with the finest examples of rugs and tapestries found in Kroraina. What is clear, however, is that some Khotanese textiles were brought to and used in the kingdom.

Much of the textiles used and consumed in Kroraina was thus produced locally or arrived through regional trade with neighbouring kingdoms, such as Khotan. Yet as shown by the four exemplary cases presented above, there was a further source of textiles evident in the Krorainan sources, namely silk from China. Unsurprisingly, given the field, this is the commodity amongst the imported goods evident in the Krorainan material that has garnered the most attention from scholars, both amongst those studying the written and the archaeological material. Perhaps more surprising, however, are some of the debates raised about silk in Kroraina, for some scholars have questioned whether the silk found in Kroraina was truly imported,⁸⁰⁵ while others, or indeed sometimes the same scholars, have argued that silk was in fact a rarity in Kroraina.⁸⁰⁶ Both these seemingly contradictory views have garnered some traction within the literature on the kingdom of Kroraina, and it is therefore necessary to address both, starting with the question of local production.

⁸⁰⁴ See document n.222 and n.327.

⁸⁰⁵ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', n. 31; Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 38–39; Feng, 'Domestic, Wild or Unraveled? A Study on Tabby, Taquete, and Jin with Spun Silk from Yingpan, Xinjiang, Third-Fourth Century.', 102; Sheng, 'Chinese Silks That Circulated among People North and West: Implications for Technological Exchange in Early Times?', 108–9.

⁸⁰⁶ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 191; Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 49; Selbitschka, 'Genuine Prestige Goods in Mortuary Contexts: Emulation in Polychrome Silk and Byzantine Solidi from Northern China', 22–26.

Was there silk production in the kingdom of Kroraina?

Given the share quantity of silk textiles found in some Krorainan burial contexts, it is perhaps not surprising that some scholars have suggested that silk was produced locally. Angela Sheng, who writes at length about the Chinese silks found in the Tarim Basin and further west, states that the local people of the Niya site cultivated mulberry, raised silkworms, and produced raw silk, though she gives no sources for this.⁸⁰⁷ A similar view is also presented by Hansen, who suggests that the Krorainans produced their own silk and simple tabby weave, again without any references.⁸⁰⁸ They might, however, be referring to Stein, who during his excavations found some examples of mulberry at Cadota, in one case worked into what he describes as a saddle tree for a donkey.⁸⁰⁹ Analysis of silk remains found at the Yingpan site from the third and fourth centuries does furthermore suggest that some of the silk used there might have been locally produced,⁸¹⁰ and Sheng's study of techniques from across the Tarim Basin has shown that Chinese weaving techniques were spreading into the region.⁸¹¹ Furthermore, it is known from later periods that the Tarim Basin region produced its own silk, famously in Khotan,⁸¹² and as tentatively suggested by de la Vaissiere, the first development of sericulture in neighbouring Khotan could date back as early as the third century CE.⁸¹³

Yet, as emphasised by de la Vaissiere,⁸¹⁴ no mention is made in the Kharosthi material of either mulberries or silkworms. One could perhaps imagine that these words too hid behind as of yet untranslatable terms, but no mention is made of silk production either. One must be very careful with this line of argumentation, however, since as repeatedly discussed, the written sources often given a very skewed view of Krorainan life. It should, for example, be noted that no direct description is given of

⁸⁰⁷ Sheng, 'Chinese Silks That Circulated among People North and West: Implications for Technological Exchange in Early Times?', 108.

⁸⁰⁸ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 38–39.

⁸⁰⁹ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:397; Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 268.

⁸¹⁰ Feng, 'Domestic, Wild or Unraveled? A Study on Tabby, Taquete, and Jin with Spun Silk from Yingpan, Xinjiang, Third-Fourth Century.'

⁸¹¹ Sheng, 'Chinese Silks That Circulated among People North and West: Implications for Technological Exchange in Early Times?'

⁸¹² Xuanzang, DTXJ, 12 (pp.319)

⁸¹³ de la Vaissière, 'Silk, Buddhism and Early Khotanese Chronology', 86–87.

⁸¹⁴ de la Vaissière, 87.

the production of woollen or hempen textiles either, though both the archaeological finds and the tax lists show that these were produced locally. Whether or not silk was produced locally, though, it is clear that local population was actively reworking, unravelling, and making new items from silk textiles and thread, as shown by both the garments and the tools for textile production uncovered in Krorainan tombs. This is exemplified by the content of the “make-up” box from M3 that contained a spindle still with silk thread on it, pieces and fragments of various coloured *juan* and *jin* silks, as well as floss of both silk and wool.⁸¹⁵

Yet even if local silk production might have taken place and much, if not most, of the silk items found within the Krorainan tombs had been reworked to suit local sensibilities, a large portion of the silk fabrics found must still in all likelihood have originated in China due to the designs and characters used. An excellent example of this would be the woman’s outerwear from tomb M3, woven with the Chinese characters 世母極錦宜二親伝子孫, reading as a well-wish of a type well known from the Chinese context, with tigers, leopards, and dragons dancing amongst the characters in a classical Chinese design. Between the precise execution of the design, drawing heavily upon Chinese cultural knowledge and styles and the sheer complexity of this very fine silk textile, more likely the product of a professional workshop than a farmhouse, it must almost certainly have originated in a Chinese workshop and been brought to Kroraina as an import.

Thus while it is distinctly possible that silk was produced locally in Kroraina or even more likely somewhere else in the greater Tarim Basin region, much of the silks from the Krorainan sources must still have been imported from China, in particular the figured *jin*-weave.

The availability of silk in Kroraina

With at least the possibility of local production of silk textiles in mind, it is even more surprising that a number of scholars appear to have argued that silk was in fact a relatively rare commodity in the kingdom of Kroraina and especially in the oasis of

⁸¹⁵ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China), 1999, 2:108.

Caḍota, described as being predominantly the domain of Chinese merchants, soldiers, or other outsiders.⁸¹⁶

Such a view certainly seems to be at odds with the wealth of silk evident in the Krorainan burials, especially when as noted by Selbitschka, out of the seventy-nine tombs uncovered to date forty-one contained tabby silk (*juan*) and twenty-seven of them contained polychrome *jin*-silk. However, he himself cautions against taking this to mean that silk was necessarily very common, given that in many cases each grave only contained a few small pieces, especially in the case of the complex *jin*-weave.⁸¹⁷ It is also noteworthy that only two documents, n.149 and n.353, specifically name garments as being Chinese. Document n.149, a short “Report” document, contains the complaint of a fugitive (*palayaṃnaga*) named Maṣaga. He gives a list of items taken from him, consisting mainly of clothes and some money, amongst which are mentioned three Chinese robes. Document n.353 is an even shorter notice stating merely that a *cinaveḍa*, that is a Chinese turban or wrap,⁸¹⁸ had been sent as a gift. One would perhaps be tempted to think that these garments were labelled as Chinese due to being made out of silk. However, as no garments specifically said to be made from silk, such as the white silk jacket from n.318, are ever called Chinese, this seems a less likely explanation. Rather, as nothing more specific is said to characterise these garments, it was in all likelihood their shape and design that was perceived by the Krorainans as Chinese, as opposed to their own styles of garment. Silk, usually *paṭa*, is furthermore only mentioned nine times in the documents, though as discussed above, several of the garments of unspecified materials, such as many of those in n.318, could have been made of silk. This apparent scarcity, together with Selbitschka’s caution on the evidence from the Krorainan tombs, could perhaps lead one to conclude that silk was indeed a rarity in Kroraina, or at least in Caḍota. Such a conclusion would,

⁸¹⁶ Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, 191; Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 42 and 49; Selbitschka, ‘Genuine Prestige Goods in Mortuary Contexts: Emulation in Polychrome Silk and Byzantine Solidi from Northern China’, 22–26.

It is however somewhat difficult to interpret Hansen’s view as she, on p.38-41, argues for a local production of tabby silk and notes its common use in Cadotan tombs.

⁸¹⁷ Selbitschka, ‘Genuine Prestige Goods in Mortuary Contexts: Emulation in Polychrome Silk and Byzantine Solidi from Northern China’, 22–23.

⁸¹⁸ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 90.

however, disregard several important points, possible local production notwithstanding.

Firstly, the seeming rarity of silk in the written material is somewhat deceptive, as it is in fact the third most commonly mentioned type of textile, following woollen rugs which appear some seventeen times and felt or coarse cloth (*namata*)⁸¹⁹ which appears thirteen times. Furthermore, the notion raised by both Hansen and Atwood that silk in the documents were rarely used by the locals and was rather the domain of outsiders, is simply incorrect.⁸²⁰ No Chinese or other identifiable outsider is mentioned in the Kharosthi documents as using silk for payment, though Chinese using silk in exchanges in Kroraina are documented in the Chinese documents found at the Lop site, as will be discussed in later chapters.⁸²¹ Instead, the one Chinese to make a purchase recorded in the kharosthi documents, the Chinaman Ṣgaṣi from document n.324, paid using golden staters and drachma, as discussed in the previous chapter. It is correct, as Hansen observes, that silk was set as a fine for Buddhist monks violating regulations in document n.489. Again in document n.348 of the “contract” type, on the sale of a pot between two men with local names, a fine in silk was to be paid to the *samgha* if the contract was broken. Yet shown by their varied activities as landowners, slaveholders and even enslaved the monks of Caḍota were hardly outsiders. Rather, when silk appears in the written material, it appears exclusively in the hands of people with local names and often with people known to have lived in Caḍota, such as in the case of cozbo Larsu, who is said to have owned silk in two documents, n.318 and n.345. The use of silk as a medium for the payment of fines in documents n.348 and n.489, as well as its use as a medium for payment by a local man Suḡita in document n.3, is another good indication that silk was fairly common in Kroraina, given that one could expect people to be able to pay fines with it. In particular, document n.348 is of interest in this regard, as neither of the two men who conducted the exchange of the pot in the document carried titles or appear to have been members of the Krorainan elite. One can, of course, question whether or not they would actually have been able

⁸¹⁹ Burrow, 100.

⁸²⁰ Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, 191; Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 49.

⁸²¹ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 57.

to pay a fine in silk, but the fact that two seemingly ordinary Caḍotans could be subject to such a fine certainly speaks to the availability of silk in Caḍota. Furthermore, when silk appears in the written documents, it often appears in fairly significant quantities, such as the jacket made of white silk owned by Larsu from our exemplary document n.318 or the twelve rolls of silk stolen from the same man in document n.345. Thus, comparatively silk appears to have been a fairly common textile in Kroraina, or at least in Caḍota, judging from the written material.

Despite Selbitsckha's caution, this is also the sense one gets when considering the archaeological material from Kroraina, though a distinction should, as he suggests, be made between *juan*-silk and other simpler weaves and the complex *jin*-silk. While in many cases only small amounts of silk were uncovered, as for example in the poorly preserved M6 in the cemetery 95MN1 with only fragments of silk from a face cover found, the fact that *juan*-silk appears in forty-one out of seventy-nine tombs is still a clear testament to its wide availability in Krorainan society. It shows us that, while highly valuable and primarily the purview of the Krorainan elites, it was common and thus cheap enough to be acquired by the less affluent members of society. This is illustrated well by the above-mentioned "log"-shaped tomb M6 (95MN1) that held a middle-aged woman and her infant and which is the poorest of the 95MN1 graves. Its poor state of preservation means that few of the textiles survived, but the grave was otherwise very spartan, with but a few ornaments of small beads buried with the deceased and no mirror or fine ornaments, as found in M3 and M5. Yet even this simplest of graves had contained at least one piece of cloth, a face cover, worked with *juan*-silk.⁸²² The frequent finds of silk fragments in many of the ruins of the Niya (Caḍota) site further underline silk's availability, and indeed even a doll found by Stein in ruin N.22 had a dress and sash of brown and red tabby silk, with a patch of purple silk sewn on.⁸²³ (See figure 15) The purpose of this doll is naturally not known, and one could perhaps speculate that it served some religious function and therefore had received the fine dress, though its appearance and hinged legs certainly reminds

⁸²² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:142.

⁸²³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 254.

one of a child's toy. Yet regardless of its function, the fact that it was found in ruin N.22, associated by Padwa with the man Yapgu⁸²⁴ a *kilmeci* of Yave-avan,⁸²⁵ again indicates that at least *juan*-silk was widely available.

Jin-silk, on the other, hand was clearly rarer, more valuable, and primarily available only to the very richest members of Krorainan society. Yet even in the case of *jin*-silk, it is problematic to describe it as rare, for while the richest graves such as M3 (95MN1) contained only a very limited number of items made from for example gold, stone beads, or pearls usually also very small in size, they contained a veritable hoard of *jin*-silk. The fact that they not only contained clothing made from *jin*-weave, as in the case of for example the jackets almost entirely made from this material, but also smaller pieces of unworked *jin*-textiles, such as contained in the lacquered box of M3, is furthermore a sign that whoever deposited it there could afford to remove even textiles from circulation – textiles that could have been used in new garments. This last point is significant, as it shows that regardless of which living person placed it there, they were likely either in possession of more, or capable of acquiring it, given that they were willing to let such perfectly usable pieces go out of circulation.

There is therefore very little evidence to support the assertion that silk was a particularly rare commodity in Kroraina, at least as far as the simpler *juan*-weaves are concerned. To the contrary, there are several written sources that in fact point to silk being exchanged, at least within the kingdom of Kroraina, in significant bulk.

Silk acquired in bulk

Most of the documents that mention silk speak of it either as the material for a piece of clothing, as was the case in both our case documents n.318 and 566, or else in quantities of an unspecified unit, translated by Burrow as either “length” or “roll”. The former interpretation, that is that the numbers represented a measure, is less likely, given that the lengths of other textiles measured in the Kharosthi documents are generally given in units of hands (*hasta*),⁸²⁶ as also seen in document n.318. This also

⁸²⁴ Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 170–72.

⁸²⁵ See document n.474.

⁸²⁶ See document n.83, 318, 431, 527, 578, 579, 581, 583, 590 and 728.

seems to have been the conclusion of Burrow, who in his dictionary notes that *paṭa* usually referred to “rolls of silk”, a conclusion also reached by Heinrich Lüders in “*Textilien im Alten Turkistan*”.⁸²⁷ This is furthermore in keeping with Chinese practise, where silk was commonly transported and exchanged by rolls, an example of which was actually uncovered by Stein near the L.A site stupa.⁸²⁸

We do not know if the Krorainan’s had adopted the Chinese standard for silk rolls, and as such, the size of the *paṭa* “rolls” of the written material cannot be clearly discerned. Yet some evidence for the amount of silk the Krorainan unit might have represented comes from a number of silk strips excavated from Krorainan graves. The largest number comes from the grave M1 and M8 at 95MN1, where tabby-silk strips with Kharosthi characters in ink had been wrapped around bows.⁸²⁹ A similar silk strip with ink characters was also found by Hedin at his grave n.34,⁸³⁰ and from the Lop site grave 80LMBMB2 a piece of *jin*-silk with Kharosthi characters was uncovered.⁸³¹ The text written with ink on this *jin*-silk is highly enigmatic, reading “*bimva śrihetaṣa ciṭa paṇaya 100*”.⁸³² The original report gives this as something like “Bimva Sriheta’s *jin*-silk, 100 money”⁸³³ while Meicun Lin translates this as “Bimva Sriheta’s silk, worth 100”⁸³⁴, but in truth the word *paṇaya* is not otherwise known from the Kharosthi material, and it is unclear what it might refer to. As will be recalled, both Chinese money and price/worth was usually referred to by other terms, such as *masa* or *muli*. The inscriptions from tomb M1 and M8, however, are far more informative, being six in total and found wrapped around bowstaves.⁸³⁵ On these little strips are lines of

⁸²⁷ Lüders, ‘Textilien Im Alten Turkistan’, 24–28; Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 102.

⁸²⁸ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 373.

⁸²⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:133, 145.

⁸³⁰ Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 130, 231–34.

⁸³¹ Xinjiang Loulan Kaogudui (新疆樓蘭考古隊), ‘樓蘭城郊古墓群發掘簡報 (Preliminary Report on the Excavation of a Cemetery in the Outskirts of Loulan)’, 34–35.

⁸³² Lin, ‘新疆文物考古研究所所藏カローシュティエー文書 (Kharosthi Wooden Tablets in the Uighur Research Institute of Archaeology)’, 274.

⁸³³ Xinjiang Loulan Kaogudui (新疆樓蘭考古隊), ‘樓蘭城郊古墓群發掘簡報 (Preliminary Report on the Excavation of a Cemetery in the Outskirts of Loulan)’, 34.

⁸³⁴ Lin, ‘新疆文物考古研究所所藏カローシュティエー文書 (Kharosthi Wooden Tablets in the Uighur Research Institute of Archaeology)’, 274.

⁸³⁵ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:187.

Kharosthi, all conforming to the same formula as for example in document n.874, which reads “*Simdham mitravamasa paṭa ḍi 20 10*”,⁸³⁶ translating into “Accomplished. 30 *dithi* of silk belonging to Mitravama”⁸³⁷. The word *simdham* (Skt. *Siddha*) has been suggested by Ichikawa in this instance to mean something like fulfilled or acquired, signifying the conclusion of a transaction,⁸³⁸ although the word is given as accomplished in Baum’s and Glass’s dictionary.⁸³⁹ Ichikawa’s reading would seem to make sense, as the silk strips were likely either part of or possibly attached to a unit of silk textile, although the strips could also possibly have been a receipt of sorts. Nicholas Sim-Williams does, however, doubt this explanation, suggesting that *simdham* is likely just an auspicious word not specifically relating to the text’s content.⁸⁴⁰

Either way, the units of silk mentioned in the five strips were all measured in *dithi*, five measuring at thirty and number n.873 as “more than twenty”. With only one outlier, this uniformity is noteworthy, as it might indicate a level of standardisation on the units exchanged, which can perhaps give a standard for the *paṭa* “rolls”. The measure of a *dithi* is not exactly known, but the word also appears written with Brahmi characters as *giṣṭi* on a similar silk strip found by Stein at the Dunhuang lime T. 25. The strip, read by Boyer, was very poorly preserved and the text therefore somewhat uncertain, but seems to have given forty-six *giṣṭi*, a unit which Stein calculated as an equivalent measure of 20 cm.⁸⁴¹ One can, of course, not be sure if the Niya grave slips and the Dunhuang slip were from the same period, and the measure may have changed over time or in different places. Yet *dithi* in the Krorainan material is otherwise usually used in the Kharosthi documents to give the height of people in contracts dealing with slaves. In document n.187, for example, a male slave given as recompense measured five *dithi*, while the girls sold in the documents n.437, 589 and 592 were five or four *dithi* tall. As such, Stein’s measure of one *dithi* equalling 20 cm appears much too short, as the slaves would then have been no taller than 1 metre,

⁸³⁶ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), 3:188.

⁸³⁷ Translated by author based on Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), 3:188.

⁸³⁸ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), 3:189.

⁸³⁹ Baums and Glass, *A Dictionary of Gandhari*, “Siddha”

⁸⁴⁰ Nicholas Sims-Williams, personal communication 24.01.2020.

⁸⁴¹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 701–3.

clearly not the height of a man. However, we can give a rough estimate based on these contracts and suggest that five *dīthi* likely measured at around 160 cm or slightly more, the likely average height of a young female in Kroraina when judging from the mummies, and a plausible height for a short male. One *dīthi* would consequently measure at around 32 cm. This would mean that the thirty *dīthi* silk held by the various individuals on the silk strips measured at around nine and a half metres, 9.6 m if our estimates were exact.

This is an extremely interesting result, because it is strikingly close to the measure of the Later Han era silk rolls found by Stein at the limes near Dunhuang.⁸⁴² One of these, T.xv.a.i.3, carried a seal impression in ink, which gave the silks origins, width, length, and weight.⁸⁴³ Stein checked the width measures against the three silk roles found during his second expedition and found that these all matched, suggesting that the seal inscription gave standardised measures.⁸⁴⁴ The length of a roll was recorded as being four *zhang* (丈), equivalent of forty *chi* (尺), often called Chinese feet. The actual length of one *chi* remained largely stable throughout the Han and all the way to the Jin dynasty, known examples of measure sticks fluctuating between 23 to 24 cm and the average of the Cao Wei dynasty examples being 24 cm.⁸⁴⁵ The roll length of the Dunhuang silk rolls were, in other words, almost exactly nine and a half metres, precisely like our estimate of the thirty *dīthi*. We can, in other words, suggest that a *dīthi* was roughly the equivalent of 32 cm and that thirty *dīthi* represented a standardised length of silk rolls measuring forty *chi*, whose actual specimen were found at both the Lop site and Dunhuang by Stein.

The size of the units exchanged as reported in the silk slips also points to fairly large quantities of silk being sold and bought, and this is reinforced by the written material. The quantities of silk in the documents vary, with some fairly small quantities, such as the total of five units mentioned in the fragmented inventory document n.225, but in most cases the numbers far exceeds this with tens of units

⁸⁴² Stein, 700–701.

⁸⁴³ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 118.

⁸⁴⁴ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 373–74.

⁸⁴⁵ Shen, Crossly, and Lun, *The Nine Chapters on the Mathematical Arts, Companion and Commentary*, 6–8.

being mentioned. (See table 2 for an overview) The highest number recorded in the documents comes from document n.3, which as mentioned above, was a “Royal Command” document, in which a local man Suḡita was in some form of dispute over the purchase of a slave Suḡisae,

Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbo Yitaka and the toṃga Vukto

Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs cozbo Yitaka and toṃga Vukto as follows: Suḡita informs us that he paid a price (*muli*) for a woman Suḡisae. The price (*muli*) was forty-one rolls of silk. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, forthwith you must carefully inquire in person, whether she was really bought. A decision must be made according to law. Against the law officials must not take possession of that woman. If you are not clear about it there, there will be a decision when they appear in our presence at the royal court.⁸⁴⁶

These forty-one “rolls” of silk paid for the slave must certainly have represented a very high price, as slaves were otherwise the single most expensive commodity exchanged in Kroraina, as shown by table 5.12, but it is far from unique. The fine set for breaking the legal document drawn up between Larsu and a monk Anamdasena in document n.345, for example, where the slave of the monk had been caught stealing from Larsu, was set to thirty “rolls” of silk. Meanwhile, the fine agreed in document n.348 was set to twelve “rolls”, and the fine on Buddhist monks who fought in document n.489 was five, ten, or fifteen “rolls”, depending on the severity of the violence. When considered against the likely measures of a “roll” discussed above, it is clear that these were very large quantities of possibly hundreds of metres of silk.

Silk, in the form called *paṭa* and in most cases likely referring to the simpler tabby silk, thus appears to have circulated widely and in significant quantities in the Krorainan economy. One final document is particularly interesting in this regard, as it

⁸⁴⁶ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 1.

appears to pertain directly to exchange and circulation of silk, namely document n.660 from ruin E.6 in the southern part of the Endere (Saca) site,

Irregular oblong tablet. Obv.

Column A

Again after the time of his return from the capital 2 *paṃdura* (?) rolls of silk were paid out.

From Puṣgari they sent 1 roll of royal silk.

Cetrakirti took 1 *sānapru*.

Rāṭhapala took 1 *palaga varna*.

Dāruge took 1 roll of silk.

Micgae bought a new *palaga varna*.

Kapotae took 1 bound *palaga varna*.

Puṃṇaṣena took 7 rolls of silk.

Of Mogāya they bought 1 new *baṃdhaga kremeru*.

Column B

The mountain people took 2 rolls of silk.

Namilgae took 1 roll of *sanapru* silk.

Irregular oblong tablet. Rev.

(*Contains a writing exercise of random words.*)⁸⁴⁷

This “List”-type document, which had been discarded and reused for a writing exercise, gives an inventory of silks either acquired or taken by named individuals. Hansen reads the document as an official returning from the capital with an inventory of silk acquired there.⁸⁴⁸ This seems unlikely, however. There is nothing in the document that suggests the man who returned was an official, and the ruin in which it was found have not furnished any further indication that it might have been the

⁸⁴⁷ Burrow, 136–37.

⁸⁴⁸ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 49.

residence of a local official or notable.⁸⁴⁹ The returning man, if the owner of the tablet or related to the business of the silk at all, could however possibly have been a scribe, given that the tablet was reused for a writing exercise. Yet in fact the document does not state that anyone brought silk with them from the capital, though this may well have happened. Rather, it appears to be an inventory of silks, and possibly other textiles hiding behind the unknown terms, acquired and sold. The document can certainly be read as such, though as it lacks any direct reference to payments, it is difficult to say for sure. It is, however, notable that ruin E.6, though excavated but briefly by Stein, contained a large number of textile fragments of wool, leather, and silk, as well as a number of worked beads and a cowry.⁸⁵⁰ Even more interesting is the fact that one of the two other documents excavated from the ruin, document n.661, in all likelihood originated from Khotan.⁸⁵¹ One could therefore perhaps propose the ruin as the abode of a man dealing in textiles, particularly silks, and the list as the product of his business' record keeping, though without further excavation and evidence this can hardly be concluded.

What the document does show is that also *jin*-silks were likely exchanged by the rolls in Kroraina, as *jin*-silk or a similar silk of very high quality must surely be what was meant by the reference to “royal silk” (*rayaga paṭa*) in the document. This would also be in keeping with the archaeological evidence, for example provided by tomb M3, which contained very large pieces of *jin*-silk. This is illustrated particularly well by the so-called “kings and lords” (王侯合昏千秋万歳宜子孫) textile discussed in section 6.1.4 (See figure 11) that had primarily been used to make the large duvet that covered the couple, but which had also been used for the man's headgear, his pants and the pillow which the woman rested on, and the remaining pieces of which was found in the lacquered box.⁸⁵² The duvet alone was a staggering 168 x 94 cm and had been made by sewing two sheets of the “kings and lords” textile together width-

⁸⁴⁹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 276.

⁸⁵⁰ Stein, 290–91.

⁸⁵¹ See the discussion of this document in section 7.4.5.

⁸⁵² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:108, 112, 116, 119.

wise,⁸⁵³ meaning that the original “kings and lords” silk must have measured more than three metres, and that is not even counting the other garments it had been used for. One can therefore be sure that this textile arrived not as a piece of clothing later reworked, but rather as a roll or similar unit of unworked textile that was then used locally.

In summary, it is clear that silk, though clearly valuable and primarily restricted to the upper levels of Krorainan society, was available and consumed in Kroraina in large quantities. Some simpler weaves may have been produced locally or at least been available from the neighbouring kingdoms, but much of the silk used in Kroraina was imported and moved into the kingdom as raw textile, likely transported and exchanged as rolls, rather than as ready-made product. Thus, as far as silk is concerned, we can surely speak of a trade in bulk.

6.3 Imported rarities: Foreign designs and ornaments in Kroraina

Exotic designs: Foreign imports or local imitations?

Textiles aside, the remaining forms of “imported goods” seen in our exemplary cases were all primarily decorative and ornamental goods. This is, of course, the case with the entirely ornamental items, such as the jewellery of the woman of both tomb M3 and M5, as well as Tilutamae’s ear ornaments, though some of the items certainly also had practical applications, such as the mirrors found in both tombs and in document n.566. Yet given their intricate and often foreign design, much of the value of these items too must have been attached to their decorative, and possibly their foreign and thus exotic, appearance. There is very little mention of and even less details on such items in the written material, document n.566, for example, being the only one to mention both pearls and mirrors. Therefore in order to answer the question of their origins, we must primarily turn to an analysis of the archaeological material. Furthermore, what makes most of these items identifiable as “imported goods” is not so much their material, which was often locally available, but rather their design and

⁸⁵³ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:112.

style. This naturally raises a second question, namely about whether these items truly were imported, or rather were local imitations or reproductions of foreign styles.

A full answer to these questions is, of course, incredibly difficult to provide, given both the complexity of identifying the origins of much of the archaeological material available and the scarcity of such items in the written sources. Yet in the case of five categories of items, most of which appears in the exemplary cases above, a little more can be said, the five being mirrors, lacquered items, the four-lobed dagger-sheaths, seals, and jewellery. These five types of items can also be fitted into three broad categories or directions of origin, namely China for the first two, the west and north for the third, and the Indian Ocean world for the last category, with seals drawing on designs from all three regions.

Mirrors and lacquerware from China

Both mirrors and lacquerware appear in our four exemplary cases above, with mirrors in both tomb M3 and M5, lacquerware in tomb M3, as well as the mirror appearing amongst Tilutamae's stolen items in document n.566. Nothing in document n.566 is said about how Tilutamae's mirror might have looked, nor is it explicitly identified as being Chinese. Given the wealth of Chinese mirrors attested archaeologically, this would seem the most likely explanation, for large quantities of mirrors, both broken and complete specimen, have been uncovered across Kroraina, all in the style of Chinese mirrors and regularly incorporating typical Chinese designs. Already during Stein's first excavation of the Niya (Caḍota) site, he uncovered two broken mirrors identified as Chinese, one showing a long bodied dragon.⁸⁵⁴ Four more mirrors, both fragments and complete specimen, were also found by him at the Lop (Kroraina) sites during his later expeditions there.⁸⁵⁵ Three further mirror fragments were uncovered by Chinese teams in the cemetery south of the Lop (Kroraina) site.⁸⁵⁶ Eleven more mirrors from Niya (Caḍota) were recorded by the Sino-Japanese expedition, including

⁸⁵⁴ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:414–15.

⁸⁵⁵ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 430; Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 221.

⁸⁵⁶ Xinjiang Loulan Kaogudui (新疆樓蘭考古隊), '樓蘭城郊古墓群發掘簡報 (Preliminary Report on the Excavation of a Cemetery in the Outskirts of Loulan)', 26.

a specimen found by the 1959 excavations. In particular, they uncovered several complete and well-preserved specimen from funerary contexts such as the tombs of 95MN1.⁸⁵⁷ In fact, judging by the burials of 95MN1, mirrors were a comparatively common luxury in Kroraina, as four out of nine graves yielded at least one bronze mirror, usually in association with female corpses.⁸⁵⁸ As with the specimen found by Stein, these mirrors were all in a style typical of Chinese manufacture and given typical Chinese motifs, as exemplified by the coiling dragon on the mirror from M3 or the four mythical beasts on the specimen from M5. (See figure 16) Some furthermore incorporated inscriptions, often of a type attested from sites in China. A particularly good example of this is the broken bronze mirror found in tomb M1 (97MN1) that carried parts of a well-known inscription reading “飢食棗” ((When) hungry (they) eat the jujubes.), referring to the “immortals” of Han mythology,⁸⁵⁹ an inscription that also appears on several mirrors that has been found both in Han and Xiongnu tombs.⁸⁶⁰ Based on these design features and the techniques of their manufacture, the Sino-Japanese excavators readily identified these mirrors as Chinese, with some such as the specimens from M3 seen in the figure above, even datable on stylistic grounds to the late Han dynasty period.⁸⁶¹ In summary bronze mirrors were not particularly rare in Kroraina and given their design and stylistic language, all the specimens so far found at the Krorainan sites were of a Chinese style.

In addition to mirrors of a Chinese style, also lacquerware has been uncovered in Kroraina in a style with clear Chinese precursors, such as the so-called makeup-box (化粧箱) from tomb M3 (95MN1). (See figure 17) Found above the head of the female, the box was fairly large, with a height of 13,5 cm, and had been lacquered

⁸⁵⁷ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:335–37; Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:57, 70.

⁸⁵⁸ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:108, 129, 134, 143.

⁸⁵⁹ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:33.

⁸⁶⁰ Lai, ‘The Date of the TLV Mirrors from the Xiongnu Tombs’, 37, 41.

⁸⁶¹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:108.

black on the outside and red inside. It contained tools for both grooming and textile production. Examination by the team furthermore showed that both the lid and the cylindrical body had been made from bamboo.⁸⁶² During his expedition, Stein found several other examples of such red and black lacquerware, both at the Niya (Caḍota) site and at the L.M site in the Lop region. In ruin N.5 Stein uncovered eight fragments of a lacquerware bowl in the refuse heap, and as the bowl was broken he could study the wood used, which he believed to be a type of bamboo.⁸⁶³ Far more spectacular were, however, the finds from ruin L.M.1, in which Stein found a lacquered casket of intricate workmanship, made from an unidentified type of wood. (See figure 18) It too had been lacquered in red and black with a design of clouds and curling grotesque beasts along the sides, and Stein noted that it was undoubtedly of Chinese manufacture.⁸⁶⁴ Yet in addition to these lacquered items, most likely all in bamboo, a number of lacquered items in various other forms of wood have been found. Firstly, in the rubbish pit of the ruin N.14, fragments of a lacquered frame in red and brown with a lozenge design on the outer side were found, along with another fragment in the same colours. Stein also found what he described as a “chop-stick” lacquered red and black.⁸⁶⁵ Three further lacquered items in the form of dagger-sheaths, made from an unspecified type of wood covered with lacquered leather, were uncovered from the 95MN1 burials. The two first, one from the tomb M1 and one from M3, are fairly plain, being a simple black and red lacquered sheath respectively.⁸⁶⁶ The third is, however, of special interest, being the finely worked and decorated four-lobed knife sheath from M3, lacquered deep red with a cloud design painted on.⁸⁶⁷ (See figure 8) Though lacquered in similar colours to the items of bamboo both these sheaths, and in particular the one from M3, are of a completely different style and drew on stylistic elements primarily from the west and north rather than the east.

⁸⁶² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:108.

⁸⁶³ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:373, 410.

⁸⁶⁴ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 194, 201–2.

⁸⁶⁵ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 251–52.

⁸⁶⁶ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:107, 144.

⁸⁶⁷ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:107.

Given this, one is forced to ask whether or not these items, though undoubtedly drawing upon Chinese designs and technology, were truly of Chinese manufacture. Bronze casting had certainly been known in the Tarim region since at least 1000 BCE, and as shown by the furnaces and the crucible found at the Niya site, it was a craft practised in Caḍota.⁸⁶⁸ One can therefore not exclude the possibility that some of the bronze mirrors had in fact been manufactured locally. Yet given their strong similarities to well-known types of Chinese mirrors and their wide use of Chinese mythical motifs and even inscriptions, any such local production must have been based on imported Chinese originals. As for the lacquered items, the question is far more difficult to answer, though in the case of the items of bamboo it seems highly likely that these were imported. In terms of the knife-sheaths, this is far more difficult, as nothing is said in the report about the type of lacquer technique used, though given the sheath's design it certainly does not appear to be an item of Chinese provenance.

The four-lobed dagger sheaths

Instead, the four-lobed dagger sheath design, seen both in the above discussed example from M3 and also in two even finer examples from M8 (95MN1), drew on a well-attested design current across the northern steppe zone and the Iranian world. All three dagger-sheaths were made from wood and covered by red leather. This leather had in the case of M3 been lacquered, and all the sheaths carried flowing floral or cloud-like patterns. Notably, they had two cross-sections creating four lobe-like protrusions, one at the top and one below the middle, where metal fastenings were attached.⁸⁶⁹ As several scholars have discussed, mostly recently Brosseder in her 2015 article *A Study on the Complexity and Dynamics of Inter-Action and Exchange in Late Iron Age Eurasia*, this particular dagger sheath design spread widely across Western Asia as well as the Middle East, gaining an important role as a status symbol. However, it appears to have originated somewhere near the Altai, north-east of the Tarim Basin.⁸⁷⁰ The design of the Caḍota sheaths is a direct parallel to the lavishly decorated golden

⁸⁶⁸ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:98–99.

⁸⁶⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:107, 133–34.

⁸⁷⁰ Brosseder, 'A Study on the Complexity and Dynamics of Inter-Action and Exchange in Late Iron Age Eurasia', 222–26.

dagger sheaths from tomb IV of Tillya Tepe as well as a similar sheath found at Dachi near the Black Sea.⁸⁷¹ (See figure 19) It has furthermore been found in several other sites, both as actual objects and depicted in art. One can even find examples in far-off locations as the royal portraits of Antiochos I at Nemrut Dağ in the kingdom of Commagene in Asia Minor, and possibly even ed-Dur on the Oman peninsula, where actual dagger-sheaths of a similar type has been found.⁸⁷²

Yet while clearly part of this widespread tradition, the Krorainan examples are also distinctly different, in particular when compared the most ornate pieces known from the west, as they were made from relatively simple and locally available materials. The example from M3 had furthermore been lacquered, an element that so far is not known from other examples. As there is nothing about the daggers beyond the design which indicates that they might have been imported, it seems most likely that they represented a local Krorainan variation upon this widespread design. Yet again, barring the possibility an analysis of the wooden cores, it is unlikely that this question can be answered conclusively.

Krorainan seals and seal designs

This same problem is perhaps even more evident in the case of the Krorainan seals, which as discussed in the preceding chapters, were widely used on a variety of sealed documents, particularly contracts and legal documents. A small selection of the sealed documents carries imprints of seals with Chinese characters, perhaps most famously the much discussed document n.571, which carries the impression 鄯善都尉 “*Shanshan tuwei*”.⁸⁷³ Yet only a few of the seals used to make these Chinese language impressions have been found in Kroraina. Stein acquired three during his second expedition, including N.0015, a seal in lignite, carved with four Chinese characters and N.Ibr.0015, a seal in bronze, with a single character and a knob shaped like some four-legged beast. Both these were likely of Chinese making or at least inspiration, carved with the typical seal script. The third N.13.002. is of greater interest, being a seal in

⁸⁷¹ Schiltz, ‘Tillya Tepe, the Hill of Gold: A Nomad Necropolis’, 227, 272–73.

⁸⁷² Delrue, ‘Ring-Pommel Daggers from Ed-Dur (Umm Al-Qaiwain, UAE)’, 210.

⁸⁷³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 260.

bronze that carried four Chinese characters, two of which can be read as “長印”, that is “seal of the chief ...”. This last seal in particular could possibly have been a gift from the Wei or Jin dynasty to the ruling elite of Kroraina.

Yet despite the fact that the Krorainian sealing practises clearly drew inspiration from Chinese examples, the majority of the seal imprints left on the Krorainian documents carried figurative designs rather than script. Correspondingly, the majority of seals actually found likewise carried pictorial motifs. A wealth of designs and figures can be traced amongst the many intact seals, and many of them show motifs and designs clearly drawing upon South- or West-Asian imaginary, and in a few cases even Hellenistic, art.⁸⁷⁴ Figure twenty shows two of the most remarkable and well-preserved examples of this, documents n.235 and 332, respectively. Document n.235, a “Royal Command” document, carries a deep imprint of a standing female figure in profile that Stein identified as Athena and which Cecil Smith further suggested might have been Athena Promachos.⁸⁷⁵ Their identification seems likely, as the helmet, the raised shield, and the characteristic swallowtail shawl can be discerned on the impressions, and the pose is strikingly similar to the Athena Promachos seen on several coins minted by Ptolemy I. These coins, Havelock in turn believes, drew their inspiration from the designs on amphora given as prizes during the Panathenaic games.⁸⁷⁶ The same “Athena Promachos” seal had also been used on documents n.310 and n.360, both also “Royal Command” types sent from the royal court, and it would therefore seem to have belonged to someone attached to the Krorainian court. Noting the extremely fine imprint, Stein suggests the seal must have taken the form of a very finely crafted intaglio, set in a square setting that likely carried the name of the owner, though the impression of the inscription is so faint it cannot be read.⁸⁷⁷ Document n.332, on the other hand, of which only the covering tablet remained but which likely was a “Contract-” or “Legal”-type document, carried two seals, one composed of four imitations of Chinese characters and one showing a portrait. The portrait is sharp and

⁸⁷⁴ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, vol. 1, fig. Plate LXXI; Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, fig. Plate XX.

⁸⁷⁵ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:354–55, 400.

⁸⁷⁶ Havelock, ‘The Archaistic Athena Promachos in Early Hellenistic Coinages’, 41–44.

⁸⁷⁷ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:354–55.

quite striking, showing a person in profile with elongated earlobes, clear facial features, hair gathered in a knot, and a hand raised in some gesture or holding a flower. Stein suggests the general treatment and style speaks to Khotanese origins, labelling the person as a woman.⁸⁷⁸ Yet the portrait also has clear parallels to the classic Gandharan sculptural depiction of the Buddha, who is also always shown with elongated earlobes and his hair bound into a knot. Beneath the seal was a short text explaining that these seals belonged to cozbo Opgeya and Pite[ya]. This is noteworthy, as it shows that these seals, whether imitated Chinese characters or “foreign” art, were actually used by local administrators of not particularly high standing. As neither cozbo Opgeya nor cozbo Piteya appear to have been particularly important, it would also suggest that these seals were acquired privately, rather than granted by for example the Chinese state.

It is furthermore striking that some signet designs discovered at Caḍota have very close correspondents discovered at Begram in modern day Afghanistan. One example is N.29.006, a bronze ring bearing what Stein described as a closed eye.⁸⁷⁹ Several rings cast in a copper alloy found at Begram carries an almost identical motif, though C. Fabregues identifies the motif as a *pūrṇaghāṭa* (vase of plenty) rather than an eye.⁸⁸⁰ This *pūrṇaghāṭa* symbol is a well-known auspicious symbol from Indian art and was also incorporated into Buddhist, Jain and Hindu rituals, again suggesting a South Asian influence.⁸⁸¹ Further similarities with material from Bactria can be observed in the close similarity between the portrait on the signet ring found in tomb VI of the spectacular Tillya Tepe burials near the historic Bactra oasis⁸⁸² and the imprint attached to document n.328, as seen in figure twenty-one. In the case of the document from Caḍota, the seal belonged to either *guśura* Cakurata or *guśura* Aśoḡa, both high-ranking nobles and officials. Several of the Tillya Tepe tombs, and notably tomb II, furthermore contained a number of signet rings or seals depicting Athena.⁸⁸³

⁸⁷⁸ Stein, 1:356.

⁸⁷⁹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 265.

⁸⁸⁰ See British Museum Catalogue, 1880.3790.o, 1880.3790.q, and IOLC.7772.

The British Museum, ‘Purnaghata Signet-Ring, 1880.3790.O’; The British Museum, ‘Purnaghata Signet-Ring, 1880.3790.Q’; The British Museum, ‘Purnaghata Signet-Ring, IOLC.7772’.

⁸⁸¹ ‘Ghāṭa-Pallava’.

⁸⁸² Schiltz, ‘Tillya Tepe, the Hill of Gold: A Nomad Necropolis’, 290.

⁸⁸³ Schiltz, 242, 264.

Though different from the Krorainian Athena seals in pose and depiction, this is still noteworthy, especially as the Athenas of tomb II wear the Greco-Bactrian helmet seen on Greco-Bactrian coins,⁸⁸⁴ which suggests a local, Bactrian origin for these seals. However, as roman coins were also discovered in the tomb, a western origin is not possible to rule out.

In the Krorainian seals, one thus sees inspirations from nearly every neighbouring region, from Chinese style seals with written characters to figurative Indian or even Mediterranean designs, which would make it tempting to see these seals as imports. One could envision this even for the simpler seals, such as N.0018 found by Stein at the Niya (Caḍota) site, a pyramidal seal made from frit with a simple scroll design. There is, of course, no reason why the design could not have been made locally, but the seal itself, being crafted from a rare material such as frit, a ceramic composition, could also very well represent an import. In fact, in the case of its finer parallel found at the Loulan site, a lignite seal designated L.A.00134, Stein suggested that the scrollwork had been shaped into a swastika.⁸⁸⁵ This would naturally in turn suggest either inspiration from or an origin in South Asia. Certainly in the case of what he saw as “western” motifs, such as the Athena Promachos, Stein was quick to suggest a western and even more specifically roman origin to the finely crafted intaglio’s used to imprint them.⁸⁸⁶ While possible, this need not have been the case, as Stein himself later recognized⁸⁸⁷, as these “classical” motifs travelled far eastwards with Alexander and his successor, and they remained in use in for example Gandhara and Bactria for long periods. In the case of the Athena Promachos, for example, it is noteworthy that Seleukos I, founder of the Seleucid dynasty who ruled Bactria until about 245 BCE, also used this motif on his own coins.⁸⁸⁸ As such, these designs would have had ample opportunity to spread eastwards and should probably be regarded as products of Bactria or North India, rather than necessarily being imports from the Mediterranean world.

⁸⁸⁴ Schiltz, 242.

⁸⁸⁵ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:416; Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 431.

⁸⁸⁶ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:354–56.

⁸⁸⁷ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 101.

⁸⁸⁸ Havelock, ‘The Archaistic Athena Promachos in Early Hellenistic Coinages’, 46–47.

Yet considering the wide and frequent usage of seals in the kingdom, it seems highly unlikely that most of these seals were imported. The seals in Krorainan usage were after all, as evidenced by the repeated reuse of the same seal by the same individual, a matter of identification and thus the owner of the seal must have chosen the design with care. As such, it seems far more likely that the prospective owner would have commissioned a seal from a local craftsmen, as opposed to buying a seal from some passing traveller or even more arbitrarily receiving it from some foreign dignitary. In fact, Khotan may well have been an important site of such production as at the Yotkan site near Khotan Stein found and bought a very large and diverse collection of seals and intaglios.⁸⁸⁹ The finds are unfortunately not from a dated context and many may well be from later periods, but as many hold fairly simple designs in bronze, it seems probable that they were made locally. As shall be discussed shortly, Caḍota too possessed its own site for the production of beads and jewellery in the so-called “Southern Workshop”, and it is therefore not inconceivable that many seals were produced within the kingdom as well. In fact, in the nearby rubbish pit of N.14 Stein uncovered a seal made of horn that had only been partly finished,⁸⁹⁰ quite likely representing a discarded example of local production. This is also in keeping with the seals themselves, as it is after all the designs of the seals that drew on foreign imagery, while the seals themselves were primarily made from locally or at least regionally available materials, such as bronze or semi-precious stones. As such, it would seem most likely that the majority of the seals and signets discovered by Stein and later expeditions, as well as their corresponding imprints on sealed documents, represented products either of Kroraina or neighbouring kingdoms, such as Khotan.

Exotic materials: Ornaments and jewellery in Kroraina

As the above discussions show, it is for most of the “imported goods” found across Kroraina rather difficult to distinguish between true imports and items made locally but drawing upon foreign designs. Yet even in the latter case, some examples to be imitated must naturally at some point have made it to Kroraina. However, in addition

⁸⁸⁹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 100–101.

⁸⁹⁰ Stein, 252.

to these many examples of foreign designs and styles current in the kingdom of Kroraina in the third and fourth centuries, whether on actually imported items or incorporated into locally made goods, there exists one type of goods about which more can be said, namely jewellery and ornamental items. These items are particularly interesting, partly because many of them were made from materials that must necessarily have been imported, but also because recent research has uncovered much of the details of their production. Such items are well represented in both the tombs M3 and M5 and document n.566, with necklaces, bracelets, ear-ornaments, and even an ornamental headgear. Amongst our examples, the full range of materials utilized for jewellery in Kroraina was also found, ranging from gold and bronze pieces to stone and glass beads, and even incorporating such exotic materials as corals, cowries, and pearls.

Turning first to the materials of likely local provenance, primarily the metal and stone ornaments, these were the most common materials for jewellery in the kingdom of Kroraina. Gold was used, though it was seemingly a rare resource, for though golden ornaments have been found in the Krorainan tombs, such as in the ear-ornaments of the woman of M3⁸⁹¹ and in a few surface finds, such as the ear or possibly nose ornament found by Stein,⁸⁹² such finds are comparatively rare. Silver and bronze ornaments, on the other hand, and in the case of bronze, also beads and especially small bells were found in large quantities on all the Krorainan sites visited by Stein. This is interesting, given that in the written material, gold is mentioned far more frequently and often in worked form,⁸⁹³ such as the golden *dare* of Larsu in document n.318 or the golden necklace mentioned in document n.113, while silver is mentioned only once⁸⁹⁴ and bronze not at all. That gold was available in the vicinity of the kingdom can be verified from documents, such as Kupšimta's letter n.140, which stated that someone was prospecting for gold. This is further evidenced by Stein's observation in his survey maps of the mountainous regions south of Caḍota that there

⁸⁹¹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China), 1999, 2:109.

⁸⁹² Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 148.

⁸⁹³ See document n.12, 113, 140, 177, 318, 324, 419, 431 and 494.

⁸⁹⁴ See document n.149.

existed several goldfields in the region, both at Surghak and Chizghan.⁸⁹⁵ Though these observations were related to the situation during the time of Stein's expeditions, it would appear to have been the same in antiquity, as there appears to be an association in the Kharosthi documents between gold and the "people of the mountain" (*parvata*).⁸⁹⁶ This is exemplified by document n.579, a "Legal" document with a short report on the reverse of the under-tablet unrelated to the main legal case. This short report, likely a draft or the result of reuse, mentions a goldsmith of the people of the mountains who is to be investigated. It would therefore seem that both gold and the skills to work it was locally available at Caḍota or its vicinity. The solution to this apparent paradox lies perhaps in the practice of looting the ancient sites by the later population of the Tarim Basin up until the twentieth century, touched upon in chapter two and well-documented by Stein, as gold would surely have been amongst the first items such looters took with them.

It is at any rate clear, judging from the undisturbed burial contexts such as M3 and M5, that the most common jewellery in Kroraina were beads of various materials. Though none of the deciphered terms in the documents refer to ornaments made with beads, a huge variety of beads were found at the Krorainan sites, both by Stein and by the later Sino-Japanese expeditions. Most were found as single, scattered beads, but Stein also found some bead still held together by string in the shape of necklaces.⁸⁹⁷ From the burial contexts of 95MN1, whole necklaces and armbands made with beads were also uncovered, both in the log-shaped tombs and the richer box-shaped tombs, as exemplified by our two cases M3 and M5.⁸⁹⁸ A wide variety of materials were used to make these ornaments, ranging from semi-precious stones such as the carnelian and haematite beads found with many other beads in the ruin N.24⁸⁹⁹ to the jade, agate, and jasper found at the Lop site.⁹⁰⁰ The majority of beads were, however, various forms of

⁸⁹⁵ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, vol. 5.

⁸⁹⁶ See document n.12, 140 and 578

⁸⁹⁷ For just one example see N.0014.d in Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:415.

⁸⁹⁸ See for example tomb 95MN1M3. The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:109.

⁸⁹⁹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 256–57.

⁹⁰⁰ Stein, 431; Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 224.

porcelain or glass beads. A staggering 768 glass beads were recorded by the Sino-Japanese expedition⁹⁰¹, and Stein furthermore found fragments of glass vessels, including a handle, in the ruin N.5⁹⁰² as well as fragments of a yellow glass vessel at the Endere ruins E.6.⁹⁰³ Stein ascribed several of these glass and porcelain beads, as well as the vessels, to a western origin, noting for example that the blue paste pendant N.XXIX.004, shaped like an urn, closely resembled specimens from Roman Egypt.⁹⁰⁴ Yet the majority of the beads from Kroraina, whether stone or glass, undoubtedly were produced or fashioned, if not in the kingdom of Kroraina itself, then at least somewhere in the Tarim Basin. Certainly at Caḍota, the Sino-Japanese team believed to have uncovered a production site fashioning such beads at the ruins N.13 and N.14.⁹⁰⁵ This hypothesis of local production is further supported by the results of a preliminary chemical analysis carried out on the glass beads that showed that the material of many beads likely had a Central Asian origin. Some of the results of these analyses did, however, point to West Asian origins for some of the material used.⁹⁰⁶ Also some of the designs seen amongst the beads might point to such a connection, seen best in the two heart shaped beads found by the Sino-Japanese expedition,⁹⁰⁷ which yet again finds a striking parallel in the many heart-shaped inlays in turquoise found at Tillya Tepe.⁹⁰⁸ The exact provenance of individual stone and glass beads are naturally nearly impossible to ascertain, but as these similarities and the chemical analysis show, ornamental beads from Western Asia likely were in circulation in the kingdom of Kroraina, together with large amounts of locally produced beads.

These necklaces and armbands made from a variety of ornamental beads do indeed appear to have been the height of fashion in the kingdom, and the wide variety of necklaces found, both in burial contexts and otherwise, incorporated a large variety

⁹⁰¹ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:101.

⁹⁰² Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:410–11.

⁹⁰³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 290.

⁹⁰⁴ Stein, 265.

⁹⁰⁵ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:91–92.

⁹⁰⁶ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:101–24.

⁹⁰⁷ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), 3:106.

⁹⁰⁸ Schiltz, 'Tillya Tepe, the Hill of Gold: A Nomad Necropolis', 230–31.

of materials and colours. The breadth of materials used is particularly well illustrated by the beads of necklace MF0027, originally found as individual beads and recorded by the Sino-Japanese expedition. Unfortunately, the exact find-spot of the beads of this “reconstructed” necklace was not recorded, but they were reported by the Minfeng Niya museum to have been found on the surface near one of the stupas of Caḍota.⁹⁰⁹ The collection contained cowries, pearls, agate, coral beads, tubular glass beads, and stone beads in a variety of colours and patterns, including blue and shades of green.⁹¹⁰ (See figure 22) Amongst this amazing variety appear three materials of particular interest, namely pearls, cowry and coral, all products of the sea and consequently with their origins very far from the southern Tarim Basin indeed.

As will be recalled, both corals and pearls appeared in both the archaeological and textual material presented above. Pearls appear in abundance, with several strings worth of small pearls counted amongst the woman’s jewellery in tomb M3 and seven strings having been stolen in document n.566. As discussed in section 6.1.5, it would seem likely that the strings of pearls owned by Tilutamae would have represented something similar to the string of twenty rather small pearls interred with the woman of M3, as no full necklace of pearls are known from Kroraina. Larger pearls were however also found at Caḍota, individually and in small quantities, as seen in the case of MF0027 above.⁹¹¹ Similarly, cowries appear in the written sources, though only once in document n.585, where it appears to have been a gift attached to the letter and sent to the cozbo Somjaka. They have, however, been found in considerable numbers across the Krorainan sites. Three cowry shells were identified already by Stein at all three major sites explored by him, with examples of worked shells found near the south-eastern ruins at Niya,⁹¹² at the Endere ruin E.6.⁹¹³ and at the Lop site.⁹¹⁴ The Sino-Japanese expedition found further examples of cowry, with two intact shells

⁹⁰⁹ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:65.

⁹¹⁰ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), 3:75.

⁹¹¹ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), 3:75.

⁹¹² Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 268.

⁹¹³ Stein, 290.

⁹¹⁴ Stein, 431.

found at N.14 and as a stray find near the Stupa, respectively.⁹¹⁵ A further seven cowries worked into beads were discovered at N.14, and as seen with the examples from MF0027, cowries both as beads and shells were incorporated into ornamental pieces.⁹¹⁶

Corals appear to have been used in much the same way, though it does not appear in the written sources, at least with any identified term. Stein did not identify any corals amongst the material he recorded, and as such, corals have so far only been found in the context of Caḍota. Bergman did record both coral beads and branches from the Charchan (Calmadana) oasis, but as these had been gathered as surface finds, their context and date is not known.⁹¹⁷ It is, however, likely that the sites further east used coral too, as a large number of coral beads were collected at the Niya (Caḍota) site by the Sino-Japanese expedition. In addition to coral beads collected in the “reconstructed” necklaces MF0027, MF0029, and MF0030, whose contexts were not recorded,⁹¹⁸ three of the tombs 95MN1 contained ornaments made from coral: an ear-ornament from M1, as part of a headgear in M5 and an unworked coral used as a pendant from grave M8.⁹¹⁹ Ruins N.12, N.14, and N.24 furthermore yielded a large quantity of coral, both as beads and in their original shape, most perforated so to be used as ornaments. Ruin N.12 yielded a particularly fine, deep red coral, while no less than thirty-one individual ornaments made from coral were collected at N.24, the residence of Raṃsotsa’s family.⁹²⁰ The most remarkable examples, however, came from the vicinity of the ruin N.14, which yielded twenty-two pieces of coral.⁹²¹

These pearls, cowries, and corals are substances only obtainable from lakes or the sea, and by necessity, they must have been imports from quite far away, as they are

⁹¹⁵ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:96; Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:75.

⁹¹⁶ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:96.

⁹¹⁷ Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 216.

⁹¹⁸ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 3:74–75.

⁹¹⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書(Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:345.

⁹²⁰ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:246.

⁹²¹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:96.

not native to the Tarim Basin. Both pearls and cowries can come from both freshwater lakes and from the sea, while corals of the type used in jewellery are all from the sea. Little is said, in general, of the species used in the archaeological reports, but Bergman noted that the collection of cowries found at the Lop station by his team had both examples of freshwater and marine shells.⁹²² The pearls are nowhere similarly identified, though as pearl producing shellfish species living both in freshwater and the sea are known from both India and China, it seems likely that the Krorainan pearls might be a mix of both.⁹²³

Unfortunately, very few details are known about the harvesting of pearls, cowries, and coral in antiquity, though all three substances were certainly in use. The little that is known comes primarily from written sources. Both pearl and cowries were harvested in China by the time of the Han dynasty, and cowries were used as both ornaments and currency in China from very early periods, so both pearls and cowries could well represent Chinese imports.⁹²⁴ It would, however, seem more likely that at least pearls, and possibly also the cowries, originated from the south and west rather than the east, that is to say from the Himalayas, India, or the Persian Gulf areas. The *Hanshu* notes that the realm of Jibin (罽賓), likely in Kashmir, produced both pearls and corals,⁹²⁵ though at least the corals must have been imported. High quality freshwater pearls from later periods, are however, known from the Himalaya region, which may have been a possible source for Jibin's pearls.⁹²⁶ Yet the most well-known pearl species are marine pearls, and Roman authors strongly associated pearls with the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. In *Naturalis Historia*, Pliny states clearly that the main source for pearls consumed by the Romans was the Indian Ocean. Especially the island of Taprobane (Sri Lanka), he suggests, is an important source of pearls,⁹²⁷ but it is the pearls from the Persian Gulf which he describes as being the finest.⁹²⁸ A similar account is given by the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* that makes repeated mentions of

⁹²² Bergman, *Archaeological Research in Sinkiang, Especially the Lop-nor Region*, 149–50.

⁹²³ Donkin, *Beyond Price, Pearls and Pearl-Fishing: Origins to the Age of Discovery*, 28–36.

⁹²⁴ Donkin, 192–203.

⁹²⁵ Ban Gu, HS, 96A (pp.107)

⁹²⁶ Donkin, *Beyond Price, Pearls and Pearl-Fishing: Origins to the Age of Discovery*, 196–97.

⁹²⁷ Pliny, NH.VI.24.

⁹²⁸ Pliny, NH.IX.54.

markets where pearls could be acquired along the South Indian coast.⁹²⁹ It furthermore mentions rich pearl-fishing grounds both at the mouth of the Persian Gulf near the islands of Calai, and also at Colchi near the southern cape of India.⁹³⁰ That these pearls were traded and sold for significant sums is well known from the Roman empire, where both the routes of acquisition and the systems of salesmen are well documented.⁹³¹ Yet antique Chinese authors associated pearls with the west, connecting them with Da Qin (大秦, The Roman Empire) rather than India, as seen in the product lists given in both the *Hou Hanshu* and the *Weiliu*.⁹³² This could perhaps represent pearls harvested in the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf, which Pliny praised as being of the highest quality and which the *Weiliu* specifically mention as producing pearls.⁹³³ These seas, and the greater Indian Ocean, were however associated by Fan Ye with Da Qin, which he also calls Haixi (海西, West of the Sea).⁹³⁴ Furthermore, imports from Da Qin are said to have been available in Tianzhu (天竺, North India), suggesting that the authors could not clearly distinguish between the different producers of the west.⁹³⁵ Thus, while Chinese and Roman authors place the origin of fine pearls in slightly different areas, they both clearly associated them with areas to the west and south of Kroraina, mainly with the Indian Ocean.

There is clearer agreement in the case of corals, which both Roman and Chinese traditions suggest to have been mainly products of the Roman Empire, coming from the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. As with pearls, both the *Hou Hanshu* and the *Weiliu* lists corals as products of Da Qin,⁹³⁶ the *Weiliu* furthermore stating that the Red Sea produced corals as well.⁹³⁷ Pliny, in his section on the origin and use of corals, agreed that the Red Sea produced corals, as did the Persian Gulf, but the finest corals he states were found in the Mediterranean, especially off the southern coast of France and near Sicily. He further suggests that coral was as highly regarded by the Indians as

⁹²⁹ PME, 56. and 61.

⁹³⁰ PME, 35. and 59.

⁹³¹ Schörle, 'Pearls, Power and Profit: Mercantile Networks and Economic Considerations of the Pearl Trade in the Roman Empire'.

⁹³² Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (25). Yu Huan, WL, Section.12

⁹³³ Yu Huan, WL, Section.17

⁹³⁴ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (23)

⁹³⁵ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (31)

⁹³⁶ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (25). Yu Huan, WL, Section.12

⁹³⁷ Yu Huan, WL, Section.17

pearls were by the Romans.⁹³⁸ This seems to be reflected in the *Periplus*, which mentions corals as imports of several important Indian ports, amongst them both Barbaricum and Barygaza.⁹³⁹ It would thus seem highly likely that some of the ornamental materials used to make necklaces and armbands in Kroraina, most certainly the corals but likely also pearls and possibly the cowries, originated from at least as far away as the Persian Gulf or the Indian Ocean, and in some cases possibly even from the Mediterranean.

Yet despite the vast distances these materials must have crossed before being put to use in Kroraina, the most striking feature of these three materials is not their distant provenance but rather the form in which they arrived. As the surveys conducted by the Sino-Japanese expedition in the vicinity of the ruin N.14 show, these materials did in fact arrive in Caḍota, not as finished products, but as unworked raw materials.

Exotic materials: The Southern Workshop

The so-called “Southern Workshop Area” (南方工房址), surveyed by the Sino-Japanese team in 1996-97, is of crucial importance for understanding the use of imported materials in Caḍota, and as such, warrants a full presentation. The area spanned roughly 400 metres from north-south and 500 metres east-west and lay in the vicinity of the cluster of structures known as ruin N.14, surveyed by both Stein and by the Sino-Japanese team. This cluster of ruins had consisted of at least four structures with the largest, ruin N.14.i, being 11x17 metres, an unusually large structure when compared with most found at the Niya (Caḍota) site.⁹⁴⁰ It appears to have been a hall-like structure with just one large room, with a height Stein estimated based on the remaining pillars to have been more than two and a half metres. In the centre had been placed four large pillars in a square that Stein thought might once have supported an atrium-like construction.⁹⁴¹ Unfortunately, the ruins were not excavated, neither by Stein’s team nor the Sino-Japanese team, though Stein did thoroughly excavate a large

⁹³⁸ Pliny, NH.XXXII.11.

⁹³⁹ PME, 39. and 56.

⁹⁴⁰ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:90–91.

⁹⁴¹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 217.

rubbish heap in the structure N.14.iii. As such, and since only one leather strip with unintelligible Kharosthi writing was found in the ruin, it is not possible to determine the purpose of the structures.

South of ruin N.14 lay a vineyard, judging by the shrivelled grapevines found there in neat rows, and in a small depression beyond this vineyard lay the “Southern Workshop” area. The area was thus called because scattered across it were found the remains of two types of oven-like structures, four termed “furnaces” (炉) and two “kilns” (窯), a man-made pool and three smaller brick buildings, as well as a large amount of beads, metal items, pottery, and other “crafted” goods. (See figure 23) The “furnaces” and “kilns” had both been made from bricks, some sun-dried and some fired, and showed clear signs of having been exposed to high temperatures with scorch marks and ash still evident. As can be seen from the plan, the furnaces were found scattered about the site, and from within were found both charcoal as well as metal slag, suggesting that at least some of them had been used for metalwork. The kilns, on the other hand, were found side by side near the pool, and the survey team thought they had been used to fire pottery and other earthenware.⁹⁴² As a number of items in stone, iron, and bronze were found across the area, including a mirror, several arrowheads and two knives, some seemingly unfinished, it was concluded that the area had been a local centre of production.⁹⁴³

Yet the most remarkable find of the “Southern Workshop” area was done in the easternmost of the three brick structures. Scattered there were found no less than twenty-two individual pieces of coral, as well as four cowries. (See figure 24) As seen from the figure, these were in various stages of production, ranging from polished and perforated coral beads and perforated coral pieces for use as necklaces to yet unworked pieces of raw coral. Together with the large amounts of stone and glass beads found across the area, this shows that not only were metal and pottery crafted locally, but jewellery and ornaments made from beads were likewise made in the area.⁹⁴⁴

⁹⁴² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:92–93.

⁹⁴³ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:97.

⁹⁴⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:96.

Beyond what can be garnered from the archaeological material, it is difficult to say much about the “Southern Workshop” area, who might have worked there, how the work was organized, and its relationship with the wider oasis, as no written material was uncovered in the area. The excavated rubbish heap of ruin N.14 did yield a single Kharosthi document in the form of a small leather strip, but it is entirely unintelligible. Yet in the same rubbish heap were found more than twelve small wooden slips, eleven of which carried finely drawn Chinese characters and whose shape Stein described as “label”-like.⁹⁴⁵ Eight of them carried decipherable text, all following the same formula of greeting, and can be illustrated by the label N.xiv.iii.4 transcribed and translated by Chavannes,

Obv: 王母謹以琅玕一致問 Rev: 王

Obv: La mère du roi se sert avec respect d'une pierre précieuse pour présenter ses salutations. Rev: Le roi⁹⁴⁶

As seen above, the slip reports that the “mother of the king” respectfully presented a precious stone and her well-wishes to the addressee, identified on the reverse as “the king”. All the slips followed this pattern, almost word for word, with the only major variations being on the obverse the identity of the sender and the type of stone sent as a gift and on the reverse the identity of the receiver. As can be seen from the above, these “label” documents possess several remarkable features. Firstly, they were written in Chinese characters rather than the more common Kharosthi script. This might suggest a Chinese presence, though as discussed in section 3.2.1 at least part of the Cadotan population were likely literate in Chinese, and so this was not necessarily the case. A more prominent feature is the frequent appearance of royal titles amongst both the addressers and the addressees. Two of the documents give the addressee as either the king (王) or the great king (大王), and several other addressers and addressees appear to have been members of the royal family, such as the mother of the king (王

⁹⁴⁵ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 218.

⁹⁴⁶ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 199.

母), the lady/concubine of the king (夫人), and the spouse of the crown prince(大子夫人). Unfortunately, no datable material was uncovered from the rubbish heap, making it impossible at present to judge the date of the labels. Nor have any excavations been undertaken at ruin N.14, which could possibly have shed light on whom these royalties might have been. Stein, for his part, suggested that these labels referred to the king of the earlier Jingjue (精絕) state and his family, whose residence he proposed ruin N.14 to have been. He bases this conclusion for a large part on the observation that one of the labels was addressed to the lady of Qiemo/Charchan (且末夫人), which he took to mean that both the Niya site and Charchan was at the time independent entities.⁹⁴⁷ This is certainly possible, though this would date the labels to an earlier period of Caḍota's history. It would seem equally likely that the labels might be taken to refer to the royal family of Kroraina, in which case the lady of Qiemo (且末夫人) would simply be a lady or concubine from Charchan (Calmadana), which after all was also under Krorainan rule. This would certainly seem the natural explanation if the documents were found to be contemporaneous with the other material found across the Niya (Caḍota) site. As a third option, the labels might not have referred to an actual king at all but rather to a member of the local ruling elite. In such an interpretation the references to a king might, for example, be seen as referring to the ruling cozbo who after all ruled the *raja*, literally kingdom, of Caḍota, and who in several cases were also called the great cozbo, perhaps mirroring the great king of the labels.

Yet the uncertain identities of the addressers and addressees notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that all the labels mention precious stones as the gifts to which they were presumably attached. More precisely, three types are mentioned: *langgan* (琅玕) in six of the document, yellow *langgan* (黄琅玕) in one, and *meigui* (玫瑰) in one. All three of these substances are known from Chinese literature. *Meigui*, according to the Han-dynasty dictionary *Shouwen Jiezi* (說文解字), appears to have referred to a red type of jade.⁹⁴⁸ A definition of *langgan*, on the other hand, is far more difficult and

⁹⁴⁷ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 218–21.

⁹⁴⁸ Xu Shen, *SWJ*, 2 (195-196)

exactly what it might have referred to has been debated to a great extent. Indeed, as suggested by Hill, it appears to have referred to different substances at different times, though in all cases it referred to some form of precious stone or similar material.⁹⁴⁹ Given the proximity of the “Southern Workshop” area, it would be tempting to see these precious stones mentioned in the labels in relation to the ornaments and jewellery worked there, especially as *langgan* in some cases appears to have referred to coral. Rather than having been discarded from the residence of the addresser or the addressee, these labels might then have been produced for whoever commissioned the ornaments made in the workshop. Then again, without further excavation this must remain but a hypothesis.

Considering the precious stones mentioned in the labels in relation with the “Southern Workshop”, it is however also noteworthy that *langgan* is in one Chinese source associated with the Kunlun Mountains.⁹⁵⁰ This appears in the *Guanzi* (管子), attributed to the seventh century but likely compiled in the early Han period, and the text state that the Kunlun produced both jade and *langgan*, which could be had from the Yuezhi people.⁹⁵¹ *Langgan* also appears in the *Hou Hanshu* and *Weilue* lists of products of the Da-Qin, that is the Roman Empire,⁹⁵² which as discussed above appears to have given precious items associated with the west, rather than necessarily things produced in the empire itself. As such, one could even wonder if some of the beads and ornaments created in the “Southern Workshop” of Caḍota made it beyond the kingdom, for example to China.

Yet such speculations about the context of the “Southern Workshop” finds aside, it is clear that this site is of crucial importance to understanding the movement and use of “imported goods” in Kroraina, and indeed the larger question of the Silk Road exchange network as well. On the one hand, the finds shows that local Caḍotan craftsmen were likely capable of producing many of the items in a “foreign” style discussed above, such as the cast bronze mirrors in a Chinese style, one of which was

⁹⁴⁹ See Hill, *Through the Jade Gate*, 273–75. Hill discuss the possible meanings of the term *langgan* and the different views on it in detail.

⁹⁵⁰ Hill, 273.

⁹⁵¹ Guan Zhong, GZ, Qing Zhong I (18)

⁹⁵² Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (25), Yu Huan, WL, Section.17

found at the site, as noted before. On the other hand, and even more importantly, is the fact that it shows with all possible clarity that imported materials, such as coral or cowries, arrived in Kroraina in a raw, unworked state, and in significant quantities. In fact, such materials arrived in large enough quantities that local craftsmen were not only skilled in handling them, but also in quantities that allowed them to have a store of yet unworked material at the time of the site's abandonment.

In summary, the Krorainan sources show that, in addition to the large amounts of silk being imported into the kingdom, a not insignificant number of ornamental items and materials also arrived. In some cases these ornamental pieces, such as the Chinese mirrors, might have been imported in their finished form, while in other cases it appears most likely that it was primarily the design that was imported, such as the case of the ornamental dagger-sheaths from tomb M3. Yet most noteworthy is the widespread use of ornamental beads made from pearls, corals, and cowrie, commodities imported from vastly distant oceans as raw materials for Krorainan workshops to work into beads and ornaments according to the local fashion. This last group of imported goods is of particular importance, because they tell us something of the nature of the connections and the types of exchange that carried these items to Kroraina. For local craftsmen to utilize and even possess a store of beads made from these materials at the time of the abandonment of the Niya (Caḍota) site, these commodities must have arrived fairly frequently.

6.4 Spice-trade in Kroraina

There is in fact a final category of imported goods which underlines this point even better, namely spices. So far, no archaeological traces or remains of spices have been excavated at the Krorainan sites, yet seeing as only a very small amount of foodstuff has survived, primarily in the best-preserved tombs, this is hardly surprising. In four of the Kharosthi documents, however, a total of eight different spices are mentioned, namely in documents n.77, 109, 354 and 702. In all four cases, the documents appear to be "Letter"-type documents, though document n.77 is so heavily fragmented it is difficult to categorize it with certainty. In the three first cases the spices mentioned were sent as gifts alongside the document, a betel (*timpura*) sent in n.77, a portion of

rock salt (*Sidhalavaṃna*)⁹⁵³ sent along with two jewels and some unidentified items in n.109, and finally a portion of ginger (*śimgavera*) in n.354. It is also possible that two of the unidentified items in n.109, the two *ariḍi* and an *ariḍaga*, was some form of ginger, as tentatively suggested by Burrow following Thomas.⁹⁵⁴ Baums and Glass' dictionary gives "fresh ginger" for both these terms,⁹⁵⁵ which would seem plausible, as ginger (called *śimgavera*) was sent as a gift in document n.354. Being sent as gifts, it is clear that these spices, whether ginger, salt or betel, were seen as very valuable, something which becomes especially clear considering the other items sent along with the rock salt in document n.109, namely jewels. All of them furthermore appear in very limited quantities, insofar as amounts are given, as all three documents merely state one in numbers behind the spice in question. This is, however, not the case with the remarkable "Letter"-type document n.702, found at ruin L. B. 4. at the Loulan (Kroraina) site.

Rectangular Under-tablet. Obv.

To the feet of the masters, the divinities, who are worshiped by gods and men, dear father gusura Leśvaṃna and dear mother Kuvinoae. Cuvalayina and Atamsiyae send their respects and health, much, immeasurably. And (we) are pleased to hear from the base of your feet that you are in good health and your people are the same. And we are alive (and well) through your favour. And thus we inform you: Atamsiyae here has survived the pains of child-birth in safety and good health. A son has been born. You must all be pleased. So it will not be long before we (again) send (?) health to your feet. Also what from there in the hand of Ponigana [...]

⁹⁵³ The meaning of Sidha, or possibly rather Sindhu, is unclear. See Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 130.

⁹⁵⁴ Burrow gives Sidha salt, Burrow, 76. Rock salt suggested to me by Nicholas Sims-Williams, personal communication on the 24.01.2020.

⁹⁵⁵ Baums and Glass, *A Dictionary of Gandhari*, "Ariḍaga"

Rectangular Under-tablet. Rev.

[.....] 1 *dhane*, 3 *dhane* of pepper (*marica*), 1 *drakhma* of ginger, 2 *drakhma* of (long?) pepper (*pipali*), 1 *dhane* of *tvaca* (Cinnamon or Cassia), 1 *dhane* of small cardamoms (*suṣmela*), 4 *stater* of sugar (*śakara*).⁹⁵⁶

As can be seen from the document quoted above, the cover-tablet is missing, which means both the address formula as well as the latter part of the text is missing as well. As such, it is not possible to say for certain whether or not the last part of the document, dealing with the spices, is connected to the main text or represents a case of reuse. There is, however, some weight for considering it part of the larger text in that the tablet carries no signs of having been scraped or otherwise prepared for reuse, and no notice is made of a change in hand by the editors. On the other hand, however, “Letter” documents as a rule did not continue on the reverse of the under-tablet, as the text written there would have been exposed when the document was sealed. Therefore, this under-tablet should most likely be understood as a case of reuse, something that might explain why the cover-tablet was not found together with it. The addressee of this letter and owner of the house in which it was found, was a man named *guśura* *Leśvaṃna*. Judging by his title as well as the rich relics and carvings found in the ruin, he must have been a member of the Krorainan nobility.⁹⁵⁷ (see figure 25) That he was rich is beyond doubt, as the share variety and amounts of spices mentioned in the list are quite remarkable. The various measures mentioned, all loan words, clearly denote units of weight or measure, though what these measures equate is not known. Given the variety, however, it certainly would be enough to represent a household’s spicebox, or perhaps an assortment of spices sold or purchased by a merchant, though as context of the list remains uncertain, this cannot be known.

What is clear is that the origins of all the spices described in the documents above were not in the Tarim Basin, except perhaps for the rock salt, as they are all the products of tropical regions. In almost all the cases, it also seems overwhelmingly likely that these commodities’ origin was somewhere in India. The plants and grasses

⁹⁵⁶ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 141.

⁹⁵⁷ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 403.

used to produce sugar, pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, and ginger all originate from the Indian subcontinent,⁹⁵⁸ while betel is native to South-East Asia.⁹⁵⁹ As shown by various antique authors, both sugar and pepper were produced in and exported from India in antiquity. Strabo and Pliny, for example, both state that sugar was grown by the Indians,⁹⁶⁰ and Pliny furthermore relates the same for pepper.⁹⁶¹ The *Periplus* similarly describes pepper as an Indian export from Barygaza and nearby ports, sold there in bulk.⁹⁶² Thus, as the Tarim Basin itself, with its very dry climate, is quite unsuited for these species, they must have necessarily been imports from more suitable regions.

This observation carries a particularly noteworthy implication, as unlike textiles like silks or ornaments like corals, spices are commodities used and consumed within a fairly short span of time. While silk cloth, for example, could be reused and resold and gold ornaments could be inherited through generations, the many spices described in document n.702 would have been consumed, whether in food or as fragrance. This then means that there must have been a fairly regular supply reaching Kroraina, even more so then in the case of the corals, and that these spices must have travelled relatively quickly from their place of origin, so as to not go off. As such, though these spices likely travelled through many intermediates, it precludes a slow, socially-driven exchange scenario like the one suggested by for example Rasckhe in his *New Studies on the Roman Commerce with the East*.

Thus, if we consider the ornamental materials from the “Southern Workshop” area and the spices evident in a small number of the Kharosthi sources, together they reveal to us some of the fundamental characteristics of the exchange that carried them deep into the deserts of the Tarim Basin. Firstly, this exchange must have been fairly regular, at least regular enough to allow the craftsmen to be familiar with the materials and possess a store, and also regular enough that the elite of Krorainan society could be familiar with the value and use of spices. Secondly, it speaks to the relative speed with which some of these imports travelled from their place of origin, as some of the

⁹⁵⁸ Toussaint-Samat, *A History of Food*, 439–53, 496–97.

⁹⁵⁹ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘Betel’.

⁹⁶⁰ Strabo, Geo.15.1.20. Pliny, NH.XII.17.

⁹⁶¹ Pliny, NH.XII.14

⁹⁶² PME, 49. and 56.

spices would not have survived a slow and meandering journey, especially as any journey through the surround wastelands would have been very slow to begin with. Finally, it dispels any Rasckhean notions of the randomness of this exchange, as materials in their raw form surely would not have travelled very far through social exchange, and in the case of the spices would simply have been consumed or gone off.

6.5 Krorainan exports

Before moving on to the role of these imports in Krorainan society and the larger problem of how they made it to the kingdom, it is worth briefly considering what products the Krorainans might have been able to offer in return. Surely, given the amounts of imported goods observed, it stands to reason that the Krorainans themselves were able to offer some export in return. This question of Krorainan exports is a large and complex one, and a full investigation of this question would need to draw on a far broader range of sources than those under consideration here, including for example finds from western Chinese tombs. Yet even when keeping strictly to the Krorainan sources, a few tentative points about Krorainan exports can be made.

Firstly, it is worth considering the basic products of the Krorainan agro-pastoral economy, discussed in sections 5.2 of the previous chapter, and in particular the production of wine, which is mentioned by the Hanshu as a product of Calmadana (Qiemu).⁹⁶³ Unlike many of the other products produced by the Krorainan agro-pastoral economy, such as grains, fruits or dairy products, wine is not strictly speaking a subsistence product but rather a form of luxury. The individual farmsteads would, of course, consume some of the wine themselves, but given that some Cađotans like Ramşotsa owned more than one vineyard, some Krorainans certainly produced more wine than they could realistically consume. As such, grapes would make a prime candidate for a cash crop and wine a possible export article. In fact, some of the surviving documents do show large quantities of wine being moved out of the oases of

⁹⁶³ Ban Gu, HS, 96A (pp.92-93)

Caḍotan. One very good example of this is document n.637, a “Report”-type document listing the expenses incurred,

Rectangular Under-tablet. Obv.

In the 11th year of his majesty the great king Jiṭuga Mayiri, son of heaven, on the first day of the sixth month, at the time the queen made a journey to Khotan, at that time the kāla Kirteya came here to Caḍota and made *vaṣḍhiga* in the mountain, in the time of the cozbo Soṃjaka. At that time (the following) expenditure was incurred : Wine *potgoñena* in the mountain 1 milima 4 khi; further, *dirpira* corn 2 milima 10 khi, and flour (*ata*) 1 milima 5 khi; further, as provisions in the mountains 1 milima 10 khi. Further, the kāla fell ill and at that time the expenditure of corn was 1 milima 10 khi in *acona*, and of wine 3 khi in *acomena*. Further, the kāla Kirteya returned from the mountain, and at that time the expenditure of wine in Cadota, in the *vasdhika*, was 7 khi. Further, at the time of his departure for the capital, wine for the journey, 4 khi *potgoñena*, and again provisions for his attendants (*vatagayana*) 1 milima 10 khi. Further, when the kāla Kirteya was gone on an embassy to Khotan, at that time the expenditure of corn for their provisions was 12 milima, in all, and in addition they took 4 sheep along with 4 milima of corn. Further, (when) the kāla Kirteya returned from Khotan, Kātila was sent from Nina and took 4 khi of wine *potgoñena*. Further, from there a letter of command came from the feet of the kāla, (saying that) a present of wine was to be sent to the tasuca Ḍhappeya. Further, we took a present of 3 khi of wine *potgoñena* to the śadavida Tsugeṣla. Further, the kāla granted 1 milima of corn to Yitaya. Further, from the feet of the kāla, *somgha* was granted each year to the administrators of the province. Further, when the kāla Puṃñabala made a journey to the mountains, at that time the expenditure of wine was 1 milima 4 khi, *potgoñena*. Further, Sagamoya, Priyavata, and Lȳipeya took 12 khi of wine *potgoñena* to the Sacas. Further, 2 milima of corn was granted from the feet of the kāla to the keepers of the camels (*uta-valaga*). The camels went out to the sacrifices. Further, Cikiṃto, the vasu Sagamoya, Tumpāla, and Cakola took 4 milima of wine *ṣamiyena* to

the mountains. Further, from a letter of presentation, 5 khi went out to Patraya, 5 khi to the secret agent (*carapurusa*) Piteya, 5 khi to the tasuca Dhageya, and 5 khi to Mogeci.⁹⁶⁴

Exactly whose expenses this was is not clear, but it was likely either the estate of *kāla Kirteya* or *kāla Pumñabala*. As seen from the various amounts reported taking out however wine was regularly carried from Caḍota, three times to the mountains (*parvata*), once to Nina, once to Saca and twice as provisions for journeys. The purpose of these expenditures of wine is not always clear, though it is noteworthy that some of the wine taken to the mountain was for the purpose of doing or making *vaṣḍhiga*. The meaning of this word is not known, but it is used in exactly the same context in documents n.622 and n.634 where orders were given to take wine to the mountain to do *vaṣḍhiga*, and appears once as an epithet for grain in document n.140. Based on this, Burrow suggests that it might have meant some form of festival, in which the wine was consumed.⁹⁶⁵ This is a reasonable explanation, though one could alternatively suggest some form of religious ritual involving wine or possibly a form of market or fair, in which the wine would be sold.

A second noteworthy feature of document n.637, when considering wine as a possible export, is the large amounts given. A total of 5 milima 1 khi *potgoñena*, 7 khi normal, 5 milima *ṣamiyena* wine was expended. What one milima equated in Kroraina is not known, but from document n.329, a “Royal Command” type document ordering wine to be sent, we learn that one camel was expected to carry 1 milima 1 khi of wine with one khi expected to be lost during the journey. No information is given on how heavily laden the camel would then be, though one would expect the load to be close to the comfortable maximum in order to minimize the number of beasts, fodder, and handlers needed. As such, given that an adult Bactrian camel can carry a travel load of about 250 kg, it seems safe to assume that the 1 milima 1 khi of wine should equate at least 150 kg, ie 150 liters of wine, which would be about a large barrel’s worth. Given this, we see that the *kāla Kirteya*, in fact, brought about a camel’s load worth of wine

⁹⁶⁴ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 132–33.

⁹⁶⁵ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 120.

for the *vaṣḍhiga* in the mountain, certainly a worthy contribution to a festival and also enough to trade in if that was the purpose of a *vaṣḍhiga*.

These approximations of what a milima of wine might have constituted furthermore raises an interesting point regarding the amounts of wine taken as tax and from the royal land by the Krorainan state. In document n.567 of the “Royal Command” type complaining of mismanagement, we learn that across four years an unfaithful *ṣoṭhaṃga* had wasted 150 milima of royal wine, which the court now demanded collected and sent. Even if this was the accumulated wine for four years it still represents a staggering quantity of wine, and it was merely the product of one wine office in one of the kingdom’s oases. Not even the most frivolous of royal courts could possibly have consumed such quantities of wine by themselves, and it seems certain that it must have been given out or sold on, quite possibly also to foreign buyers.

Textiles similarly seem a likely candidate for a Krorainan export. As touched upon in section 6.2, there is much archaeological evidence to suggest that the oases of the kingdom of Kroraina produced large quantities of high quality woollen textiles, including very fine carpets and tapestries, products which the Tarim Basin is famous for even today. Many such textiles, for example the type of rugs or carpets called *kojava*, repeatedly figure as payment in the Krorainan contracts, and they were clearly common trade objects internally in the kingdom.⁹⁶⁶ It therefore stands to reason to assume that they may also have been sold out of the kingdom. This might at least have been done by the royal court, since much like with wine, it acquired large quantities of *kojava* rugs through its taxation system,⁹⁶⁷ rugs which for the most part had to be sold on to be of value for the Krorainan state.

A final possible source of Krorainan exports worth discussing here, and the one that would be easiest associated with long-distance exchange, was various forms of precious stones and metals. As noted, goldfields were recorded south of Caḍota by Stein, and Huntington visited several of them, for gold can be found along most of the

⁹⁶⁶ See document n.222, 327, 575, 583, 633 and 833.

⁹⁶⁷ See document n.173, 207, 382, 714 and 728.

rivers of the Southern Tarim Basin.⁹⁶⁸ The gold from these fields is carried down from the mountains by the rivers and deposited amongst the gravel, where the water fans out at the foot of the mountains. This gold was certainly also being prospected in Krorainan times, for as will be recalled from Kupṣimṭa's letter n.140 to his brother-in-law Lȳipeya, Kupṣimṭa had sent people to prospect gold in the mountains. These same rivers carried many other valueables down into the Tarim Basin, most famously various rare shades of jade. Jade in the Southern Tarim Basin has long been specifically associated with Khotan and its two rivers,⁹⁶⁹ but many other Tarim rivers also carry jade. This seems to have been the case with some of the rivers in Kroraina as well, since the *Hanshu* records jade as one of the primary products of interest in the kingdom.⁹⁷⁰ As noted by Atwood, later medieval travellers like Marco Polo suggested that the Southern Tarim rivers produced other precious stones, like jasper and chalcedony.⁹⁷¹ When further considering the evidence from the "Southern Workshop", which appears to have been crafting beads and possibly other forms of jewellery, it seems reasonable to suggest that various forms of precious and semi-precious stones as well as precious metals were an important export from Kroraina, both in raw and possibly worked form.

These are of course but some possibilities, as one could easily imagine that other Krorainan commodities such as horses and camels were similarly being exported. Nor would these three commodities, wine, textiles, and ornamental materials have been traded in the same way, with the same reach and possible destinations. Yet they do offer some possible and, in light of the Krorainan sources, likely export commodities. However, determining the extent of Kroraina's actual exports would require a far more detailed and broader study of its own.

⁹⁶⁸ Huntington, *The Pulse of Asia, a Journey in Central Asia Illustrating the Geographic Basis of History*, 158, 195–96.

⁹⁶⁹ Michaelson, 'Jade and the Silk Road: Trade and Tribute in the First Millennium'.

⁹⁷⁰ Ban Gu, HS, 96A (pp.85)

⁹⁷¹ Atwood, 'Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh'ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)', 192.

6.6 Kroraina and the consumption of prestige goods

Why imported goods?

Thus far this chapter has sought to sketch the wider economic landscape of the kingdom of Kroraina, discussing the presence of “imported goods” in both the written and archaeological material. In the preceding sections this chapter has also shown how there is ample evidence for both the use of and trade in various imported commodities. Many of these items were rare and exotic goods with origins far beyond the kingdom itself, some originating as far away as the Indian Ocean. This conclusion naturally rises several intriguing questions. How did these commodities make it to Kroraina? On which routes and by who were they transported? Last but not least, how did the local Krorainans acquire these commodities and for what purpose?

In the following chapters, this case study will discuss possible answers to these questions. It will look at how the Southern Tarim Basin region was connected, what evidence there is for various forms of exchange moving through it and what role the Southern Tarim Basin kingdoms themselves had in the movement of these commodities. First, however, it is prudent to consider the final question in some detail, namely why these commodities appear in Kroraina and what purpose they served there. Given the richness of the available sources, both archaeological and written, it is quite surprising how little attention has been paid to this question. As discussed in the introduction, most scholarly works that do discuss the Krorainan evidence tend to link these finds with the Silk Road. Craig Benjamin’s recent book *Empires of Eurasia*, for example, though it does not directly address the Krorainan evidence, states that we must assume these commodities to have travelled through the Tarim region with Chinese diplomats and commercial caravans.⁹⁷² Similarly Valerie Hansen, who in her book directly highlights and discuss some of these commodities found at Caḍota such as pearls or Chinese mirrors in relation with the Silk Road, does not consider why these commodities had made it to Kroraina.⁹⁷³ Indeed even Wu Yong, who studied the corals found by the Sino-Japanese expedition, merely suggests that these commodities

⁹⁷² Benjamin, *Empires of Ancient Eurasia: The First Silk Road Era, 100BCE-250CE.*, 106–7.

⁹⁷³ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 50.

must have been moved, directly or indirectly, on the Silk Road in connection with the Chinese tributary system.⁹⁷⁴

However, such a scenario, that these commodities merely happened to find their way to the houses and graves of Caḍota and other oases in the kingdom, either as Chinese gifts or accidental droppings made by passing caravans, simply cannot hold when faced with the variety and volume of commodities discussed above. Rather, I will argue that a key to understanding why these commodities made their way to Kroraina lies in the nature of these commodities themselves, as most of them fall into the category of prestige goods.

Imported goods and prestige goods

Most commodities and resources, to some extent and in certain social contexts, have uses beyond their immediate functionality. The possession of large herds of camels for example, as with the Krorainan king's royal herds, could serve both as a symbol of wealth and be used for gift-exchange, in addition to having more practical sides, such as providing meat, mounts and so forth. Yet unlike most of the common resources and commodities found in the Krorainan material, be it grain, sheep or royal camels, prestige goods are characterised by their primary function of communicating with the owner's social environment, be it as a display of wealth and power, or as a sign of belonging to a particular group. Ornaments, such as the many bead, pearl and coral necklaces found in Kroraina, are obvious examples of this, though what constitutes prestige goods within a given society can vary widely and take many forms.⁹⁷⁵ As discussed by Honeychurch, however, commodities obtained from distant locations, which he term "novelties", are particularly well suited as prestige goods, being by their very nature rare and difficult to obtain.⁹⁷⁶ Since Kroraina undoubtedly had a wealthy ruling elite, one would therefore expect that also the elites of Kroraina and similar Tarim Basin polities sought to acquire novel prestige goods. Indeed, this appears to

⁹⁷⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (*Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China*), 1999, 2:353.

⁹⁷⁵ Selbitschka, 'Genuine Prestige Goods in Mortuary Contexts: Emulation in Polychrome Silk and Byzantine Solidi from Northern China', 1–12.

⁹⁷⁶ Honeychurch, *Inner Asia and the Spatial Politics of Empire. Archaeology, Mobility and Cultural Contact.*, 17–26.

have been the case for at least two notable reasons, namely for use as social markers and as commodities for use in their own systems of redistribution and reciprocity.

Prestige goods as social markers

The acquisition and consumption of various luxuries are forms of conspicuous consumption, as described by Thorstein Veblen, the ability to acquire these items showing off their owner's wealth and power.⁹⁷⁷ Yet they also serve the important function of demarking social groups, functioning as social markers. The use of items as social markers is readily visible in most, if not all, societies across time and space. Choice of dress, hairstyle and accessories, whether arm-rings or modern phones, makes members of a given society able to readily identify which social group a given person seeks to be part of. Throughout history, elites have used social markers to distinguish themselves from the societies they sought to rule, and amongst such social markers, imported "novelties" are particularly notable. This is seen just as starkly in the spectacular nomadic burials of Tillya Tepe in Afghanistan, with its Hellenistic cameos, golden Eros and Roman coins,⁹⁷⁸ as it could be seen amongst the roman elite in their use of pearl ornaments or silk dresses so detested by Pliny.⁹⁷⁹ While, as Honeychurch emphasises,⁹⁸⁰ the use of these social markers are not necessarily intentional strategies, they nonetheless play a crucial role for social elites in visualising, and thus reinforcing and reproducing, the boundaries between social groups.⁹⁸¹

Turning to the Krorainan material, it is clear that imported prestige goods were by no means purely the purview of the social and economic elites. As discussed at length in the section on textiles, it appears that silk, for example, was more generally available in the kingdom and based on the amount found in graves, it appears that even those of lesser wealth could possess some silk. Similarly, even the comparatively

⁹⁷⁷ Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, chap. 4.

⁹⁷⁸ Schiltz, 'Tillya Tepe, the Hill of Gold: A Nomad Necropolis'.

⁹⁷⁹ Pliny, NH.VI.20

⁹⁸⁰ Honeychurch, *Inner Asia and the Spatial Politics of Empire. Archaeology, Mobility and Cultural Contact.*, 25.

⁹⁸¹ Honeychurch, 24–25; Tilly, 'Changing Forms of Inequality', 33–34.

“simpler” log-shaped graves yielded Chinese mirrors,⁹⁸² and some imported ornaments, including ornaments made from coral.⁹⁸³ Judging from the available evidence, however, it is clear that the majority of imported prestige goods were owned and consumed by the Krorainan elite.

There are several good examples from the written sources of the accumulation and consumption of imported novelties by the upper strata of Krorainan society in quantities that must have been far in excess of what was generally available. One example is gušura Lešvaṃna and the list of spices in document n.702, discussed in the previous section. Another, particularly good, example is cozbo Larsu, the actor n.385 encountered in the document n.318. As discussed there, Larsu was the son of a prominent official, the Cozbo Samasena, attained the rank of cozbo himself and furthermore appears to have been a sponsor of the local monastic community. As such, he was clearly an influential member of Caḍotan society and part of the ruling elite. As will be recalled, he appears to have accumulated large quantities of fine textiles, owning for example a silken jacket, many embroidered and polychrome garments, and twelve rolls of silk, as mentioned in documents n.318 and n.345. That such accumulations of imported prestige goods were actually used to display wealth is also evident in the available sources, shown particularly well by the Krorainan burial finds, and more specifically, by such examples as the tomb M3 (95MN1) with its spectacular inventory of silks, fine weapons, and imported ornaments. Whether or not it was the occupants who had owned and used this vast inventory in life, the fact that it accompanied them in death was clearly a display of their, or their surviving relatives', wealth and status in the Caḍotan society. The act of interment was naturally also one of the ultimate forms of conspicuous consumption that one could perform, given that the wealth in question was permanently taken out of circulation.

Whether or not cozbo Larsu or the man and woman of tomb M3 (95MN1) wore the prestige goods they evidently possessed during life is, of course, more difficult to know for sure. Certainly in the case of the tomb M3, some of the items within appear

⁹⁸² For example tomb 95MN1M5. The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (*Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China*), 1999, 2:143.

⁹⁸³ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:345.

to have been specifically crafted for the grave, such as the large silk blanket that covered the two corpses, which would neither have been warm nor practical as bedding, given its size.⁹⁸⁴ Some of the items, however, showed clear signs of wear, such as the man's jacket made from cotton and three different types of *jin*-silk, indicating that some of them had indeed been used in life. The written material, perhaps not unsurprisingly, gives little evidence for what people wore and pieces of art showing people from Kroraina are rare. Of some interest is the small doll found in ruin N.22, discussed on page 270-271, that had been dressed in a light-brown silk dress with patches of purple and buff material attached and sashed with a band of red silk.⁹⁸⁵ (Figure 15) The most prominent person of ruin N.22 appears to have been a man called Yapgu. He is never given with an official title, yet still appears to have been a fairly important individual, described as an elder (*jetha*) in document n.477 and said to be on royal business in document n.480. The purpose of the doll is not known, though it appears very much like a child's toy, and if so, this doll might indicate what a young woman of a good family would dream of wearing. Another possible piece of evidence to support that the prestige goods of the graves were actually worn in life comes from the painted reliefs inside the stupas of Miran. Though most of the uncovered friezes depict scenes from Buddhist stories and other religious motifs, Nakanishi points out that the figures of the top register appear to depict members of the Krorainan elite, likely donors.⁹⁸⁶ These figures, though most of their upper bodies are missing, are sumptuously clad in long coats, trousers and leggings, all in vivid colours. As Nishinaka notes, several of the designs actually match items found in Krorainan tombs, making it likely that this represented the fashionable style of dress for a member of the Krorainan elite.⁹⁸⁷ Though neither of these two depictions gives conclusive evidence, it does on the whole seem very likely that the wealth of luxurious clothing and accessories owned and worn in death by members of the Krorainan elite were also used in life as social markers.

⁹⁸⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:114.

⁹⁸⁵ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 254.

⁹⁸⁶ Nakanishi, 'The Art of Miran: A Buddhist Site in the Kingdom of Shanshan', 179.

⁹⁸⁷ Nakanishi, 170-71.

Similarly, visible distinctions of status, underlined by the use of imported prestige goods, were made by the Krorainan elites through their use of seals. These seals, though their place of manufacture is difficult to ascertain, carried designs drawing their inspiration from clearly foreign origins, whether Greek myths or Chinese officialdom. Many of the sealed documents carried a small text beneath the seal noting who had set it, and out of the thirty-four cases where this statement is legible, thirty give the seal owners as officials. In the remaining four cases, there are two documents stating that the seals were set by monks, probably also honoured members of the Cađotan society.⁹⁸⁸ This leaves only two cases of people without a title being named as having utilised a seal, namely Tsuđeşla in document n.348 and a woman named Namişyanae in document n.380. Only on document n.348 is the seal still visible, with a still clear impression, though notably the design is a geometric one. Seals with foreign designs therefore appear to have been mainly the domain of Kroraina's elite and closely connected to government service. As such, possessing and using such a seal would be a clear sign of not only wealth but also of membership in the ruling officialdom. These seals were set on several types of documents, most notably on contracts and legal documents, before these documents were given out and stored. As such, many members of Krorainan society would likely have seen them, making them very visible markers of social status and the boundaries between the rulers and the ruled.

Prestige goods and the networks of the elite

These examples show clearly that the Krorainan elites acquired prestige goods in significant quantities and used them as visible markers of social status, both in life and death. Yet because the access to these visual markers of social status would have been an important component in remaining part of the elite, we are led to the second important role of prestige goods for elites, namely as elements in networks of redistribution and reciprocity. Systems of redistribution and reciprocity amongst elites from most societies are well known and serve a number of purposes. As stressed by Veblen, gifts and gift giving is also a form of conspicuous consumption, showing off

⁹⁸⁸ See document n.419 and n.425.

the giver's power and wealth.⁹⁸⁹ Yet such actions also served as means of maintaining social relations amongst the elite and as means of creating and maintaining vertical bonds of loyalty and support. Furthermore, while a component in practically every known society to some extent, redistribution and power bases built upon bonds of reciprocity is often highlighted as an important feature of Central Asian state formation. Much of the recent scholarship on the formation of large nomadic empires in antiquity, for example, has pointed to the process of redistribution of novelties from the leader to his following of warriors as one of the crucial mechanism driving the development of these polities, often linking these processes to the development of larger exchange networks.⁹⁹⁰ Beckwith even takes this a step further and suggests that this reciprocal relationship between the ruler and his followers, which Beckwith calls the *comitatus*, was the central mechanism that created the Silk Road.⁹⁹¹

There are few records of royal gift-giving or systems of reciprocal service and rewards on the level of the polity in the Kharosthi sources. The king certainly granted rewards to some officials, for example, a grant of land in Saca to the cozbo L'ýipeya, mentioned in document n.160, but prestige goods are never involved in the extant examples. Certainly some of the literary pieces in the database do appear to praise generosity as a virtue.⁹⁹² A line on document n.523 for example, which appears to have been a writing exercise written on the reverse of a list, states, "Alas the life of the poor; and again alas the life of those rich people who have not the sense to enjoy or distribute (their riches)."⁹⁹³ The line above it similarly laments the folly of storing wealth for the sake of wealth, without the good sense to use or distribute it. Yet while perhaps indicative of the Krorainan cultural view on the virtue of giving or distributing, it can hardly be taken as evidence of royal gift-practices. Nor can it be said to be representative, given that only eleven such literary pieces have so far been uncovered.

⁹⁸⁹ Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 53.

⁹⁹⁰ Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, 26–28; Honeychurch, *Inner Asia and the Spatial Politics of Empire. Archaeology, Mobility and Cultural Contact.*, 73–74; Raschke, 'New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East', 607–9.

⁹⁹¹ Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, 26–28.

⁹⁹² See document n.511 and n.523.

⁹⁹³ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 103.

It is possible, even likely, that some of the rich materials from the Krorainan burials, such as the silk or mirrors, were acquired as part of a system of royal gift-giving and redistribution. Of particular interest are items such as the silk blanket wrapped around the male in tomb M3 (95MN1), which carried the inscription 王侯合昏千秋万歳宜子孫, translating into “kings and lords shall be married for thousands of autumns and tens of thousands of years; it is right that they shall bear sons and grandsons”.⁹⁹⁴ This silk blanket, which must have originated in China proper, could well represent a gift from the king to one of his followers. Yet as the identity and status of the inhabitants of the tombs remains unclear, as discussed above, this can hardly be taken as conclusive evidence. Indeed, even if the inhabitants of the tombs were not part of the royal family, as Lillian Lan-ying Tseng has suggested might be the case for tomb 95MN1M8,⁹⁹⁵ no conclusion can really be drawn about how the inhabitants acquired their rich assemblage beyond conjecture. What is far better covered in the Kharosthi documents, however, is how imported prestige goods were used regularly in a system of gift-giving connected with the sending and receiving of letters.

A typical example of this practise can be illustrated by document n.109, which is a letter sent by a father, the often encountered *šoṭhaṅga* *Lýipeya*, to his son *Lýimsu*. As the under tablet is missing the initial part of the letter containing the greeting formula, the name of the sender and main body of the text, are not known.

Oblong Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be opened by (my) dear son *Lýimsu*.

Cov.-tablet. Rev.

.....] the sacrifice is to be made, so the sacrifice is to be made (when he) comes down to me here there will be a sealed wedge-tablet concerning the camels; I will send it there. A letter is coming about the *klasemcis* in the autumn. Your

⁹⁹⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡學術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡學術調査報告書* (*Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China*), 1999, 2:112.

⁹⁹⁵ Lan-ying Tseng, ‘Decoration, Astrology and Empire: Inscribed Silk from Niya in the Taklamakan Desert’, 92–93.

camels are to be sent to the kingdom (province). Former letter-carriers have seen that the Supis are certainly coming here. Whatever letter-carriers shall come here provisions must be sent here. I have sent to mother and father an *ariḍi* each, to Suḡīta *sidha* salt, to Śarvaśriāe one *ariḍaga* and one *livaṣa* along with *alaṃgila* (*asaṃgila*), to Śamapriāe one jewel and to Suṽornapriāe one jewel; so you need not be worried about presents.⁹⁹⁶

This practice of gift-giving and sometimes gift-exchange appear to have been an important part of the social interaction of those Krorainans who exchanged letters, in most cases identifiable as members of the ruling elite. Twenty-eight letters mention the practice of gift giving along with letters, either stating what item was sent with the letter and for whom, or explaining why a gift was not sent. (See table 3 and 4) The number of documents identified as letters totals one hundred and thirty-five. As such, it appears to not have been necessary to send a gift along with letters in all cases, though as many of the letters are fragmentary, there might be cases of gift giving not recorded in the tables. It is, of course, also quite possible that in many cases the nature of the gift sent along with the letter was simply not stated, even if a gift was actually sent alongside the letter.

Curiously, based on the letters that do mention gifts, there is no clear pattern regarding whom or in what social contexts such gifts were expected. In document n.109, for example, the sender, who is likely Lȳipeya,⁹⁹⁷ states that he has sent presents to his father and mother, so that his own son Lȳimsu needs not worry about this. Yet in document n.164, where the same Lȳimsu sends a letter to his father Lȳipeya, no present is mentioned. Similarly, letter n.305, sent by a likely fictive “brother” *kāla Kunala* to *cozbo Soṃjaka*, does not mention a present, while the letter n.288, sent by two *cozbo* to the same *Soṃjaka*, does.

It is, however, clear that the system did contain strong elements of reciprocity, as some documents suggest that a gift or help was expected in return. The clearest example of an expected exchange is seen in document n.316,

⁹⁹⁶ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 20.

⁹⁹⁷ Lȳimsu is said to be the son of Lȳipeya in several documents. See for example document n.164. See Lȳimsu, actor n.49 for more details.

Oblong tablet. Obv.

To her dear sister Puṃñalazaae, of pleasant aspect, Cukapae sends health, much, immeasurable, and thus (reports): I have sent you one *paṃzavaṃta* made of *prigha*, you must certainly send me a coat.

Here a woman Cukapae sends a gift to her sister, some cloth made from *prigha* which Lüders and Henning has identified as damask silk,⁹⁹⁸ and states that she expects to receive an item of clothing in return. Similarly it was often emphasised how that which was sent was a small thing and that a return present was not needed, seen for example in document n.288, or that the sender was travelling and therefore a reciprocal gift was not needed.⁹⁹⁹ In addition to being reciprocal, the function of the gift was in many cases mostly social. This is seen both in the many presents said to be “tokens of remembrance,” and in particular in document n.338. This document, addressed to cozbo Somjaka and asking him to look into a variety of matters, states quite clearly that the gift was sent as a token of good will (*manasiṃgaramatra*).¹⁰⁰⁰

This gift-giving system, while the details are somewhat opaque, does however appear to have constituted an important social norm and to have played an important function in reinforcing ties of kin or friendship. Indeed, the very words used to describe the presents suggests this, since they are, as seen above, regularly said to be tokens of remembrance or something to put the receiver in mind of the sender.¹⁰⁰¹ The customary nature of this gift giving is repeatedly illustrated in the material by the many assurances that a gift in return was not needed, as the sender was travelling or otherwise away from home.¹⁰⁰² This is seen in, for example, document n.152 sent by a cozbo Nastimta to cozbo Lýipeya, where the sender states “I sent this letter while on a journey, so do not worry about a gift.”¹⁰⁰³ Another example is document n.159, also addressed to Lýipeya together with cozbo Tamjaka, where the unknown sender ends with noting that, “This letter has been forwarded through a series of people, so do not

⁹⁹⁸ Henning, ‘Two Central Asian Words’, 150–57.

⁹⁹⁹ See document n.152 and 159.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 64.

¹⁰⁰¹ See document n.140, 161, 184, 252, 353, 354, 370, 585 and 756. In one interesting case, document n.231, an arrow is sent as a token of good luck instead.

¹⁰⁰² See document n.152, 159, 246 and 373.

¹⁰⁰³ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 27.

mind about a present.”¹⁰⁰⁴ An even clearer indication as to the perceived importance of this custom in social interaction is in the final lines in document n.320. This document was sent to a cozbo Naṃdivalasya from an unknown addresser who, in the last lines, explains why he could not send a gift. This he emphasises, must be known to the cozbo, “so you need not be angry about (the absence of) a gift.”¹⁰⁰⁵ Another telling case comes from document n.690, found at the L.A (Kroraina) site.

Oblong tablet. Obv.

Of their dear son-in-law Puṃtsoya and their dear daughters Sotoae, Cuṃ[nae] (and) [Ve]na[e] (?), of pleasant aspects. Budhanaṃti, Priyanāṃti, Budhapala and Dhamaśriyae asks the health of their divine bodies, again and again, much, immeasurably. We are pleased to hear that you are well. We too are well through your favour. And thus (we report). Other relations have received small presents. We have been ignored. We have heard from others that from you [...]¹⁰⁰⁶

Here the addressers, Budhanaṃti and his family, note that small presents had been sent to other relations of their son-in-law but that they had been ignored. As the extant letter likely represents a draft, given that it had been written on an oblong tablet, the remaining text is unfortunately not known, though it appears to go on to report the things given to the other relations. What is clear, however, is that the in-laws of Puṃtsoya found the lack of gifts sent to them to be quite insulting, stating that they have been ignored. All this suggests that the practise of gift giving with letters was considered a very important show of friendship and affection, practised both in the interaction between close family but also amongst non-related members of the Krorainan elite.

A wide variety of different commodities was included in this system of gift-giving alongside letters, varying greatly in both apparent value and origin. (Table 3 and 4) As seen in the table, the most common type of item sent as a present was

¹⁰⁰⁴ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 29.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 59–60.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Burrow, 140.

clothing, mostly in the form of the items called *lastuga* and *varsaga*. As with so many of the cloth items, it is not known what exactly these represented, though a *lastuga* in document n.566 is said to be of many-coloured cloth, suggesting that they represented an article of dress rather than a type of textile. Both of these two common types of gifts likely represented local products of Kroraina, though as the *lastuga* of our example document n.566 was made from silk, they could evidently incorporate imported materials. Amongst the gifts sent in this way, however, imported prestige goods were very common, with at least six identifiable cases of imported goods being sent, out of a total of eighteen documents. (See table 3 and 4) This number also excludes a number of likely imported novelties, such as the jewels described in document n.109 seen above. Amongst the gifts made of cloth are two clear examples of imported prestige goods, namely the previously discussed Chinese “turbans” (*cinaveda*) sent in document n.353 and a silk bag sent as a present in document n.756. In the case of document n.756, the silk bag itself was also the document with a short greeting having been written onto the silk bag itself, stating that it was a token of remembrance. Besides these imported cloth items, spices were commonly sent, appearing as the second most common type of commodity sent as gifts in general. The examples of spices sent are betel, sent in document n.77 and n.721, and ginger, which appears in both document n.354 and likely also in document n.109 as *ariḍi* and *ariḍaga*. The use of these plants as gifts, both tropical plants that prefer a humid climate for growth, is most telling, as it shows that the Krorainan practice of gift giving drew on long-distance exchange to supply some of the commodities used in maintaining their social networks.

Given how deeply ingrained these imported goods were in the socio-political practices of the Krorainan elites, whether used as markers of wealth or incorporated into their networks of reciprocity and friendship, they clearly were not imported into Kroraina by chance or accident. Rather, in order to sustain these important practises, it is clear that the members of the Krorainan elites must have actively sought to acquire these commodities and can hardly be ascribed the passive role to which they are usually relegated.

6.7 The problem of the missing merchants

This chapter has thus far dealt with the questions of what types of imported goods have been found in Kroraina, from where they might have originated and what purposes they served in the local socio-political and economic landscape. We have seen that relatively large quantities of imported goods made it to Kroraina, originating from as distant areas as central China or the coasts of the Indian Ocean, and we have shown that at least some of these goods must have arrived on a frequent basis. In the preceding section we also explored some of the possible uses to which these items were put in Kroraina and showed how many of these imported items served an important function both as markers of status and prestige, and also in maintaining elite networks. Thus, read and analysed as a whole, the available sources from Kroraina would seem to suggest that imported goods arrived on a regular basis and in surprisingly large quantities into a kingdom which actively sought them.

This naturally leads us to the final, and for this dissertation the most crucial, question surrounding the imported goods found throughout the kingdom of Kroraina, namely the question of how these items made it to the kingdom. With this question, we return in a sense to the reoccurring question of how the so-called “Silk Road” exchange might have functioned, as many of the solutions proposed there could certainly be applicable also in the case of Kroraina. The “Minimalist” view that most of the goods exchanged across long-distances were carried by way of social and political mechanisms, such as marriages or alliance building, might furnish part of the explanation. Though as shown by the finds from the “Southern Workshop” and the spice-import evident in the written material, the exchange must, for at least some of the goods, have been far more frequent and sustained than such mechanisms would allow. As suggested by the Sino-Japanese team, the so-called “tribute trade” of the Han dynasty and later Chinese dynasties might also furnish an explanation for some of the finest Chinese products found in Kroraina. As discussed in detail by Selbitschka, however, there is little evidence for such “tribute trade” involving Kroraina or other Tarim Basin polities,¹⁰⁰⁷ and this form of exchange does at any rate not explain the

¹⁰⁰⁷ Selbitschka, ‘Early Chinese Diplomacy: Realpolitik versus the So-Called Tributary System’.

many ornaments, spices and other items of clear southern or western provenance. There is, of course, the “traditional” Silk Road exchange of caravans and traders, but here too we encounter a most serious problem, for as repeatedly stressed by Valerie Hansen, there is but one Kharosthi document that mentions merchants.

The elusive merchants of document n.35

The document in question is document n.35, also known as N.i.49 in Stein’s catalogue. It was found, along with many other scattered tablets, in room v.a of ruin N.1 but had originally been part of a tightly packed “archive” in room i from which the local explorer Ibrahim had removed them just prior to Stein’s arrival.¹⁰⁰⁸ The ruin N.1, which yielded an unusually high number of documents, was at the time just prior to its abandonment the resident of the frequently encountered *ṣoṭhaṃḡa Lýipeya*,¹⁰⁰⁹ one of two officials to which the document itself was addressed,

Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbo Bhimaya and *ṣoṭhaṃḡa Lýipe*

Cov.-tablet. Rev.

Suḡita is to be prevented. At present there are no merchants from China, so that the debt of silk is not to be investigated now. As regards the matter of the camel Tamcina is to be pestered. When the merchants arrive from China, the debt of silk is to be investigated. If there is a dispute, there will be a decision in our presence in the royal court.¹⁰¹⁰

The document appears to be a fairly short notice written on a wedge tablet, addressed to two well-known local officials in the form of the cozbo Bhimaya, which should likely be read Tsimaya,¹⁰¹¹ and the *ṣoṭhaṃḡa Lýipeya*. Based on its shape, the form of

¹⁰⁰⁸ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:316–18.

¹⁰⁰⁹ See chapter two, section 2.3 for the discussion of the link between certain individuals and certain ruins. See also Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd–4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 118–40.

¹⁰¹⁰ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 9.

¹⁰¹¹ Burrow, ‘Further Kharosthi Documents from Niya’, 111–12.

the address and its final line, the document can confidently be categorised as a “Royal Command” document,¹⁰¹² and as can be seen, it addresses the matter of a debt in silk,¹⁰¹³ along with a matter regarding a camel. Someone was to be pestered over the matter of the camel, while a Suḡita was to be prevented, in most readings interpreted in relation to the matter of the debt. Finally, before the debt of silk could be investigated, the merchants had to arrive from China.

As will be recalled from the introduction to this chapter, this document has been perceived as an important document by most authors discussing the Krorainan economy and long-distance exchange.¹⁰¹⁴ There are good reasons for this, as the document is the only document to specifically mention China as a geographic location, and of course also the only document to explicitly mention merchants. Most authors, such as Atwood, touch upon the document only in passing, usually used as evidence to suggest that Chinese merchants were the only silk suppliers in Caḡota.¹⁰¹⁵ Valerie Hansen, however, makes much of the document and both quotes and discusses it in some detail, both in her book and earlier article. She too reads it as evidence for Chinese merchants being the prime silk suppliers in Caḡota. She furthermore suggests that it shows that the Krorainans themselves were unfamiliar with the value of silk and relied on the specialised knowledge of the Chinese merchants for its use, especially when used as a form of currency.¹⁰¹⁶ Looking closer at both the form and the actual content of document n.35, these readings are however highly problematic, for at least three reasons.

The most obvious problem with interpreting document n.35 is how little it actually tells us, a problem compounded by the fact that the document is missing its

¹⁰¹² Hansen makes a similar assessment, calling the document a “royal order”.

¹⁰¹³ Selbitsckha (Selbitschka, ‘Genuine Prestige Goods in Mortuary Contexts: Emulation in Polychrome Silk and Byzantine Solidi from Northern China’, 23 and 26.) suggests that the silk in question was tabby silk, which while quite likely cannot be concluded as the word used is *paṭa*, a word that as discussed in section 6.2 was a generic term encompassing a wide variety of silks.

¹⁰¹⁴ Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, 35; Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 49–50; Selbitschka, ‘Genuine Prestige Goods in Mortuary Contexts: Emulation in Polychrome Silk and Byzantine Solidi from Northern China’, 23 and 26.

¹⁰¹⁵ This is in itself an odd statement given his assertion that silk was also produced by the Krorainan state in the capital. See Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, n. 31.

¹⁰¹⁶ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 49.

under-tablet. As will be recalled, the standard format for a Krorainan “Royal Command” was a double wedge-shaped tablet where the address would be written on the obverse of the cover and the text itself would commence on the obverse of the under-tablet and, if necessary, continue on the reverse of the cover-tablet. It would also invariably commence with a standard formula along the lines of, “His majesty the king writes, he instructs so-and-so as follows:”. In the case of document n.35, however, we are left with only the cover-tablet, the under-tablet likely having been lost when first removed from its original position in the “archive” of room I. This means that document n.35, in fact, only represents the tail end of a rather lengthy royal order with the weight of the text missing, which makes it very difficult to judge the way in which the merchants were involved and the nature of the disputes described. There is, for example, nothing to explicitly link the prevention of Suḡita with the debt in silk, as the line about Suḡita could well be connected with a different case now lost on the under-tablet, or else with the matter of the camel.

This further compounds the second problem, as certainly in the text, as it stands, there is absolutely nothing to indicate that the merchants were needed for their expertise or knowledge of silk, as a currency or otherwise. On the contrary, given what we know of how widespread the use of silk was in Kroraina, as discussed in section 6.2, there is every reason to believe that the local cozbos and other officials were more than capable of judging this themselves. Consider for example cozbo Larsu, actor n.385, who appeared in the document n.318 on pages 254. He was clearly familiar with silk, as he had a large inventory partly consisting of it as described in that document, and as shown by document n.345, he was also capable of judging its value when demanding recompense for his other inventory of stolen goods. Another interesting example is document n.3, found in the same archive of ruin N.1 as document n.35,¹⁰¹⁷ and also concerning a Suḡita,

Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbo Yitaka and the toṃga Vukto

¹⁰¹⁷ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:318.

Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs cozbo Yitaka and tomga Vukto as follows: Suḡita informs us that he paid a price (*muli*) for a woman Suḡisae. The price (*muli*) was forty-one rolls of silk. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, forthwith you must carefully inquire in person, whether she was really bought. A decision must be made according to law. Against the law officials must not take possession of that woman. If you are not clear about it there, there will be a decision when they appear in our presence at the royal court.¹⁰¹⁸

This document, a complete example of the “Royal Command” type, describes an apparent conflict over an exchange in which a slave had allegedly been bought for the price of forty-one rolls of silk. This is, in fact, the only document to describe an exchange involving silk or one where silk was used as a currency, but as can be seen, neither merchants nor any Chinese were involved or required to solve the ensuing dispute. Thus there is little reason to believe that the merchants in question were needed because of some expertise or knowledge.

Yet the most fundamental problem with Hansen’s and other scholars’ readings lies in their interpretation of the line “merchants from China” as meaning Chinese merchants. Looking closer at the original text, this is not explicitly stated. The original second line of the document, in Boyer, Rapson and Senart’s transcription, reads “*ahono cinasthanade nasti vaniye ahono paṭarna na prochidavo*”.¹⁰¹⁹ The Krorainan prakrit word for China, *Cinasthana*, meaning literally “Chinese place/land”, is not in the genitive case here, nor does it carry the local suffixes *-emci*, *-imci* or *-ci*, as was commonly the case when indicating the origins of people.¹⁰²⁰ Furthermore, the merchants (*vaniye*) are not described as *cinavaniye* or a similar, as was the way Chinese individuals or goods were usually identified.¹⁰²¹ Rather, *Cinasthanade* is in the ablative case, thus meaning something like “no merchants coming/moving from China”. This does, of course, not preclude the possibility that the merchants in

¹⁰¹⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 1.

¹⁰¹⁹ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 12.

¹⁰²⁰ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 31.

¹⁰²¹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 89–90.

question may have been Chinese, as they may well have been, but looking only at document n.35 it is just as possible that the merchants in question were local Krorainans, Khotanese, or possibly from further afield.

Given these observations, how then should this document be interpreted? Clearly a number of possible hypotheses can be proposed, both pertaining to the role of the various actors involved and who the merchants might have been. Certainly, as far as the role of the various actors are concerned, some interesting possibilities can be gleaned from comparing document n.35 with other Kharosthi documents, pertaining both to the role of Suḡita and that of the merchants. Starting with Suḡita, actor n.95, he cannot based on our criteria be attested securely in any other document. But he should in all likelihood be equated with some of the many other Suḡitas appearing in documents from ruin N.1 and would appear to have been the son or possibly relative of the owner of that house ṣoṭhaṃga Lȳipeya, with whom he also appears in document n.35.¹⁰²² Hansen, in her 2011 article, describes Suḡita as a “high official”, though this is clearly mistaken as the highest titles ever ascribed to any Suḡita in the documents were that of ṣoṭhaṃga and vasu,¹⁰²³ neither of which ranked particularly high. Rather, the Suḡitas from ruin N.1 appear mostly in more mundane contexts, for example in a dispute over a slave’s debt in document n.24, running deliveries in document n.106, and being addressed along with other family members in the letters n.109, n.140, and n.164. Suḡita appears, of course, also in document n.3, having bought a slave for a considerable number of silk rolls. On the whole, the Suḡita from ruin N.1, if it indeed one person, appears to have lived much like his father or relative Lȳipeya, possibly even following in his footsteps as ṣoṭhaṃga, and much like the ṣoṭhaṃga Ramṣotsa described in the previous chapter, also ran some business on the side. It is in this context, we should understand his involvement in document n.35 as well, for there is reason to believe that Suḡita was in fact the creditor in the dispute. The evidence for this lies in the first line of the document, stating that he “is to be prevented”, *varidavo* in prakrit. This word appears in a number of other royal orders and decrees, some of

¹⁰²² Padwa support this identification and suggests Suḡita was the son of Lyipeya in his discussion of ruin N.1, Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 132. No mention of this is however made in his onomasticon.

¹⁰²³ See document n.12 and document n.162 respectively.

which explicitly deal with debts. Document n.357, for example, states: “Also you inform us that people are harassing each other on account of old debts. They are to be stopped (*varidavo*).”¹⁰²⁴ A variation upon this also appears in the lengthy “Royal Decree” n.272, stating: “These well-to-do people are to be prevented (*varidae*) from persecuting the debtor people”.¹⁰²⁵ Suḡita, if he was connected with the debt in silk at all, is thus probably best understood as the creditor who was to be prevented from harassing his debtors until an investigation could be undertaken. Indeed, given Suḡitas repeated involvement with silk, it could even be proposed that he might himself have ran some business selling and lending silk, though the evidence is by no means conclusive.

Turning to the merchants of document n.35, there is good reason to believe that the merchants were somehow involved in the dispute itself as a concerned party, rather than needed for some skills they possessed. That they were somehow involved in the dispute is certainly the most reasonable explanation as to why the case could not be conducted without them. Furthermore, the delaying of a legal case due to one party being away on a journey is also known from document n.584, which presents a strikingly similar problem,

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

This document is to be carefully kept by Kutreya and Ramṣotsa.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

This is the seal of the guṣura Jebhatra, the caṃkura Caraga and the cozbo Soṃjaka.

Rectangular Under-tablet Obv. & Cov.-tablet. Rev.

In the 4th year, 2nd month, 28th day of the reign of his majesty the great king Jitughha Mahiriya, son of heaven, here in Caḏota the guṣura Jebhatra, the caṃkura Cataraga, the cuḷalayina Dirpara, and the cozbo Soṃjaka examined a

¹⁰²⁴ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 69.

¹⁰²⁵ Burrow, 49–50.

dispute. Ramsotsa, Kutreya, and Cinika brought an action concerning sheep. When Kutreya was *ašga*, at that time they took a gift of honour to Ramsotsa. They gave him four sheep. Vuginga gave them, Suḡuta took them. After that Kutreya, Vuginga, and Cinika carried off twenty sheep from Ramsotsa. This case was put off. Vuginga died. Suḡuta is in Khotan. When Suḡuta comes back from Khotan, at that time the matter is to be taken in hand. It is to be carefully examined with oath and witness.¹⁰²⁶

In this “Legal” document involving the frequently encountered Ramsotsa and his son Suḡuta, we are presented with a complicated dispute over the giving and taking of sheep. What is interesting, however, is that the presiding magistrates refrained from making a verdict because Suḡuta, who had originally received the sheep seemingly on behalf of his father, was not present. We are told that he was away in Khotan, and the case would only be heard again once Suḡuta returned from there, much like the merchants in document n.35. There is also striking similarity in the wording of the original texts, at least when ignoring some irregularities in spelling,

Document.35: “*yaṃ kāla Cinasthanade vaniye agamiṣyati taṃ kāla paṭaṛṇa prochiḍavo*”¹⁰²⁷

Document n.584: “*yaṃ kāla Suḡuta Khotamnade agachiṣati taṃ kālaṃmi saṃghaṭṭidavo*”¹⁰²⁸

These parallels certainly speaks for a reading of document n.35, where the merchants are understood as being somehow party to the dispute over the debt of silk, either because they had been involved in some transaction with it or quite possibly because they were the debtor in the case.

Yet who were these elusive merchants and where did they hail from? Despite the revised reading of “*Cinasthanade vaniye*”, as meaning “merchants coming from China” rather than “Chinese merchants”, they could still very well be Chinese. Indeed,

¹⁰²⁶ Burrow, 122.

¹⁰²⁷ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 12.

¹⁰²⁸ Rapson et al., 219.

Kroraina's proximity to China and the object of the debt being silk that likely originated in China would seem to speak for such a solution. Also, given that at least one "legal"-type document exists in which a Chinese man was involved, namely n.324, such an interpretation must remain a likely solution. However, other equally possible scenarios could be imagined. Considering the similar case in document n.584, it is for example a distinct possibility that the merchants in question were local Krorainans. If the merchants were indeed parties to the dispute, such a solution would seem perhaps the most likely, and their journey to China should then be seen as a similar venture to that which had taken Suḡuta to Khotan. This final question is, however, one which document n.35 itself does not provide a ready answer to. In order to find a solution to it, one would have to look more broadly, not only at the Kharosthi material, but also at Chinese and Sogdian sources from Kroraina.

Merchandise but no merchants

Document n.35, in and of itself, is therefore not evidence for Chinese merchants being active in Kroraina nor of them being heavily involved in the trading of silk there, though it certainly speaks to connections between the kingdom and the Chinese world. Thus, the problem of the missing merchants remains, and while highly interesting, the one Kharosthi document that does indeed mention merchants fundamentally provides very little information about what they were doing in Kroraina, from where they might originally have hailed, and whom they might have been.

In order to proceed with our case study, we must therefore turn to other approaches and also a broader range of source, if any solution is to be found to the central question of how the many imported goods presented in this chapter made it to the kingdom. The remaining three chapters of the case study will therefore focus on this question and approach it from three different angles. The next chapter will first explore the routes of movement through the kingdom of Kroraina and the connections evident in the Kharosthi sources, both within the kingdom but crucially also with the surrounding regions. Chapter eight will then turn to the question of who moved across these routes and who might have been active in exchanging goods through the region as well as what forms this exchange might have taken. In doing so, it will move

beyond just the Kharosthi documents and discuss in detail some of the Chinese and Sogdian sources. Finally, the ninth chapter will close the case study by showing how the kingdoms of the Southern Tarim Basin region were, in fact, active in facilitating movement and, at least to a certain extent, also exchange throughout their territories.

Chapter 7: Islands in a sea of sand

The kingdom of Kroraina was a vast kingdom by any stretch of the imagination, extending more than 650 kilometres in a straight line between the easternmost Lop site of L.F and the Niya (Caḍota) site. Its oasis towns lay mostly along the major rivers coming down from the southern mountains, green bands in a vast wasteland of dust, rock, and sand. Matsuda's island metaphor of the oases as lonely islands in a sea of sand would seem apt indeed. On first sight, the written sources from the kingdom would also seem to support the assertion that sites like the Caḍota oasis were like lonely islands, isolated by the vastness of the surrounding wastelands. As already pointed out, the documents rarely mention merchants or travellers from far afield, being overwhelmingly concerned with local administration.

Yet as suspected by Matsuda, when subjected to a more thorough examination, this mirage of the isolated oasis hardly holds up to scrutiny. Many of the documents explicitly discuss interaction and contact over vast distances, with distant places or people. In fact, the majority of documents speak in and of themselves to the close integration of a geographically large kingdom and its widely dispersed ruling elite. Consider, for example, the orders from the royal court to their local representatives or letters of information sent within the royal bureaucracy, as discussed in chapter five. Upon the urging of these royal orders, large quantities of agricultural produce, whether grain, wine or cloth, were moved across the kingdom as tax, crossing at times significant distances. The Kharosthi documents are, in other words, rife with the evidence of connections.

Thus this chapter, as the fourth step in this case study of the kingdom of Kroraina and the southern Tarim Basin, seeks to re-examine the Krorainan material and the connections evident therein. Phrased as a question, we could ask: "What networks of contact were the Krorainan oases part of and how far did they reach?" Given the number of Kharosthi documents, however, making a concise overview of these connections is difficult. For this reason, the following chapter will be divided into two parts with different methodological approaches. The first part will attempt to gain an overview of the connections through a quantitative analysis, using network

theory and drawing two network models. The focus of this part will be to give a visual presentation of the networks evident in the sources, for which network methodology and modelling is ideally suited. The first part will furthermore apply some basic analytic tools from network theory in order to examine the structures of the network models and identify some central sites. The second part will, in turn, present a quantitative analysis informed and directed by the network models thus produced. Here we will return to the source material itself and attempt to substantiate the connections appearing in the model. It will furthermore allow for a critical examination of these same models as well as of the results of the network analysis. Seen together, this will give a good picture of the networks of contact in which the Krorainan oases took part.

It should be noted that the following analysis will not limit itself to merely considering “trade” connections, but rather aims to look broadly at all forms of contact, be it forms of exchange, the movement of people, or forms communication. This means that the networks and connections presented in the following cannot be used to say anything definitive about exchange and trade in Kroraina as such. Instead, the analysis will take this broader approach in order to map the full extent of Kroraina’s contacts as evident through its written material, which in turn may show something of what sort of “world” a polity in the Tarim Basin oriented itself in.

7.1 Network analysis: Methodology and terms

Before commencing with the first part of this chapter and its network analysis, it is necessary to briefly introduce the basics of network methodology and some of the central tools and terms that will be employed.¹⁰²⁹ To construct a network model, one needs a dataset containing the two fundamental elements of the network, namely nodes and the edges between them. Nodes are the things that are connected in the network and can represent anything from people or locations to documents or items, depending on the nature of the dataset. Edges, meanwhile, is the network analysis term for the

¹⁰²⁹ Readers interested in more detailed discussions of Network Theory and how it might be applied should see Ruffini, *Social Networks in Byzantine Egypt*; Brughmans, ‘Connecting the Dots’; Knappett, *Network Analysis in Archaeology: New Approaches to Regional Interaction*.

connections between these nodes and can likewise represent any number of connection types. Edges can also be directed, i.e. only connecting in one direction, or weighted, that is assigned a number based on the strength or frequency of the connection.¹⁰³⁰ In this dissertation, all locations mentioned in the Kharosthi documents will be treated as nodes, and whenever two locations appear in the same document, an edge will be drawn between them, representing some form of contact between the two places, making a one-mode network.¹⁰³¹ The data from the sources is then plotted onto an adjacency matrix that is in turn used to draw the network model, known as the network graph, in this case done using the Visone software.¹⁰³²

This produces a network model that serves as an excellent visualisation of the original dataset. It also allows for the application of a wide variety of mathematical methods and techniques for analysing the network and its structures in various ways. The following analysis will only touch upon three such analytic tools, all fairly simple but useful nonetheless. The first of these, “degree”, looks at the entire network and describes how well connected the network is as a whole, by measuring the average number of edges, that is connections, each node has. Thus, a network with a “degree” of four means that on average each node has four edges.¹⁰³³ The second analytic tool that will be used, namely “node betweenness centrality”, is used to identify central nodes. This measure creates an index that lists the probability that a node will be passed by traffic travelling along the shortest possible route between two other nodes in the network.¹⁰³⁴ Thus, a node with a high “betweenness centrality” is centrally placed and can be expected to control movement through the network, as one might expect for example a mountain pass to do in a road network.

Finally, the following analysis will utilise the Girvan-Newman clustering algorithm for identifying clusters of closely connected nodes within the network. This approach is a little more complex, starting by measuring the “edge betweenness

¹⁰³⁰ Ruffini, *Social Networks in Byzantine Egypt*, 21.

¹⁰³¹ One could also make a separate node for the documents and connect locations with documents connected to other locations in a two-mode network, but given the nature of this inquiry it is of little interest here.

¹⁰³² Available online at <https://visone.info/> and introduced in Weidele and Brughmans, ‘Introduction to Exploratory Network Analysis for Archaeologists Using Visone’.

¹⁰³³ Ruffini, *Social Networks in Byzantine Egypt*, 36.

¹⁰³⁴ Isaksen, ‘The Application of Network Analysis to Ancient Transport Geography: A Case Study of Roman Baetica’, 7–8.

centrality”, i.e. measuring which edge is most likely to be travelled along when crossing the network using the shortest path possible between any two nodes. The edge with the highest betweenness is then deleted, the “edge betweenness centrality” calculated again, and the new highest-ranking edge is once more deleted, a process that is repeated until all nodes have no edges. This creates a number of shrinking clusters, starting with all nodes but quickly ending up with smaller clusters of internally well-connected nodes. In this way, the analysis indicates which groups of nodes are particularly well connected to each other.¹⁰³⁵

These three measures are, as said, only some of the many methods for analysis available, yet I believe them to be particularly well suited to exploring the sides of the Krorainan network of interest here. The networks “degree” will allow us to say something about the relative isolation of locations within the network, while “node betweenness centrality” will allow for identifying particularly important sites. Finally, the clustering measure will allow for the identification of clusters of sites that often interacted with each other.

7.2 The Caḍota network: A snapshot of a local network

The Dataset

Turning then to the Krorainan documents and the qualitative analysis the first step consisted of identifying documents relevant to the question at hand, that is, documents that in one way or another recorded connections or movement between locations. As a criterion for selection, only documents explicitly mentioning at least one location have been selected. This naturally included documents directly mentioning a location, but I have further chosen to include locations mentioned in the epithets of individuals, such as Kanasaga the Khotanese (*Khotani*) mentioned in document n.30. This is reasonable, as the presence of a Khotanese would mean that someone, either the person or an ancestor, at some point moved from Khotan to the location in which the document was produced, representing a form of contact.

¹⁰³⁵ Weideler and Brughmans, ‘Introduction to Exploratory Network Analysis for Archaeologists Using Visone’, 36.

The result of this selection is noteworthy, as 222 out of the 880 documents in the database, i.e. almost exactly a fourth, explicitly mention a location and thus a connection or several connections between sites. It is these 222 documents that will form the basis for the following analysis. Nearly all these documents were found at the Niya (Cađota) site, with only four from the Endere (Saca) site and seven from the Lop (Kroraina) site. This means that the network which the network construction will produce is not a balanced Krorainan network as much as it is a Cađotan network, something which will affect the resulting network model.

Furthermore this number, 222, does not include the inherent movement that one can assume in the delivery of many of the documents of the “Royal Command” –type. These documents, addressed from the king himself and presumably written by scribes or bureaucrats at the royal court, certainly imply movement, as they must have been sent from the royal court to local officials in towns such as Cađota. Yet these “Royal Command” documents make up nearly a third of the database and would thus massively skewer the network analysis even further in favour of Cađota and Kroraina, the major find site and the capital, and thus they have not been included. Similarly, the movement inherently implied in “Letter”-type documents, which by their very nature must have been sent from one location to another, have not been included. This is not so much because they would necessarily skewer the analysis, but beyond having been sent to or from the site they were found at, it is in most cases impossible to confidently determine the origin or destination of these documents.

Even so, the “Royal Command” type together with the “Letter” type still make up a clear majority amongst the 222 documents in question. (See table 1) From these documents, eighty-two unique locations can be identified, most which appear to be situated within the Kingdom of Kroraina itself. (See table 2) Amongst these locations, some thirty-four are named as *avana* or *kilme*, administrative units mainly within the oasis of Cađota and thus not of interest to this analysis, leaving a final number of forty-eight unique locations. As should already be clear from this short summary of statistical information, the oasis of Cađota and the other oasis towns within the Kingdom of Kroraina were far from isolated.

Network model one

This is reflected in network graph one (See graph 1), which gives the complete network as constructed from the documentary database. The graph represents an unweighted, one-mode network created with an adjacency matrix, in which the find sites of the documents have also been included as locations. It is a well-connected network with a degree, that is an average number of connections per node, of four and only one clear cutpoint, without which large parts of the network would be disconnected, namely Caḍota.

Caḍota is the undisputed central node of the network. This fact becomes even clearer when considering its betweenness centrality, that is, how often the node acts as a bridge in order for other nodes to connect in the network, which is at 80%. (See graph 2. Table 3) This centrality is entirely unsurprising, as it is merely a function of Caḍota being the find site and/or producer of the majority of the documents used to construct the network. As the find site has, in graph one, also been included as a case of “mentioning” and thus as a node, Caḍota is connected to all sites from documents found at Caḍota, which explains its overwhelming centrality measure. What is noteworthy, however, is the cluster of high centrality sites on the right-hand side of the graph. These seven sites, Calmadana, China¹⁰³⁶, Khotan, Kroraina, Nina, Parvata, and Saca appear to form a tightly knit cluster, an impression further reinforced when grouped using the Girvan-Newman clustering algorithm. (See graph 3) The only other well-connected site is Pisali, but as shown by the clustering algorithm, it is not closely associated with these seven sites. Between them, these seven sites contain the largest oases within the kingdom, namely Calmadana, Saca and Kroraina as well as the two largest neighbouring polities, namely the kingdom of Khotan and China. Before looking at these sites more closely, however, it would be prudent to consider solutions to the anomalous effects caused by Caḍota’s position within the network.

¹⁰³⁶ Exactly what is meant by China in the context of the Caḍota documents is unclear. Likely it refers primarily to Dunhuang, the nearest Chinese town, but could also mean China proper further east.

Network model two

Merely deleting Cađota from the network is clearly not a satisfactory solution, though doing so does show that the main clusters of the Cađota network remains intact, even though the many sites connected only to Cađota are lost. A better solution then seems to be to construct a new network, where an edge is created only when two sites are mentioned together in the same document, which is what was done to create network graph two. (See graph 4) By constructing the network this way, twenty sites were left unconnected to the larger network, as they only occur by themselves or in connection with an *avana* or *kilme*. Two disconnected clusters also formed, containing Samana and Bumni, and Yasala and Suryada, respectively. The disconnected sites as well as the two disconnected clusters were then removed from the network. In order to further refine the analysis of this network, each edge was furthermore weighted based on the number of times the nodes it connects co-occur in the database. This means that an edge representing a reoccurring connection in the material would be given more weight in analysing paths within the network model.

The removal of the unconnected nodes and clusters leaves a complete and centralised network, with a highly centralised network as defined by Ruffini being characterised by a few high centrality sites connecting many less-connected sites.¹⁰³⁷ This is certainly the case in this second network model, as it is characterised by a highly interconnected central cluster surrounded by many more peripheral connections. Compared to network graph one, this network is also slightly better connected, with an average degree of four and a half. The central cluster is virtually identical to the high centrality cluster from network graph one, with the addition of Cađota and the slightly more peripheral Khema and Remena. A second cluster is also formed in the top part of the graph around Pisali, and both these are seen very clearly when the nodes are grouped using the Girvan-Newman clustering algorithm. (See graph 5) This second cluster is, however, clearly secondary to the central cluster, as seen when considering the nodes betweenness centrality. (See graph 5. Table 4) Here the central cluster, and in particular the major oases sites, such as Cađota, Calmadana, Khotan, Kroraina and Saca, rank the highest. One must note, however, that certain

¹⁰³⁷ Ruffini, *Social Networks in Byzantine Egypt*, 34.

anomalies remain within the network structure. Pisali and partly also Calmadana both have a very high betweenness centrality due to their position as prime connectors of the second cluster. Especially in Calmadana's case, this connection is weak, as it is based on a single document, namely n.122. This document contains a report or a list of cows, which had been sold or lost at various locations, with no explicit link between the sites mentioned. The connection between the various sites in this document is thus quite weak, but this connection to the second cluster is what makes Calmadana's centrality score the highest in the network. The second notable anomaly is the high betweenness centrality of the China node. This is mainly due to it being the only node connected to Tsaga, and through it to Ursasa. Yet when examining the documents dealing with Tsaga, it is clear that this site was a smaller town or village in the proximity of Cađota or at least administrated from there.¹⁰³⁸ As such, Tsaga should likely also have connections to Cađota or other neighbouring sites, which in turn would decrease the China node's betweenness centrality score.

The Cađotan networks summarized

Despite these weaknesses in the networks' construction, the overall impression of the networks with their central cluster remains unchanged. The network produced from the Kharosthi sources from the Kingdom of Kroraina shows that the many oases of the southern Tarim Basin were far from isolated. Instead the network is a centralised one, dominated by a small group of highly interconnected oases hubs, each with their own periphery of less-connected sites. The central oases interacted with most other hubs in the network, and in the links between them, one would thus expect to find the core infrastructure of the southern Tarim Basin. Furthermore, the network is not one limited to only the kingdom which produced its sources, but rather one of impressive geographic reach. Amongst its central clusters are found the Kingdom of Kroraina's two major neighbours: Khotan and the China node. The network is stretched even further through its connections with Kuci to the north and distant Sogdiana in the west.

¹⁰³⁸ See document n.68 and n.90 which both appears to deal with the administration of Tsaga. See also doc.255 where a Chinese named Aryasa is said to own land in Tsaga.

At this point the objection could be raised that while the network model produced by the Caḍota documents certainly appears impressive in geographic reach and connectivity, it does not reflect anything but the chance mention of sites together in administrative documents. As seen in the above example of Calmadana and document n.122, some of the connections within the network model are, in fact, quite weak. While this does not necessarily invalidate the observations gleaned from the network model, as this relies on the entire collection seen together, it does call for a qualitative analysis of the sources to further examine these results. This analysis, which follows, will be informed by the network model, starting with an analysis of the major Krorainan sites before discussing the most notable “foreign” connections of interest to this dissertation.

7.3 The Krorainan network

Routes through the kingdom

The core structure of the network graphs does appear to match well the content of the actual documents from Kroraina, where the same core of oases sites appears as the most important sites and furthermore interacted frequently. Several of the documents in the database describe the routes and infrastructure used to travel between the various sites of the kingdom and beyond, and again the routes and their hubs match well with the prominent nodes of the network. In particular, documents n.14, n.214 and n.367 are of interest here, all of which are “Royal Command” documents dealing with official envoys moving between the capital of Kroraina and the neighbouring kingdom of Khotan. The route used by the envoy Ṣameka is described in the complete document n.14,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbo Bhimaya and ṣoḥaṃga Lýipe

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs cozbo Bhimaya and ṣoḥaṃga Lýipeya as follows: Ṣameka informs us that he went as an envoy to Khotan. From

Calmadana they gave him a guard and he went as far as Saca. From Saca they gave him a guard and he went as far as Nina. From Nina to Khotan a guard should have been provided from Caḍota. As far as Khotan [.....]. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, the hire of a guard from Nina to Khotan is to be handed over according as it was formerly paid, along with an extra sum. A decision is to be made according to the law.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Of Šameka¹⁰³⁹

It describes him as first going to Calmadana, then to Saca, then to Nina, and from there to Khotan. On the way, he was given a new guard for each stretch, and the local officials at Caḍota are reprimanded for having failed to provide a guard from Nina to Khotan. They are then instructed to repay the fee for the hire of a guard (possibly to the envoy) as well as an extra sum. Document n.214, which misses its cover and thus possibly some text, describes a similar route for an envoy bringing a horse as a gift to the King of Khotan. Instructions are given to provide foodstuff and fodder from Saca for as far as Remena, and then from Caḍota as far as Khema, a site controlled by the Kingdom of Khotan. Finally document n.367, slightly broken and missing the cover, details the animals and guards to be provided for an envoy from Saca to the frontier at Caḍota, and then another group from there to Khotan. Several other documents describe movement along this same route, notably n.251, 362 and 637, though none in as much detail as the three given above. One other example of an itinerary exists, appearing in document n.64. This document, also a “Royal Command”, describes the stages of a journey made by caṃkura Vaješa from the royal capital as far as Pisali, though the document was seemingly addressed to Caḍota. Vaješa travelled with four *aṃtagi* (express) camels to Samarsa, then to Šnuna and finally to Pisali, the document giving instructions that he is to be given four fresh camels with every step. Both Samarsa and Šnuna appear in only this document, and nothing is known about their locations, making it difficult to judge where this route could have run, though it could

¹⁰³⁹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 3–4.

well have been an alternative and quicker route running through the desert. At any rate, it does not appear to have been the main route of communication through the kingdom.

The main route, in summary, started at Kroraina in the east and then moved from oasis to oasis westwards, first to or past Calmadana, then to Saca before finally reaching the frontiers of the kingdom at Caḍota or nearby Nina. Sometimes the site of Remena was also used, seemingly as a stop between Saca and Caḍota. For those travelling further westwards towards Khotan, it appears that Khema was the next destination, before presumably heading for the city of Khotan itself. This route, which followed the foothills of the Kunlun Mountains from oasis to oasis, must have been the main thoroughfare within the kingdom of Kroraina and is notably made up of several of the most prominent hubs from the network graphs, namely Kroraina, Calmadana, Saca, and Caḍota. It is worth noting that while the direction of travel suggested here from Kroraina in the east and westwards is the one described in the documents n.14, n.214 and n.367 above, this is not the most frequently travelled direction in the database as a whole. As shall be seen in the analysis below, the majority of movement described in the documents moved eastwards, towards the capital of the kingdom.

Caḍota

Moving from west to east within the kingdom, the first hub is Caḍota itself. In both network graphs it is placed centrally, and even in network graph two, it is still amongst the most important sites in terms of betweenness centrality and degree, connected to every other major node in the network model as well as many smaller sites. Yet it is difficult to judge the extent to which this actually reflects Caḍota's prominence as a town within the Kingdom of Kroraina, or if it is merely a reflection of it having received or produced most of the sources used in the database. It is noteworthy that none of the documents found at Endere (Saca) or Lop (Kroraina), though representing but a small sample of fifty-four documents, contain a single mention of Caḍota, while Calmadana, Kroraina and Khotan appear repeatedly. Nevertheless, even if Caḍota is overrepresented in the source material, it was an undeniably well-connected town, situated as the main frontier town on the border between the Kingdom of Kroraina and

the Kingdom of Khotan. Its role as the frontier in the west is well attested in the documents. It is mentioned explicitly, for example in the above-mentioned document n.367 and implicitly in the other documents describing the route through the kingdom.¹⁰⁴⁰ This role as a frontier is further attested in the many documents concerning the watch to be kept at the frontier and the danger of Khotanese attacks. Several Krorainan documents sent between officials concern themselves with a group of watchmen called the *s̥paṣavamna*, usually translated as frontier-guard by T. Burrow.¹⁰⁴¹ A word with Iranian roots,¹⁰⁴² the *s̥paṣavamnas* were a state-appointed group of watchmen that could be called upon by local officials as needed, but also by the local population in exchange for a fee.¹⁰⁴³ These *s̥paṣavamnas*, who only appear in documents from Caḍota, were closely connected with watching and controlling the crossing of the frontier. In some cases, they helped to stop people and goods from leaving the kingdom, as in document n.71, while in other cases they appear to have controlled people entering, as in the case of document n.471, where the *s̥paṣavamna* are accused of having helped themselves to the belongings of a group of Khotanese refugees. Caḍota's position is further attested by the danger posed to it by Khotanese attacks. In documents n.376, n.415, n.494, n.516 and n.625 attacks carried out by the Khotanese are mentioned, and both n.415 and 494 specifically state that the province of Caḍota was plundered by them.

The importance of this its location on the frontier is reflected very well in the statistical material from the sources, and thus also in the network models, where Caḍota's two closest connections are Khotan and Saca. In fact, these two connections, Caḍota-Khotan and Caḍota-Saca, are the two single most commonly mentioned connections, appearing eight times each. While these two connections do not necessarily attest to Caḍota's centrality in the Kingdom of Kroraina, it does show the oasis' close connections both eastwards and westwards. In addition to these two connections, Caḍota is strongly associated with the elusive site of Parvata (The Mountains) and the often-mentioned people of the mountains. This is not particularly

¹⁰⁴⁰ See in particular n.251 and n.362.

¹⁰⁴¹ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 132.

¹⁰⁴² See Burrow, 'Iranian Words in the Kharoṣṭhi Documents from Chinese Turkestan', 512. for a full discussion of the term.

¹⁰⁴³ See n.518 for a case of a disputed appointment. See n.71 for a case of the local population calling upon them.

well represented in the statistical material and the network graphs, but several documents appear to suggest that Caḍota was in close proximity too, and perhaps even in charge of the Parvata area. This appears to be suggested by document n.386, where the official, cozbo Somjaka, is instructed to prevent the people of Caḍota from doing injustice against the people of the mountains and in document n.12, where a large group of people from the mountains stood witness. However, it is unclear if the mountains refer to a specific place and the people there or rather a larger area and a group of possibly semi-nomadic people. Yet whether or not Caḍota controlled the Parvata and its people, it must have been close. This is seen in the series of letters sent by kala Puṃṇabala, who names himself son of the king and was thus presumably resident at the capital, instructing the receiver vasu Sagimoya and others to go to the mountains and buy various products, in addition to making or doing *vaṣḍhiga*.¹⁰⁴⁴ As discussed on page 306, the meaning of this term is not clear, appearing only in four documents¹⁰⁴⁵, though in three of these cases it refers to something done in the mountains on the order of a *Kala* and involving wine. The fact that the wine was to go from Caḍota, as opposed to for example the capital, would suggest that the Parvata location or area was closer to Caḍota, though it is admittedly possible that the Parvata referred to a large area covering the entire mountain range to the south.

Whichever way one interprets this, these examples from the sources show beyond a doubt that Caḍota was, as suggested by the network model, a well-connected site and an important node connecting movement westwards out from the Kingdom of Kroraina, and also southwards towards the people inhabiting the Kunlun Mountains and Tibetan foothills.

Saca

Continuing eastwards, the next major node was the oasis town named Saca in the Krorainan documents, which likely lay at or near the Endere site. The older ruined site of Endere, which had later been resettled as a fort by the Tang period, was not as large as the settled site seen at Niya, though this may well be partly due to the very limited

¹⁰⁴⁴ Document n.622, 633, 634 and 635.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Document n.140, 622, 634 and 637.

surveying of the site. It did, however, contain several stupa, a small fortified post to the south as well as a larger circumvallation, the remnants of a tower and some houses, all likely dating to the period of the kingdom of Kroraina.¹⁰⁴⁶ There is little indication in the Krorainan documents as to the size of the Saca site, though several documents show it to have been a cultivated oasis.¹⁰⁴⁷ Saca furthermore appeared to have had a garrison of soldiers, as document n.1 sent to cozbo Tamjaka discusses a case where a group of soldiers (*seniye*) from Saca carried off two cows, while the previously mentioned documents n.14 and n.367 stipulated guards to be sent along with envoys. It is noteworthy, however, that in the two cases where both Saca and Caḍota are called upon to provide provisions, such as food and fodder or other resources to the state, the amount demanded from Saca is always less than from Caḍota.¹⁰⁴⁸ For example, in document n.214, which discusses an envoy sent to Khotan, Saca is to provide food in 10 *vacari*, 10 *vacari* of *phalitaḡa* and two sacks of alfalfa, while Caḍota must provide 15 *vacari* of each type and three sacks. Though by no means a definitive measure and one possibly skewed by Caḍota's prominence as a find site, it could perhaps be an indication of the two oasis towns' comparative capacities.

While the discovered site appears to have been smaller, Saca is nonetheless a prominent site in both network graphs, where it belongs to the central cluster of nodes and both its degree centrality and betweenness centrality rank amongst the highest. This importance in the network is in keeping with Stein's observation that the areas of vegetation along the Endere River would have been the only viable site for a halfway station on a desert route between Niya (Caḍota) and Charchen (Calmadana).¹⁰⁴⁹ In network graph two, it is seen to be strongly associated with both Caḍota and Khotan, with repeated mentions of all these three sites together. Many of these cases of contact occur in the itineraries of official travellers described previously, though the connection between Saca and Caḍota went further. Both document n.97 and n.573 concern marriages carried out between the people of Saca and Caḍota, while in document n.160, the Caḍotan Lyipeya had been granted land in Saca by the king.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 270–92.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Document n.159 and 160.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Document n.214 and 367.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 274.

Several other documents dealing with Saca further detail resources moved between the two oases, both by official orders and individuals.¹⁰⁵⁰ Finally, three documents dealing with Saca order various people to watch it for news or the movement of hostile forces. Orders to this effect appear in document n.133 and are likewise written on the back of the legal document n.578, likely as a draft. Perhaps most interesting is document n.123, which though but a short report, states that news of the army was brought from Saca and a watch was sent out, although the man selected refused to go. No document mentions a watch to be set on Calmadana or Kroraina, though watch was sometimes set on sites to the west, such as Khema. Saca then, it would seem, was the eastern frontier of the Caḍotans and an important source of news and forewarning of possible attacks.

Judging by network graph two and the number of coappearances, Saca's connections eastwards seem weaker than would be expected. Only in the above-mentioned itinerary of document n.14 are Calmadana and Saca mentioned together, though this document does describe someone explicitly travelling from Calmadana to Saca. As for the capital Kroraina, the connection appears even weaker, as Saca and Kroraina only coappear in the long report of document n.637, which gives a summary of expenditures occurred at Caḍota during the visit of the queen and various kalas. Measures of wine were given both as provisions for kala Kirteya, as he returned to the capital and towards the end of the report also to a group of people from Saca, and as such, the two places are never really associated with each other in this document. This apparent lack of communication eastwards from Saca must, however, be attributed to the fact that most of the Krorainan documents were found at Caḍota. Looking at the six documents discovered by Stein at Endere, two of these mention movement to or from the capital Kroraina. The first, document n.660, is a list on an oblong tablet of silk rolls handed out or received, and the first entry mention an unnamed person returning from the capital. The very fragmented document n.663, which has many of the characteristics of a "Letter"-type document, mentions both news and wedge-tablets arriving from the capital. Though certainly a very small sample, these documents

¹⁰⁵⁰ Document n.159, 368, 625 and 637.

seems to suggest that, given more evidence from Saca itself, its eastwards connection would also be better represented in the material.

Much like Caḍota, a closer study of the documents concerning Saca confirms the impression given by the network graphs, namely that Saca was a well-connected oasis site, in close contact with Caḍota to its west. Furthermore, though our sources here are scant, it would also have been in contact eastwards with Calmadana and the capital Kroraina. Finally, it is worth noting that, as shall be discussed in detail in the next section, the Endere site furthermore yielded documents with very far reaching connections indeed.

Calmadana

The next node on the eastwards route through the kingdom of Kroraina was the oasis of Calmadana. Situated near the modern oasis of Charchan, it appears to have been one of the most important oases within the kingdom, as it is mentioned seventeen times in the documents. It is thus the most frequently mentioned node from the kingdom after the find site of Caḍota nearby Parvata and the capital of Kroraina itself. This is further supported by Steins observation of the twentieth century oasis' ample water supply, comparable to other well-established oases, such as Keriya.¹⁰⁵¹ Calmadana is also the only site beyond Caḍota and Kroraina for which a cozbo is mentioned. This occurs in document n.582, a contract, the first part of which is datable to ca. 266 CE and in which a cozbo of Calmadana named Suryamitra stands as a witness. Though it is quite possible that even smaller sites within the Kingdom of Kroraina were administered by cozbos, it is still noteworthy that a cozbo from Calmadana was taken as a witness for a contract in Caḍota. Turning to the network graphs, the impression of Calmadana as an important site is further reinforced, as it is amongst the most prominent sites of the central cluster when measuring for betweenness centrality. Especially in network graph two, Calmadana appears important, with the highest betweenness centrality amongst any node. As explained above, however, this is partly the result of the connections made based on document n.122, which follows,

¹⁰⁵¹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 294–95.

Oblong tablet. Obv.

Namarasma gave one royal cow as a present (laṣi di[ta]) in Lominana.

In Piṣalyi one cow was sold to Sotuge; the head of the *saṃgha* received the price, milimas [...] of corn.

In Calmatana one cow was sold to Vanamkha, the price received [...]

One large cow was lost at Parcona *pirova* (fort); these four cows Namarasma [...]¹⁰⁵²

In this document is a short, four-line report of four cows that appear to have been in the care of a Namarasma. Two were sold, one at Pisali and one at Calmadana, while one was given away as a present in Lominana and one was lost at the Parcona *pirova* (fort)¹⁰⁵³. There is, therefore, no clear link in this document between Calmadana and the other sites, though they could of course be near each other, meaning that Calmadana's prominence could be seen as somewhat anomalous. As a test for this, the connections from document n.122 were deleted from network graph two and betweenness centrality was measured again. (see table 6) This, as seen in the table, notably reduces the centrality measures of Calmadana in favour of Kroraina and Pisali, which become the sole connectors of the Pisali cluster, although Calmadana remains one of the most prominent sites. This is not particularly surprising, as Calmadana is well connected to most other major nodes in the network even without document n.122.

To the west Calmadana appears closely connected with Caḍota, though as discussed, above the available sources gives only a single link to Saca. The nature of Calmadana's connections with Caḍota appears to mainly fall into two categories, namely documents dealing with the movement of resources and letters. In the four documents dealing with the movement of resources from Caḍota to Calmadana, it is mainly local agricultural products that were sent, everything from camels and grain to wine.¹⁰⁵⁴ Notably in all these cases, the resources are to be sent from Caḍota,

¹⁰⁵² Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 21–22.

¹⁰⁵³ Burrow translate *pirova* as bridge, but as discussed in section 9.2.1 the correct translation is fort or military post.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Document n.4, 309, 329 and 547.

suggesting perhaps that Calmadana was the more prominent oasis town. It is, however, more likely the result of the source documents all having been sent to Caḍota and therefore left there, while no documents sent to Calmadana have been found there. As for letters, Calmadana is mentioned five times, though in three it is merely discussed and both the addresser and addressee are in different locations. Two documents however, n.519 and n.546, were explicitly sent by someone in Calmadana to Caḍota. Curiously, both were addressed to the same person, namely Ramsotsa's grandson Caṣgeya, and both were found in the same ruin, namely N.24. Both letters furthermore mainly concern animals that were to be sent to Calmadana. Especially document n.519 is of interest,

Oblong tablet. Obv. & Rev.

To his dear brothers, of pleasant aspects, the monk[s?] Sodaya and Caṣgeya. Cinasena pays his respect and sends health, much and more, and thus I write: I have sent a letter five or six times concerning sheep, but have not heard anything from there. It is now the third year since I came there and handed over to you, Caṣgeya, and Pgu eight sheep with lamb and six males to dispatch here. After that the *vulutsukla* brought ten items of small livestock here. They were all goats. That left four over. The other wretched animals you kept back there. These animals along with those belonging to the *kilme* are to be brought here to Calmadana attended by Sucama. I am writing expressly. I will be able to do something for you. Goats are not to be sent again. Also your father Suḡuta promised, in your presence, a camel and a horse. Let it not be forgotten. Also there are many people there [.....]¹⁰⁵⁵

Here the addresser Cinasena states that he visited Caḍota three years before and left a number of sheep in the care of Caṣgeya to be sent to Calmadana. He then complains that these animals have not been brought to him as agreed, but instead goats were sent, and asks that the remaining animals, as well as other animals he had been promised, will be sent. In return, he promised to be able to do something to aid the addressees. It

¹⁰⁵⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 102.

is unclear if Cinasena had merely visited Caḍota or actually resettled to Calmadana from there. Certainly, people resettling in this way between Caḍota and Calmadana do not appear to have been entirely uncommon, as document n.257, though fragmentary, mentions a son of a woman from Yave-avana in Caḍota residing in Calmadana.

As suggested by network graph two, Calmadana also had firm connections eastwards, both to the capital Kroraina and also towards China, though as was the case with Saca, it is likely that the full extent of these connections is not available to us due to the majority of sources being from Caḍota. There are two co-occurrences of Calmadana and Kroraina in the Kharosthi documents, one fairly incidental one in document n.296 and one very explicit connection in document n.678. In the latter document, the under-tablet of a “Contract”-type which was found at L.A.4, a man of Kroraina named Camaka is said to have been domiciled in Calmadana. He still owned property in Kroraina, however, which he sells in the document. Another document, n.686 from a different room in the same ruin L.A.4, gives a list of cows which “went away” to various people and locations, likely meaning that they were given as gifts or sold. One of these cows were sent, presumably from the L.A site or nearby, to a group of Chinese at Calmadana. As shall be discussed shortly, Calmadana has one of the closest connections with the China node, presumably the Dunhuang area to its east, though for now this document suggests a further connection between Calmadana and Kroraina. In fact, if considering only the forty-eight documents found at the Lop (Kroraina) sites Calmadana is mentioned two times, making it is best-represented site in the material from Lop. This again it confirms the impression given by the network graph of a well-connected oasis town, which communicated both with Caḍota to the west and likewise with the capital of Kroraina to its east.

Kroraina

This leaves the oasis or region of Kroraina itself, the last major node in the Kingdom of Kroraina, when travelling eastwards. As noted in chapter four, there has been some debate as to Kroraina’s exact location, but it is quite clear that its centre and the so called “great city” was the L.A site at the shores of the lake Lop Nor. Unsurprisingly, the capital of Kroraina is the most frequently mentioned site within the Kingdom

except for Caḍota, appearing twenty-five times. As most of the “Royal Command” documents were sent from the king’s court, however, the real frequency of its appearance would be even higher if these were considered. Notably in network graph two, Kroraina’s strongest connection is with distant Caḍota, and its connection with Khotan appears as strong as with the far closer site of Calmadana, both coappearing twice. Again, as discussed in the sections of Calmadana and Saca, this is likely the result of the available sources mostly being found at Caḍota, and partly also the fact that many documents were written at the capital and thus did not need to explicitly mention it. Looking only at the documents found at Kroraina (Lop sites), however, the picture is quite different. As already discussed above, Calmadana is mentioned twice, once as the domicile of a man of Kroraina in document n.678 and once in connection with a list of cows dispatched in document n.686. In the same list, cows have also been sent to Niya, likely an erroneous or alternative spelling of Nina, the area south of Caḍota at modern Niya/Minfeng. Furthermore, in document n.675, a man of the *Parvata* (mountains) named Ratuka has come as a fugitive and the document gives instructions on how he is to be treated. Though the sample of forty-eight documents is of course rather small, it does seem to suggest that Kroraina was in close contact with most other major sites within its realm and not only Caḍota.

The communication between the capital Kroraina and Caḍota does however appear to have been frequent, as the Krorainan documents detail that the king gave instructions to his officials, dispensed justice in countless smaller disputes, granted land, and demanded various forms of tax and obligations. Resources sent as tax appear to have constituted one of the most frequent forms of exchange between Kroraina and Caḍota, though in the majority of cases where tax is being sent, the destination is not specified. Among the documents explicitly mentioning the capital, however, a few also concern themselves with taxes to be brought there.¹⁰⁵⁶ One of the most characteristic is document n.162, which takes the form of a letter sent to cozbo Kranaya and ṣoṭhaṃga Lyīpeya from the cozbo Patraya and vasu Suḡīta. It gives a detailed account of the tax levied on the people of Peta-avana in Caḍota; six sheep and three khi of ghee per year, which had all been delivered to the capital so that no arrears were left. In addition to

¹⁰⁵⁶ Document n.162, 291 and 431, as well as possibly n.250.

resources being sent to the capital as tax, there are likewise a few instances of items said to have been specifically obtained at the capital. Examples of this from Caḍota is document n.505, where a man named Tsugenamma received something called a *karoma* at the capital. It could possibly represent some luxury item, at least judging by document n.660 from the Endere site, where someone returning from the capital paid out two rolls of *pamdura* silk.

In addition to resources, there are several examples of people travelling between Kroraina and Caḍota for a wide variety of reasons. The most common example is the many Caḍotan petitioners, who are said to have complained before the king at his court, a common occurrence as discussed in section 5.5.2. Though there are examples to suggest that the plaintiff himself did not always appear in person and instead sent a letter or tablet, the wording of some of the documents clearly indicate that many travelled themselves as they frequently open with the statements, “so-and-so informs us here” or “so-and-so makes a representation here”.¹⁰⁵⁷ In this, this case “here” must be taken to mean the royal court at the capital. Other examples of Caḍotans having travelled to the capital for other reasons also exists, such as in the above-mentioned document n.505, where two men are said to have travelled to the capital for which they received provisions. Other examples include document n.506, where a monk left for the capital with the slave of another man and document n.530, where Suguta from ruin N.24 had exchanged grain for a camel in the capital.

Examples of movement in the other direction, from the capital to Caḍota, are likewise evident for both the highs and lows of Krorainan society. As for those lower down in society, the “Letter”-type document n.370 describes an incident, where a group of fugitives from Kroraina had fled their debt and the creditor ogu Alýaya by going to Caḍota. However, cases of important officials or nobility travelling are covered much more extensively. Document n.478 is one good example of this, reporting on a group of seven officials described as “army people” coming from the capital and then listing the considerable amounts of food given to them in Caḍota. Even more notable are the visits made by the queen, along with several *kalas*,

¹⁰⁵⁷ There are many examples to this effect. See n.12 or n.31 for examples.

described in document n.637.¹⁰⁵⁸ Other occasions of queens visiting Caḍota include document n.27 and n.431, though either of these cases could naturally be describing the same visit as document n.637. Finally, though the sources are scant, there appears to have been communication and even a hierarchy between the monastic Buddhist communities of Caḍota and Kroraina, with Kroraina as the senior community. The only detailed example of this contact comes from document n.489, in which the community of monks in the capital, together with the king, laid down regulations for the community of monks in Caḍota. The document explains that it had been heard that the Caḍotan monks did not adhere to regulations, and the document therefore decrees who were to be the head of the community, before giving a list of several dictates to be observed. Though no other documents pertaining to this relationship appear in the database, it seems clear from this one case that there was contact and a clear hierarchy between the two communities.

Seen as a whole, it can be concluded that much like the oasis towns it ruled further west, the capital of Kroraina was an important hub in close contact with the other major oasis towns within its kingdom. Though our sources mainly give us information about the connection between Kroraina and Caḍota, the connection between Kroraina and Calmadana or Saca was likely equally strong, if not stronger.

Minor sites and conclusion

During the period of our sources these four oasis towns formed the central hubs of the kingdom, tying together the many smaller sites and functioning as administrative centres. As for the smaller sites themselves, it is significantly harder to say much about their nature or even geographical location, as the Krorainan documents mention them mostly in passing. Several of the most frequently mentioned minor sites, such as Bhagasa, Masina, and Tsaga, were likely situated close to Caḍota. The documents give the impression that they were administered from there, likely as part of the *raja* of Caḍota. Nina, situated somewhere near the modern oasis of Niya, was likely in a similar position, though it appears to have been slightly more distant and thus more independent. Matters pertaining to the administration of Nina do, however, seem to

¹⁰⁵⁸ The document is quoted in full on page 305-306.

have been run from Caḏota, for though Nina is mentioned as a stop in the itinerary of the previously discussed document n.14, it is the officials of Caḏota who are reprimanded for having failed to provide a guard from there. Similarly in document n.189 and n.518, problems in Nina are sent to Caḏotan officials. Of other minor sites, like Pisali and Remena, even less is known beyond their functions as stops along itineraries, though as stated previously, Remena appears to have been somewhere between Caḏota and Saca, while judging by document n.291, Pisali must have been somewhere on the routes east of Caḏota.

From this analysis, it is absolutely clear that the oasis towns of the Kingdom of Kroraina were far from isolated. What these many examples show is that the connections described by the network graphs previously discussed are, for the most part, far from occasional or coincidental coappearances. Rather, the network maps fit well with the actual content of the sources, which in turn are the reflection of continuous exchange and interaction between all the major oasis towns within the Kingdom of Kroraina. As suggested by the graph, these oasis towns, Caḏota, Saca, Calmadana, and Kroraina, formed a tightly knit network of central nodes that in turn connected the various smaller settlements of the kingdom. Interaction between them was vigorous and varied, including exchange of resources in the form of both trade and tribute, letters both official and private, as well as people travelling and resettling. This state of affairs fits well with Matsuda's hypothesis of oasis communities as actively communicating and interacting with their neighbours and thus spawning networks of routes through the wastelands separating them. Yet as shown in the network graphs, the oasis towns of the Kingdom of Kroraina were not only connected to each other. They also interacted with polities and people beyond the kingdom.

7.4 The wider network

On the whole the documentary evidence from the Kingdom of Kroraina is overwhelmingly concerned with local issues and, consequently, mainly describe local routes of exchange and interaction. However, this does not mean that they did not interact with the wider region surrounding the kingdom, as both regional and even long-distance contacts are evident. The geographical positions of all the sites

mentioned in the Krorainan documents have not been identified, and it is therefore not entirely clear which ones were part of the kingdom of Kroraina and which ones lay beyond it. There are, however, five nodes from the network graph that have been securely identified with areas beyond the kingdom itself, namely Khotan, Khema, China, Kuci, and Sogdiana (Suliga). Turning to the network graphs, the three first sites were furthermore seen to be integrated well into the network, with both Khotan and China ranking amongst the central nodes in terms of centrality measures. The following section will discuss these links qualitatively, following the frequency of their appearance, to give a description of Kroraina's wider network.

Warfare and the enemies of Kroraina

Before discussing the wider network in detail, however, another form of interaction must briefly be discussed, because one of the most common contexts of interaction with "foreigners" in the Krorainan documents were through warfare. Two groups in particular appear to have constituted a threat to the kingdom of Kroraina, namely the Khotanese and the Supi. As discussed briefly above, there are five documents, which describe attacks by the Khotanese, namely document n.376, n.415, n.494, n.516, and n.625. None of the documents give detailed descriptions of these episodes, nor do they date the attacks, but two of them describe Caḍota having been plundered. Documents n.376, n.415, and n.625 further describe cases where people were kidnapped during the attacks, likely being forced into slavery as was the case in document n.415. Based on the dating of document n.415 as well as the appearance of the *cozbo* Somjaka in several of the relevant documents, it seems probable that most of these episodes describe the same attack. The dated documents are given as the 7th year of king Mahiri and as seen in appendix V, Somjaka was active during the early reign of king Mahiri. It therefore seems likely that a war was fought between Kroraina and Khotan during the early reign of king Mahiri, probably sometime in the 280s, during Somjaka's time as head of the province of Caḍota.

Yet the most persistent and, as one gets the impression, dreaded threat to Kroraina was a people named the Supi. Little is known about these people, though they were likely one or several groups of people inhabiting the Kunlun mountains

south of Kroraina and, as Burrow notes, they also appear in Saka texts from Khotan as Supiya.¹⁰⁵⁹ While the Khotanese documents do not place them geographically, they did fear the Supiya as savages, said to be one of four people who devastated Khotan.¹⁰⁶⁰ It also seems likely that they were one of the groups described in both the *Hanshu* and the *Weiliu* as Qiang (羌) tribes, a group which both texts suggest inhabited the mountains south of Kroraina and which the *Hanshu* describes as nomadic and well-armed.¹⁰⁶¹ In the Krorainan documents, there is little further information on the nature of the Supi people, beyond their description as feared invaders. A telling example is document n.515 as follows,

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be opened by the cozbos Kranaya and Lýipeya, of pleasant aspects.

Rectangular Under-tablet. Obv.

To his dear brothers the cozbos Kranaya and Lýipeya, honoured by men and gods and of pleasing aspect, the cozbo Kunala sends the health of their divine bodies, again and again, much, very much. And thus (I report) namely: Even now they say that there is reason to fear and be alarmed of the Supi. Other frontier-guards are quickly to be sent here.

Some eighteen documents mention the Supi, and in every one, they are similarly described as invaders and a threat. Most documents concerning the Supi merely state that they are to be feared and admonishes local officials to keep a watch for them,¹⁰⁶² but there are also at least two clear periods of Supi attacks upon the kingdom. The first appears to have taken place early in the reign of king Mahiri, thus roughly in the 280s, based on document n.324, which is dated to the 4th year of Mahiri (ca. 288 CE). This document describes Calmadana having been attacked and sacked by the Supi, who are said to have carried off the *raja*'s inhabitants. It also fits well with an attack upon

¹⁰⁵⁹ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 131.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Bailey, *Indo-Scythian Studies Being Khotanese Texts*, 7:79.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ban Gu, HS, 96 (80-81), Yu Huan, WL (Section 3).

¹⁰⁶² For examples, see document n.86, 88, 109, 126, 139, 515, 541 and 578.

Caḍota described in several documents addressed to cozbo Soṃjaka who, as discussed previously, likely ruled during Mahiri's early reign. Document n.351, a "Royal Command", appears to be the first in this series which informs Soṃjaka that the Supi have reached Navote, a site that, based on document n.754, would seem to have been close to Kroraina itself. The king then urges Soṃjaka to take measures to protect the kingdom, which in this case meant the province of Caḍota. This the cozbo seems to have done, as in document n.272 it is described how, when the Supi came to Caḍota, Soṃjaka gathered all the people within the *nagara*, translated by Burrow as city but in this case perhaps rather meaning fortification or castle. This might have saved the people, but the Supi then appear to have plundered Caḍota too, for both in document n.212 and n.491, complaints are made to Soṃjaka of horses and people respectively carried off by the Supi. Though these attacks might of course have been separate incidents, it seems likely that it happened during one raid.

This is not the last time the documents deal with the Supi, however, for a series of documents involving soṭhaṃga and cozbo Lýipeya, whose tenure as cozbo appears to have taken place some thirty years after cozbo Soṃjaka's, describes another spate of attacks. In document n.133, cozbo Lýipeya was informed that the Supi had reached Kogitasasa, while document n.119 describes Calmadana once more having come under attack. Due to a lack of dates, the exact sequence of these events cannot be determined, but as Lýipeya is cozbo in both documents, these events must have taken place in or after the 9th year of king Vaṣmana, likely in the 320s. It does appear as if Caḍota might this time have been spared, however, as document n.126 reports that all is well regarding the Supi. Likely they were driven back by the Krorainan army, which was assembled to oppose attacks by the Supi at least on one recorded occasion. This is described in the "letter" n.722., which describes Calmadana as in danger from the Supi before stating that the army is gathering and making a request of both a bow and arrows to the addressee. As the letter is not dated, it remains unclear which of the two periods of hostilities, if not another period, it describes.

Khotan and Khema

Returning to Kroraina's wider network, the most prominent site, both in the network graph and statistically in the documents, was the oasis of Khotan. Having the third highest betweenness centrality in network graph two, Khotan appears as one of the most important sites. This reflects well the statistical material, as Khotan is the second most frequently mentioned site in the entire Krorainan database, appearing in forty-one instances. This prominence is very much in keeping with what is known about Khotan from Chinese sources, where it is known as Yutian (于寘). Already in the *Hanshu*, it was one of the largest kingdoms in the Tarim Basin and certainly the strongest in the southern Tarim Basin.¹⁰⁶³ It was, however, during the period covered in the *Hou Hanshu*, mainly the first and second centuries CE, that Khotan really rose to prominence in the Chinese historical narratives. In the narrative of the *Hou Hanshu*, Khotan played a central role both politically and militarily, for example bringing about the downfall of the hegemon Xian of Yarkand.¹⁰⁶⁴ Furthermore, it was given the significant population figure of 83,000 people across 32,000 households, though this likely also included its conquests, such as Khema in the Keriya valley. The accuracy of these figures is naturally difficult to gauge, but even if the population was somewhat smaller, it would make it amongst the most populous areas in the Tarim Basin.¹⁰⁶⁵

The strong link between Kroraina and Khotan is visible not only in the network graph but is also amply attested qualitatively in the Krorainan sources. The most common contact between Kroraina and Khotan, which the Krorainan sources attest to, were political in nature, as fifteen of the documents mentioning Khotan do so in related to the movement of envoys, couriers, or ambassadors.¹⁰⁶⁶ As already seen above in the itineraries of official envoys discussed in documents such as n.14 and n.214, there were established procedures for supporting the movement of these envoys from the capital of Kroraina to Khotan. Local officials were instructed to provide them with animals, food and fodder, guards and guides – all the necessities of travel. When the officials failed to render the services the envoys required, they were both

¹⁰⁶³ Ban Gu, HS, 96 (97)

¹⁰⁶⁴ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (33-41)

¹⁰⁶⁵ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (17)

¹⁰⁶⁶ Document n.14, 22, 86, 135, 214, 223, 248, 251, 253, 330, 362, 367, 388, 637 and 686.

reprimanded and forced to pay fines to cover the expenses incurred, as seen in both documents n.14 and n.223.

Various types of expeditions are described in the sources as travelling in this way. Most who travelled using this system are merely said to have gone on a mission (*dutiyaē*), presumably in most cases at the behest of the king, as the travellers are often called envoys or messengers (*duta*).¹⁰⁶⁷ Only in document n.214, a “Royal Command”, is the goal of the expedition made more explicit as it states that, “For the sake of the affairs of your province I have sent in the hand of the ogu Alýaya a horse as a present to the King of Khotan.”¹⁰⁶⁸ The province in question is clearly Cađota, as the command was sent to the cozbos Kolýisa and Somjaka. Although it carried no date, it could perhaps be a gift from king Mahiri to reconcile the Khotanese and end the hostilities, which appear to have existed during his early reign. In the other documents, it seems likely that those sent to Khotan carried messages for the king or went as his ambassadors. The former is perhaps more likely in the many cases of envoys without titles travelling, such as Šameka in document n.14 and Suyarnapala in n.22, while in the case of the previously seen ogu, or cozbo Bhagašena, one could perhaps have actual ambassadors. Ambassadors with the authority to parley is at least likely in the case of document n.637, dated to the 11th year of king Mahiri (ca. 295 CE). In this document a *kala*, one of the highest-ranking nobles, named Kirteya, is described as going on a mission to Khotan, either together with the queen or shortly after she herself also travelled to Khotan. In two cases there are also Khotanese envoys travelling the other way, seen in document n.86, where Khotanese envoys come on account of the boundary and in document n.686 from the L.A site, which describes Khotanese envoys being given a cow, presumably for consumption and provision.¹⁰⁶⁹ Yet, regardless of the authority of the envoys sent, the regularity of this system and the many references to it as being part of the law, makes it clear that these were not occasional or scattered incidents of contact. Rather, the journeys described in these documents were part of a well-established system of official communication between Kroraina and Khotan. The importance and existence of this system is hardly

¹⁰⁶⁷ See for example document n.22 and n.135.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 40.

¹⁰⁶⁹ There is also a very uncertain case, due to the documents fragmented state, in n.330.

surprising, as Khotan would have constituted one of the kings of Kroraina's chief political challenges. This the political importance of Khotan to Kroraina is further emphasised by repeated instructions to the governing cozbos in Caḍota to relay any news from Khema and Khotan immediately to the king's court.¹⁰⁷⁰

Official envoys, though they constitute a significant portion of the cases in the Krorainan sources, were however not the only people to travel between Khotan and Kroraina. Many others likewise made their way between the two kingdoms. This is attested in the Krorainan documents by several Khotanese, who appear to have been staying or residing in Caḍota.¹⁰⁷¹ Though some of these were slaves, such as the man Samngo given to the community of monks at Caḍota in document n.322, the majority of cases give the impression that these Khotanese were free and lived as integrated parts of the community. People labelled as Khotanese appear in "Royal Command" documents after complaining about not having been paid in document n.30 and being accused of thievery together with a Caḍotan in document n.36. Yet perhaps the surest sign of their settled status is their inclusion in lists of people. This is the case in document n.517, which gives a number of people to be brought as part of some legal case, where both a Khotanese named Mosana and a Khotanese monk named Dhamasura appear. Though the appellation of labels such as Khotanese (*Khotamni*) in the documents is no absolute guarantee for these people actually hailing from the kingdom of Khotan, the label is lent further credibility by the many cases of Khotanese arriving as refugees.¹⁰⁷²

Precisely what is meant by the term *palayamnaga*, usually called refugee but sometimes also fugitive in Burrow's translation¹⁰⁷³, is not entirely clear and nothing is said in the documents of the reasons for the Khotanese's flight. There are, however, a number of comparable cases where Krorainans fled and became fugitives elsewhere. Judging by these Krorainan cases, people became *palayamnaga* for a wide variety of reasons. Both document n.71 and n.621, for example, have couples eloping together, while document n.506 describes two slaves fleeing and document n.370 mention a

¹⁰⁷⁰ Document n.248, 272 and 283.

¹⁰⁷¹ Document n.30, 36, 216, 322, 335 and 517.

¹⁰⁷² Document n.296, 333, 403, 471, 662 and 735.

¹⁰⁷³ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 104.

group fleeing debt. It would seem then that people fleeing and being taken in as refugees was not an uncommon phenomenon in the ancient Tarim Basin and indeed that a certain precedent existed for how to treat them. The Khotanese refugees were, for example, not without legal rights, as shown by “Royal Command” document n.471, which accuses the frontier-guards (*sṗasavamma*) of having stolen the property of a group of Khotanese refugees and commands it to be returned. The fact that the *palayamnaga* had legal rights is also made explicitly clear in document n.403, where it is said that a Khotanese woman had unjustly been made to work, something which went against the law of the kingdom. Yet at the same time, the Khotanese refugees were not entirely free after having come to the kingdom as the king or his officials granted them to specific people and households to settle. This was in fact regulated by Krorainan law, as shown by document n.861, which states, “As settled/fixed by the old law of old debts (*purva puranaga dhamana*), (those who?) come from other domains as fugitives (*palanaga (palayanaga)*) to our own royal domain these become the king's own.”¹⁰⁷⁴ This is the case in documents n.296 and n.403 as well as others that do not specifically name the fugitives as Khotanese. The status was, however, not that of a true slave but rather a form of dependant, as document n.292 states that a group of *palayamnaga* are to be given a house, fields and seeds for cultivation, while document n.403, as we have seen, stipulated that they were not to be made to work unjustly.

Besides these refugees, the Krorainan documents do not record Khotanese arriving from the west, though as shown by the cases of Khotanese not named as refugees living in Kroraina, they apparently did arrive. A few scattered mentions also exist of Krorainans travelling in the other direction. A particularly interesting case is document n.584,

Rectangular Cov.-tablet. Obv.

This document is to be carefully kept by Kutreya and Ramṣotsa.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Translated by author based on Duan and Tshelothar, *Kharosthi Documents Preserved in Qinghai Tibetan Medical Culture Museum*. Baums and Glass n.884.

Cov.-tablet. "Beneath the Seal".

This is the seal of the guśura Jebhatra, the caṃkura Caraga and the cozbo Soṃjaka.

Rectangular Under-tablet Obv. & Cov.-tablet. Rev.

In the 4th year, 2nd month, 28th day of the reign of his majesty the great king Jitugha Mahiriya, son of heaven, the guśura Jebhatra, the caṃkura Cataraga, the cūyalayina Dirpara, and the cozbo Soṃjaka examined a dispute. Ramṣotsa, Kutreya, and Cinika brought an action concerning sheep. When Kutreya was *aṣga*, at that time they took a gift of honour to Ramṣotsa. They gave him four sheep. Vuḡinga gave them, Suḡuta took them. After that Kutreya, Vuḡinga, and Cinika carried off twenty sheep from Ramṣotsa. This case was put off. Vuḡinga died. Suḡuta is in Khotan. When Suḡuta comes back from Khotan, at that time the matter is to be taken in hand. It is to be carefully examined with oath and witness.¹⁰⁷⁵

This court case, a “Legal” document containing a dispute over sheep had to be postponed due to one of the involved, Suguta son of Ramṣotsa, being away in Khotan. This is particularly interesting, as this Suguta is a well-known figure from the material, with a long career as a scribe and a man of some means, certainly not a refugee. Unfortunately, his purpose in Khotan is not stated in the document. Yet while Suḡuta was not a refugee, it is likely that many of the fugitives that fled Caḡota did head towards Khotan, as seems to be the case in document n.71, and which there are two cases for in documents mentioning Khema. Finally, there is the interesting case of document n.400, a “Royal Command” document, where a man named Cakasa is said to have taken a slave named Cramaena, belonging to another man, to Khotan with his hands bound behind his back. Upon his return, he did not have the slave Cramaena with him. Though very little context is given, and though Cakasa denied having taken Cramaena to Khotan, it appears the Krorainan officials at least were suspecting that the man had been sold in Khotan. Another case of slaves being exchanged between

¹⁰⁷⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 122.

Khotan and Caḍota appears in document n.415, though here three young Khotanese men gave a woman as a present to the mother of the cozbo Soṃjaka. If, however, either of these two cases do actually describe slave trade, they would constitute one of the few instances of actual exchange taking place between Caḍota and Khotan, which is otherwise almost non-existent in the Krorainan material. That such slave trade took place however does seem likely, both due to the Khotanese slaves found in the Krorainan documents, but also given how widespread trading of slaves was in the contracts from Kroraina.

Before finishing off this section on the contacts between the kingdoms of Kroraina and Khotan, it would seem prudent to briefly touch upon the site of Khema. Khema is mentioned seven times in the Krorainan material, and as discussed in the section on itineraries westwards, it lay west of Caḍota on the route towards Khotan, likely in the Keriya oasis. Both the *Hanshu* and *Hou Hanshu* mention it as a polity, and the *Hou Hanshu* name its kingdom Jumi (拘彌). Originally it had its own king, but though the kingdom was repeatedly restored to independence during the first and second centuries CE,¹⁰⁷⁶ it was by the time of the third century ruled by the king of Khotan.¹⁰⁷⁷ This is corroborated by the Krorainan material, as Khotan and Khema are mentioned as a pair in four out of seven documents. The two remaining documents are interesting, however, as they both name Khema as the destination for fugitives fleeing Kroraina. In the rather complex case of document n.506, a “Legal” document, two slaves are said to have fled to Khema, where they are to be looked for. Similarly, document n.709, another “Legal” document, has another slave fleeing to Khema after getting into a fight with a free man, though he was eventually found and apparently killed by his former owners.

As this multitude of different examples show, there was frequent and sustained contact between the kingdoms of Kroraina and Khotan. Much of the interaction extant in the Krorainan documents appears to have been political in nature, though this is hardly surprising, given that the sources in question were overwhelmingly products of the royal administration. To the rulers of Kroraina, Khotan constituted one of their

¹⁰⁷⁶ Fan Ye, HHS, 88 (15-17)

¹⁰⁷⁷ Yu Huan, *Weilue* (Section 5)

most significant neighbours, and thus diplomacy with this power was essential. Nevertheless, as the examples of Khotanese living or seeking refuge in Kroraina shows, there were also private individuals moving between the two political entities. It is the two cases of Krorainans travelling the other way, Suḡuta in document n.584 and Cakasa in document n.400, which in our context deserves further consideration. In both of these cases, the Krorainans were free men who travelled to Khotan, rather than fleeing as refugees, and both returned back to Caḍota at a later point. Neither of their travels was recorded because of the journey itself, but rather constitute incidental details included in other accounts. Thus judging from these two, admittedly limited, cases it does not seem as if travelling to Khotan was a particularly noteworthy or uncommon activity. It therefore seems likely that many others may have made the same journey without it ever being noted or written down by the authorities, as the route was clearly well established and frequented by official delegations.

Cinasḥana

Following the kingdom of Khotan, including the nodes of Khotan and Khema, the third most frequently mentioned “foreign” node is the one made up of those called *Cina-* in the documents, meaning Chinese.¹⁰⁷⁸ Though mainly used as a label to denote people being Chinese, the word is in one instance used to refer to a place with the addition of *ḥana*. This *Cinasḥana* or “Chinese place” might have referred to China proper, though in all likelihood, it primarily represented the oasis of Dunhuang, which was the most prominent Chinese settlement immediately to the east of Kroraina. Returning to the network graphs, the China node is central in both, and particularly in network graph two it appears as the fourth most prominent nodes when looking at betweenness centrality. This is partly a result of documents n.80 and n.255, which connect the China node to Tsaga as discussed in section 7.2.3. Yet even accounting for Tsaga’s connection to Caḍota, as is done in network graph one, the China node remains central. It is quite surprising then, considering its presence in the network, that China and the Chinese only appear six times in the Krorainan documents. This fact is even more startling when considering the presence of Chinese officials and soldiers in

¹⁰⁷⁸ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 89.

the kingdom during at least some of the period in which the Krorainan materials were being produced, as already discussed in chapter four. Much like in the case of the prominence of Khotan, however, the ready explanation for this lack of mentions of China in the sources is of course that the vast majority of them were found and produced at Caḍota at the western extremity of the kingdom of Kroraina. The likelihood of this being the explanation is further reinforced if one considers the forty-eight documents from the Lop sites (Kroraina) in isolation. In this collection, China as a site is far more prominent, as it appears in two documents, seemingly a small number but being as often as Calmadana and beaten only by Kroraina itself in numbers of times it is mentioned. That the Chinese presence in the kingdom was stronger in the east and weaker in the west at Caḍota is further supported by evidence in Chinese documents found in the kingdom, where the Lop site has yielded a significantly larger volume of Chinese documents than Caḍota.¹⁰⁷⁹

Yet as shown by the content of the documents mentioning China or Chinese, there was a Chinese presence seemingly across the kingdom. The prime evidence for this is document n.686, a list of cows sent or given away which contained several place names.

Oval-topped tablet. Obv.

Column A.

[.....] went away.

A cow of [.....] went away to the Chinese of Opimta.

A cow of [.....] went away to the messengers from Khotan.

A cow of [.....] went away to the Chinese of Calmadana.

Lama took the cow of [.....].

A cow of [.....] went away to Tryachi (Dryachi).

A cow of Kayamdaga went away to Tryachi.

A cow of [.....] went away to Tryachi.

A cow of [.....] went away to the Chinese in Niya (Nina?).

¹⁰⁷⁹ See section 3.2.1.

Column B.

Tagaca's cow went away to the Chinese.

Onaka's cow went away to the cozbo Kuñita.

Cinga took Smagamta's cow.

Kuuna's cow went away to Tryachi.

Kumpara's cow went away to Pakhi.

The soṭhaṅga Pgena's cow went away to the Chinese.¹⁰⁸⁰

The Chinese are mentioned five times in this document amongst many other, clearly Krorainan, receivers of bovines. Twice it is merely stated that so-and-so's cow went away (likely meaning they were given away) to the Chinese, without further specifications. In these two cases, it seems likely that these cows were given to the Chinese of the garrison that existed at the L.A, in whose close proximity the document n.686 was found.¹⁰⁸¹ The three remaining lines mentioning Chinese, however, note their locations, stating that a cow went away to the “Chinese of Opimta”, the “Chinese of Calmadana” and finally the “Chinese in Niya”, likely a mistake for Nina. While Opimta is not otherwise known as a site, though it often appears as a name and thus might signify a household/area ruled by an Opimta, both Calmadana and Nina have been encountered previously. In all three sites, the document seems to suggest a Chinese presence, though whether these groups were official outposts, as the one found at the L.A seems to have been, or rather groups of civilians or even traders, is unclear.

Based on the precedence of the L.A site, the former alternative might seem the most likely, though as already discusses in chapter four, there is little supportive evidence for this. Instead, if considering document n.255 or n.324 from Caḍota, the other option appears more likely. Document n.324 describes a Chinese man involved in an exchange with a man of Calmadana, though nothing is said of where he himself resided. Document n.255 is more helpful however as in this document, a short and fragmentary report on an oblong tablet, it is stated that a Chinese (*Cimna*) Aryasa

¹⁰⁸⁰ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 139–40.

¹⁰⁸¹ See chapter four for a discussion on the Chinese outpost at Lop. See further Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 369–450.

owned land in Tsaġa near Caḏota, which he said was not for sale. This peculiar link between the Chinese and Tsaġa is further reinforced in document n.80, a long list of names, which starts with Tsmadhi of Tsaġa and in column C lists a Chinese (Cimna) Kamcgeya. As with the case of Khotanese, the link between the appellation and ethnicity is not entirely secure, and it is of course also possible that *Cimna* in this case meant something other than Chinese. The latter case seems unlikely however based on items, such as three robes in document n.149, also being called *Cimna*. The name Aryasa is otherwise unattested in the Krorainan documents and could well be a rendering of a Chinese name, though Kamcgeya does appear in two other documents without the appellation *Cimna*, and in the case of document n.569, he is said to be of the Mountains. Yet it would seem that at least the local Caḏotans perceived these men called *Cimna* as somehow Chinese and that at least one such Chinese man inhabited Tsaġa. Several personal names also appear seemingly starting with an initial *Cina* or *Cimna*, for example the suveṭha Cinaṣena in document n.375 or the ogu Cimnaphara in document n.399, which might have indicated Chinese descent, or at least perceived descent. A particularly interesting case, which might support such a view, is highlighted by Mariner Padwa in the family of the man Yapgu.¹⁰⁸² His wife was named Cimġayae and their son was similarly named Cinaṣa, while either their daughter or daughter-in-law was named Cinapriyae. The seemingly hereditary nature of this label could perhaps be taken as a sign of ethnic or cultural affiliation with China, though this is far from clear.

In either case the collection of documents concerning China and Chinese, though small, suggests that several Chinese were stationed or settled in the kingdom. This Chinese presence was of course already known from the content of the Chinese documents from both the Niya and Lop sites, but the Krorainan material further shows that they both interacted with the locals and also settled amongst them. As document n.35 discussed at the end of chapter six certainly shows, there were also commercial agents connecting Kroraina and *Cinasthana*, whether this was China proper or the westernmost settlement of Dunhuang. Little can be said of the frequency of this

¹⁰⁸² Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)', 218.

contact or who conducted it, based on the Krorainan material. Yet it is noteworthy as one of the few cases of documented commercial contact between Kroraina and its neighbours.

Kuci

The next foreign “node” mentioned in the Krorainan material, in terms of number of occurrences, was the node of Kuci or the Kingdom of Kuci, readily identifiable with modern Kucha or Qiuci (龜茲) of the Chinese annals. Kuci appears five times in the Krorainan material and all five in connection with a man named Sagamoya, alternatively spelled Sagimoya, Sagimovi or Zagimoya. As explained in full in document n.621, a “Royal Command” document, Sagamoya the son of a potter from Yave-avana in Caḍota, eloped with a woman named Surpriyae, the wife of his neighbour. Together the couple fled as refugees to the kingdom of Kuci, where they stayed for several years before returning and being accepted back by the king himself. Document n.621 ends by stating that the couple, resettled in Caḍota, were not to be harassed over the question of a bride price (*lode*). Documents n.629 and n.632, also “Royal Command” documents, refer to the same incident though not in as much detail, and likewise in these documents the king orders that Sagamoya and his wife are not to be harassed. Upon returning from Kuci, Sagamoya became the servant, also called slave, to one of the king’s sons named kala Puṃṇabala, who granted him land in Caḍota.¹⁰⁸³ Yet he did not lose all connections with Kuci, as document n.629 describes how Sagamoya incurred a debt while a fugitive in Kuci. This was a debt that certain people, presumably from Kuci, were trying to claim after his return to Caḍota.

These three mentions of Kuci appears quite incidental, and it is therefore hard to imagine a close connection between the kingdoms of Kuci and Kroraina of the type that appears to have existed between the latter and the kingdom of Khotan. Little is likewise said in these documents about the route used by Sagamoya between Kroraina and Kuci. However, the two last documents to deal with Kuci and Sagamoya’s case, n.834 and n.861, are of greater interest as they are both lengthy “Legal”-type

¹⁰⁸³ See document n.862. This document does not mention Kuci.

documents made at the royal court itself, and in the case of document n.834, give a more detailed account of Sagamoya's flight to Kuci,

Rectangular Under.-tablet. Obv.

In the 6th year, 1st month, 25th day of his majesty, the great king Jitugha Mairi, son of heaven, at this time the son of heaven in person heard the investigation of the guśuras Dhamapala, Paṃcama, Ciṃnamavara¹⁰⁸⁴ and Dajapala, the [soveṭha] Maṣ[dhi]ge, the tuguja Syaptala, the caṃkuras (?) Śamaśena, Ldaṣa and Alýaya, the [kori] Spapaya, and the cozbos Jeyatratha, Arjuṇa and Cimryaśa.

Sagamovi, Klasemna, Kolýisa and [Pulam]do (brought) a complaint concerning Apgeya, Lýipta, Pgiso, Lýipae, Patraya and Apta. In fact these 7 (?) people had wished to flee to the kingdom of Kuci as refugees (*palayitamti*) from Caḍota. Also, at that time, Sagamovi, Klasemna, Kolýisa and Cataya had fled Caḍota and settled in the kingdom of Kuci. For six years Sagamovi, Klasemna, Kolýisa and Cataya lived in the kingdom of Kuci. For the sake of their devotion (love) to the master, the king of Nuava land. Because of this devotion these people, Sagamovi, Klasemna, Kolýisa and Cataya came back here to (our) own domain. Pulamdo, raised a complaint against Sagamovi, Klasemna, Kolýisa and Cataya concerning Apgeya, Lýipta, Pgiso, Lýi[p]aae, Patraya and Apta (and they say): "The people from my household fleeing (to Kuci) were murdered on the way by Sagamovi, Klasemna, Kolýisa and Cataya." Sagamovi, Klasemna, Kolýisa and Cataya says: "In fact these people fled Caḍota one day together (with us). These people had no horse on which to load water and provisions. They died because of craving (these things). (They were) not beaten, not wounded, not *kajariti* (?), not cut. With regards to, with regards to, the decision there are no other witnesses. Sagamovi, Klasemna, Kolýisa and Cataya swore an oath. From now on¹⁰⁸⁵

¹⁰⁸⁴ Possibly the Chinese named Mavara or the Chinese *mahavara* (Accountant)?

¹⁰⁸⁵ Translated by author based on Zhang, 'A Wooden Tablet in Kharosthi Script'. Baums and Glass n.842.

This document n.834 is interesting for several reasons, being the product of the royal court in action, but it furthermore gives a number of interesting details about the connections between Caḍota and Kuci. In this court case, a man named Pulaḿdo had accused Sagamoya and his people of murdering another group of refugees en route to Kuci, a group of people that had fled from Pulaḿdo farm. Sagamoya himself fled with three companions, along with his his wife, as known from document n.861. The other group is stated to have contained seven people, though only six are listed.¹⁰⁸⁶ This means that a large group of people tried to flee from Caḍota to Kuci, likely an indication that there were useable routes connecting the two kingdoms and, more specifically, Caḍota and Kuci. The document n.834 furthermore specifies something about the conditions of this route, at least if Sagamoya is to be believed, as the route would require supplies of water and provisions of such amounts that they required pack animals to carry them.

Based on this, the routes of such a connection likely ran north along the course of the Niya river, which would have led almost straight in the direction of the Kucha oasis snaking its way across the vast Taklamakan desert. Alternatively, it could possibly have run along the neighbouring Keriya River to the west, which also traversed the Taklamakan in the direction of the Kucha oasis. However, this seems less likely, as the refugees would then have entered the kingdom of Khotan. It is not known how far the Niya river reached into the desert in antiquity, but it appears likely that it reached much further north than today, based on the Niya site remains and on comparable finds along the Keriya river to its west.¹⁰⁸⁷ Interestingly, evidence to support such a connection also appears in the *Hanshu*. In the section on the kingdom of Qiuci, it is said to adjoin the kingdom of Jingjue (Caḍota) to its south, Qiemo (Calmadana) to the south-east, and Jumi (Khema) to the south-west.¹⁰⁸⁸ The *Hanshu* of course describes the situation mainly in the last century BCE, but when held together with the evidence from the Krorainan sources, it seems clear that these connections north-south across the Taklamakan were still active in the first centuries CE.

¹⁰⁸⁶ There is no clear reason for this discrepancy, and it could be regarded merely as a scribal mistake, though it could also possibly be that the unnamed seventh refugee could have been a child or similar.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Debaine-Francfort, Debaine, and Idriss, 'The Taklimakan Oases: An Environmental Evolution Shown Through Geoarchaeology', 182–84.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ban Gu, HS, 96 (163)

The Suliga and Sogdiana

The final “foreign” node in the network generated from the Krorainan documents is the node labelled *Suliga*. This word was an epithet that can be confidently translated as Sogdian and indicating an origin in Sogdiana, appearing only in document n.661 found on the floor of the ruin E.6 in the southern part of the Endere (Saca) site.¹⁰⁸⁹ Stein, upon finding it, already noted the peculiarity of its alphabet, and subsequently Rapson et al., Peter S. Noble, as well as T. Burrow made notes of the unusual characters, the inclusion of some Brahmi characters and the peculiar dialect of the document that differs markedly from the Krorainan material.¹⁰⁹⁰ Based on these peculiarities, the document dating in the reign of a Khotanese king and the content of the document itself, Burrows concluded that the document was produced in the kingdom of Khotan.¹⁰⁹¹ This certainly seems likely, though as first pointed out by Konow, the document found at Endere is quite possibly a copy, as it was found on an oblong tablet, highly unusual at least for contracts from Kroraina.¹⁰⁹² Whether or not this was the case, it is certainly a document of the utmost importance to this discussion,

Oblong tablet. Obv.

On the 18th day of the 10th month of the 3rd year, at this time in the reign of the king of Khotan, the king of kings, Hinaza Deva Vijitasimha, at that time there is a man of the city called Khvarnarse. He speaks thus: There is a camel belonging to me. That camel carries a distinguishing mark, a mark branded on it, like this-- VA SO. Now I am selling this camel for a price of 8,000 *maṣa* to the *suliga* Vagiti Vadhaga. On behalf of that camel Vagiti Vadhaga paid the whole price in *maṣa* and Khvarnarse received it. The matter has been settled. From now on this camel has become the property of Vagiti Vadhaga, to do as he likes with it, to do everything he likes. Whoever at a future time complains, informs, or raises a dispute about this camel, for that he shall so pay the penalty

¹⁰⁸⁹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 276.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 249; Noble, ‘A Kharosthi Inscription from Endere’; Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 137.

¹⁰⁹¹ Burrow, ‘The Dialectical Position of the Niya Prakrit’, 430.

¹⁰⁹² Noble, ‘A Kharosthi Inscription from Endere’, 445.

as the law of the kingdom demands. By me Bahudhiva this document (?) was written at the request of Khvarnarse.

SPA SA NA

(RBS notes that these characters are written larger and with long stems, likely the initials of the witnesses below.)

(A line of Brahmi)

Nani Vadhaga, witness. Śaśivaka, witness. Spaniyaka, witness.

Oblong tablet. Rev.

(Various isolated aksaras, some of them apparently Brahmi)¹⁰⁹³

Dated in the reign of an otherwise unknown king of Khotan called Vijitasimha, it is not possible to firmly date document n.661. In a note to his paper on early Khotanese chronology and kings, Étienne de la Vaissière suggests that the king Vijitasimha, if the same as a king Simha found in the Tibetan text *Li yul lunbstan-pa* (Prophecy of the Li Country), would have reigned around ca. 320 CE.¹⁰⁹⁴ This date fits well with the dating of the last Krorainan documents from Caḍota and also the dated Sogdian material from further east. No date is given amongst the associated Krorainan documents from ruin E.6 or the wider Endere site, but based on their content and judging on palaeographic grounds, they were certainly the product of the Krorainan administration, as recognised by Stein.¹⁰⁹⁵ Thus, although an exact date cannot be given, the document was likely contemporaneous with the Krorainan material, and a date around 300 CE seems likely.

The document itself is a contract on the sale of a camel between a Khotanese man, Khvarnarse, and a Sogdian man named Vigiṭi Vadhaga, a Kharosthi transcription of a Sogdian name reconstructed by Nicholas Sims-Williams as βγγṣty-βntk (Vagisti

¹⁰⁹³ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 137.

¹⁰⁹⁴ de la Vaissière, 'Silk, Buddhism and Early Khotanese Chronology', 87.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 275–76.

Vandak, “Slave of the gods”).¹⁰⁹⁶ The exchange took place in Khotan, where a local scribe following local Khotanese legal and epigraphical practices wrote the document. Three men stood witness, one of whom was also a Sogdian named Nani Vadhaga, the Kharosthi transcription of the common Sogdian name nny-βntk (Nanai-vandak, “Slave of Nanaia”).¹⁰⁹⁷ This document therefore shows clearly that there was a Sogdian presence in Khotan in the period of the Krorainan documents, and at least in this case, they were involved in an exchange with a local Khotanese man. Yet the extent of these Sogdians’ connection to Kroraina and how document n.661 ended up in Saca, remains unclear. Certainly, some unknown actor, such as a Khotanese refugee, could have transported the contract or possibly its copy to Saca. It certainly seems a tempting explanation to suggest that Vigiti Vadhaga was given the contract and he himself carried it to Saca. This would have been in line with Krorainan practice, where the buyer kept the contracts, though nothing is known from this period on the Khotanese practice, and would seem reasonable, as the contract would be a legal guarantee for his right to the camel. There are no indications as to why it was left there, though one can imagine the camel being sold again, or else having been lost so that the contract had no further value and was thus discarded.

In either case, this suggests that at least some Sogdians might have moved through Kroraina, and there are a number of fragmentary Sogdian document finds from Kroraina that further tie the kingdom to Sogdiana and suggest that at least some Sogdians might have been active in the kingdom. The six Sogdian documents found by Stein, were found at L.A, L.M, and L.L, four at the former and one at each of the latter, and a further one was found at the Niya site by the Sino-Japanese expedition. Documents L.A.6.ii.0104 is noteworthy, as it was found behind what Stein believed to be the remnants of the Chinese garrison at the L.A. site in a large refuse heap made up mainly of straw and dung. In it was uncovered a large quantity of Chinese documents on paper and wood, some dated to between 264 and 312 CE, with a smaller collection

¹⁰⁹⁶ Grenet, Sims-Williams, and de la Vaissière, ‘Sogdian Ancient Letter V’, n. 3; Lurje, *Personal Names in Sogdian Texts*, 2:141–42.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Grenet, Sims-Williams, and de la Vaissière, ‘Sogdian Ancient Letter V’, n. 3; Lurje, *Personal Names in Sogdian Texts*, 2:271–73. The name also appears in the Sogdian Ancient Letter II, see Sims-Williams, ‘The Sogdian Ancient Letter II’.

of Kharosthi documents and the Sogdian document,¹⁰⁹⁸ making the Sogdian documents roughly contemporary with the Krorainan and Chinese ones. All the Sogdian documents are on paper and most are but fragments, making their decipherment a difficult task. As such, only three documents, L.A.2.x.01, L.M.2.ii.09 and 93A27F1:3 from Niya, have been translated.

All these three translated documents are parts of letters, though none are complete. 93A27F1:3 from the Niya (Caḍota) site appears to be a section from the bottom of a letter and mentions both Kucheans and the Supi as well as several names.¹⁰⁹⁹ At least two of these names are recognisably Sogdian, namely msmyw (Mas-mew) and nnyḍt (Nanai-dhat).¹¹⁰⁰ However, as nothing of the context survives, it is impossible to say if they, the addresser, or addressee were living at Caḍota or elsewhere in the kingdom of Kroraina. The letters L.A.2.x.01 and L.M.2.ii.09 are of more interest, as both appear to have been sent by wives to their husbands. L.A.2.x.01 is the smallest, being but a small scrap of a document, and contains only a short greeting formula likely opening the letter. (See figure 1) As read by Sims-Williams, it reads “βγw xwt’w βγ’(‘)[ny BRY...” translating as “To the noble lord, (my) hus[band” and is thus the opening of a letter sent by a wife to her husband.¹¹⁰¹ Fragments of the same formula also opens L.M.2.ii.09, which as the longest of the three documents has twenty surviving lines. (See figure 3.2) It too was sent by a wife with the Sogdian name Mayavanuk to her husband, whose name either was or started with Chir, and she mentions consulting another Sogdian named Farnasp. Though fragmented, it is clear that she complains about her husband’s absence and in Sims-William’s reading, she appears anxious for his return because she is pregnant.¹¹⁰²

Neither L.A.2.x.01 nor L.M.2.ii.09 specifically state the locations of either addresser or addressee. Yet given that both documents were found deep in rubbish heaps, their find spot was most likely also either the place of writing or more likely their destination, as one would not expect letters to regularly be thrown into the

¹⁰⁹⁸ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 381–83.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Sims-Williams and Bi, ‘A Sogdian Fragment from Niya’, 85.

¹¹⁰⁰ Sims-Williams and Bi, 86.

¹¹⁰¹ Sims-Williams, ‘A Sogdian Greeting’, 178, 180–81.

¹¹⁰² Sims-Williams, *A so far unedited early Sogdian letter from Loulan (Stein collection, L.M.II.ii.09)*, forthcoming

rubbish en route. Nor does it seem likely that the documents represent drafts, since both were written on paper. Thus, as husbands were the addressee in both documents, it seems reasonable to assume that the letters were sent to the Lop sites of Kroraina and that both husbands were staying there, quite clear evidence of a Sogdian presence. A further Sogdian letter appears to speak to even deeper bonds between Sogdians and Kroraina, however, namely the so-called Sogdian Ancient Letter I found by Stein near Dunhuang.¹¹⁰³ Here a woman named mywn'yh (Miwnay), seemingly a Sogdian name, is sending a letter from Dunhuang to her mother, complaining about her difficult situation and wanting to return to the mother.¹¹⁰⁴ The mother's location is not disclosed but her name was c't'ysh (Chatis), a name that as first noted by Henning appears in the Kharosthi material as Catisa.¹¹⁰⁵ This name is very well attested in the Krorainan material, as Catīṣae was the name of Sunamta's mother (actor n.382), and thus the wife of Suḡuta and daughter-in-law of our friend Ramṣotsa, appearing in document n.516. Furthermore, the name was also the name of at least one Krorainan queen, as both documents n.46 and n.334 mention a *Catiṣa-deviyae-ayana* or "Queen Catisa's avana". As such it seems likely, though its etymology is uncertain,¹¹⁰⁶ that the name Chatisa/Catīṣae was a Krorainan one and that the mother of Miwnay was a Krorainan woman married to a Sogdian man, the mother at least likely residing at one of the easternmost Krorainan oases.

Thus, while mostly fragments, the Sogdian material from Kroraina clearly indicates that Sogdians and their mail traversed the territory of Kroraina. The implications of these sources for our understanding of the wider Sogdian trade activity in this period will be discussed further in the following chapter 8, but for now it suffices to note that held together these documents confirm the place of the Sogdiana node in the network of the Krorainan sources.

¹¹⁰³ The Ancient Letters will be presented and discussed in more details in the following section 8.3.3.

¹¹⁰⁴ Sims-Williams, 'Towards a New Edition of the Sogdian Ancient Letters: Ancient Letter 1', 187.

¹¹⁰⁵ Henning, 'The Date of the Sogdian Ancient Letters', n. 3.

¹¹⁰⁶ Sims-Williams, 'Towards a New Edition of the Sogdian Ancient Letters: Ancient Letter 1', 188.

7.5 The “world” of an oasis kingdom

This analysis of the connections and the network described in the Krorainan sources has clearly shown that the Southern Tarim Basin was far from isolated in the period under consideration. Rather, it is clear that the oasis towns and the kingdoms of this region were part of larger networks, across which they interacted both politically and economically. In our Krorainan case study, the core of this kingdom’s network was not surprisingly the major oasis towns, which made up its administrative centres and the economical hubs of Kroraina.

The kingdom and its oasis towns were, however, also part of a wider network extending in all directions and covering vast distances. Though the interaction with its immediate neighbours Khotan and China, on an east-west axis, appear to have been by far the most important and regular, the oasis towns of Kroraina also interacted with polities to their north, as seen with Kuci, and the people in the southern mountains, such as the people of the Parvata and likely also the Supi. These observations would seem to fit well with Matsuda’s theory of interconnected and interdependent oases, as such a network structure was at least in place by the first centuries CE.

Yet as noted initially, the connections and networks described in this chapter are not strictly connections involving trade or exchange. They can perhaps give some indications of where to look for the sources of the various imported luxuries found across Kroraina, but they do not on their own explain their presence. With the “world” of Kroraina thus established, we must therefore turn to the pressing question of exchange.

Chapter 8: Forms of long-distance exchange in the Southern Tarim Basin

So far, this case study of the kingdom of Kroraina has primarily been concerned with studying the local conditions of the kingdom, exploring its economy, the presence and role of foreign imports in this economy, as well as addressing the idea of a relatively isolated kingdom. I have shown that the kingdom possessed a complex economy with clear differentiation in wealth and structured by a number of legal institutions.

Furthermore, we have seen how both large quantities and a large variety of commodities were imported into the kingdom, both as finished products and in the form of raw materials that were worked locally. These imports played an important role in the socio-political structures of the kingdom, a fact which reveals that these commodities did not simply make it to the kingdom at random but were rather purposefully acquired and utilised. Finally, contrary to what one might imagine, we have shown that the kingdom was far from isolated, its oases being hubs in the local landscapes and forming important connection points in a far-reaching network of connections. Indeed, this network did not only span the Southern Tarim Basin but also incorporated connections with as distant places as China and Sogdiana, reflecting a wider network of interaction and contact across the Tarim Basin and beyond.

The preceding chapters, however, have so far largely avoided the central problems at the heart of this dissertation, namely the questions relating to the nature of the exchange that had, one way or another, brought the many imported goods to Kroraina. “What form did the exchange take?” “Who were the actors conducting and driving this exchange?” and “What role, if any, did the kingdoms of the Southern Tarim Basin play in this exchange?”

Based upon the framework of the Krorainan economy laid down by the preceding chapters, we are now ready to look closer at these questions, the first two of which will be the topic of this chapter, while the final question will be tackled in chapter nine. With these questions, we return to the overarching questions of this dissertation, namely those of connections and exchange across Eurasia in antiquity, the

“Silk Road exchange network”, and the greater scholarly debate about how this might have functioned. The following will therefore address the major narratives and approaches on the “Silk Road” exchange, exploring their viability in the Krorainan context and to what extent they are supported by the available evidence.

8.1 Gift exchange

The “Raschkean” minimalist approach

Gift giving and gift exchange was, as will be recalled from section 6.6.4, an integral part of Krorainan elite culture and was likely one of the major ways in which prestige goods of various kinds, including imported goods, circulated within the kingdom itself. It was precisely such forms of socially or politically driven exchange that Manfred Raschke envisioned as the primary driving force behind the “Silk Road” exchange. Such mechanisms, he argues, would have been able to drive commodities over vast distances, though the process must by necessity have been slow and the path often meandering. Raschke also spends much of his article on showing the absence of merchants and organised commercial links from most of the available sources,¹¹⁰⁷ an absence seemingly matched in the Krorainan material, where as has been discussed, but a single document explicitly mention merchants.

There is admittedly little evidence in the Kharosthi material for the elite’s gift exchange “network” reaching beyond the kingdom itself, as nearly all instances of gifts exchanged happened between members of the Krorainan elite. Three exceptions exist, however, all involving Khotan or the Khotanese in documents n.214, n.335, and n.399. The two latter documents appear to concern private matters, both being “Letter”-type documents. Document n.335, addressed to a man named Cugapa by a Khotamni Śakha, that is Śakha the Khotanese, primarily concerned a matter of a camel and also grain. The document is heavily fragmented, as well as missing its under-tablet, but at least two of the lines mention presents, and it would seem that a present was included with the letter as well. This would suggest that presents did also pass between Khotanese and Krorainans, something also indicated in document n.399,

¹¹⁰⁷ Raschke, ‘New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East’, 606–22, 676–79.

where a camel was to be sent that would impress the Khotanese, though one cannot know if these Khotanese actually resided in Khotan or if they lived in Kroraina. With the document n.214, however, we are on firmer grounds, as the recipient of the gift in question was the king of Khotan himself,

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs the cozbos Kolýisa and Somjaka as follows: Now I have sent the ogu Alýaya on a mission to Khotan. For the sake of the affairs of your province I have sent in the hand of the ogu Alýaya a horse as a present to the King of Khotan. Provisions for this horse are to be given from Saca and Cađota: from Saca 10 *vacari* (a vessel of sort) of meal, 10 *vacari* of *phalitaga*, and lucerne in two sacks, as far as Remena; from Cađota 15 *vacari* of meal, 15 *vacari* of *phalitaga*, and lucerne in three sacks as far as Khema.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Ogu Alýaya his majesty the great king
..... *maha* great king¹¹⁰⁸

As can be seen, the document describes the mission of an Ogu Alýaya to Khotan, where he was to present a horse to the king. The horse was, as clearly stated, a diplomatic gift apparently intended to appease the Khotanese king and secure the western border of the kingdom. As the document is not dated, it is not possible to provide a definitive context for this episode, though especially given the appearance of cozbo Somjaka, it would seem natural to connect this mission to the warfare between Kroraina and Khotan in the early reign of king Mahiri.¹¹⁰⁹ Although no other document mentions such diplomatic gifts, thus making it difficult to judge how common they were, the giving of such gifts seems likely to have been a well established diplomatic strategy based on what we know of Krorainan gift practices on the local level.

¹¹⁰⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 40.

¹¹⁰⁹ For more about the mentions of Khotanese attacks and warfare see section 7.4.1.

Therefore, a “Raschkean” gift exchange model should perhaps not be entirely discounted, especially given the apparent lack of merchants in the sources and the well-established practice of gift giving in Krorainan culture, which in a few cases did include the Khotanese. As such, some of the imported goods seen in the sources might well have entered the kingdom as diplomatic, or perhaps even personal, gifts. However, the limited evidence for this in the Krorainan sources can hardly account for the quantities of imported goods seen across the kingdom. Perhaps for this reason, this form of gift exchange has garnered little scholarly attention in the case of Kroraina. Instead, it is another form of gift exchange, discussed briefly by Raschke, that has been repeatedly invoked to explain the presence of imported goods in Kroraina, namely the so-called “tribute trade” system.¹¹¹⁰

The “tributary trade” approach

The “tribute trade” system has long remained one of the most popular theories on how the successive Chinese empires interacted and traded with foreign polities and suggests, in essence, that in return for gifts of tribute that demonstrated their submission, the tributary would receive lavished gifts. As will be recalled, this theory was in particular cemented by the seminal work “*Trade and Expansion in Han China*” by Yingshi Yü, who through a study primarily of the history of Han-Xiongnu relations proposed this as the dominant form of interaction between the Han dynasty and surrounding polities. As argued by Yü, the tributary trade happened primarily in two ways. Firstly, when offering tribute, the Chinese court would offer far larger counter gifts, allowing polities to essentially conduct a highly beneficial trade. Secondly, by giving tribute the tributary envoys would get access to Chinese markets and could thus use the tributary mission as “a cloak for trade”.¹¹¹¹

It is within this framework that much of the archaeological material found at the Krorainan sites, and especially in the burials of Cadota, have been interpreted by both

¹¹¹⁰ Such explanations are proposed by, The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:122–25; Wu, ‘ニ遺跡出土の珊瑚および関連問題 (The Relationship between Coral and Its Environment as Found at the Niya Site)’, 353.

¹¹¹¹ Yu, *Trade and Expansion in Han China. A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations.*, chap. 6.

the original excavators and several later studies.¹¹¹² Some of the finds, primarily the large amounts of fine *jin*-silk excavated across Kroraina, would certainly seem to support such an interpretation. In part, this is due to the designs found, as argued by Hansen in the case of the “王侯合昏千秋万歳宜子孫”¹¹¹³ silk that had been used to fashion amongst other items the spectacular blanket of tomb M3 (95MN1). The characters on this textile, Hansen argues, should be read as a well-wish to the local king and his lords, which in turn would indicate that it represented a gift from Chinese authorities to the local king.¹¹¹⁴ A similar interpretation has also been proposed by Lilian Lan-ying Tseng for the “五星出東方利中国” *jin*-piece used in the tomb M8 (95MN1), whose woven inscription translates to “The conjunction of the five planets in the East would benefit the Middle Kingdom”. Tseng suggests this textile to have been a gift received through the tributary system by a local ruler and used to show his continued loyalty to the Han court.¹¹¹⁵ The large quantities of fine silks found across the Krorainan sites has furthermore been taken as a sign that they arrived through the system of “tributary trade”, argued for example by Raschke, who suggests that such quantities only came about as a result of the rulers acquiring them through the tribute system before spreading them as gifts amongst their followers.¹¹¹⁶

None of the examples above, however, are particularly convincing, relying primarily upon preconceived notions of the “tributary trade” for their explanations. Though doubtlessly both valuable and imported from China, there is nothing inherent in the *jin*-silks found across Kroraina to suggest that they were in fact received through the tributary system, as the written inscriptions might just as well have been intended for Chinese consumers. Rather, the by-now traditional notion of the “tributary system” ignores the complex motifs of both the Han authorities and the “barbarians”, as argued forcefully by Selbitschka,¹¹¹⁷ and lends itself towards an oversimplified understanding

¹¹¹² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (*Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China*), 1999, 2:122–23; Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 40; Lan-ying Tseng, ‘Decoration, Astrology and Empire: Inscribed Silk from Niya in the Taklamakan Desert’, 93.

¹¹¹³ Translated by Hansen as, “kings and lords shall be married for thousands of autumns and tens of thousands of years; it is right that they shall bear sons and grandsons”. See page 252 for the full discussion of this item.

¹¹¹⁴ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 40.

¹¹¹⁵ Lan-ying Tseng, ‘Decoration, Astrology and Empire: Inscribed Silk from Niya in the Taklamakan Desert’.

¹¹¹⁶ Raschke, ‘New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East’, 619–21.

¹¹¹⁷ Selbitschka, ‘Early Chinese Diplomacy: Realpolitik versus the So-Called Tributary System’.

of Chinese interaction with the polities of the north and west. Yet in the case of Kroraina, a more fundamental problem of the “tributary trade” theory is that it was based upon a study of the Han-Xiongnu relationship, which Yü believed could exemplify all Han foreign policy vis-à-vis the so-called “barbarians”.¹¹¹⁸ This is however problematic, for while the Chinese sources give a number of examples of return gifts to the Xiongnu, no such gifts are mentioned in the case of Kroraina.

As shown by table one, there are repeated mentions in the Chinese sources of diplomatic interaction between Kroraina (Shanshan) and successive dynasties, including a number of instances in which the kings of Kroraina sent tribute to the Imperial Court. Yet notably, there are but two instances in which gifts were explicitly sent the other way mentioned in the *Hanshu* (漢書) and the *Jinshu* (晉書) respectively. In the first instance, occurring in 77 BCE, the gift was said to be “gold and valuables”, yet it can hardly qualify as a gift, as the giving was but a pretence for an audience in which the king of Kroraina was assassinated.¹¹¹⁹ The second gift, a court dress, was granted to a king Xiumituo (休密馱) of Shanshan (Kroraina) during a visit to the imperial court of the short-lived Former Qin dynasty (前秦) that took place in 382 CE and included an offering of tribute.¹¹²⁰ Though the dress was likely of silk, the purpose of the tributary visit was, however, most certainly not trade, as the king petitioned the Qin emperor to send an expedition to attack his enemies in the Tarim Basin. As such, neither of these instances of gift giving appears to support the notion of a “tributary trade” system. Naturally, we cannot assume that all instances of gifts sent to Kroraina were recorded in the surviving sources, and many of the instances of tribute offering by the kings of Kroraina may have occasioned an unrecorded counter gift. Yet even if we assume that all tributary offerings were richly reciprocated, which we have no evidence of in the case of Kroraina, the ten recorded cases of such tributary interaction, two of which were rejected, hardly suffice to explain the richest of tombs like M3 and M8 (95MN1) or men like cozbo Larsu from document n.318. Similarly,

¹¹¹⁸ Yu, *Trade and Expansion in Han China. A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations.*, 9. Yu even states, “Thus a review of its Hsiung-nu policy would be sufficient to reveal its basic attitude towards the barbarians in general”.

¹¹¹⁹ Ban Gu, HS, 96A (pp.89-90)

¹¹²⁰ Fang Xuanling et al, JS, 113-114 (pp.517-524)

none of the material uncovered across the Krorainan sites, whether Kharosthi or Chinese, mention any such gifts being sent by the Chinese state, despite a number of edicts and diplomatic letters in Chinese having been found.¹¹²¹ Indeed, there is but one mention of tribute, *gong* (貢) in Chinese, in the available material, namely in the Chinese document Cn.903 (LA.4.i.1) found by Stein at the Loulan site. The short document records a case where a *Hu* (胡), a general Chinese term for people from the north-west, named A Zong (阿宗) gave a tribute of silk quite possibly to the Chinese garrison, though the document says nothing specific about this. Though far from clear, there is nothing in the document that suggests that the giver was in any way acting for the Krorainan king, nor is there any mention made of a counter gift.

The limits of gift exchange

In conclusion, there is thus little evidence for various forms of gift exchange, whether on a private or state level, between Kroraina and its neighbours. That is not to say that gift exchange cannot be part of the explanation of how imported goods made it to Kroraina. The kingdom was certainly in diplomatic contact with its surroundings, especially with Khotan and with the successive Chinese dynasties, and it is highly likely that some gift-exchange was part of this diplomatic interaction, though in almost all the recorded cases these gifts moved from Kroraina to other entities. Yet while such gift exchange, whether termed tributary trade or otherwise, likely played a role in moving precious commodities into the kingdom, the limited evidence at hand does not appear to account for the quantities of such material in Kroraina.

The “tributary” approach furthermore cannot explain the presence of “western” and “southern” imports, such as corals or spices in Kroraina, most of which would not have arrived from China. Given that some of these reached Kroraina as raw materials, in the case of corals, or else were perishable, in the case of spices, it seems unlikely that they somehow arrived “accidentally” in Kroraina as part of such “tribute trade”, either. Considering the characteristics of these commodities, it seems likewise

¹¹²¹ See for example the letter found in ruin N.5 by Stein (N. xv. 93 a. b.), translated by Chavannes in Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:537. Or the letter found by Tachibana at the Lop site, translated by Chavannes in Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*. Appendix A.

impossible that other forms of gift-exchange, brought about by inter-oasis marriages or alliance building, can explain their movement. As such, we must turn to other forms of exchange and other possible actors.

8.2 Trans-regional organisations as drivers of exchange

A second direction of research that repeatedly appears in studies of the early Silk Roads is a focus on the role of certain trans-regional organisations in driving the exchange. More specifically, a number of researches have focused on the role of Buddhism and especially Buddhist monasteries in both facilitating but also actively driving exchange across Eurasia.¹¹²² Valerie Hansen, across a number of publications, has furthermore argued for the role of the Chinese military in creating the “Silk Road” and in stimulating trade in the regions of Central Asia in which it was active.¹¹²³ Though clearly very different phenomena, both these theories rely on the role of trans-regional organisations in driving and facilitating the movement of goods, and both have also been used to explain the imported goods seen in the kingdom of Kroraina.

Buddhism and the role of monastic communities

Turning first to the role of Buddhism and Buddhist communities, there are a number of studies that have suggested a strong link between Buddhism and the “Silk Road” exchange, with notable examples such as Jason Neelis and Xinru Liu. Of these two, only Liu has discussed the case of Kroraina specifically, primarily the evidence from the Niya (Caḍota) site, which she includes in her “*The Silk Road in World History*”. She argues for a close relationship between the Buddhist monasteries and traders. The needs of Buddhist art and institutions, she suggests, raised the value of a number of commodities, such as silk, incense and gems, which benefited traders, and the monasteries themselves furthermore provided hospitality for travelling traders, making the movement of trade easier and safer. The traders, on the other hand, provided the Buddhist monasteries with rich donations, both to strengthen the community and for

¹¹²² See for example, Neelis, ‘Long-Distance Trade and the Transmission of Buddhism. Primarily Based on Kharosthi and Brahmi Inscriptions’; Liu, *The Silk Road in World History*.

¹¹²³ Hansen, ‘The Place of Coins and Their Alternatives in the Silk Road Trade’, 104; Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 235–38.

use in religious art or decoration.¹¹²⁴ Indeed, Liu suggests that by the fourth century this relationship had become so strong that Buddhist organisations had “taken over control of the Silk Road”.¹¹²⁵

In the case of the kingdom of Kroraina too Liu suggests that the Buddhist community played a central role in trade, emphasising in particular the “Contract”-type document n.419, where the community of monks (*bhikṣusamgha*) stood as the authority and the “Royal Decree”-type document n.489, where fines in silk were set for monks committing acts of violence.¹¹²⁶ This is an interesting approach, since there are a number of cases where monks conducted some form of exchange,¹¹²⁷ and it is particularly interesting, as observed by Atwood,¹¹²⁸ that some monks conducted their exchange in gold or money.¹¹²⁹ The best example of this is found in the “Contract”-type document n.419, the one extant contract drawn up under the authority of the monastic community (*saṃgha*). In the document a man named Anamda, likely a monk, purchased a vineyard for a golden stater and fourteen muli. Some monks, like those participating in the exchange of n.419, indeed appear to have been quite wealthy, some owning land and others owning slaves.¹¹³⁰ In fact, the monk Mochapriya in document n.500 even appears to have lent a large sum of *masa*, likely coins, to a man from Nina. As for the monastic community as an organisation, it is noteworthy, as emphasised by Liu, that all fines imposed by the community were in cloth, in most cases specified to be silk. This is seen both in document n.489, where a number of fines were set for breaking the monastic regulations, and in the “Contract”-type document n.348. These fines might suggest that the monastic community was well versed in dealing with commodities such as silk and possibly in utilising it as money, as opposed to the animals more commonly set as fines.

Yet while this use of silk in monastic contexts is certainly notable, and while it is true that a number of monks appears to have been engaged in exchange within the

¹¹²⁴ Liu, *The Silk Road in World History*, 51–55.

¹¹²⁵ Liu, 60.

¹¹²⁶ Liu, 59.

¹¹²⁷ See document n. 130, 322, 330, 419 (?), 425, 437, 519, 546, 549, 582, 652, 655 and 782.

¹¹²⁸ Atwood, ‘Life in Third-Fourth Century Cadh’ota: A Survey of Information Gathered from the Prakrit Documents Found North of Minfeng (Niya)’, 190–91.

¹¹²⁹ See document n.419 and 500. Possibly also document n.494 as argued by Atwood.

¹¹³⁰ See document n. 345, 492 and 506.

kingdom, these cases are still a distinct minority. Considering, for example, the documents that discuss silk (table 6.2), one will find that in the vast majority of cases make no mention of either monks or Buddhist organisations. Similarly, various forms of money, whether gold or the possible *masa* coins, were as shown in section 5.4.5, more frequently utilised by people without a title than by monks. Furthermore, when considering the very blurry line between the monastic community and laity, the evidence for monks specifically as somehow involved in exchange becomes even weaker. Consider, for example, the well-documented grandson of Ramṣotsa, Caṣgeya actor n.384. He is named a monk in document n.519, and both in that document and others, such as documents n.222 and n.576, he was involved in exchanges and disputes over various commodities. Yet given his membership of the entreprenuring Ramṣotsa family and the fact that he usually appears acting together with his father or brothers, it would seem wrong to suggest that it was his monastic connections that enabled him to conduct his business activities. Rather, despite him being a monk, he continued to conduct his family's business.

As for evidence for the monastic community itself playing a vital role in exchange, we are left with next to nothing. In fact, beyond the right to act as court, appearing in only one document and seemingly applying only in cases concerning its members, there is no evidence for the monastic organisations of Kroraina facilitating exchange. There is also no Krorainan material to indicate that the monastery itself, if such existed independently in Krorainan settlements at all, served as places of rest for traders. Thus, while the monastic organisations of the Southern Tarim polities might have played a role in providing shelter and aid to travellers, at least to Buddhist adherents such as Faxian, there is not evidence that can support Liu's assertion that Buddhist organisations had "taken over control of the Silk Road", at least not in the area under consideration.

The Chinese Army as a driver of trade

Turning to the second organisation proposed, in the form of the military forces of successive Chinese dynasties active in the Tarim Basin, and Hansen's suggestion that they played a major role in both bringing commodities to the region and encouraging

trade there, we appear to be on firmer ground. As stressed by Hansen, records from the Tang era (seventh to ninth century) show that at least in that period, the Chinese military efforts in the region brought staggering volumes of money and silk into the local economy. In fact, according to the encyclopaedia *Tongdian* (通典), written by Du You (杜佑) at the end of the eighth century, the expenses for frontier defence cost two million strings of coins in 713 CE and a staggering ten million in 741 CE.¹¹³¹ Though the veracity of these figures and what they represent have been discussed to a great extent, there is no doubt that the military undertakings of the Tang dynasty brought vast amounts of silk and money into the Tarim Basin region. Furthermore, though the scale of the Tang dynasties involvement was on an order of magnitude far beyond that of the short-lived dynasties of the third and fourth centuries, the presence of these smaller military operations too must clearly have had an impact on the local economy.

It is perhaps somewhat surprising then that no mention of this has survived in any surviving Kharosthi sources, though this might be due to the weight of the material having been found at the Niya (Caḍota) site, in the extreme western part of the kingdom of Kroraina and far from the Chinese garrison at the Lop (Kroraina) sites. The only possible exception to this could perhaps be found in document n.686, the “List”-type documents found at the L.A site, which as discussed in the previous chapter lists the cows of various people and what happened to them,

Oval-topped tablet. Obv.

Column A.

[.....] went away.

A cow of [.....] went away to the Chinese of Opimta.

A cow of [.....] went away to the messengers from Khotan.

A cow of [.....] went away to the Chinese of Calmadana.

Lama took the cow of [.....].

A cow of [.....] went away to Tryachi (Dryachi).

¹¹³¹ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 106–7.

A cow of Kayam̄daga went away to Tryachi.

A cow of [.....] went away to Tryachi.

A cow of [.....] went away to the Chinese in Niya (Nina?).

Column B.

Tagaca's cow went away to the Chinese.

Onaka's cow went away to the cozbo Kuñita.

Cinga took Smagamta's cow.

Kuuna's cow went away to Tryachi.

Kumpara's cow went away to Pakhi.

The ṣoṭham̄ga Pgena's cow went away to the Chinese.¹¹³²

As can be seen, a number of these cows were given to various groups of Chinese, something that could perhaps refer to Chinese outposts, especially given the find site's proximity to the presumed headquarters of the Chinese garrison. Yet whichever way one were to interpret this document, the military activities of the Wei and Jin dynasties are at least amply reflected in the Chinese sources found across Kroraina, the majority of which had been produced by the Chinese military garrisons, as discussed previously.¹¹³³

These garrisons do not appear to have been particularly large, and though they farmed and produced some of their own supplies, they also appear to have interacted with the Krorainan population in order to acquire a number of commodities. This is seen, for example, in a number of record documents such as the documents Cn.779-781 of the Stein collection that have been translated by Chavannes, found in the ruins L.A.3 and L.A.4, which all mention acquisitions of *Hu* (胡) spades and iron saws.¹¹³⁴ Other documents also discuss the price and measures of some of the acquisitions made, as seen for example in document Cn.812, where some sort of textile was

¹¹³² Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 139–40.

¹¹³³ See section 3.2.1 for a discussion of the Chinese sources and section 4.1.3 for a discussion of the Chinese garrisons in Kroraina.

¹¹³⁴ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 168.

purchased.¹¹³⁵ Some of these acquisitions were also done in very large quantities, exemplified best by Cn.779 that states,

(承) 前新入胡畱合三百九十五枚

Pour faire suite à ce qui précède, 395 bêches des Hou, nouvellement reçues.¹¹³⁶

The 395 *cha* (畱), a form of spade for digging irrigation trenches that had been acquired, must have been a significant purchase considering the high number. And given that they had been acquired and not made by the garrison's personnel, and that they were described as *Hu*, it seems highly likely that they had been acquired from the Krorainans. Unfortunately, no mention is made of how they were paid for but judging from some of the other documents this could be done through exchange, by means of both coins (*qian* 錢) and silk. The former is seen, for example, in document Cn.886, where a *Sutehu* (粟特胡),¹¹³⁷ that is a Sogdian, was given an unspecified something followed by a summary of money used and remaining.¹¹³⁸ Silk, on the other hand, was used for purchases in document W.102 of the Hedin collection. The latter is a particularly interesting case for our purposes, being a slightly longer and more informative text that runs as follows,

Vorderseite:

出 敦煌短綾綵廿匹

給吏宋政糴穀

泰始五年十一月五日從掾位馬厲主者王貞從

¹¹³⁵ Chavannes, 173.

¹¹³⁶ Chavannes, 168.

¹¹³⁷ The character preceding *Hu* (胡) Chavannes could not identify, but Hou and Yang read it as *Sute* (粟特), that is Sogdian.

Hou and Yang, 樓蘭漢文簡紙文書集成 (*A Collection of the Chinese Documents on Paper from Loulan*), 61.

¹¹³⁸ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 182.

掾位趙辯付從史位宋政

Rückseite:

功曹闕

Vorderseite: Ausgefolgt 20 Rollen kurze Seidenstoffe (Seidenkurzwaren) von *Tun-huang* an den Beamten *Sung Cheng* zum Ankauf von Getreide.

Im 5. Jahre *T'ai-ski* (= 269 n. Chr.), am 5. des 11. Monats haben (sie?) der *Ts'ung yuan-wei Ma Li*, der *Chu-che Wang Chen* und der *Tsung yuan-wei Chao Pieu* dem *Ts'ung-shi-wei Sung Cheng* übergeben.

Rückseite: (Unterschrift.) Der *Kungts'ao* (Kreissekretär) *K' an*. [— für die Richtigkeit —].¹¹³⁹

Not only is this intriguing document accurately datable to the year 269 CE, but it also describes how twenty rolls of coloured *ling*-silk (綾綵), meaning a type of satin-like weave, were acquired from Dunhuang in order to buy grain. The document does not specify from whom the grain was to be bought, but given that the silk had been sent from Dunhuang for the purpose of purchasing grain, it seems evident that the grain would be bought locally, presumably from some wealthy Krorainan or possibly the Krorainan state. Thus, not only were silks used by the Chinese garrison to acquire necessities from the local population, but this was also silk of a high quality, likely comparable to some of the pieces seen in the 95MN1 tombs. In fact, there is some evidence that silk was not only exchanged, but exchanged in large quantities, as shown by document W.46 of the Hedin collection. It states that a staggering 4326 rolls of silk had been taken out or acquired for the *zhuren* (住人),¹¹⁴⁰ interpreted as residents by Conrady and as master by Wang though this is disputed.¹¹⁴¹ Yet whoever it was for, it shows that large quantities of silk moved through the Chinese Garrison at Kroraina.

¹¹³⁹ Conrady, *Die Chinesischen Handschriften- Und Sonstigen Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in Lou-Lan*, 134–35.

¹¹⁴⁰ Conrady, 124–26.

¹¹⁴¹ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 57. Various other views are summarized in Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, n. 57.

Textiles such as these were furthermore used to pay the garrison's soldiers, who likely used some of this pay locally and many of whom were themselves described as *Hu* (胡) or *Zhihu* (支胡), that is barbarians from the north-west.¹¹⁴² A good example of this is found in document Cn.804 from the Stein collection, where a *Hu* soldier named *Teng Ning* (騰寧) was given a large piece of blue "market" felt, an old suit made of felt and some other, undecipherable items.¹¹⁴³ Furthermore, as will be recalled from section 4.1.3, some of these *Hu* (胡) or *Zhihu* (支胡) carried names that Brough managed to identify as Krorainan.¹¹⁴⁴

These examples show that the Chinese military interacted economically with the local population, both by buying commodities locally and through employing local soldiers. Although no mention of this is made in the written material, we must also assume that the garrison's soldiers used much of their pay locally. The extent of this activity is difficult to gauge accurately, as the collection of Chinese documents is limited and because almost none of the Kharosthi documents mention the garrison. Yet given that the records show that silk was used to pay for grain presumably from the local Tarim polities or population, as was the case in W.102, it seems probable that the Chinese garrison was an important vector for bringing Chinese goods into Kroraina.

The persisting problem of corals and cardamom

In summary, we may conclude that while the monastic communities of Kroraina might have played a role in facilitating travel and trade through the region, the Krorainan evidence suggests that this was at best a limited role. Furthermore we have seen that the activity of the Chinese military and state likely explains some of the silk and other Chinese imported goods evident in the Krorainan sources. Yet even so, neither of these organisations, nor the exchange they conducted or facilitated, explains the presence of significant quantities of corals in the "Southern Workshop" area nor the list of spices on document n.702.

¹¹⁴² See for example Cn.763, 804, 846, 892 and 928.

¹¹⁴³ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 171.

¹¹⁴⁴ Brough, 'Supplementary Notes on Third-Century Shan-Shan', 606.

The question of how these commodities made it to the kingdom of Kroraina thus persists, and we must therefore return to the oft criticised commercial trade and the problem of the elusive merchants. At first glance, this form of exchange too would seem to offer few answers, since as discussed in section 6.7.1, there is but a single Kharosthi document that explicitly mentions merchants. Yet as demonstrated in chapter seven, a number of people moving through the Southern Tarim region do appear in the Kharosthi material, some of them hailing from far distant lands. In fact some of these mysterious travellers, when considered together with the evidence from the other written sources uncovered in the region, primarily the Chinese and Sogdian documents, quickly start taking the shape of our missing merchants.

8.3 Merchants and commercial trade

8.3.1 Ginger, Southern Betel, and the Chinese pass-slips

The most important single piece of evidence in this regard is a small, broken wooden slip with Chinese characters found in the rubbish heap of ruin N.5, named N.xv.78 by Stein. (See figure 1) Though only a small piece of the original text survives, much faded, the last six characters can be discerned and read as, “..薑南榔貨物”.¹¹⁴⁵ The first of these characters is uncertain, but the second 薑 means ginger. The two next, 南榔, mean south and betel nut (areca nut), and Chavannes reads them together as “southern betel”. Finally, the two last characters 貨物 he translates as “merchandise”, though they should be understood in the sense of cargo or a batch of merchandise.¹¹⁴⁶

Here then, we finally find some of the spices sent between the members of the Krorainan elite, described as a being someone’s merchandise and/or cargo, though as the slip is broken we do not get the remaining context, nor does the document tell us whom might have owned the cargo. Despite its broken state, however, more can be said, as it appears very likely that N. xv. 78 had once been part of a pass-slip or pass-record issued by the Chinese authorities, a type of document that was found in

¹¹⁴⁵ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:542.

¹¹⁴⁶ Wang reads these two last characters rather as “money goods” and interpret it as a separate batch of items. See Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 58.

abundance together with it in the rubbish heap of ruin N.5.¹¹⁴⁷ This system of issuing passes to travellers, which were then inspected at checkpoints along the main roads, has a long history in China and is well documented during the time of the Han dynasty.¹¹⁴⁸ Actual examples of such passports have been repeatedly uncovered, for example, at the Dunhuang “limes” represented by documents such as T.xv.a.ii.46.¹¹⁴⁹ That this system was still active during the later dynasties in the period under consideration, the Wei and the Jin, is shown by three of the Chinese documents from the Lop (Kroraina) site that mentions a “關領主簿” (*Guanling zhubu*), that is an officer in charge of the pass point registry.¹¹⁵⁰

The examples of such pass-slips found vary somewhat in format, seemingly depending on context and the standards of their period of creation. It is also, at times, difficult to distinguish between actual pass-slips and the records of such passes, as they contain similar information. However, all the slips found at the Niya (Caḍota) site follow a similar pattern and appear to represent actual passes.¹¹⁵¹ They start by giving the name, age, and sometimes origins of the traveller, followed by a physical description and often a description of goods or possessions carried. A complete example of this could sometimes run over more than one slip, such as was the case with N.xv.61-62,

男生年廿五車牛二乘黃牯牛二頭

Nan-cheng (nom d'homme?), âgé de 25 ans; deux chars à bœufs; deux boeufs jaune-rouge (?)¹¹⁵²

¹¹⁴⁷ See the documents from ruin N.5, N. xv. 02, 08, 09, 53, 61, 62, 152, 169, 175, 191, 192, 337 and 339. Translated in Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:540–42. Some also in Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 58.

¹¹⁴⁸ Loewe, *Records of Han Administration*, 1:107–14.

¹¹⁴⁹ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 108.

¹¹⁵⁰ Chavannes, 161.

¹¹⁵¹ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 58.

¹¹⁵² Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 542.

As this example shows, these pass-slips did not always follow exactly the same pattern, as the above example only gives a possible name, the age of the traveller, and the carts and animals in his possession. These possessions did, however, always come last, and as such, it seems quite possible that the cargo of ginger and southern betel of N.xv.78 were the cargo of such a traveller. If this is the case and the slip N.xv.78 was indeed a Chinese pass slip, it seems almost certain that the traveller in question was a merchant, given the cargo and the wording of the document.

What N.xv.78 does not tell is who the owner, and possible merchant, might have been and we must therefore turn to other sources. Because while an excellent example, N.xv.78 is far from the only document, whether Kharosthi, Chinese, or Sogdian which, on closer inspection, gives evidence for merchants and commercial activity in the Southern Tarim Basin region.

8.3.2 Chinese Merchants

Chinese merchants in the Kharosthi documents

The first group that we find involved in mercantile activities are Chinese, described both in the Kharosthi and the Chinese sources. As will be recalled from the previous chapter, there are several Kharosthi documents that reveal that some Chinese appear to have resided or even settled in Kroraina. The widespread nature of this Chinese presence is shown by document n.686, quoted above, which mentions Chinese living in Calmadana and Nina as well as some groups likely residing near the capital Kroraina itself. As shown by documents such as n.80 and n.255, both mentioning Chinese connected to and in the latter case owning land in the village of Tsaga, it is clear that at least some of these appear to have been doing so independently of the Chinese garrison. Most of these brief glimpses tell us very little of what these Chinese were doing in Kroraina, with one notable exception, namely document n.324 found in the rubbish heap of ruin N.5.

Document n.324, a “Contract”-type documented dealing with the sale of a slave and dated to ca. 288 CE, is remarkable in many regards and therefore worth quoting in full,

Rectangular Under-tablet. Obv.

In the 4th year of his majesty the great King Maïri the son of heaven, on the 13th day of the 3rd month, at this date (?) the Supis came to Calmadana; they plundered the kingdom and carried off the inhabitants. The Supis seized a man called Saṃrpina, a slave of the vasu Yonu and sent him as a present to Cinaşgasi (the Chinaman Şgaşı). Cinaşgasi (provided) from here, as a recompense for the man, two golden staters and two drachmas. (Consequently) that man became the rightful property (?) of Şgaşı. His own master, the vasu Yonu, did not wish to remove the man himself, and permission was given to Şgaşı to sell him to others. Considering this Cinaşgasi sold this man to Katge. As the price of the man [.....] and one bow is right. Cinaşgasi has sold well and Katge has bought well. From now on [.....]¹¹⁵³

The Chinese man Şgaşı of this document, not attested elsewhere, appears to have been a man of some means and stature, as this document constitute one of only two rare cases where gold was used as payment in a contract. As clarified in section 5.4.5, it seems certain that the terms stater and drachma represented measures rather than actual coins, yet the fact that Şgaşı paid in gold and not for example animals, as was more common, would indicate that he was not an ordinary Krorainan landholder. Even more impressive than his method of payment, however, is the fact that the otherwise feared Supi would send him a slave as a gift, a form of peaceful interaction with this people unknown from any other document.

Little more can sadly be said of the people involved in this contract, since the cover-tablet of document n.324 is missing. This is very unfortunate, as it would likely have contained valuable details about who ended up storing the document and further details about the parties involved as well as whom oversaw the exchange and where. As it was the man Katge who eventually bought the slave Saṃrpina, however, it was likely Katge who deposited it at Cađota, meaning that both Şgaşı and Yonu could well be from elsewhere, and in the case of Yonu, likely Calmadana. As for Şgaşı, there are no indications as to where he might have resided, though given his apparent wealth

¹¹⁵³ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 60–61.

and good connections, one would expect him to have resided closer to the capital Kroraina. He could perhaps have been an important member of the Chinese garrison at Kroraina, which might explain his connections, or else he might have been an influential Chinese merchant possibly based in one of the major oases of the kingdom of Kroraina.

While certainly intriguing, the evidence from document n.324 when seen alone, is hardly evidence for more than a scattered instance of local trade, albeit one involving both a Chinese and the Supi. Luckily, however, the Chinese sources uncovered across Kroraina provide more than just one scattered reference, for a number of them refer directly to commercial activities.

Chinese merchants in the Chinese sources

Several of the references in the Chinese sources are fairly vague, and while they clearly relate to commerce and related economic activity, it is often difficult to discern more of the context. This can be seen, for example, in the mentions of debts and capital on loan in the documents N. xv. 109¹¹⁵⁴ and Hedin's P.17.¹¹⁵⁵ Similarly vague is the short reference in document P.27,2, to an exchange done with a Nu (奴) barbarian, probably referring to a Xiongnu outside Dunhuang¹¹⁵⁶ or the note contained in document Cn.914 (LA.6.ii),

.....張幼業於??.....¹¹⁵⁷

.....賈敦煌錢二萬.....

.....業約得

L.1 Tchang Yeou ye (parait être un nom d'homme.)

L.2 fait le commerce à Touen-houang; 20,000 pièces de monnaie ...

¹¹⁵⁴ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:539.

¹¹⁵⁵ Conrady, *Die Chinesischen Handschriften- Und Sonstigen Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in Lou-Lan*, 94–95.

¹¹⁵⁶ Conrady, 105–6.

¹¹⁵⁷ The question mark indicates a character that could be discerned but not read.

L. 3. (Tchang Yeou-)ye a à peu près réussi.¹¹⁵⁸

This document exemplified, in many ways, these scattered references. It clearly reports some matter of commercial nature conducted at Dunhuang, as expressed with the character *gu* (賈), which can mean both to do trade and merchant more specifically. The matter furthermore involved what appears to have been a large sum of coins. Yet it is highly fragmented and hardly tells us much about who were involved, what was traded, or for what purpose.

Fortunately, a few of the documents are better preserved and thus more revealing. One of the most striking is document Cn.930 (LA.1.iv.2), written on paper and found in the ruin LA.1 of the central Lop (Kroraina) site. This building is itself of some interest, having been a sturdily built and large house, in which were found an intact roll of plain yellow silk and some lacquerware fragments as well as both Kharosthi and Chinese documents on both wooden tablets and paper.¹¹⁵⁹ Number Cn.930 is of the latter type and was found glued together with seven other Chinese paper documents in a bundle, which had been used to repair part of the wall and later painted over. Given its length, I have chosen to provide a provisional English translation in notes below,

十月四日具書焉耆玄頓首言

..督郵彥時司馬君彥相侍者各.....

主人自隋無他甚休闊別踰異念想無....

....時賣買略訖健丈夫所在無.....

頃來旋追想言會聞有人從郡.....

..徐府君繕在小城中唐長史在.....

..伯進爲東部督郵修正云當.....

¹¹⁵⁸ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 188.

¹¹⁵⁹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 370–75, 432–33.

.....如是彥相.....

Le dixième mois, le quatrième jour, lettre écrite. Moi, *Hiuan*, originaire de *Yen-ki*, en me prosternant le front contre terre, je dis ceci:

je m'adresse au surveillant de la poste nommé *Yen-che* et à l'honorable *sseu-ma Yen-siang*, à tous deux

O O allaient de compagnie; c'était fort bien de toute manière; une séparation est survenue qui dépasse ce qui est ordinaire; je pensais à vous sans fin

époque; les affaires commerciales sont presque terminées; l'homme énergique partout où il se trouve ne

récemment, je me suis rappelé nos conversations d'autrefois; j'ai appris que quelqu'un était venu de la commanderie

le préfet *Siu Hi* se trouve à *Siao-tcheng*; le *tchang-che Tang* se trouve à

Po-tsin est, dit-on, tou yeou sieou-tcheng de la section orientale; il faut

..... ainsi, *Yen-siang*

As can be seen from the above, the document is a letter addressed to two senior Chinese officials, the *duyou* (督郵) *Yanshi* (彥時) and the *sima* (司馬) *Yanxiang* (彥相). It was sent, however, by a man from a Tarim Basin polity who describes himself as *Xuan* (玄) from the polity of *Yanqi* (焉耆), that is modern Karashar located in the northern part of the Tarim Basin in the foothills of the Tianshan mountains. Polite and highly personal, the letter appears to have been sent between close associates or possibly even friends, remembering the pain of their parting as well as addressing a

¹¹⁶⁰ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental*, 195.

(Provisional translation by author)

“In the 4th day of the 10th month this letter was written. I, Xuan of Yanqi (Karashar), prostrates myself and say: I address the county inspector (Wang) Yanshi and the major named Yanxiang, to both of them.....

... went in company. It was very good. A separation has occurred which goes beyond the ordinary and I think of you endlessly....

... time, the commercial business/trade is soon finished. The energetic/healthy man, wherever he is not.....

... recently, I remembered our old conversations. I learned that someone had come from the Commandery.....

The prefect Xu .. is in the Xiaocheng (small castle?), the Zhangshi (長史) Tang is in

..... (the final two lines have not been translated).....»

number of more practical matters. Amongst these is a for our purposes extremely interesting line, n.4, stating “....時賣買略訖健丈夫所在無.....”, which translates into something like “time, the commercial business/trade is almost finished. The energetic/healthy man, wherever he is not.....”. Here Xuan is clearly reporting on a trade venture, literally selling and buying (賣買), in which county inspector Yanshi, the major Yanxiang, and Xuan of Yanqi were involved together.

The document itself does not give a year, but as one of the Chinese documents, Cn.886 (LA.1.iii.1) found in ruin LA.1, carried the date 330 CE, the letter is clearly from the period under consideration. Given that it had been used as wall filling, however, it was likely somewhat older than Cn.886, which was found on the original floor, and as such, Cn.930 should likely date to the third century. As the letter was addressed to county inspector Yanshi, it seems likely that he might have resided in the Lop (Kroraina) site, though given that the letters had been used as wall filling, it is difficult to tell if he had inhabited the ruin LA.1 or if the paper of the letter had been brought in from elsewhere for use in repairs. It is similarly difficult to judge from where Xuan sent his letter, as this is not stated, though given how he identifies himself, it would be natural to assume that the business was conducted in Yanqi (Karashar) or at least somewhere in the Tarim Basin. In fact, county inspector Yanshi appears to have had a strong connection with the polity of Yanqi (Karashar). For example in document Cn.934 from the same group of glued documents a Wang, the surname of Yanshi, is said to have received a title from the king of Yanqi (Karashar), and the same king appears also in document Cn.938 (LA. i. iv. 3) from the same ruin.¹¹⁶¹

No matter his exact connection to Yanqi, however, the case of county inspector Yanshi shows clearly that some ranking members of the Chinese garrison in Kroraina not only possessed a wide and influential network in the region but also conducted what appear to be private commercial ventures there.

The case of the two Ma (馬)

¹¹⁶¹ Chavannes, 197–98.

They were however not alone in this, for some men further down in the ranks also appear to have been actively engaged in commercial activities on the side, a situation shown very clearly by the example of the two men named Ma Li (馬厲) and Ma Ping (馬評), respectively. These men appear in a number of the documents collected from the Lop (Kroraina) site, and both Ma appear with titles suggesting that they served in various roles at the garrison there.¹¹⁶² Though the two men shared the same surname, it is not clear if they were in fact related, though they appear with the same actors and in related circumstances.

What is clear, however, is that both men were engaged in extensive commercial activities, primarily dealing in silk, as shown by the letter fragment P.13,2,

Vorderseite:

蚰牀子二匹買??

若有不得(者)?????

??以買(綾)若不得者

綾以買絮若綾絮

??買之

并蚰牀子

馬主簿念事

Rückseite:

??以去十一月五

王比??不濟

高旋內??情齊

¹¹⁶² Document P.13,1, P.13,2 and P.18,6 has a *zhubu* (主簿), keeper of records, named Ma, likely Ma Li. In P.14,1 appears a Congshi (從事), aide, named Ma.

遠不過來秋

之事故不多言

麥一????年不多

.... *she-chuan tze*. Kaufte in 2 Rollen

.... wenn man nicht bekommt

.... am Damast zu kaufen. Wenn man (ihn) nicht bekommt

.... Damast, um *sü* (grobe Seide). Wenn Damast und *sü*

.... kauft es.

.... zusammen mit *she-chuang-tze*. Der *chu-pu Ma (Li)* wolle sich der Sache annehmen.

Rückseite:

.... am 5. des I I. Monats vergangenen Jahres

.... unnütz.

.... in *Kao-süan (?)*

fern. Nicht über nächsten Herbst hinaus

... Angelegenheit des, daher (brauche ich) nicht viel [Worte zu machen?]

Weizen(?) ein Jahr nicht viel¹¹⁶³

Though heavily fragmented and difficult to read, the document clearly contains instructions for purchasing both fine satin-like *liang*-silk (綾) as well as a type of silk floss called *xu* (絮). Along with it was also sent *Shechuanzi* (虵牀子), the Chinese name for the plant *Cnidium monnieri* that was used extensively in early Chinese

¹¹⁶³ Conrady, *Die Chinesischen Handschriften- Und Sonstigen Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in Lou-Lan*, 91–92.

(Provisional translation by author)

“... *Shechuanzi*. Buy in two rolls ...

... if you cannot get

... to buy damask. If you cannot get

... damask for course silk. If damask and course silk ...

... buy it.

Together with *Shechuanzi*. The *zhubu Ma (Li)* wanted to (will?) take care of the matter.

(Backside not translated)”

medicine.¹¹⁶⁴ It seems that *zhubu* (主簿) *Ma* (馬), likely Ma Li, was to be involved with it, probably in receiving the shipment, though this is not clear on account of the letter's fragmented state. What the document clearly shows, however, is that one of the Mas was involved in acquiring a variety of silks. Ma Li, according to P.10, furthermore appears to have been involved with grain trading, and he seems to have possessed animals and carts that he hired out in return for money, despite his apparent connection to the garrison.¹¹⁶⁵

While clearly active in buying and selling goods and hiring out carts, one could perhaps still see the above activities of the Ma, at least Ma Li, as connected to the activities of the Chinese garrison. Yet the most complete document in which one of the Ma appear, the letter P.6,1, would seem to disprove this,

舍餘生口 三日到舍
 左謙前相..任綵所來出皮佰卅市郡
 致東縣賣今在郡便錢市綵適得十
 去餘綵間所言責并官所給賞計足(償)

(致)

責家不欲償者煩手書今長史印填以到
 致敬東今住家相待到便當共行餘綵家
 權不能得也.....經紀責索償使畢..

值信 仁白

白

諱泰文

馬評君

.... die übrigen Tiere freilassen am 3. Tage kam (er) an und wohnte (? ließ los?)

¹¹⁶⁴ Stuart, *Chinese Materia Medica: The Vegetable Kingdom*, 120.

¹¹⁶⁵ Conrady, *Die Chinesischen Handschriften- Und Sonstigen Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in Lou-Lan*, 87–88.

Tso K'ien half(?) früher Seide und (?) führte Pelze nach *Peh (Meh)-shikün* aus.

wenn sie in die östlichen Distrikte kommen, verkaufen. Jetzt kauft man im Bezirk Buntseide zu angemessenem Preise; sie steht sich auf 10 (?) ... die übrige Buntseide wegtun. Privat(?)schulden, die man angiebt, zusammen mit der Entschädigung (Lohn?), welche die Beamten geben, werden als genügende Bezahlung gerechnet ...

Wenn die Schuldner nicht bezahlen. wollen, bitte ich ein eigenhändiges Schreiben an den jetzigen *Chang-shi* namens *Sun* zu richten. Um zu gelangen

sende (meinen?) Respekt. *Tung(?)* ist jetzt zuhause und wartet; kommst Du(?) an, so müßt Ihr zusammengehen. Die übrige Buntseide, im Hause ...

Man kann die Vollmacht (? das Gewicht?) nicht erlangen Die Agenten fordern Rückzahlung; man veranlasse *Pi* ...

Preis. Der Brief ...

(So) schreibt *Jen*.

Adresse:

(Durch) *Peh* mit dem Namen *T'ai-wen* (an) Herrn *Ma P'ing*.¹¹⁶⁶

As shown by the final lines, the letter was sent to Ma Ping (馬評) from a man named Taiwen (泰文), though as it ends with a statement saying “thus writes *Ren*”, it is

¹¹⁶⁶ Conrady, 83–84.

(Provisional translation by author)

“.... release the remaining animals..... in 3 days he arrived and lived (?).....

Zuo Qian helped (?) earlier silk and (?) took furs to Bai Shigun (?).

When you come to the eastern district, sell. Now you buy in the commandery coloured silk at a reasonable price, it stands in 10.... remove (?) the remaining coloured silk.

Private debts, which are given, together with the compensation given by the official, are counted as sufficient payment....

If the debtor does not want to pay, please write a handwritten letter to the current Zhongshi named Xun. When (you?) arrive.... send my respect.

Dong (?) is home now and waiting; if you arrive, you must go together. The remaining coloured silk, (deposit?) in the house.....

The authorization could not be obtained... The agents demand repayment, to induce Bi....

Price. The letter....

Thus writes Ren.

By Hui Taiwen to the lord Ma Ping.”

unclear if the letter in fact just relates another letter or directly addresses Ma Ping. This aside, however, the document is fairly intact and discusses a number of activities and issues related to commerce. As can be seen, it mentions a number of goods, including coloured silk (綵) and furs or hides, in addition to containing a long section on debts that are to be demanded, with the aid of the authorities if necessary. Most remarkable however is the third line, “致東縣賣今在郡便錢市綵適得十”, in which someone is instructed to sell something, possibly the above-mentioned silk or furs, in the eastern district, and secondly to buy silk at a reasonable price in the commandery (郡). This commandery almost certainly refers to the commandery of Dunhuang (敦煌), the westernmost of the Han commanderies, and the district or prefecture (縣) likely refers to a smaller unit within a commandery, thus possibly somewhere east in Dunhuang commandery. Not only was silk to be bought, however, it was to be bought at a reasonable price, and a reference to its current value even appears to have been given. This is striking, as it shows a clear understanding of the fluctuation of prices on the part of the writer. Thus, given that the people involved were both buying and selling as well as moving commodities, it seems highly likely that the purpose of buying reasonably would be to generate a profit on their trade.

Thus we see again, as with Kupṣimta’s letter n.140 discussed on pages 180-181, a clear awareness of the basic principles of trade displayed in documents discussing the acquisition and trade in valuable goods. It is difficult to tell which of the Ma commercial activities were official and which were private, possibly because these were deeply entangled. Yet given the breadth of commercial activities in which both the Ma of our documents were involved, they were clearly acting as more than mere representatives of the Chinese garrison. Rather, it would appear that they might have used their position in the garrison, as seen in their ability to draw on the Zhongshi’s authority when calling in debts, to further their commercial activities, activities that appears to have involved the import of silk. Thus, in people like the county inspector Yanshi or the two Ma, we might therefore see a reflection of the Chinese Ṣgaṣi from the Kharosthi document n.324.

8.3.3 “Western” merchants

Sogdians in the Krorainan sources

The second group we find involved in mercantile activities in the Southern Tarim Basin region are the Sogdians. As will be recalled from the previous chapter, two Sogdians appeared in document n.661 discovered at the Endere (Saca) site. This “Contract”-type document, that in all likelihood had been drawn up in the kingdom of Khotan rather than Kroraina, described the purchase of a camel by a *suliga*, that is Sogdian, named Vigiti Vadhaga, corresponding to the Sogdian name βγyšty-βntk (Vagisti Vandak). Another man with a sogdian name also appeared amongst the witnesses to the contract, Nani Vadhaga or nny-βntk (Nanai-vandak) in its original form. Document n.661 thus shows that some Sogdians were active in the kingdom of Khotan, and given that Nanai-vandak stood witness, it is likely that he might have resided there. Since the document was found at the Endere site, document n.661 further indicates that Sogdians also lived in or at least travelled through Kroraina, though no direct mention of this appears in the known Kharosthi documents. The presence of these Sogdians is, however, further corroborated by the fragments of documents in the Sogdian language, written on paper and found throughout the kingdom of Kroraina. As discussed previously, seven such fragments have been found to date, one at the Niya (Caḍota) site and the remaining six across L.A, L.L and L.M, three of which were parts of letters. Two of these were letters from wives to their husbands, men who likely resided in Kroraina, but due to their fragmented state, they do not give much information about what Sogdians might have been doing in the Southern Tarim Basin beyond giving evidence for their presence.

Very little can similarly be gleaned from the one Chinese document that appears to mention a Sogdian, namely the dated wooden slip Cn.886 from ruin LA.1.

建興十八年三月十七日稟??胡樓

一 萬存錢二百

L.1: La dix-huitième année *kien-hing* (330 p. C.), le dix-septième jour du troisième mois, donné au O *Hou* (nommé) *Leou*

L.2: Dix mille; restent deux cents pièces de monnaie.¹¹⁶⁷

As can be seen, Chavannes' transcription does in fact not mention any Sogdian, but in their revised reading Can Hou and Daixing Yang read *sute* “粟特”, that is Sogdian, as the two characters before *Hu* (胡) and furthermore change the character for remaining (存) to *dan* (石), a measure for grain.¹¹⁶⁸ Though difficult to say for certain, especially given a large smear of ink across the characters 日粟特, this reading seems reasonable, and would thus point to a Sogdian “barbarian” being active in Loulan in the year 330 CE. It would also seem that this Sogdian was somehow involved with money or possibly a trade of grain for money, given the revised second line, a reading adopted by Hansen.¹¹⁶⁹ Yet as the slip is broken, the exact relationship between the two lines remains unclear, and the Sogdian *hu* might just as well have been a soldier or courier. Hansen furthermore suggests that document W.46 from the Hedin collection, mentioned above, was in fact a trade of animals for silk conducted by a Sogdian,¹¹⁷⁰ though nothing in the document itself supports this interpretation, as neither horses nor Sogdians are mentioned.

However, considering the above evidence and given the fact that the Sogdians during later centuries became the “Silk Road” traders par excellence, it would perhaps seem tempting to identify Vagisti Vandak and Nanai Vandak of document n.661 as merchants. Furthermore, given that Vagisti Vandak paid for the camel with 8000 *masa*, likely referring to Chinese-type bronze coins,¹¹⁷¹ he must at any rate have been a man of means. It is similarly tempting, as indeed done by Hansen, to identify the *sute hu* of the Chinese document Cn.886 as a merchant, as he too appears together with

¹¹⁶⁷ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 182.

¹¹⁶⁸ Hou and Yang, 楼蘭漢文簡紙文書集成 (*A Collection of the Chinese Documents on Paper from Loulan*), 61–62.

¹¹⁶⁹ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 43.

¹¹⁷⁰ Hansen, 43.

¹¹⁷¹ See the full discussion in section 5.4.5.

measures of money. Yet nothing in the documents linked these Sogdians specifically to trade or long-distance exchange. They certainly appear to have been involved with money, and in one case the purchase of a camel, but given how many Krorainans similarly used *masa* as money and bought camels, this in itself can hardly be enough to identify these Sogdians as merchants.

The evidence from the Sogdian “Ancient Letters”

Fortunately, another and far more informative source for Sogdian mercantile activities in the region was uncovered by Stein during his second expedition in the form of a group of letters excavated at one of the watch towers north-west of Dunhuang. The watch-tower in question was designated T.12 by Stein and lay on a small hill a short distance west of what has been identified as the famed Yumen or Jade Gate checkpoint, T.14, at a bend in the ancient line of walls described as the Dunhuang “Limes” by Stein. (See map 22) The structure itself was in a relatively poor state of preservation but had once consisted of a watch-tower and adjoining buildings, and it was between the walls of these on the south side of the tower that Stein found a number of documents and fragments.¹¹⁷² Amongst these were several Chinese documents on wood, a number of complete and some fragmentary paper documents carrying Sogdian letters, and a single Kharosthi document written on silk.¹¹⁷³ The Sogdian documents were clearly letters, as several were found neatly folded and some carrying addresses, as was one of the Chinese documents Cn.607 (T.XII.a.ii.12), as shown by the content. This led Stein to the conclusion that the find represented the contents of an ancient “mail bag”.¹¹⁷⁴ Hans Reichelt, who was the first to attempt a full translation of all these Sogdian fragments, identified seven different and more or less complete texts, all of which were letters and which he termed “die Alten Briefe” or Ancient Letters (AL).¹¹⁷⁵

¹¹⁷² Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 669–77.

¹¹⁷³ Stein, 669–70, 776–77.

¹¹⁷⁴ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 134.

¹¹⁷⁵ Reichelt, *Die Sogdischen Handschriftenreste Des Britischen Museums: Die Nicht-Buddhistischen Texte*, 2:1–56.

For revised translations of Ancient Letter 1, 2, 3 and 5 see:

All of these letters are exceedingly interesting, as they are brimming with information about Sogdian communities that resided in the Tarim Basin and western regions of China, AL 1 and 3 for example being letters sent by an abandoned wife and daughter. Yet for our purposes, three are of particular importance, namely AL 2, 5, and 6. AL 2 was the most remarkable of the letters found by Stein, as it was found complete and folded inside a sealed double envelope, with an inner wrapping of silk and an outer layer of coarse hempen fabric upon which had been written the address.¹¹⁷⁶ This address remarkably stated that the carrier “should send and bring [this] letter to Samarkand.”¹¹⁷⁷, Samarkand being the largest and most well-known of the Sogdian city-states, where it was to be received by a noble lord Varzakk. The letter itself had been sent by a man named Nanai-vandak, likely the same name as carried by the witness in the Kharosthi document n.661, and within he related all the troubles that had befallen China, the Sogdian communities there, and their business. Amongst the information provided, he mentions a number of remarkable events, including a famine and subsequent burning of Luoyang, the destruction of Ye, and an invasion by the Huna or Huns.¹¹⁷⁸ With reference to these events, the document has repeatedly been attempted dated, something that has sparked a fierce debate and led to two full translations of the letter, though as argued very thoroughly by Frantz Grenet and Nicholas Sims-Williams, the AL 2 must have been written shortly after 311 CE.¹¹⁷⁹ As they were found together in the same context, this means that all the letters should be datable to roughly this period. This would mean that they were very close or contemporary to the Kharosthi documents of Kroraina, something further underlined by the one Kharosthi document found together with Ancient Letters.¹¹⁸⁰

With this date in mind, we turn to AL 5, sent by a man called Frī-khwatāw to the noble lord, the chief merchant (*s’rtp ’w*) Aspandhāt. Already the title of the recipient should alert us to the nature of Frī-khwatāw and Aspandhāt’s relationship,

Sims-Williams, ‘Towards a New Edition of the Sogdian Ancient Letters: Ancient Letter I’; Sims-Williams, ‘The Sogdian Ancient Letter II’; Grenet, Sims-Williams, and de la Vaissière, ‘Sogdian Ancient Letter V’.

¹¹⁷⁶ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 671.

¹¹⁷⁷ Sims-Williams, ‘The Sogdian Ancient Letter II’, 269.

¹¹⁷⁸ Sims-Williams, ‘The Sogdian Ancient Letter II’.

¹¹⁷⁹ Grenet and Sims-Williams, ‘The Historical Context of the Sogdian Ancient Letters’.

¹¹⁸⁰ Conversely, as “Ancient Letters” of a similar orthography were found at the Krorainan sites the Krorainan material also helps support a dating of the Dunhuang Ancient Letters to around 300 CE.

and the letter itself then goes on to mention the woes of China and the hardship faced by the Sogdians there before discussing a number of commercial ventures and problems encountered by Frī-khwatāw as he acted for Aspandhāt. Amongst these are mentioned what appears to be a debt in silver, measured in stater, that was owed to the chief merchant, as well as a description of an inventory of goods kept in the town of Guzang (kc'n), modern Wuwei, in Gansu.¹¹⁸¹ Frī-khwatāw stated, “In Guzang (there are) 4 bundles of “white” for dispatch, and 2,500 (measures of)(?) pepper for dispatch, and a double *prasthaka* of n(.y)t, and 5 *prasthakas* of *rysk*, and ½ stater of silver.”¹¹⁸² Although a number of the commodities mentioned are hapaxes or illegible, it is clear that the inventory mainly contained imported and valuable goods, such as pepper or the “white”, which Grenet and de la Vaissière suggests might have been white lead, known in China as *hu* power (胡粉).¹¹⁸³ Here then we have not only merchants but merchants working over vast distances and dealing in valuable commodities, such as silver and spices like pepper, indeed one of the very spices that appeared in the inventory of the Kharosthi document n.702.

Still, even though AL 5 mentions localities in China and was itself heading westwards, it makes no mention of the kingdom of Kroraina or any connection to the Sogdians there. Such a connection is however made in AL 6, a letter sent between by a Sogdian named *prnxwnt* (Farnkhund) to the noble lord (*w*)[*r*'...]' *kkw* (Wara...akk). This letter has so far only been published in a full transcription by Reichelt, who was able to read and translate only a very small part of the document. Yet in the fifth line, the letter mentions a place named *kr'wr'n*, clearly a rendition in Sogdian of the same place name as Prakrit Krorāṁna/Krorayina, the royal city of Kroraina.¹¹⁸⁴ Reichelt does not give a full translation of the line in question, but Nicholas Sims-Williams has most graciously provided me with a new and full translation of the document,

¹¹⁸¹ Grenet, Sims-Williams, and de la Vaissière, ‘Sogdian Ancient Letter V’.

¹¹⁸² Grenet, Sims-Williams, and de la Vaissière, 93.

¹¹⁸³ Grenet, Sims-Williams, and de la Vaissière, 99–100.

¹¹⁸⁴ Reichelt, *Die Sogdischen Handschriftenreste Des Britischen Museums: Die Nicht-Buddhistischen Texte*, 2:38–39.

(*Recto*) [To the noble] lord Wara...akk, a thousand (times) blessing and homage on bended knee, as is [offered] to the gods, sent by his servant Farnkhund. And for me the day would be better if I myself might see you [healthy] (and) rested and we might pay homage at [your] feet.

And, sir, [the lead]er(?) imposed (great) labour on me and gave me *šdyh*, and called for me (saying): Go out to Kroraina, (and) then you should buy me silk (in exchange) for it, and (in exchange)(?) for the silk [you should buy ..., and] (in exchange)(?) for [it] you should buy camphor and bring it to me. And, sir, when ... the message came ... reject ... me(?) news(?) ... should not wish(?) ... the ... I am ready.

(*In the margin*) This letter was written (lit. “made”) [in the ... month] on the 26th day.¹¹⁸⁵

As can be seen, Farnkhund relates to Wara...akk, a task he was set to by an unknown third person. The full extent of this task is now clear, owing to the fragmented state of the text, but it involved a series of trades to be undertaken in Kroraina (*kr'wr'n*). There Farnkhund was to acquire both silk and camphor, all of which he was then to bring back to the unknown third person. This is clear evidence of trade taking place in Kroraina, and given the quantities of silk known from the kingdom, it would make good sense that silk was traded there. Yet as camphor is a substance extracted from the camphor tree native to southern China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, it further indicates that Kroraina was a market where imported items were resold.

Sogdian merchants in Kroraina

Given this evidence from the Sogdian Ancient Letters of Dunhuang, letters that shows extensive trade in commodities brought over long-distances, the evidence for Sogdians in the Southern Tarim Basin and the kingdom of Kroraina must likewise be seen in a new light as well. As shown beyond doubt by AL 6, some Sogdians were active in Kroraina itself, which would go a long way to explain the presence of the Sogdian letters there. Similarly, given the trades to be conducted, it seems highly likely that at

¹¹⁸⁵ Nicholas Sims-Williams, *Ancient Letter 6*, forthcoming

least some of these Sogdians were merchants, supporting Hansen’s suggestion for the Sogdian that appears in the Chinese document Cn.886. Sogdians, or at least their mail, also travelled through the kingdom of Kroraina, as made clear by the Ancient Letters’ find location in the watchtower T.12 on a path westward that would have led to the kingdom of Kroraina. Considering the route the Ancient Letters would likely have taken beyond Kroraina, along the southern rim of the Taklamakan, this might also explain the find of the “Contract”-type document N.661 at the Endere (Saca) site, as this would lend credence to the theory that the document had been carried there by the buyer, the Sogdian Vagisti Vandak, quite possibly on the very camel described therein.

In fact, when considering the evidence for Sogdian mercantile activity on a fairly sizable scale seen in the Ancient Letters, another document from the Endere (Saca) site takes on a new interest, namely document n.665. This document was discovered in a rubbish heap underneath the foundations of the Tang-era fort at the site, and due to its position and language, Stein thought it likely to date to the Krorainian period of occupation.¹¹⁸⁶ The document took the shape of a folded leather document of the same size and make as those commonly addressed to the top official in Caḍota, categories as a “Royal Decree” type, and judging by its content, document n.665 appears to have been similar in nature. It had, however, suffered significant damage, meaning that only parts of the text can be restored. The text that can be read certainly gives the impression of an administrative document, and of particular interest are lines two to four,

Leather Document. (Torn) Obv.

[.....] *pa se na vi du sa ti [m]la sa*

[.....] *humno* the Sokhaliga caravan

[.....] [*tve*] retinue (of) 86 people (and) 10 camels.

[.....] [*sa*] to be let go far away. Also (it is) announced, now *su-*

[.....] [*hi*]*syati* announced that (there is?) no herd (?) there, with regard to that

[.....] [...] from the camel two hands later will question who (?)

¹¹⁸⁶ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 278.

[.....] [..] *thi palyatra* (?) will question so no old law
[.....] *-thina* by the fort (*pirovena*) divided *immade*
[.....] *k.ga* divided so [ka..]

Leather Document. Rev.

[.....] *manna* will/should not be deposited inevitably not finding
gim[.]nisyatu

(At the other edge: tablet inverted)

The ogus (*torn*)¹¹⁸⁷

Here a *sokhaliga sarthasa*, translated by Burrow as “*sokhaliga caravan*”,¹¹⁸⁸ is mentioned and apparently contained a large group of eighty-six people with ten camels. Though the length of text missing (and thus any change of topic) is not clear, it would then seem that this caravan was subsequently allowed to leave. What the epithet *sokhaliga* might have meant, Burrow did not venture to suggest, but it distinctly recalls the Khotanese Prakrit *suliga* (Sogdian) encountered in document n.661 above. The Sogdian origin of this ethnonym would have read as *sugdhika*, and as suggested to me by Stefan Baums, a development of [d] to [l] is typically seen in some of the Iranian languages, such as Bactrian, that must surely have mediated this word into the Prakrit of the Tarim Basin.¹¹⁸⁹ In fact, as pointed out to me by Nicholas Sims-Williams, the word for Sogdian is actually attested in Bactrian sources with the place name βονο-σογολιγο (Bunsuglig, “land of the Sogdians”).¹¹⁹⁰ It therefore seems clear that *suliga* was simply a simplified or alternative form of *sokhaliga*, from Bactrian σογολιγο, meaning Sogdian.

Document n.665, in other words, appears to mention a Sogdian caravan passing through the area, and if line two and three are connected, then the caravan was rather sizable with eighty-six people and ten camels. Given their numbers and the ratio of

¹¹⁸⁷ Translated by author based on Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*.

¹¹⁸⁸ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 132.

¹¹⁸⁹ Stefan Baums, personal communication 04.01.2019.

¹¹⁹⁰ Sims-Williams, *Bactrian Personal Names*, 2:87.

animals to men, this does not seem like a group of odd travellers or refugees, but rather like an organised party or caravan. And judging by the Sogdian letter L.M.2.ii.09 found at the L.M site, written by a Sogdian woman to her husband likely in Kroraina, such Sogdian caravans through Krorainan lands were not all that rare, as she claims to repeatedly have sent letters to her husband along with caravans.¹¹⁹¹

There can therefore be no doubt that Sogdian merchants, even in this early period, must have played an important role in bringing imported goods from the west and south to the kingdom of Kroraina. No matter how one looks at it, these were undeniably merchants involved in true long-distance trade, with lords and chief merchants sending their agents across the entire breadth of Central Asia to trade pepper, silver, silk, and camphor all the way to north-western China.

8.3.4 Krorainan merchants?

What then of the Krorainans themselves? It certainly seems odd that no Krorainan would have had an interest in partaking in the trade that quite clearly went on across and within Kroraina. Even more so when some Sogdians headed specifically to Kroraina in order to do trade in silk and camphor, presumably because Kroraina was an ideal location for acquiring these commodities. Further, considering the well-developed economic system of the kingdom, with its many institutions, and the obvious wealth of some Krorainans, this lack of involvement seems nearly impossible. Yet as repeatedly mentioned, the Krorainan sources do not furnish much evidence for trade or commercial activities beyond a very local level, with only document n.35 mentioning merchants. Read more closely and seen in light of the evidence for long-distance trade in the Southern Tarim Basin as presented above, however, a little more can be said about the possibilities for Krorainan merchants.

As already touched upon in chapter five there is some evidence for Krorainans actively seeking to accumulate wealth by trade, as seen in Kupşimta's letter n.140, where he gave instructions for the prospecting and sale of gold. Some fairly well-off Krorainans also travelled beyond the kingdom for unspecified reasons, as discussed in

¹¹⁹¹ Nicholas Sims-Williams, "A so far unedited early Sogdian letter from Loulan (Stein collection, L.M.II.ii.09)", forthcoming

chapter seven. For example, Ramṣotsa's son Suḡuta was away to Khotan in document n.584. Yet only one actor appears to combine the trade in valuables with contacts abroad, namely Sugita in document n.3 and n.35, both documents quoted in full in section 6.7.1. The first document is rather straightforward, and in it a man named Sugita made a complaint concerning a slave woman whom he had bought for forty-one rolls of silk. The second document, being but a fragment, is more complicated, stating that a man named Sugita was "to be prevented" before going on to discuss merchants arriving from China as well as a debt in silk. Though difficult to verify, there is as discussed in section 6.7.1, every reason to believe that Sugita was the creditor who was owed silk and was to be prevented from harassing the debtor. If so, it would seem very tempting to connect the two Sugita from document n.3 and n.35, especially as both documents were found in ruin N.1 belonging to ṣoṭhamga Lýipeya who had a son or close relative called Sugita. Furthermore, given that Lýipeya was brother-in-law to a wealth man at the capital, had his son Lýimsu serving at the royal court and himself owned land in both Caḍota and Saca, his family would certainly be in an ideal position to pursue various forms of commercial ventures.¹¹⁹² One could therefore possibly interpret Sugita of document n.3 and n.35 as dealing in silk, likely either as part of a family venture or supported by them.

It is, however, not necessary to stretch the Kharosthi documents to such an extent in order to find signs of Krorainans involved in trade, for as discussed in section 6.2.3, several slips of silk with writing in Kharosthi with ink have been found in several Krorainan burials.¹¹⁹³ These were all rather uniform and gave a name and length of a silk roll, a note that should likely be understood as a label or form of receipt accompanying the purchase of silk rolls. Given that these were written in Kharosthi of the style and type in use in Kroraina, it would seem natural to interpret them as the product of Krorainans dealing in silk. How they got this silk is naturally not explained by the small silk slips, but two finds from the "limes" of Dunhuang cast further light on this. The first was the paper fragment T.12.a.ii.20 found by Stein together with the Sogdian Ancient Letters, the fragments of a document that carried

¹¹⁹² See document n.140, 576 and 160 respectively.

¹¹⁹³ See documents n.807, 871-877.

Kharosthi characters.¹¹⁹⁴ Its shape and the fact that it was written on paper do suggest that it might have been a letter, perhaps belonging to the same “mail bag” as the Sogdian Ancient Letters, though due to the poor quality of the reproduction and its poor state of preservation, it has not been possible for me to decipher it yet. Yet it is clear evidence that someone writing Kharosthi did visit the Dunhuang area and possibly sent their mail from there during the third century CE. The other find was the small silk slip T.15.a.iii.57 found by Stein in a refuse heap of the lime T.15. Like the Krorainan slips, this slip also gave a length of silk, corresponding to the silk roll that it had once been attached too, though unlike them, it had been written in Brahmi characters. Brahmi was also known in Kroraina,¹¹⁹⁵ and Boyer who examined the text found some parallels with the Prakrit of the Kharosthi documents. The Brahmi did appear, however, to be a somewhat older form, and as the document was found together with Chinese documents datable to the first century CE, it might predate the Kharosthi material from Kroraina.¹¹⁹⁶ It is nonetheless an indication that people using the same silk-slip system as at Kroraina were active in Dunhuang and apparently acquiring silk there, whether during the third and fourth centuries or in an earlier period.

We do, in other words, have Krorainans involved with silk trade in Kroraina, as shown in section 6.2.3 on a rather large scale, and we have Kharosthi and Brahmi writers in Dunhuang, some of whom also were involved with silk. These Kharosthi and Brahmi users could naturally have been from elsewhere in the Tarim Basin, or perhaps from as far afield as Northern India. That North Indians might have been involved was certainly suspected by Stein, in part due to the above-mentioned Chinese pass-slips found in ruin N.5 at the Niya (Caḍota) site. As will be recalled, these followed a regular formula, as exemplified by N.xv.61-62,

男生年廿五車牛二乘黃犗牛二頭

¹¹⁹⁴ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 669–71.

¹¹⁹⁵ See document n.431 and n.523.

¹¹⁹⁶ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 701–4.

Nan-cheng (nom d'homme?), âgé de 25 ans; deux chars à bœufs; deux boeufs jaune-rouge (?)¹¹⁹⁷

Unlike N.xv.61-62, however, N.xv.53 Explicitly identify the hold as a Yuezhi (月氏), an epithet that Stein argues must be understood as the realm of the Dayuezhi (大月氏), that is the Kushan empire that ruled Bactria and Northern India.¹¹⁹⁸ Stein speculated that the holder of N.xv.53 might have been from Kashmir, while more recent suggestions by Bi and Sims-Williams have speculated that it might have been either a Bactrian or a Sogdian.¹¹⁹⁹

This does, however, beg the question of why several Chinese pass-slips belonging to Indians, Bactrians, or Sogdians would end up in the rubbish heap of a homestead in a rather small oasis town like Caḍota? This is not an easy question to answer, but certainly there was no Chinese garrison at Caḍota that might have collected them, nor does it seem reasonable that passing officials might have brought them. Rather, the more reasonable explanation would be that these pass-slips were carried to Caḍota not by foreigners but by Caḍotans, who upon returning promptly discarded their now useless pass-slips. Admittedly, this does not explain why they were all dumped in one place, but it does make more sense in the context of some of the pass-slips, given for example that the two carts and oxen of document N.xv.61-62 would be far from ideal for crossing the mountains to the west and south of the Tarim Basin. Such an interpretation was already touched upon by Brough in his 1965 article, where he strongly argues that both the pass-slip holders and the Yuezhi of the Chinese documents from the Lop sites should be understood not as people from the Kushan domain but simply as Krorainans.¹²⁰⁰ In particular, he makes the very interesting note that the apparent name of the traveller in N.xv.61-62, Nansheng (男生), must have been read close to *nəm šieṅ* found in the Kharosthi documents as *Namṣana*.¹²⁰¹ It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that we have evidence for Krorainans acquiring

¹¹⁹⁷ Chavannes, *Les Documents Chinois Découverts Par Aurel Stein Dans Les Sables Du Turkestan Oriental.*, 542.

¹¹⁹⁸ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:372.

¹¹⁹⁹ Sims-Williams and Bi, 'A Sogdian Fragment from Niya', 96–97.

¹²⁰⁰ Brough, 'Supplementary Notes on Third-Century Shan-Shan', 605–6.

¹²⁰¹ Seen in document n.87 and n.167 and with a female version *Namṣanae* in document n.110 and n.137.

Chinese pass-slips, likely in order to journey to Dunhuang and some with the goal of acquiring silk. Indeed, it could even be that the person who carried the cargo of ginger and betel mentioned in slip N.xv.78 was a Caḍotan. Yet a Krorainan explicitly engaged as a merchant still eludes us.

This has, however, changed following the recent discovery and publication of the peculiar Kharosthi document found amongst the collection of the Hetian (Khotan) County Museum by Diego Loukota.¹²⁰² The document had no official find site, but as the Hetian museum has otherwise acquired many items and documents from the Niya (Caḍota) site, its providence is likely Niya. In fact, based on its content it likely came from ruin N.29 because the document concerns a man named Sagamovi, the well-known Caḍotan who escaped with his wife to Kuci (Kucha), as discussed in section 7.4.4, and later resided in the farmstead N.29. The document itself consists of three tablets tied together, but only one has been read due to issues of conservation, reading as follows,

In the year 18, the month 11, day 8. In this time the great king of Kucha, the son of heaven Pitṛbhakta, has issued his mercy. There is a native of Shanshan (*nuaviya*), Sagamoi by name, merchant (*vaniya*) of *arna* in the capital. For his sake (the king?) gave six *rate yole ive unatse*. Let there be a *khavalga* in Oriya, then the *khavalga* [are?] those 100 sheep.

Only the tasucas of the kingdom:

Some of the tasucas of the kingdom must be lenient towards (?) these eight friends (?). They should give to Sagamoi the external *zamda*. Śarzape made a gift (?).¹²⁰³

In the tablet one encounters a Sagamoi, the same name as Sagmoya/Sagamovi, who is called *nuaviya*, that is a Nuavan, Nuava being the local name for the kingdom of

¹²⁰² First published in Chinese in Loukota, ‘和田博物馆藏源于龟兹国的一件佉卢文木牍 (A Kharosthi Document from Kucha in the Hetian Museum)’. Recently in English in Loukota, ‘A New Kharosthi Document from Kucha in the Hetian County Museum Collection’.

¹²⁰³ Loukota, ‘A New Kharosthi Document from Kucha in the Hetian County Museum Collection’, 96.

Kroraina.¹²⁰⁴ Given that this document was likely found at the Niya site and Sagamoya's well-documented six-year stay in Kuci, this is certainly the same man. Not only that, he was described as a *vaniya*, that is merchant, during his stay in Kuci. Exactly what he dealt in is not clear as *arna* is not known, though Loukota suspects wool based on the mention of sheep. Yet no matter what he dealt in, we here finally have our elusive Krorainan, and even a Caḍota, merchant.

8.4 The problem of the “Prime Mover”

Returning to the opening questions of what forms of exchange might have brought the imported goods evident in the Krorainan sources to the kingdom and which actors were important in this process, one must I believe necessarily conclude that no simple answer exists to these questions. Gift exchange, whether through social alliances or in the form of the Chinese tributary diplomacy, must certainly have accounted for some of these items, and as shown quite clearly by the Chinese documents from the Lop (Kroraina) site, the Chinese army also brought such imports into the region. Yet at the same time, one must recognise that both Raschke and Hansen were wrong to completely dismiss the “Silk Road” trade, that is the role merchants and commercial trade. Because while both their alternatives clearly merit consideration, when held together, the available evidence from the southern Tarim Basin shows quite convincingly that merchants played an important role in carrying imported commodities to Kroraina. Yet here too one sees a great diversity of actors, including Chinese officials and officers trading on the side, Sogdians trading over vast distances, and possibly even local scribes or magnates conducting regional trade.

It is therefore necessary to recognize that exchange in the Southern Tarim Basin region in our period took on a wide range of forms and was driven by a range of different factors and actors operating for an equally varied number of reasons, with everything from diplomatic to commercial motifs. One major question still remains, however, namely the often-neglected question of how people, whether Khotanese envoy, Chinese soldier, Sogdian merchant, or Buddhist monks actually traversed the vast distances and hostile terrain of the Southern Tarim Basin.

¹²⁰⁴ See discussion of this in section 4.2.1.

Chapter 9: The Tarim States as actors in regional exchange networks

Returning to the questions from the introduction of chapter eight, we can conclude with certainty that imported commodities from both geographically closer as well as more distant locations moved into or through the kingdom of Kroraina by way of a number of different actors and vectors. Gift giving certainly appears to have played a role, in the available material largely seen in a diplomatic context, and the important role played by the army of Chinese empires and their successive garrisons can certainly not be understated. Yet, at least as far as the available sources go, trade conducted by merchants appears to have been the most important vector, carried out on scales ranging from interregional long-distance trade to short-distance regional activity. However, beyond their participation in diplomatic networks and the very limited evidence for some locals travelling and trading, one must wonder where this leaves the polities of the Southern Tarim Basins.

The final section of this case study will therefore attempt to address the question of the role of the Tarim Basin polities in facilitating and driving regional and trans-regional exchange networks during the first four centuries CE. In keeping with the study's focus on the kingdom of Kroraina, this will provide the primary example, but in order to get as complete a picture as possible, this chapter will also draw upon evidence from the neighbouring kingdom of Khotan. Through an analysis of the available sources, the following will highlight some of the neglected sides of the often-ignored polities of the Tarim Basin, which as we have seen are usually relegated to the role of middlemen at best, if not altogether ignored. This will be done through three sections, addressing the Tarim polities as facilitators of travel, as providers of a legal framework, and finally as promoters or drivers of exchange.

9.1 On the importance of infrastructure and a legal framework

This case study has so far mainly concerned itself with investigating the extent of the contacts of the southern Tarim Basin kingdoms as well as discussed what evidence

exists for the import of prestige goods and who might have carried these items to the region. In other words, the study has discussed what evidence exists for contact, and what evidence exists for exchange. In doing so, this study has focused on similar facts and argument as can be found in many, if not most, academic works discussing the Silk Roads, whether these have argued for the role of empires, steppe nomads, or otherwise. Yet a question far too rarely asked, though of pivotal importance to any serious inquiry into any form of economic network, is the question of how the transportation and exchange of the commodities in question was actually conducted. Most accounts of the Silk Road appear to assume that this was carried out by large scale caravans, often citing Sima Qian's passage on how groups of government envoys sometimes numbering in the hundreds headed westwards, or focus on the Chinese pass-slips. While one could, as Hansen does,¹²⁰⁵ point to the fact that such large caravans are hardly ever mentioned in any extant source, there is also the issue of how these journeys were carried out. Hardly none of the major works on the Silk Road discuss how these expeditions, whether Chinese envoys or Sogdian merchants, solved the many practical issues of acquiring supplies, finding the correct route, avoiding bandits, crossing rivers and not least, once they reached their destination, actually conducting communication and exchange.¹²⁰⁶

That these issues were a deadly reality cannot be doubted. Travelling routes dominated by the harsh wasteland of the Taklamakan or the foothills of the Kunlun Mountains, which contain some of the most inhospitable stretches on earth, to say nothing of the mountain passes of the Pamir or the Karakorum, would naturally have been a difficult undertaking. That these problems were encountered by ancient travellers is furthermore reflected in many antique sources, particularly in Chinese accounts of the region. One will recall Faxian's account of his travels from Dunhuang to Shanshan (Kroraina) from around the turn of the fifth century, describing the desert as lifeless and trackless, the only indication of possible routes being the bones of the dead,

¹²⁰⁵ Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History*, 77–78 and 82. Hansen discusses this repeatedly, but documents this particularly well in the case of Kucha.

¹²⁰⁶ Or in the cases when this is addressed it is usually done in a highly schematic manner without referencing any extant sources, as seen for example in Benjamin, *Empires of Ancient Eurasia: The First Silk Road Era, 100BCE-250CE.*, 98–114.

Le Hao, the prefect of T'un-hwang, had supplied them with the means of crossing the desert (before them), in which there are many evil demons and hot winds. (Travellers) who encounter them perish all to a man. There is not a bird to be seen in the air above, nor an animal on the ground below. Though you look all round most earnestly to find where you can cross, you know not where to make your choice, the only mark and indication being the dry bones of the dead (left upon the sand).¹²⁰⁷

The description of travel through the Tarim Basin given by the imperial advisor Du Qin (杜欽), who advised the Han emperor towards the end of the last century BCE, follows in a similar vein by stating,

For asses, stock animals and transported provisions, they (the envoys) depend on supplies from the various states to maintain themselves. But some of the states may be poor or small and unable to provide supplies, and some may be refractory and unwilling to do so. So our envoys clasp the emblems of mighty Han and starve to death in the hills and valleys. They may beg, but there is nothing for them to get, and after ten or twenty days man and beast lie abandoned in the wastes never to return.¹²⁰⁸

His speech goes on to describe the hardship of the mountain passes beyond the desert on the way south to India, likely routes through the Kunlun or Karakorum ranges. Here the travellers had to traverse slopes called “the slopes of the Red Earth and the Fever of the Body”, where man and beast suffer fever, headaches and nausea,¹²⁰⁹ likely a description of altitude sickness. The dangers of the precipices that followed were said to be indescribable.¹²¹⁰

While it is possible that both Du Qin’s and Faxien’s accounts may well have been exaggerated, to lend credence to Du Qin’s advice or showcase Faxien’s stoicism

¹²⁰⁷ Faxian, FGS (12-13)

¹²⁰⁸ Ban Gu, HS, 96 (110)

¹²⁰⁹ Ban Gu, HS, 96 (109-111)

¹²¹⁰ Ban Gu, HS, 96 (111)

and bravery, they still paint a vivid picture of the perceived danger of the routes through the Tarim Basin. It cannot be doubted that the questions of access to supplies, security, and guides were of paramount importance to any longer journey in antiquity.

Furthermore, at journey's end, the potential traveller, whether envoy, monk or merchant, would also be faced with the problem of how to conduct their contact and exchange. As emphasised by economic historians, a certain level of trust and cooperation is crucial in any form of exchange. Even in the case of the most basic act of barter, where an animal was exchange for a carpet, a level of shared understanding and trust would have been needed to come to terms on issues such as value and form. Furthermore, some form of security against one party renegeing on the deal, for example by withholding or killing the animal in the above example, would be highly desirable. Such systems of trust and security can potentially be provided by a variety of institutions, be it kinship, shared cultural conventions or a formal legal framework of courts, contracts, and currency. Whatever its form, it would be important for making exchange feasible.¹²¹¹

When faced with such challenges, how then could these journeys and the following exchanges have come about? As with the question of imports the answer is again likely multi-faceted, but some important leads can be found in the quotes of Faxian and Du Qin, who both point to the role of the local Tarim polities. It therefore seems prudent to investigate if it was not through the use of local infrastructure and local systems of security, whether against physical threats or of an economic nature, that these journeys were made possible.

9.2 Providing infrastructure and security

There exist detailed itineraries in both the Krorainan and also some of the Chinese sources, sketching the routes which travellers through the southern Tarim Basin predominantly followed. These itineraries ran from oasis to oasis, taking in fresh supplies, and at times, fresh animals at each stop. This pattern of travel was very much akin to the way travel was conducted in the region during the early twentieth century,

¹²¹¹ Zhang and Elsner, 'A Social-Leverage Mechanism on the Silk Road: The Private Emergence of Institutions in Central Asia, from the 7th to the 9th Century', 1–2.

and which Stein describes in detail in his works, such as the stretch between Karghaliq and Khotan.¹²¹² Notably Stein and his contemporaries encountered very little physical infrastructure, such as established roads. From his travels around Khotan, Stein relates how the routes west of Khotan were dominated by barren ground and gravel steppe, while the routes eastwards traversed stretches of sandy desert.¹²¹³ Similarly to these conditions prevailing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there is also very little evidence for physical infrastructure along the established routes across the southern Tarim Basin in antiquity.

The only marked exception to this were bridges. In his travel through the Tarim Basin, Stein repeatedly crossed rivers, ravines and streams by wooden bridges, and one ancient example of such a wooden bridge was also discovered at Cađota. In the southern part of the Niya (Cađota) site, Stein found what he called a footbridge that in ancient times had spanned the Niya river south of the main oasis town just before the river swung and ran to the west of the settlement. The remains of the bridge were quite sizable, as Stein could still trace it across more than twenty-seven metres and with its tallest still standing trestle reaching nine metres in height.¹²¹⁴ (See figure 5.2) Based on the one found at Cađota, it seems reasonable to assume that other rivers near major settlements were similarly bridged in antiquity, though neither Stein nor later archaeological expeditions have uncovered other ancient bridges in the southern Tarim Basin sites as of yet.¹²¹⁵ Arnaud Bertrand, in his article on the water-management of Cađota, claims that other sites like Endere, the Lop sites, Miran, and Karadong have yielded several bridges, but this is never substantiated further in his text nor stated in any of the references given.¹²¹⁶

¹²¹² Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:94–99.

¹²¹³ Stein, 1:94 and 309-310.

¹²¹⁴ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 240.

¹²¹⁵ This conclusion stems from my survey of the following archaeological reports, Stein's reports, Bergman's reports, the Sino-Japanese expedition and the Sino-French expedition.

¹²¹⁶ Bertrand, 'Water Management in Jingjue Kingdom', 29. Here he refers to Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, vol. 3. Figure 7 and Baumer, *Southern Silk Road: In the Footsteps of Sir Aurel Stein and Sven Hedin*, 100–101.

Pirova, bridges or forts?

Turning to Burrow's translation of the written sources it has been suggested that the bridge found by Stein is reflected there as *piro/pirova*, a term Burrow translates as bridge. Burrow based his translation on the context of several of the documents and proposed an etymology from an Iranian word, *prθwaka*.¹²¹⁷ The word *piro/pirova* and the related term *pirovala*, which Burrow gives as bridge-keeper, appears in a total of eleven documents, ten from the Niya (Caḍota) site and one from Endere (Saca).¹²¹⁸ Bertrand, using Burrow's translation, discusses several of these documents, especially the important document n.120, and suggests that most of the documents from Niya referred to the footbridge discovered by Stein.¹²¹⁹

However, since Burrow's original work, the translation of *piro/pirova* as bridge and *pirovala* as bridge-keeper have been challenged by a number of linguists. Already sir Harold Bailey, in an article from 1951, pointed to the connection between Niya Kharosthi *piro/pirova* and the Khotanese term *prūva-*. This word he showed on grounds of textual comparison to mean "military post" or "fort", and he furthermore connected the word to Manichean Sogdian *ptrwp*, meaning castle.¹²²⁰ Later articles on the subject by both Dieter Weber and Nicholas Sims-Williams agree with this interpretation, and Sims-Williams furthermore reconstructs the Old Iranian etymological root of the word as *pāti-raupa*.¹²²¹ On etymological and comparative grounds, it is therefore certain that Niya Kharosthi *piro/pirova* should be read as fort and not bridge.

Additionally, as already stressed by Bailey,¹²²² if considering the context in which these words are used the suggested reading of fort would seem to fit just as well, if not better, than bridge. Take for example the "report"-type document n.120,

¹²¹⁷ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 105–6.

¹²¹⁸ Document n.120, 122, 154, 157, 188, 246, 310, 333, 376, 639 and 665.

¹²¹⁹ Bertrand, 'Water Management in Jingjue Kingdom', 29 and 32.

¹²²⁰ Bailey, 'Irano-Indica IV', 920–26.

¹²²¹ Weber, 'Iranian Loans in the Niya Documents Re-Examined', 36; Sims-Williams, 'Some Bactrian Terms for Realia', 193.

¹²²² Bailey, 'Irano-Indica IV', 925.

Stick-like tablet. Obv. & Rev.

In the 3rd year, 4th month, 15th day, at this time, it was necessary to go to the *ṣitga potge* for the second time. All the work-people came to the *pirova* (bridge/fort?) [.....] the water was very muddy (*kha[lu]sa*). Owing to that fault the well-born people came to an agreement. We stopped and turned back the magistrates from the *ṣitga potge*. The well-born people who were there on account of the king's business were: Namarazma, the senior cozbo, Paṃciṃna, [Naṃ]maśura, Tgaca, the apsu Apñiya, Calmasa, and Kaṃciya, the ari Lỳipana.¹²²³

This document would seem to associate the word *piro* with water, making work on a bridge seem likely. Yet as the sentence is fragmented, it could well be that the muddy water was in the *ṣitga potge*. Burrow suggests this word to mean “reservoir” or “water tank”, while Bailey gives it as “kitchen” or “cooking place”.¹²²⁴ In either case, it is clear from documents n.347 and n.397 that the *potge* stored water. Thus, understanding the document as concerning the water supply to a fort would fit the context just as well as a bridge. Perhaps even more so, as the group of important local men, including a senior cozbo, are said to have gone on the king's business, which the water supply to a fort would likely be, rather than going to solve a problem with a local water tank. The two other documents that Burrow primarily draws upon, n.310 and n.639, would furthermore seem to suit the context of “fort” rather better than bridge. This is the case in document n.639, a “Royal Command” document sent to a *tasuca Kunala*, where the official is admonished for blocking a road,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to *tasuca Kunala*

¹²²³ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 21. With my addition of (*piro*).

¹²²⁴ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 107; Bailey, ‘Indo-Iranian Studies II’, 129–32.

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs tasuca Kunala as follows: The ogu Azuraka informs us that there the Caḍotans belonging to the kilme of the ogu Azuraka go from here. You occupy the road and keep them back a long time. If they go on their own initiative, they demand a cow from them as recompense (for using) the *pirova* (bridge/fort?). This is not the previously existing law that the road of *asmati* people should be occupied. When a letter of command comes to you from here (saying) that the road is to be blocked and the *piro* (bridge/fort?) seized, at that time it is to be blocked and the *piro* (bridge/fort?) is to be seized. As long, however, as a letter of command (to that effect) does not come from here, the road is to be left open in peace to the Caḍotans. The cow (demanded as) recompense for (using) the *pirova* (bridge/fort?) is not to be relinquished.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Of ogu Azuraka¹²²⁵

The location where the road was being blocked is not made clear in the document, and Burrow appears to have assumed that blocking the road would have been most easily done by seizing a bridge over which it ran. While this is an entirely reasonable supposition, Burrow appears to have missed the direction of travel implied by the document. The Caḍotans who were kept back by Kunala are said to have gone from “here”, *imade*, a word that refers to the location of the king himself and therefore the capital at Kroraina. The Caḍotans in question thus appear to have been coming from the east and would therefore not need to cross any bridges near Caḍota. They may, however, have had to pass a fort, situated along the routes to the east of the town.

There is, of course, the possibility that the location in question was not near Caḍota at all. The tasuca Kunala, who is also the addresser in the “Letter”-type document n.160, appears to have sent that document from Saca, where a river would have to be crossed. Yet this tasuca Kunala is probably also the actor known as cozbo

¹²²⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 133.

Kunala, who appears in several documents and seems to have been active at Caḍota. There is, furthermore, ample evidence to show that several officials travelled extensively in the kingdom, making it precarious to place tasuca Kunala in Saca based on document n.160 alone.¹²²⁶ Moreover, as the document n.639 above was itself found at Caḍota, it was most likely related to affairs there.

Thus, while these observations can hardly be held up as conclusive, they do further strengthen Bailey's interpretation of *piro/pirova* as meaning "fort" or "military post", as this meaning is at least as suitable as "bridge". We can therefore summarise that the term *piro/pirova* in the Kharosthi documents should be understood as referring to a fortified military post, fort, or a larger fortification of sorts. Furthermore, we know from the documents that there was at least one *piro/pirova* near, but not in Caḍota,¹²²⁷ and that certain people were named as *pirovala* and put in charge of it.¹²²⁸ Finally, it is clear from document n.639 that the *piro/pirova* could be used to control traffic along the roads within the kingdom, as well as across its borders, as seen in document n.310 and n.333.

Forts and military posts

Bailey's interpretation is further supported by the fact that a multitude of fortified sites, varying in size and construction, has been discovered within the bounds of the Kingdom of Kroraina, some of which may well have corresponded with the *piro/pirova* of the documents. A total of at least thirteen such sites are reported in the excavation reports, covering all major oases mentioned in the documents except Calmadana, and thus including Niya (Caḍota)¹²²⁹, Endere (Saca)¹²³⁰, Charkliq, Miran,¹²³¹ and Lop (Kroraina)¹²³². Some of these can be securely dated, based on

¹²²⁶ See for example document n.152 and n.478.

¹²²⁷ See document n.188 and n.246 which both says that something must be brought "out to" the *piro/pirova*.

¹²²⁸ See document n.154 and n.188. In the first a Sugiya carries this title. In the second the *pirovala* are mentioned in plural as *pirovala*[a]ye.

¹²²⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (*Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China*), 1999, 2:154–58.

¹²³⁰ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:417–38; Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 270–89.

¹²³¹ Ito, 'The Ruins of Loulan, Miran and Charklik'.

¹²³² Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 385–89; Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 180–198 and 259–269.

excavated documents, to periods after the Kingdom of Kroraina fell and will therefore not be included in this discussion. This is the case with the large forts of Endere and Miran, which can be dated to the later Tang and Tibetan periods, based on a graffiti and several written documents.¹²³³ Furthermore, the three sites at Charkliq, named Koyumal, Bash-koyumal and Yu-ni-cheng, will also not be considered, as they are all of uncertain dates.¹²³⁴

The remaining eight fortified sites, however, were all likely in use during the third and fourth centuries and discovered at or near the sites of Niya (Caḍota), Endere (Saca), and in the Lop (Kroraina) sites. At Niya (Caḍota) itself, a large fortified position was found by the Sino-Japanese expedition south of the main site. Stein's expedition uncovered a smaller, almost intact fort to the south of the larger Tang period fort at the Endere (Saca) site as well as a larger walled area to the north. Stein's expeditions furthermore uncovered a series of four forts along the former northern banks of Lake Lop Nur, named L.E, L.F, L.K, and L.L, and traced of fortifications at the larger site L.A. (See map 20) Notably, these fortifications seem to fall into two broadly similar categories, being sites fortified with a large circumvallation and those consisting of smaller, fort-like structures.

Three of the fortifications fall into the first category, namely the one at Caḍota, the walled site at Saca, and the one at L.A, which all took the form of a large circumvallation. At Caḍota, the Sino-Japanese expedition identified the remnants of several sections of walls that formed a large elliptical enclosure that the report names the "Southern Castle". Though very little of the wall could still be traced, the team managed to identify and excavated a gate in the southern wall, facing south-south-east. From north to south the walled area measured 185 metres, while from east to west it measured 150 metres, and the complete wall had had a circumference of ca. 530 metres. The sections of the wall still extant were built from stamped clay, and though severely damaged, they still stood over two metres high in places. The interior of the circumvallation was entirely covered in tamarisk cones, and due to time-constraints,

¹²³³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 275-276 and 450-485.

¹²³⁴ Ito, 'The Ruins of Loulan, Miran and Charklik', 152-55.

the Sino-Japanese team was not able to survey for structures within.¹²³⁵ Notably, the fortifications were found some distance to the south of the main dwelling clusters and also south of the footbridge discovered by Stein. (See figure 1) In an associated structure standing just south of the gate, thought to have been an animal shelter due to the cow and dog manure found within, was discovered a dated Kharosthi document n. from the sixth year of king Mahiri (290 CE), confirming that the area was in use during the third and fourth centuries.¹²³⁶

The circumvallations of the Endere site and the Lop site L.A were similarly heavily eroded as the one found at Niya (Caḍota), but otherwise they proved to be quite different. In the case of the Endere circumvallation, where Stein conducted but a short survey, the fortification formed an oblong, measuring ca. 160 metres from north to south and ca. 100 metres from east to west. (See map 13) The wall itself was made from stamped clay with a superstructure of sun-dried bricks, though the remnants of these were very irregular. Due to its much eroded state, when compared with the Tang-era fort, Stein thought it likely that this fortification must have been older. He concluded that it must have been from the “Krorainan period”, though as no structures were excavated inside, he could not find written evidence to support this.¹²³⁷ A more thorough investigation was conducted at the L.A site. The circumvallation here formed a slightly angled quadrangle with sides measuring roughly 300 by 300 metres. (See figure 2) The entire structure had been angled so that the northern and southern walls ran east-north-east, which Stein believed to have been done intentionally in order to align them with the prevailing wind direction.¹²³⁸ The walls at L.A were built from stamped clay, though interspaced with layers of tamarisk branches to further strengthen the construction and prevent erosion. Much like at Niya (Caḍota), the walls did in places still stand over two metres tall.¹²³⁹ As described earlier in section 2.5 the interior of the circumvallation housed several buildings, including what had been a Chinese official post or garrison quarters as well as a stupa. From the Kharosthi and

¹²³⁵ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書* (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China), 1999, 2:154.

¹²³⁶ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:157–58.

¹²³⁷ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 281.

¹²³⁸ Stein, 386–88.

¹²³⁹ Stein, 386.

Chinese material found in these buildings, the site can furthermore be securely dated to the third and fourth centuries.¹²⁴⁰

However, while certainly fortified sites, none of these three larger fortifications appear to suit the definition of *piro/pirova* particularly well. Though they clearly were military installations, they all appear to have been located within the oasis towns themselves. Furthermore, none of their locations appear particularly well suited for controlling roads or access to the kingdom, though our limited knowledge of the exact routes used in antiquity makes this difficult to say for certain. Rather, it seems likely that these three sites should be equated with some of the instances of the term *nagara*, that is “city” or “town”. As first pointed out by Padwa, the “Royal Decree” document n.272 appears to mention the circumvallated “Southern Castle” at Caḍota.¹²⁴¹ The relevant sections of the very long document run as follows,

Document on leather Obv.

.....] Also it appears that (*ityartha*) since last year you have been in great danger from the Supis and you settled the people of the kingdom (province) inside the city. Now all the Supis have gone; where they were formerly settled, there they have settled. In your province there has come about a relaxation. Also there is peace and quiet from Khotan. Now the *lautgaimci* (?) people are to be written down. Only the city is to be defended; the other people of the kingdom are to be left alone; they are not again to be harassed (by being crowded) in the city. Also last year the royal *śuka*-wine was collected there. Now it is heard that the tax-collectors and officials of wine department have used up all this wine. When this letter of instruction reaches you, quickly thereupon last year's *śuka*-wine and this year's wine is to be collected all complete, and is to be poured together in one place. Also just as there the yatma Parkuta collected and deposited the *kuyana*, *tsamghina*, and *koyimamḍhina* corn

¹²⁴⁰ See for example document n.676, dated to the 38th year of a king whose name is illegible (likely Amgoka making it ca. 284 AD), and n.677, dated in an illegible year of the reign of Amgoka.

¹²⁴¹ Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’, 90–93.

in all the offices of the city, even so now let the *kuṃyana*, *tsamghina*, and *ko[yimaṃdhina*] corn be collected and [.....] in the city. [.....]¹²⁴²

The city (*nagara*) described in this document appears to have served the role of a defensible position into which people and, if referring to the same city (*nagara*), also collected tax could be gathered. This would fit well with the so-called “Southern Castle”. Even more so, as the site is rather small and thus crowding the population of the oasis town into the enclosure could certainly be seen as a nuisance. In other documents, however, *nagara* is clearly being used to refer to an actual city, usually the capital, and thus it is hardly possible to equate this term with all of the larger circumvallations in Kroraina.

The second group of fortified structures, the fort-like structures, would however seem to correspond far better to the term *piro/pirova*. The construction of the four smaller fortifications scattered across the Lop region, L.E, L.F, L.K, and L.L, all fort-like structures, were broadly similar to the construction of the circumvallation at L.A.¹²⁴³ All had been raised as quadrangles rather than circular constructions, with the largest site L.E actually forming a rectangle and the remaining three having a more oblong shape. (Figure 3 and 4) Like at L.A the walls had been placed so that two aligned with the prevailing wind and all four had walls constructed from clay with layers of tamarisk to further strengthen the construction. With the exception of L.F, all these fort-like structures furthermore had walls still reaching at least three metres in height at the time of their discovery. As such, all five of the Lop (Kroraina) fortifications show clear parallels in construction and design, which would suggest that they should be dated to the same period. Archaeological finds further support this, in particular two Chinese documents found in L.E. dated to 266 and 267 AD¹²⁴⁴ and an undated Kharosthi document n.757 found at L.F. L.L can likely be similarly dated, based on the two Kharosthi documents n.752 and n.753 found at the nearby site L.M. As for L.K, no documents were found in its vicinity, but based on its structural

¹²⁴² Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 49–50.

¹²⁴³ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 180–89, 192–93, 259–64.

¹²⁴⁴ Stein, 262.

features, Stein suggested that it must likewise be from the Krorainan period.¹²⁴⁵ This is further supported by the similarities between carved wooden pieces found within L.K and other Krorainan sites.¹²⁴⁶ L.K is however noteworthy, as it displays some marked differences from the other three Lop (Kroraina) forts, having by far the sturdiest fortification. The massive walls, which though eroded, Stein surmised must have stood to a height of more than six metres, had been further reinforced with layers of Toghrak timber between the clay and reed layers. Furthermore, a sturdy wooden framework of vertically placed wooden posts supported the more than four metres thick walls, both steadying and reinforcing the construction.¹²⁴⁷

The fort-like structure found by Stein in the southernmost part of the Endere (Saca) site was similarly described by him as “massive”, and has several parallels to the dimensions of L.K. The nearly intact fort was composed of a square measuring roughly twenty-by-twenty metres, with stamped clay walls roughly two and a half metres thick and, in some places, nearly five and a half metres tall. Remnants of parapets along the walls were still visible, and a protruding bastion guarded the entrance. (See figures 5) The fort unfortunately did not yield any written material that could provide Stein with a secure date, but based on similarities in material and construction to other datable structures at the Endere (Saca) site as well as with other Krorainan fortifications, Stein proposed to date it to the earlier “Krorainan” period of occupation.¹²⁴⁸ Endere, interestingly, is the only site besides Niya (Çaḍota) that yielded a document using the word *piro/pirova*. This is found in the torn leather document n.665 that contained the mention of a Sokhaliga caravan discussed in section 8.3.3. The eighth line of this document reads, “[.....] -dhina by the *pirova* (bridge/fort?) (?) divided/distributed *immade*”¹²⁴⁹. Though the context is not at all clear, the document does appear to mention a fort, and as no location is given it is tempting to see this term in connection with one of the two fortified sites from the Krorainan period.

¹²⁴⁵ Stein, 189.

¹²⁴⁶ Stein, 192.

¹²⁴⁷ Stein, 184–85.

¹²⁴⁸ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 283–84.

¹²⁴⁹ The translation, by the author, is very provisional. The original line, as transcribed by Rapson et al, is as follows, “[.....] -dhina pirovena vibhaktaga *immade*”.

Yet even if all the four forts from the Lop (Kroraina) sites and the southern Endere (Saca) fort appear to have dated to the period under consideration, it is not entirely clear who occupied them. Stein argued that the fort L.E, and to a lesser extent also for L.K, were strikingly similar in construction methods and material to the so-called Han “limes” north of Dunhuang, and as such, he argued that these represented Chinese outposts.¹²⁵⁰ This argument is, however, not particularly convincing. This is partly because the forts displayed clear similarities to other fortifications further west, such as the fort at Endere (Saca) and even more strikingly the ruins of Karadong along the Keriya river,¹²⁵¹ which one can say with certainty did not house Chinese garrisons. The finds from the forts furthermore are generally very similar to those of the other Krorainan sites, including other architectural elements, such as the carved wooden decorations from L.K mentioned above. As such, the similarities in construction technique, materials, and layout are likely more a result of borrowing and local necessities rather than indicating who built them.

However, for two of the forts, L.E and L.F, more convincing evidence is found in the existence of Chinese documents, six of which were found at L.E and further two from L.F.¹²⁵² The decipherable documents from L.E appear to be either letters or orders sent by Chinese officials,¹²⁵³ which could suggest that a garrison was present in L.E and that the orders were addressed to them. Alternatively however, they could also have been lost by the courier in transit, and thus accidentally ended up in the forts, an interpretation that could be supported by the find of a single kharosthi document in L.F,¹²⁵⁴ though the reverse could of course also be the case. The perhaps most likely scenario, at least for L.E and L.F, is a mixed occupation, either at the same time or through later reoccupation. The first possibility is certainly made possible when considering the finds from the L.A site, where both the Chinese garrison and a Krorainan administration quite clearly co-existed. A similar scenario might have been the case for L.E, where a local garrison could have housed a small Chinese official

¹²⁵⁰ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 189, 260.

¹²⁵¹ Stein, 186.

¹²⁵² Stein, 262–63; Maspero, *Les Documents Chinois de La Troisième Expédition de Sir Aurel Stein En Asie Centrale*, 77–78.

¹²⁵³ Maspero, *Les Documents Chinois de La Troisième Expédition de Sir Aurel Stein En Asie Centrale*, 77–78.

¹²⁵⁴ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 263.

presence. Alternatively, L.E and L.F could originally have been occupied by the Chinese forces before being abandoned and subsequently taken over by local forces, or vice versa. Such a scenario might be supported by the fact two datable documents from L.E, n.246 (L.E. i. 1.) and n.247 (L.E. i. 2.), which both give dates very close in time, namely to 266 CE and 267 CE respectively, suggesting a short period of Chinese occupation.

In truth, only a more thorough archaeological investigation, and hopefully the discoveries of more conclusive written material, can give a final answer to these problems. It is at any rate clear from the archaeological material that some basic infrastructure was in place throughout the kingdom of Kroraina, both in the form of bridges, such as the one at Caḍota, as well as fortified military posts. The written material also appears to mention these military posts, which likely fits the term *piro/pirova*. Finally, while it is difficult to ascertain with absolute certainty who operated all of the five forts discussed above, especially L.E and L.F, their purpose and connection with movement across the kingdom is far more evident.

Securing the roads

Though not their only purpose, it is evident that the Krorainan forts played a role in securing the primary paths through the kingdom. This is shown by their positions occupying highly strategic localities in the landscapes. It is noteworthy, for example, that the Saca (Endere) southern fort, as well as both L.K and L.L had been situated on locations overlooking rivers, likely important lines of local communications, in addition to providing a steady water supply.¹²⁵⁵ Even more telling is, however, the position of the four Lop (Kroraina) forts, which all lay strung along what was once the north-western shore of the lake Lop Nur. (See map 20) As already appreciated by Stein, this must have represented the primary routes connecting the central Lop sites with both Dunhuang, past L.E and L.F, as well as with Miran and the Tarim delta, past L.K and L.L, sticking close to water and what was once riverine forest.¹²⁵⁶ Indeed, in the case of L.K, it lies in an almost straight line between the L.A. and Miran about one

¹²⁵⁵ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 284; Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 184, 192.

¹²⁵⁶ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, 189, 260.

third of the way, if proceeding from the central Lop (Kroraina) site, and must inevitably have been an important stopover on that route. This placement was clearly not accidental, as these forts by virtue of their positions would have both facilitated and controlled movement through the region. Given Bailey's reinterpretation of the word *piro/pirova* as fort, it likewise appears clear from the written material that at least some of these forts were important in providing both shelter and security on these routes.

Forts providing shelter are described both in document n.639 above, which chastised tasuca Kunala for preventing the Caḍotans from using the *piro/pirova*, as well as the fragmented "Royal Command"-type document n.333, where Khotanese refugees (*palayamne*) are said to have entered the *piro/pirova*. Both these cases suggest that one could seek shelter in the *piro/pirova*, or at least enter into it, presumably as a place of rest and safety. Such usage was, in fact, also suggested by Stein for the southern fort of the Endere (Saca) site independently of the documents, as he thought it too small to have housed a permanent garrison and rather to have represented a place of refuge when danger threatened.¹²⁵⁷ As shown by document n.120 above, at least the the *piro/pirova* near Caḍota had or controlled a water supply, and given the locations of the Endere (Saca) and L.K forts, they too likely possessed such a supply. This would have made them invaluable as resting places, since access to water was and still is the most important issue facing any traveller in the southern Tarim Basin region.

Turning to the issue of security, it can be seen from a number of documents that the efforts to secure the routes through the kingdom did not always meet with success. Documents n.423, n.548 and n.555 show this, as they all state that people wanted for questioning at the royal court were only to be sent "at a time when the roads are secure".¹²⁵⁸ Even worse, goods sent on the roads could sometimes be plundered en route, as mentioned in document n.165, where an official is instructed to make sure that such does not happen. Yet despite not always being successful, documents such as n.639 above, express quite clearly the Krorainan government's stated interest in both

¹²⁵⁷ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 283–84.

¹²⁵⁸ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 86, 108, 110.

securing and controlling travel through the kingdom. Document n.639, for example, while berating the local official for his conduct and for acting without orders, clearly states that if ordered to do so, the official in question was to take control over the *piro/pirova* and control traffic along the road. This system can be seen in action in document n.310,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to cozbo Soṃjaka

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs the cozbo Soṃjaka as follows: The treasurer Kuvīñeya reports that two men, fathers, belonging to him escaped and are there. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, forthwith these men are to be carefully searched for. The *pirova* (bridge/fort?) is to be put into the charge of Cimaka and Şekla, so that they shall not escape to another kingdom. In the year before last there was a wedge-tablet concerning these men (sent) in the hand of Suḡi, (but) up till to-day nothing has been heard. Again there was a letter of command in the hand of the secret agent Lýipta and again no decision was heard of. Again there was a letter of instruction with a detailed account concerning these men in the hand of Suḡi. Now the matter has been carefully examined here. (We find that) for three years these men have been working there and you do not send them here. If suitable people shall come here, these men are to be sent here in their hands, so that they shall not again disappear from the road.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

The women said that these men are [.....] and Patruḡa. They are to be carefully inquired after in whatever village and house they are. Also Cimaka and Şekla have spoken. They said that they are in Caḡota. One time a letter of command concerning these men was taken in the hand of Suḡiya. A second

time Lýipta took a letter of command. There was a letter of command in the hand of Kapgeya. A fourth time the *ṣoṭhaṃga* [.....]¹²⁵⁹

As can be seen, the document is of the “Royal Command” type and in it the king ordered the apprehension of a pair of runaway slaves. These slaves had apparently sought refuge in Caḍota, and in order to prevent them from fleeing again, the king ordered the *piro/pirova* to be occupied and the road put under surveillance.

This duty appears to have fallen to one of two groups or offices (*dramṅa*)¹²⁶⁰, the *pirovala* or the *śpaṣavaṃna*. The first of these, the *pirovala* or fort-keeper, appears in only three documents, two of which were private contexts, and their role is therefore difficult to describe in much detail.¹²⁶¹ Yet as shown by document n.188, they resided, at least some of the time, at the *piro/pirova* itself, likely as a sort of caretaker and watchman. This would be in keeping with the role of the office of the *-vala* that served as herders and minders of animals, presumably staying with them. The active closing and control of the road, as undertaken in document n.310 above, was however the domain of the *śpaṣavaṃna*, which Burrow gives as “guard” or “watchman”¹²⁶² and in his translation frequently as “frontier-guard”.¹²⁶³ The duty or role of *śpaṣavaṃna* was, as most *dramṅa* offices, appointed by the royal administrator and appears to have acted as the primary military force and guard force in the provinces.¹²⁶⁴ At least in the province of Caḍota, from which most of our evidence comes, the *śpaṣavaṃna* were also closely linked with guarding the kingdom’s borders and with controlling the movement of people across them. This is illustrated well by document n.310, as the two men sent to take control of the *piro/pirova* to prevent the slaves escape, actor n.476 named Cimaka and n.477 named Şekla, both appear with the title *śpaṣavaṃna* in

¹²⁵⁹ Burrow, 56–57.

¹²⁶⁰ For a brief introduction of the bureaucratic hierarchy and state service in Kroraina see section 4.3.4.

¹²⁶¹ See document n.154, 188 and 765.

¹²⁶² Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 132.

¹²⁶³ See for example document n.71 and 88. Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 15, 18.

¹²⁶⁴ For the matter of appointments, by *cozbo*s, see document n.518 and n.520. For use as military personnel, see document n. 84, 88, 119, 126 and 515.

document n.507.¹²⁶⁵ The *śpaśavaṃna* also aided with the pursuit of fugitives trying to flee the kingdom in document n.71 and appear to have escorted a group of Khotanese fugitives (*palayaṃnaga*) back from the border in document n.471. It is unclear if the *śpaśavaṃna* were paid a salary for their services, though this seems likely, given that most *dramga* offices were salaried,¹²⁶⁶ and as shown by document n.71, they at least had a right to parts of anything they confiscated. This right, and their power to control the roads, appear at times to have led the *śpaśavaṃna* to act as little better than robbers. This is described in document n.471, where the *śpaśavaṃna* had confiscated the property of the Khotanese that had come to the kingdom. Such actions were, however, not in line with the royal government's intentions, and in the document the king ordered the confiscated property returned and noted that property was not to be confiscated without a legal ruling.

Despite the predatory behaviour of some frontier guards and the occasional failure of the systems put in place, the intentions behind the *piro/pirova* system and the offices of *pirovala* and *śpaśavaṃna* cannot be mistaken. The fact that considerable efforts went into setting up and maintaining, as well as monitoring, a system of forts and guards set on major routes and along the borders shows that the Krorainan polity was actively engaged with security and controlling movement across its territory. The exact intentions behind these attempts cannot easily be discerned without written sources from the royal court itself, though apprehending individuals and keeping the roads safe for the movement of royal officials, envoys and taxes must have been major factors. Yet whether intentional or not, these measures would also have provided some basic infrastructure and security for other travellers as well, whether monks, merchants, or local petitioners heading for the royal court. The existence of forts at regular intervals along the routes must have been particularly important, and as suggested by documents such as n.639 above, these *piro/pirova* were important shelters, which made travel possible.

¹²⁶⁵ The names are spelled slightly differently, something which is not uncommon in the kharosthi documents. Based upon the criteria of co-appearance, which they also do in document n.396, they can however be confidently identified as being the same individuals.

¹²⁶⁶ See for example the *valāga* and *arivaga* below.

9.3 Facilitating movement and travel

It was not only the danger of violence, whether from robbers or wild animals, that the traveller faced when moving across the kingdom of Kroraina; as shown by various accounts of travel through the region, the greatest dangers were posed by the terrain of the Tarim Basin itself. Failing to acquire necessities such as food and water as well as the animals to carry both the traveller and their provisions could often have lethal consequences, as illustrated by the “Legal”-type document n.834. As will be recalled, it related a court proceeding at the royal court, in which Sagamovi and three others had been accused of murdering a group of people who fled together with them from Cađota across the Taklamakan to the kingdom of Kuci in the northern Tarim Basin. Sagamovi and his compatriots, however, refuted the accusation and explained what had happened,

Sagamovi, Klasemna, Kolýisa, Cataya says: In fact these people fled Cađota one day together (with us). These people had no horse on which to load water and provisions. They died because of craving (these things).¹²⁶⁷

Despite these dangers it appears, as discussed in section 7.4.2, that envoys and ambassadors from the kingdom of Kroraina travelled to Khotan on a fairly regular basis. It is therefore hardly surprising that the kingdom had a system in place to provide its own officials and envoys with all they needed for their journeys, including provisions and animals. This system was described repeatedly in various royal orders to the provincial administrators.¹²⁶⁸ One of the more detailed examples is the “Royal Command” -type document n.214, addressed to the cozbos Kolýisa and Somjaka,

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs the cozbos Kolýisa and Somjaka as follows: Now I have sent the ogu Alýaya on a mission to Khotan. For the sake of the affairs of your province I have sent in the hand of the ogu Alýaya a horse

¹²⁶⁷ Translated by author based on the transcription of Zhang, ‘A Wooden Tablet in Kharosthi Script’.

¹²⁶⁸ See document n.14, 22, 135, 214, 223, 251, 253 and 367.

as a present to the King of Khotan. Provisions for this horse are to be given from Saca and Caḍota: from Saca 10 *vacari* (a vessel of sort) of meal (*satu*), 10 *vacari* of *phalitaga*, and lucerne in two sacks, as far as Remena; from Caḍota 15 *vacari* of meal (*aṃna*), 15 *vacari* of *phalitaga*, and lucerne in three sacks as far as Khema.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Ogu Alýaya his majesty the great king
..... *maha* great king¹²⁶⁹

As can be seen from the above, the travelling envoy Alýaya was to be provided with fodder for the royal horse, including grain (*satu/aṃna*), *phalitaga*¹²⁷⁰ and lucerne, from the local officials in Saca and Caḍota. This was to be provided at regular intervals as far as Khema, the first oasis in the kingdom of Khotan, with Caḍota and Saca each being responsible for one stretch of the journey. A similar division of these duties is also described in document n.14 and n.367, where guards and mounts were to be provided, though n.14 also mentioned Calmadana. Notably, this system was not merely an informal system or one enforced through royal orders, but rather, it was a legally enshrined system, as shown by document n.14 and n.223. Both these “Royal Command” -type documents were sent post-facto and criticise the local officials for failing to meet their obligations, both noting that both cases should be settled according to the law.

Despite these instances of local officials failing to do their duties, this system made travel from the capital Kroraina to Khotan possible for royal envoys, providing them with animals and provisions. Yet as illustrated by Faxian’s account of the crossing of the Lop desert between Dunhuang and the kingdom of Kroraina, travellers across the wide wastelands of the Tarim were also in danger of losing their way, often with lethal consequences.

¹²⁶⁹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 40.

¹²⁷⁰ The meaning is unknown, though as noted by Burrow it is clearly a form of fodder. Burrow, 40.

The Krorainan arivaga

This brings us to one of the most interesting aspects of the Krorainan system for envoys, namely the men who accompanied the travellers and ambassadors on their journeys. Beyond the bare necessities of acquiring food and water as well as animals, one must wonder how these ancient travellers dealt with issues of security. Not only would the ancient traveller have been in need of a guide who knew the correct routes and the dangerous stretches to be avoided along them, but they would likewise have needed someone who knew how to negotiate with the local populations, whether villagers, frontier-guards, or brigands, someone familiar with their customs and who knew where to seek aid or shelter. This would have been an issue of crucial importance to any traveller through ancient Kroraina, whether travelling on royal business or as a private endeavour. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Krorainans had a solution to this problem: the arivaga system.

Twelve different documents, all from Cadota, mention the word arivaga, a role which Burrow based on the context gives as guide¹²⁷¹ and whose etymological roots likely lies in Sanskrit.¹²⁷² Two of these documents are dated, to 297 and 301 AD, but as nearly all of the remaining documents also mention cozbo Somjaka, it is likely that they too fall in or around this period. Though more than half the documents that mention the arivaga have them appear in other capacities, as witnesses on contracts or mentioned in letters,¹²⁷³ the remaining documents makes it clear that the arivaga were primarily concerned with the movement of envoys. These five cases are, by no means, the only documents discussing the movement of envoys as seen above and, as such, it is not entirely clear if an arivaga accompanied all envoys travelling to Khotan. However, as there are only six documents that discuss journeys prior to the fact, i.e. excluding the two documents that berate officials for errors in arranging journeys after the fact, it would seem that most official envoys travelled with an arivaga. From these documents, the duties and function of the arivaga system can be made quite clear and a particularly good example is found in document n.135, a “Royal Command”, quoted below,

¹²⁷¹ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 76–77.

¹²⁷² Baums and Glass, *A Dictionary of Gandhari*, “Arivaga”

¹²⁷³ See document n.244,507,569 and 593.

Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the *ṣoṭhaṃga* L̥yipeya.

Under-tablet. Obv. and Cov.-tablet. Rev.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs the *ṣoṭhaṃga* L̥yipeya as follows: Now the *cuyalayina* Phuṃaṣeva has had to go on a mission to Khotan. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, straightaway this Apita must go on the mission, and the *cuyalayina* Phuṃaṣeva must go with him to Khotan. As regards the two express (*aṃtagi*) camels of *cuyalayina* Phuṃaṣeva, they must be given (him), (likewise) the one express (*aṃtagi*) camel of Apita must be given (him). Also a suitable man is to be given them as guide (*arivaḡa*), who will go in front of them. This guide must go on his own beast. Just as formerly you have provided fodder and water for envoys, so now they are to be given to these envoys.

Under-tablet. Rev.

Cuyalayina Phuṃaṣeva¹²⁷⁴

Here the role of the arivaga is described in some detail: he is to bring his own steed and go in front of the envoys sent on a royal mission to Khotan. The meaning of the phrase “who will go in front”, originally “*yasya anupurvena gaṃdavo siyati*”, would seem to indicate that the arivaga were to act as pilots of sort, guiding and possibly escorting the envoys. Similar words are also used about the arivaga in the fragmented document n.388, which states, “.....]vya anupurvena Khonaṃmi arivaga gachidaga *hakṣati*”.¹²⁷⁵ Though bereft of context, this would appear to mean, “going in front, the arivaga will have gone to Khotan”, though oddly Burrows translates this as, “in regular succession arivagas will have gone to Khotan”.¹²⁷⁶ Either way, the interpretation of this phrase as guide or pilot, which Burrow himself based his translation of arivaga upon, furthermore appears to fit the one other document in which a similar phrase

¹²⁷⁴ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 24.

¹²⁷⁵ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 139.

¹²⁷⁶ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 79.

appears, namely n.307. In this letter, sent by a kala to the great cozbo Somjaka, the latter is urged to have tax collected and sent as quickly as possible. It is then said that the Yatma and Ageta officials, who were to oversee the effort, are to make sure no tax is missing and “have to go in front”.¹²⁷⁷ Again, the meaning appears to be that the officials in charge are to escort the tax the whole way.

The phrase “go in front” in document n.307, however, could also be understood to mean that the officials in question were to guard the tax. Indeed, it is not entirely clear if the arivaga is best understood merely as a guide or also as a guard or escort of sorts. Harry Falk, who largely agrees with Burrow’s translation of arivaga as meaning “guide”, suggests that the term likely also had this broader meaning. He gives the Sanskrit roots of *arivaga* as the term *arivarga*, and in his discussion on this term notes that it primarily appears in alchemical text as a substance that mediates or fuses other elements, which would otherwise not combine. As such, he suggests that the word arivaga should not only be understood as “guide” but furthermore carried the meaning of “mediator” and “escort”.¹²⁷⁸ Two documents, n.14 and n.367, would however seem to indicate that the role of guard or escort was filled by another group, called the *valaḡa*. This is indicated most clearly by document n.14 as follows,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbo Bhimaya and ŝoṭhaṃga Lýipe

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs cozbo Bhimaya and ŝoṭhaṃga Lýipeya as follows: Ŝameka informs us that he went as an envoy to Khotan. From Calmadana they gave him a guard (*valaḡa*) and he went as far as Saca. From Saca they gave him a guard and he went as far as Nina. From Nina to Khotan a guard should have been provided from Caḡota. As far as Khotan [.....]. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you, the hire of a guard from Nina to Khotan is

¹²⁷⁷ The original reads, “yeŝa anupurvvena gaṃdavya ŝiyati”.

¹²⁷⁸ Falk, ‘The First-Century Copper-Plates of Helaguṭa from Gandhara Hailing Maitreya’, 5–6.

to be handed over according as it was formerly paid, along with an extra sum. A decision is to be made according to the law.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Of Sameka¹²⁷⁹

Document n.367 also mentions a *valaḡa* being sent along with an envoy in a similar manner, apparently taking on a role much like the *arivaga*. One could, of course, understand this as two words referring to the same role and the same individuals, but as both terms appears together in document n.253, this would not seem to be the case. Rather, the problem appears to be Burrow’s translation of *valaḡa* as “guard” in these two documents. The term *valaḡa* does admittedly seem to make sense as guard in these two documents, but in all other cases of the word Burrow chose to translate it as “keeper” in the sense of “a keeper of animals”. This is not without good cause, as the *valaḡas* in four out of eight cases are mentioned together with camels.¹²⁸⁰ Even in document n.367, where Burrow gives the *valaḡa* as guard, the *valaḡa* is to be provided together in the first instance with two camels and, in the second instance, a horse. The reason for Burrow’s choice of “guard” seems to be the root of the word *valaḡa*, which he traces to the Sanskrit word *pālaka*, meaning “protector”. He further connects this to the various *-vala* titles derived from *pālaka*, such as *uṭavaḡa* (keeper of camels), *paśuvaḡa* (keeper of the sheep) and *aśpavaḡa* (keeper of the horses). Yet as pointed out to me by Nicholas Sims-Williams, the change from p to v is not expected at the start of a word, a fact that also caused Burrow some hesitation.¹²⁸¹ Instead, Sims-Williams notes that the word actually has a parallel in Bactrian and is found as *oalaḡo* in the Bactrian letter cl from Northern Afghanistan, there too as a word meaning someone involved with moving animals, in this case horses.¹²⁸² If we thus decouple the word *valaḡa* from *pālaka*, it can be confidently interpreted as as keeper or handler of

¹²⁷⁹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 3–4.

¹²⁸⁰ See documents n.40, 82, 253 and 367.

¹²⁸¹ Nicholas Sims-Williams, personal communication 24.01.2020. Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 119.

¹²⁸² Sims-Williams, *Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan, II: Letters and Buddhist Texts.*, 88–89.

animals, something that in most cases seems to make better sense. It would also explain the short and seemingly confused document n.253,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. (Fragmented) Obv.

[...] Cozbo Somjaka [...]

Wedge Cov.-tablet. (Fragmented) Rev.

From those one *arivaġa* (guide) is to be given to the cozbo Bhaġaṣena [.....]
and a *valaġa* (keeper) of the camel is to be provided as far as Khotan.¹²⁸³

As both *arivaga* and *valaġa* appear together in this document, it would appear that their roles were quite distinct, if complimentary, with the *valaġa* being primarily concerned with animals, in this case camels. Given this, there appears to be no contradiction in one and the same embassy being accompanied by both an *arivaga* and a *valaġa*. In summary, the *arivagas* of Kroraina were guides or pilots who accompanied travelling embassies between oases, and if one accepts Falk's etymology there might further be grounds to suggest that the *arivagas* may have acted as an escort and mediator.

In addition to several documents detailing the activities of the *arivagas*, the Kharosthi sources furthermore contain evidence for the nature of the role. Firstly, two "Legal"-type documents, n.507 and n.593, mention *arivagas* in lists of witnesses said to be "noble" people. What is meant by this word, originally "azade" and translated as either "noble" or "free"¹²⁸⁴, is not clear. It does, however, show that the *arivagas* belonged to the middle or upper strata of Caḍotan society. Secondly, being an *arivaga* was a hereditary duty or obligation owed by individuals to the Krorainan state and supervised by the provincial governor. That being an *arivaga* was a hereditary duty, more so than a profession, is made clear by documents n.10 and n.438. In both documents, which are of the "Royal Command" type, different individuals have complained to the royal court that they have been made an *arivaga* despite their fathers not having been *arivagas*. Furthermore, document n.438 also clearly places the

¹²⁸³ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 47.

¹²⁸⁴ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 73.

appointment and supervision of the arivagas with the local governor, in this case the cozbos Kranaya and Lýipeya,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

To be given to the cozbos Kranaya and Lýipeya.

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the king writes, he instructs the cozbos Kranaya and Lýipeya as follows: Bhimaṣena informs us that he is not a hereditary *arivaḡa*. He does not know properly the Khotanese *mata*. You make him an *arivaḡa*. He is not to be made an *arivaḡa*.

Wedge Under-tablet. Rev.

Bhimaṣena¹²⁸⁵

Interestingly this document, aside from noting the hereditary nature of the duty, also mentions what appears to have been the primary requirements for serving as an arivaga, namely the possession of certain knowledge about the Khotanese *mata*. This might indeed be what is meant by the phrase “suitable man” (*maṃnuśa aḡhovaga*¹²⁸⁶) used about the arivaga in document n.135 above. For the word *mata*, neither Burrow nor Baums and Glass are able to provide a translation,¹²⁸⁷ but the context would appear to make the meaning quite clear. Given the arivaga’s role as a guide and escort, the word should be taken to mean either route to or customs of Khotan and the Khotanese. In fact, the Khotanese *mata* could well refer to both, as this type of knowledge about the way to Khotan and conditions there would have been indispensable for the arivaga. Yet, whatever the meaning of the term *mata*, document n.438 makes it quite clear that

¹²⁸⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 90. Bhimaṣena appears to have been in regular conflict with the governors over imposed duties, as he makes a similar complain about other roles in document n.439

¹²⁸⁶ Rapson et al., *Kharosthi Inscriptions*, 54.

¹²⁸⁷ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 77.

the duty or obligation carried out as arivaga was hereditary and involved a transfer of knowledge from father to son.¹²⁸⁸

The requisite for knowledge of the Khotanese *mata* also points to an interesting question, namely upon which routes an arivaga could be called on. Certainly, in the five cases in which arivagas are described as travelling, they are in all cases accompanying envoys headed for Khotan. The requirement for knowledge of the Khotanese *mata* would, of course, also seem to suggest that the arivagas were primarily concerned with the route to Khotan. Only in one document is an arivaga to be sent elsewhere, namely to Remena in document n.251,

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

His majesty the great king writes [.....

..] The *ambukaya* Apñiya went on an embassy to Khotan. When this sealed wedge-tablet reaches you [.....] is to be given. (If) again now it should be necessary to go, an *arivaġa* should quickly be sent to Remena.

Wedge Cov.-tablet. Obv.

Of *ambukaya* Apgeya.¹²⁸⁹

Remena, as discussed in section 4.2.3, likely lay eastwards of Caḍota between it and Saca. Yet as would seem clear from the context of the admittedly fragmented document, which misses both its under tablet and has one tip broken off, the arivagas in question were to be sent in the context of an embassy going to Khotan. This lack of evidence for arivagas plying other routes either within or around the kingdom of Kroraina should, however, not be taken as conclusive per se. No arivaga has appeared in material from other Krorainan sites than Caḍota, and in the Caḍotan case, it would not be surprising that the major concern would be journeys to the neighbouring kingdom in the west. As such, very little can be definitely said of the possibilities for

¹²⁸⁸ The exact words used, in both document n.10 and n.438, are “*pitara pita uvadae na arivaġa asti*” meaning literally “starting with father’s fathers (they) have not been *arivaga*”.

¹²⁸⁹ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 46.

arivagas or arivaga-like systems covering, for example, the stretch from Lop to Dunhuang.

Most surprising, however, is the appearance of the title arivaga in a context very far removed from Kroraina, namely as the title of a donor on a copper plate dedication discovered in a stupa in the Gandharan region. The copper plates contain a lengthy text describing the donation and its purpose and were found in Rani Dad in Orakzai Agency near modern Peshawar. The text dated to either 64 or 74 CE and has been published and translated by Harry Falk.¹²⁹⁰ In the text, the donor describes himself as “*helaute demetriaputre arivagi*”, that is in Falk’s translation “Helagupta, son of Demetrios, the caravan guide (*arivagi*)”.¹²⁹¹ The text furthermore gives a line dedicating the donation to the father with the words “*pidu demetriasa arivagisa adhvatidakalagadasa p(u)yae*”, translating as “For the veneration of (my) father Demetrios, the caravan guide (*arivagisa*), whose time has expired”.¹²⁹² As Falk convincingly shows, this Gandhari title is clearly the same word as the one used in Krorainan Prakrit. However, it is perilous to equate the content of this arivaga title with the same title from the Krorainan documents, especially as there is no indication of the activities of these arivagas anywhere in the remaining text. As such, Falk’s translations of arivaga as “caravan guides” are in these cases purely based on the meaning of the word in the Krorainan context. Yet as Falk also points out, the title in this case too appears to have been hereditary, being carried by both father and son. Furthermore, given that arivagi Helagupta donated gold for the foundation of a stupa, these Gandhari arivaga from Rani Dad appear to have been men of some standing in the local hierarchy, much like the Krorainan arivagas. If the Gandhari arivagi served the same function as their Krorainan counterparts, one would hope that the title might have appeared on one of the many rock inscriptions from the passes north of Gandhara, in the Hunza and Gilgit valleys. Unfortunately, as far as I have been able to ascertain, no inscription with this title is known to date.

This enticing connection aside, the importance of an institution like the arivaga system for the workings of travel and trade along the “Southern Route” of the Tarim

¹²⁹⁰ Falk, ‘The First-Century Copper-Plates of Helagupta from Gandhara Hailing Maitreya’.

¹²⁹¹ Falk, 5.

¹²⁹² Falk, 8.

Basin cannot be overlooked. Serving in a comparable capacity to naval pilots, the arivaga would accompany official envoys on the route westwards from Caḍota, acting as both a guide and possibly also as an escort and mediator. Given the difficulties of the terrain in the southern Tarim Basin, to say nothing of the ever-present difficulties of language, customs and laws when travelling, institutions of this type must have been crucial for making the journeys of these envoys possible. The institution was one with long roots, as made evident by its hereditary nature and the notion that the knowledge and obligation to fill the roll would be passed down from one's father's fathers.

The Tarim Polities as providers of provisions and guides

While the envoys of the kingdom of Kroraina had access to systems providing them with provisions, animals and guides, it is difficult to say with certainty to what extent these institutions were also available to outsiders or private citizens. Although ordinary Krorainans, and to a certain extent also outsiders, are described frequently as moving or travelling through and sometimes beyond the kingdom, nothing is said of how these journeys were conducted, being either of little interest or implicit knowledge to the parties who produced the sources. As such, what little can be said about this question must be gleaned from a very limited material.

It appears likely that at least foreign envoys, both Chinese and envoys from other kingdoms, made some use of the systems for facilitating travel described above. This is indicated by some of the accounts of the *Hanshu*, for example, in the memoranda of Du Qin quoted above where he noted that Chinese envoys relied upon the local polities for both animals and provisions. An even more important indication is given in the section describing the kingdom of Shanshan (Kroraina), where in a discussion of the relations between Shanshan (then called Loulan) and the Han in the early first century BCE, it is noted that,

However, Lou-lan was the furthest east [of the states of the Western Regions]. It lay close to Han and confronted the White Dragon Mounds. The locality was short of water and pasture, and was regularly responsible for sending out

guides, conveying water, bearing provisions and escorting or meeting Han envoys.¹²⁹³

The *Hanshu*, in other words, describes the Krorainan government as responsible for providing the very same services to Chinese envoys as it provided its own envoys, and it would seem likely that this was done as part of the same system. The situation described in the *Hanshu* does, however, date to the beginning of the first century BCE, and as such, it does not provide direct evidence for the second to fourth centuries CE, the period here under consideration. Yet given that systems for providing such services existed in Kroraina also in our period, it would seem likely that Chinese and other envoys moving through the region could still rely upon the aid of the Krorainan government. Certainly such aid was provided to the armies of the short-lived Former Qin dynasty during their expedition to the Western Regions in the late fourth century, as described in the *Jinshu*'s chapter 114 on the reign of Fu Jian.¹²⁹⁴ Amongst the Kharosthi documents, a single document would seem to suggest that such services were provided, namely the "List"-type document n.686 quoted on page 364-365. This document listed a number of cows that had been given over to various groups and individuals, notably five different groups of Chinese as well as one cow provided for "the messengers from Khotan".¹²⁹⁵ The document itself does not specify whom or for what reason these animals were given out, but document n.686 was found adjacent to the large wooden building L.A.4 placed close to the western gate of L.A and contained both a reception area and several large halls.¹²⁹⁶ (See figure 2) Its location, size, and layout certainly give the impression of an official building, an impression reinforced by the Kharosthi documents excavated from within, being mostly legal matters or lists. As such, it seems likely that document n.686 too was the product of the Krorainan administration, the cows described being either animals brought in through the gate or kept in the nearby pens, and would thus show that provisions were in fact provided from the Krorainan government to visiting envoys.

¹²⁹³ Ban Gu, HS, 96 (89)

¹²⁹⁴ Fang Xuanling et al, JS, 114 (521-523)

¹²⁹⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 139-40.

¹²⁹⁶ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 378-79.

More difficult still is the question of private individuals being able to draw upon systems for aiding envoys in Kroraina, whether locals or travellers from abroad. No document makes any mention of such aid being extended, and it would seem unlikely that the Krorainan government would expand its resources to aid private individuals. Yet while systems for provisioning and guiding travellers may have been intended to serve only royal needs, this does not mean that the same provisions and services could not be bought. In fact, two of the documents discussing envoys, n.14 and n.223, suggest that if the official system failed, the envoys would acquire what was needed at their own expense, and presumably so too could travellers. Indeed, both camels and horses were rather frequently hired out, often for travel or transportation, as described in a number of documents.¹²⁹⁷ This was also the case in document n.223, where the envoy Saṃghila, on a mission to Khotan, had not received a horse from the local authorities and had been forced to hire a horse locally at his own expense in order to proceed. It is likely also in this light that one ought to understand the “Contract”-type document n.661, where the Sogdian Vagiti Vadhaga had bought a camel in Khotan.¹²⁹⁸ Though his purpose is not stated in the document itself, it seems highly likely that he needed the camel to facilitate either travel or transportation, given that the document itself had somehow made it to the Endere (Saca) site, where it was found.

As for personnel, document n.14 quoted above makes it clear that these too could be hired, at least in the case of the *valaḡas* (handler/keeper of animals). The document describes how the hire for *valaḡas* was to be provided for each step of the journey an envoy made from the capital Kroraina to the border to Khotan. As the local authorities at Caḡota failed to hire the *valaḡa*, however, the envoy Ṣameka had apparently paid out of his pocket, a sum which the king instructed to be returned to him. Presumably other travellers too, whether locals or foreigners like the Sogdian Vagiti Vadhaga, would have been able to hire these men for the right price. Likewise, it seems probable that the *arivagas* would have hired their services out to other travellers as well, given the exclusive skills and knowledge they appeared to possess, though unfortunately nothing is said of this in the surviving sources.

¹²⁹⁷ See document n.83, 181, 359, 401 and 505.

¹²⁹⁸ See pages 370-371.

Despite these difficulties in determining exactly who could and could not utilise the institutional infrastructure provided by the kingdom of Kroraina, the mere fact that these institutions existed is of great importance. Whether or not the Krorainan government intended for others to use them, they would have provided groundwork for infrastructure, which others could then utilise. As such, the Kharosthi sources provide tangible proof of how the so-called “Silk Road” exchange, however it is envisioned, might have physically been carried out across the vast and harsh landscapes of Inner Asia. It is furthermore noteworthy that all these forms of infrastructure, whether forts or the various guards and guides, represented an expenditure for the Krorainan royal government. This is especially true for the various offices, some of who appear to have had accompanying salaries attached. Thus local tax money was channelled into the maintenance of the system of communication throughout the region, and though it might not have been intentional on the part of the Krorainan royal government, this would certainly have been crucial in allowing others, such as the monk Faxian or the Sogdian Vagiti Vadhaga, to cross the region.

9.4 Facilitating trade: Providing a legal framework

Foreign actors and the local legal institutions

In addition to providing infrastructure along much of the southern route through the Tarim Basin region in the period under consideration, the kingdom of Kroraina provided other types of institutions of crucial importance to fully-fledged trade, namely a legal framework. Even the simplest forms of exchange require a minimum of established practices and institutions to function. Furthermore, when considering the far more complex commercial dealings evident for example in the Sogdian Ancient Letters, involving both money and valuable goods brought in over vast distances to foreign people and cultures, this need for a common framework and legal guarantees would only intensify. Luckily, as discussed at length in chapter five, the Krorainan state already had such a framework in place. The Krorainan economic landscape was, as demonstrated, both highly institutionalised, with set systems of contracts, debts, price and so on, as well as structured by legal institutions in the form of the royal law and the royal courts. As will be recalled, written contracts in particular appear to have

played an important role in Krorainan exchange, acting both as receipts and as legal guarantees in case one of the parties attempted to dispute or renege on the agreement.

These economic and legal institutions would then seem to provide a ready basis, upon which trade in the Southern Tarim region could be based and within which also merchants from beyond the kingdom could operate. Indeed, this appears to have been the case, as shown by document n.324, n.661, and possibly also the difficult document n.35, in which merchants were actually mentioned. The case of n.35, in which a debt to silk was to be investigated when a group of merchants arrived from China remains, as discussed in section 6.7.1, unclear and multiple interpretations are possible. For example, it is not possible to determine if the merchants were in fact local Krorainans, Chinese, or something else, and their relationship with the debt in question is also difficult to determine. Yet if they were foreigners of some description, document n.35 would seem to indicate that foreign merchants too both used and abided by the Krorainan institution of loans and debts and that the disputes they were involved in could be solved through the ordinary Krorainan legal procedures. This was, at any rate, the case with property rights and contracts, as shown by the more complete “Contract”-type document n.324,¹²⁹⁹

Rectangular Under-tablet. Obv.

In the 4th year of his majesty the great King Maïri the son of heaven, on the 13th day of the 3rd month, at this date (?) the Supis came to Calmadana; they plundered the kingdom and carried off the inhabitants. The Supis seized a man called Saṃrpina, a slave of the vasu Yonu and sent him as a present to Cinaşgaşi (the Chinaman Şgaşi). Cinaşgaşi (provided) from here, as a recompense for the man, two golden staters and two drachmas. (Consequently) that man became the rightful property (?) of Şgaşi. His own master, the vasu Yonu, did not wish to remove the man himself, and permission was given to Şgaşi to sell him to others. Considering this Cinaşgaşi sold this man to Katge.

¹²⁹⁹ See pages 394-395 for further discussion of this document.

As the price of the man [.....] and one bow is right. Cinaşgaşi has sold well and Katge has bought well. From now on [.....]¹³⁰⁰

The document is incomplete, missing its cover-tablet and thus also the full details. Given the limited text, one could at first glance be tempted to interpret the document as the vasu Yonu bringing the Chinese man Şgaşi to court over the stolen slave. This would be incorrect, however, because the document is quite clearly a “Contract”-type document, seen in the use of the formula “Cinaşgaşi has sold well and Katge has bought well.”, typical of contracts, and the lack of an opening list of magistrates that in almost all cases headed complete “Legal”-documents.¹³⁰¹ Instead, the contract came about because the Chinese man Şgaşi wished to sell the slave that the contract concerned and had found a buyer in Katge. The former history of Şgaşi’s acquisition of the slave was then recounted in order to verify that Şgaşi had settled everything with the vasu Yonu and to guard against any further claims by him. Sgasi was, in other words, the seller in the “Contract”-type document, indicating quite clearly that foreigners, such as the Chinese, could and did operate within the same legal framework provided by the Krorainan royal court as the locals. The same also appears to have been the case in the “Contract”-type document n.661 of the Sogdian Vagiti Vadhaga that, as discussed on pages 370-371, was almost certainly a Khotanese contract. Here the foreigner Vagiti Vadhaga was the buyer, while a “man of the city”, that is likely a Khotanese named Khvarnarse, was the seller, and in this instance as well, the contract followed the local legal precedent.

The Tarim legal tradition

This last point is noteworthy, as it highlights another interesting side of the Krorainan legal institutions, namely their similarity to legal traditions across the Tarim region and even beyond. This phenomenon, first discussed by Douglas Hitch¹³⁰² and noted also by Ching and Ogihara,¹³⁰³ is best observed in the case of contracts and the roughly

¹³⁰⁰ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 60–61.

¹³⁰¹ For other examples of the phrase “bought well, sold well” see document n.419, 587, 678. For the magistrate lists see section 4.3.4 and also table 5.15.

¹³⁰² Hitch, ‘The Special Status of Turfan’.

¹³⁰³ Ching and Ogihara, ‘A Tocharian B Sale Contract on a Wooden Tablet’.

contemporaneous n.661 from Khotan provides an excellent example of this. As will be recalled from chapter five, the “standard” Krorainan contract was constructed with a number of formulaic sentences and statements in a more or less set order. These can be summarised in the following points, though naturally most actual contracts deviated somewhat from this “standard”,

1. Summary of content and seals (on the obverse of the covering tablet);
2. A dating formula (using the regnal year of the ruling king);
3. Body of the agreement;
4. Statement of equality;
5. Statement of ownership (often with a list of things that one could now do);
6. Statement of authority (Stating that the agreement could not be disputed);
7. List of witnesses;
8. Penalty clause (Sometimes combined with the statement of authority);
9. Identity of the scribe;
10. Statement of validity (giving how long the agreement would be valid, often indefinitely), and
11. A note on who cut the string.

Considering Şgaşi’s contract n.324 above, while keeping in mind that the cover-tablet and therefore parts of the text is missing, it clearly fits into this pattern. It started with a date (2), followed by a length body explaining the context of the exchange (3). It then gave a common variety on the statement of equality (4), stating that the parties had sold and bought well, before starting what appears to be a statement of ownership (5) that would have run something like “From now on Katge shall have ownership over that man, to bind him, to beat him, etc.”.¹³⁰⁴ The missing reverse of the cover-tablet would most likely have continued with a statement of authority, a list of witnesses, the identity of the scribe, and possibly some of the other common elements.

¹³⁰⁴ See document n.590, n.591 and n.592 for some examples of common statements of ownership regarding slaves.

The Khotanese contract n.661 also shows a remarkable adherence both in structure and in content to this pattern,

Oblong tablet. Obv.

On the 18th day of the 10th month of the 3rd year, at this time in the reign of the king of Khotan, the king of kings, Hinaza Deva Vijitasimha, at that time there is a man of the city called Khvarnarse. He speaks thus: There is a camel belonging to me. That camel carries a distinguishing mark, a mark branded on it, like this-- VA SO. Now I am selling this camel for a price of 8,000 *maṣa* to the *suliga* Vagiti Vadhaga. On behalf of that camel Vagiti Vadhaga paid the whole price in *maṣa* and Khvarnarse received it. The matter has been settled. From now on this camel has become the property of Vagiti Vadhaga, to do as he likes with it, to do everything he likes. Whoever at a future time complains, informs, or raises a dispute about this camel, for that he shall so pay the penalty as the law of the kingdom demands. By me Bahudhiva this document (?) was written at the request of Khvarnarse.

SPA SA NA

(RBS notes that these characters are written larger and with long stems, likely the initials of the witnesses below.)

(A line of Brahmi)

Nani Vadhaga, witness. Śaśivaka, witness. Spaniyaka, witness.

Oblong tablet. Rev.

(Various isolated aksaras, some of them apparently Brahmi)¹³⁰⁵

One immediately notices some major differences. Firstly, the document was on an oblong tablet rather than a rectangular one as was common in Kroraina. It also dated in

¹³⁰⁵ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 137.

the reign of the king of Khotan and appears to have carried the initials of the witnesses at the bottom of the document, all elements unknown in the Krorainan contracts. These differences aside, though, it is remarkably similar, starting with a dating clause (2), followed by the body (3), a short statement of ownership (5), a statement of authority (6) combined with a penalty clause (8), an identification of the scribe (9), and finally a witness list (7). In other words, it contains more than half the “standard” elements of a Krorainan contract, more than some actual contracts from Kroraina. The language is also in many cases strikingly similar, if one takes into account the dialectal differences, using for example the phrase “Whoever at a future time complains, informs, or raises a dispute about this camel...” (*yo pacema kali tasya utasya kidā cudyadi vidiyadi vivadu uthaviyadi*), present in the Krorainan contracts n.580 and n.581 as “Whoever at a future time informs, disputes or disagrees about this...” (*taha ko pačima kalaṇmi veteyati coteyati sajeiyati*). Several aspects of the contract furthermore point to a shared institutional basis for contracts, such as full property rights expressed in the “statement of ownership” and an underlying “law of the kingdom” seen in n.661, as regulating the penalty clause.

As shown by Hitch, these similarities reflected a similarity in both contractual structure and underlying legal practices that not only stretched across large parts of the Tarim Basin but also appear to have remained fairly stable over time. This legal tradition does however appear not to have been exclusive to the Tarim Basin polities but also finds strong parallels in the Bactrian material.¹³⁰⁶ Consider for example the statement of authority (6), as it appears in its fullest form in the “Legal”-type document n.437, a dispute over a slave, in this case also combined with a penalty clause (8),

Whoever at a future time, whether he be brother of caṃkura Kapgeya, or brother's son, or grandson, or relative, or any other *kilmeci*, shall again bring the question up before the vasus and agetas concerning that girl, and shall desire to make it otherwise, his representations at the king's court shall be without

¹³⁰⁶ Hitch, ‘The Special Status of Turfan’.

authority, and he shall pay the penalty which ensues (namely, a fine of) one four-year-old gelding and fifty blows.¹³⁰⁷

compared with the Bactrian legal document **O**, concerning a case of violence, from Guzgan in Northern Afghanistan dating to the seventh and eighth centuries,

If I should dispute - I, Yobig myself, or my brothers, or my sons, or my own (household and) family, or my (fellow-)citizens, or the men of the district - then my claim (and) argument shall not be valid in court, and also I pay a fine - I, Yobig myself, and my brothers (and) sons - to the treasury of the lords of Gozgan of fifty dinars of struck gold, and we shall pay fifty dinars to you, Bramarz.¹³⁰⁸

Not only does the Bactrian document similarly state that any disputes will be invalid at court and stipulate a fine to be paid to the lord of Gozgan, but it even gives a list of people who cannot dispute the matter. This included brothers, sons, family and men of the same district, just like the Krorainan document listed brother's sons, grandsons, other relatives and *kilmeci*, that is, fellow clansmen.

This naturally begs the question of how this legal tradition came to be and why it showed such remarkable similarities over such large areas. Hitch proposes it to be the legacy of a period of occupation of the Tarim Basin by the Kushan dynasty who also ruled Bactria, linking it to what he calls a period of "Kushan Domination".¹³⁰⁹ This theory is certainly a possibility, though as noted earlier in section 4.1.4, the evidence for this is weak, and a few short decades of occupation would hardly seem enough time to cement such long-lived legal and bureaucratic traditions as he credits it with. Rather, it seems more likely that the various codes drew from both older traditions and social structures in the Tarim Basin and Pamir region, many of which might have been shared, as well as possible Kushan inspirations, with or without a period of occupation. This would certainly have been in keeping with the case of the

¹³⁰⁷ Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 89–90.

¹³⁰⁸ Sims-Williams, 'Bactrian Legal Documents from 7th- and 8th- Century Guzgan', 15.

¹³⁰⁹ Hitch, 'The Special Status of Turfan', 13–15.

Kharosthi script and the Prakrit language, which each Tarim polity adapted to and filled with local names and terms.

Whatever its origin, it is at any rate highly unlikely that the harmonisation of these legal codes was a conscious process on the part of the governments of the Tarim polities. It is also unlikely that these legal traditions were specifically meant to facilitate trade. Yet however it came about, this shared tradition spanning across much of Inner Asia must have been a great boon for anyone attempting to conduct exchange or simply travel through the region. To what extent the contracts or ruling from one kingdom carried weight in another is of course very difficult to say for certain, though given that the contract n.661 had been brought to Endere (Saca), whoever carried it likely thought it to be of some worth. Yet even if the contracts could not cross borders, this shared legal tradition would have facilitated a shared understanding and likely also trust of the legal framework in use in the region, which would have had obvious benefits for anyone wishing to travel or trade in the Tarim Basin.

9.5 The Tarim Polities as actors in regional trade networks

To summarise the above, it would seem that Du Qin's reference to the importance of the local polities for facilitating movement and interaction across Inner Asia was not merely empty words. Rather, as has been shown, polities like the kingdom of Kroraina would have been important facilitators of such movement, providing not only physical infrastructure but likely also guides, guards and, crucially a legal framework within which to conduct exchange. Already here then we have good reason to question the common trope of the "middlemen", who only siphoned off resources from a system created and driven by other actors, as clearly the polities of the Tarim Basin were crucial in creating the foundations for the exchange system in the first place. Yet though the polities of the Tarim Basin played a key role in providing the framework for a "Silk Road" exchange system, there is little in the above to prove an active interest in the system itself. However, one piece of evidence from the southern Tarim Basin does point in this direction, namely the Sino-Kharosthi coins found in Khotan.

The Sino-Kharosthi coins of Khotan

The Sino-Kharosthi coins of Khotan, thus called because of their dual inscription of Kharosthi on the obverse and Chinese on the reverse, have been much discussed since the first discovery of two specimens along the Keriya river by the diplomatic mission of Sir Douglas Forsyth in 1869.¹³¹⁰ A number of theories on their provenance and dating have been proposed, ranging from Greco-Bactrian kings of the first century BC to the sixth century CE, many of which are conveniently summarised by Enoki.¹³¹¹ A general consensus has, however, been reached that the coins were issued by kings of Khotan, and the recent scholarly works have tended to favour a dating to sometime in the first or second century.¹³¹² In doing so, they generally follow the dates suggested by Joe Cribb in his two articles from 1984 and 1985. Cribb organises the known coins into thirteen groups,¹³¹³ which he in turn suggests belonged to three sequences that can be dated from between the early first century CE to 132 CE.¹³¹⁴ He bases this primarily upon internal chronology, three coins being overstrikes of Hermaeus imitations associated with the first Kushan king Kujula Kadphises, as well as the identification of some of the issuing kings with Khotanese kings known by name from the *Hou Hanshu*.¹³¹⁵ Though Lin Meicun has insisted on a later date and some slight corrections have been suggested by both Wang and Hitch,¹³¹⁶ Cribb's view remains the most commonly accepted and will also be adopted here.

The issue of dating aside, what make the Sino-Kharosthi coins of interest to this study are the intentions behind their bilingual nature. (See figure 6) Most of the coins known, with some exceptions, fell into two denominations, one "tetradrachm" and one "drachm". The coins were clearly in a western tradition and drew predominantly from

¹³¹⁰ Enoki, 'On the So-Called Sino-Kharosthi Coins', 384.

¹³¹¹ Enoki, 409.

¹³¹² Ma and Sun, 'The Western Regions under the Hsiung-Nu and the Han', 227; Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 37–38; Hitch, 'The Special Status of Turfan', 13–14.

¹³¹³ Cribb, 'Sino-Kharosthi Coins of Khotan. Their Attribution and Relevance to Kushan Chronology, Part 1', 130–35.

¹³¹⁴ Cribb, 'Sino-Kharosthi Coins of Khotan. Their Attribution and Relevance to Kushan Chronology, Part 2', 136–38.

¹³¹⁵ Cribb, 'Sino-Kharosthi Coins of Khotan. Their Attribution and Relevance to Kushan Chronology, Part 1', 147; Cribb, 'Sino-Kharosthi Coins of Khotan. Their Attribution and Relevance to Kushan Chronology, Part 2', 136–38.

¹³¹⁶ Lin, '新疆和田出土汉文于阗文双语文书 (On the Sino-Khotanese Bilingual Documents Unearthed from Hotan Xinjiang)'; Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 37; Hitch, 'The Special Status of Turfan', 13–14.

Bactrian and Indian coinages, being struck in bronze and carrying an image of a horse or a camel on the obverse, as opposed to Chinese coins that were generally cast, had a square hole in the centre, and carried no images. Likewise the Kharosthi inscription was in a Bactrian and Indian tradition, identifying the issuing king and giving his titles, often naming him as “king of kings”.¹³¹⁷ Yet unlike any Bactrian or Indian coins, the Sino-Kharosthi coins carried Chinese inscriptions on the obverse, most issues reading either as “銅錢重廿四銖” or “六銖錢”, meaning “copper coin, weight 24 grain” and “6-grain coin”, respectively.¹³¹⁸ As recognised by Wang, this inscription clearly related the Sino-Kharosthi coin to the standard Chinese issue at the time, the bronze wuzhu or “5-grain” coin that appears to have circulated widely in the Tarim Basin both during and after the Han period, as discussed briefly in section 5.4.5.

This reverse inscription is of great importance, for while the Kharosthi on the obverse carried a “political” message and could well have been used to assert Khotanese independence as suggested by Cribb,¹³¹⁹ the text on the reverse was purely practical. Its only purpose was to explain to an audience used to Chinese coins and versed in Chinese that it was, in fact, a coin and what its weight was, according to Chinese measures. The Sino-Kharosthi coins, in other words, represent a conscious attempt at bridging the gap between the Indo-Bactrian and Chinese coin traditions by making an issue that could bridge the two systems, and being a coin issued by the kings of Khotan, we can be sure that this was no accident or mere private initiative. Rather, the primary purpose of the Chinese inscriptions must have been to ease use and acceptance of these coins amongst people used to the Chinese coins, and as such, to facilitate trade between the Kushan and Chinese spheres.

9.6 More than mere “middlemen”

It seems then, at last, that we can approach an answer to the problem posed by Faxian’s journeys, a journey that took him across wastelands and mountains “filled with evil demons and hot winds”. Journeys such as his and the many shorter journeys

¹³¹⁷ Cribb, ‘Sino-Kharosthi Coins of Khotan. Their Attribution and Relevance to Kushan Chronology, Part 1’.

¹³¹⁸ Wang, *Money on the Silk Road*, 37.

¹³¹⁹ Cribb, ‘Sino-Kharosthi Coins of Khotan. Their Attribution and Relevance to Kushan Chronology, Part 2’.

carried out by Sogdians, Chinese, and Krorainans, were made possible because the areas they traversed were, in fact, not the uninhabited wastes that one can sometimes get the impression of. Rather, as they moved through the Southern Tarim Basin, these travellers traversed a region dominated by two large kingdoms with a well-organised system of infrastructure and institutions that could be drawn upon.

Infrastructure included measures to provide secure roads, such as forts and their personnel, and even more crucially, systems of guides that could safely ferry travellers across the desert. For those seeking to trade, the kingdoms also provided a legal framework and institutions within which to conduct this activity. As seen in the case of the kingdom of Khotan, they might even have had an interest in promoting this trade. Thus, we must conclude that the polities of the Southern Tarim Basin were much more than mere “middlemen” in the economic system stretching across their region. Instead, they and their inhabitants were active participants who, with their local infrastructure, both facilitated trade and travel through the region and at the same time also sought the many goods carried by the Silk Roads exchange network.

Chapter 10: A kingdom at the crossroads of the Ancient World

This dissertation set out with the intention of studying the economic conditions and connections of the Southern Tarim Basin and to see how these might have played a role in shaping the Silk Road exchange network between the third and the fifth centuries CE. The three first chapters of the case study looked at various aspects of the economic landscape of Kroraina, considering the evidence for its economic system, the presence and role of long-distance exchange in the kingdom, and the networks in which its oases were situated. The two last chapters turned to questions concerning the Silk Roads, looking first at the form Silk Road exchange might have taken in the Southern Tarim Basin and, secondly, to what extent the kingdoms of the Southern Tarim Basin played a role in facilitating and driving this exchange.

In this concluding chapter I would like to briefly summarise the most important findings of the case study and place them into a larger context. As the case study sought to employ a bottom-up approach, it is only natural that this conclusion too will take such an approach, summarising first those points concerning primarily the kingdom of Kroraina and secondly those with a wider bearing upon the Silk Roads phenomenon. Furthermore, stemming from the conclusion in chapter eight, which found that none of the existing approaches to the Silk Roads alone can explain the Krorainan case, I would like to end my dissertation by proposing a new model for understanding the Silk Roads and point to what I believe are some important avenues of future research.

10.1 The economic landscape of Kroraina revised

Firstly, and most emphatically, I argue that the analysis has shown that a complete re-evaluation of previous descriptions of the economic system of the kingdom of Kroraina is in order. Previous studies have labelled the kingdom's economy as either a highly limited subsistence economy or a rigid feudal system, in both cases seeing the kingdom's oases as largely isolated and in neither case leaving much room for commercial activities. These assertions, as shown in chapter five to seven, do not hold up to closer scrutiny.

Chapter five commenced by discussing the agrarian basis of the Krorainan economy and does recognise that farming and animal husbandry were the fundamentals of the kingdom's economic system, both in terms of individual wealth and state revenue. Indeed, as shown by the discussion of tax and taxation, all available evidence suggests that the Krorainan state was reliant upon the agricultural surplus of its farmers and herders rather than being funded upon commercial activities as has been suggested by some scholars. Yet as shown by multiple well-attested examples, there were individuals in Krorainan society, predominantly members of the local elites, who did pursue the generation of wealth by variously investing the surpluses of their landholdings into both trade and lending. Such sophisticated economic behaviour was made possible by the fact that the Krorainan economy was governed by several economic institutions, many of which were legally enshrined. Of particular importance were the three institutions of contracts, loans, and legal courts. Together with other, more fundamental, institutions, such as those of property rights and a concept of price, this trio of institutions structured the kingdom's exchange and the profit-seeking actions of individual actors. The Krorainan economic system was, in other words, a complex economic system structured by institutions and a legal code. Indeed, when compared with what is known of other ancient economic systems, such as the economy of the traditional "centres" of the Mediterranean,¹³²⁰ India,¹³²¹ and China,¹³²² the Krorainan economy appears to have been every bit as sophisticated, though naturally operating on a far smaller scale.

Chapter six is broadly split into two parts and turned first to what evidence exists for long-distance exchange in the sources from the kingdom of Kroraina, and secondly to what extent the wealth of the Krorainan elites were used for acquiring these prestigious goods. The first part commenced by analysing two tombs and two documents concerning cases of theft. By examining these, it was shown how large amounts of imported goods were in circulation in the kingdom of Kroraina, primarily but seemingly not exclusively, amongst the elites. Some of these imported goods were,

¹³²⁰ Andreau, *The Economy of the Roman World*.

¹³²¹ Ray, *Monastery and Guild. Commerce under the Satavahanas*.

¹³²² Yu, *Trade and Expansion in Han China. A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations*; Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han*.

in turn, considered in further detail. Imported textiles, primarily Chinese silks but also examples of textiles from neighbouring Khotan, appear to have been imported in bulk, while imported ornaments and designs appear to have been rarer, if still found in significant quantities. Next were discussed the questions of what forms and frequency the exchange carrying these goods might have taken and two types of imported goods of particular importance were addressed, namely aquatic raw materials for jewellery, being corals, pearls and shells, as well as spices. Corals, pearls, and shells were found to have been imported as raw materials that had then been worked locally into jewellery, meaning that the local craftsmen had both a steady supply of and the skills to work with these materials. Spices, being mostly perishable and meant for consumption, were also shown to have been in regular use amongst the kingdom's elites. The presence of both these exotic imports, originating in tropical and coastal regions far from Kroraina, are crucial for understanding long-distance exchange in the kingdom, as they show not only the reach of Krorainan imports but also underline the frequency with which this trade must have occurred. The second part of the chapter then addressed the question of what roles these imported goods played in Krorainan society. It was shown how these resources should be understood as forms of prestige goods and that they not only played an important role as social markers but also were important resources in network building amongst the elites. Long-distance exchange is thus not only shown to have occurred, but the resources acquired through this trade did, in fact, play an important role in maintaining the socio-political system of Kroraina.

Chapter seven moved away from the strict realm of the economic and considered the question of the oases' supposed isolation. The chapter approached this question in two ways, firstly through a quantitative analysis using network theory, and secondly by a more traditional qualitative analysis of the written sources. It was shown, by both approaches, that the Krorainan oases were far from isolated. To the contrary, all the major Krorainan oases were closely connected to each other in a multifaceted network of interaction, with economic, political, and kinship ties. Furthermore, it was shown how the Krorainan oases were also connected to many of their neighbouring polities, in particular to Khotan but also to Kucha and to China, and

even included such distant contacts as Sogdiana. These foreign connections were also multifaceted, including the movement of people and resources, as well as some rare indication of kinship ties. Thus, far from lonely islands caught in a sea of sand, the Krorainan oases were in fact part of a wide reaching network that stretched across truly vast distances, all the way from Sogdiana in the west to China in the east.

Together, these three chapters show with utmost clarity that a re-evaluation of previous descriptions of Kroraina's economic landscape is in order. The kingdom of Kroraina's economic system was a complex one, governed by legally sanctioned institutions and with room for sophisticated economic behaviour. Individual Krorainans could and did accumulate wealth, and part of this wealth was used to acquire a broad range of imported luxuries, resources that played an important role in the local socio-political system. These imports were likely made possible by the fact that the closely connected Krorainan oases were themselves part of a wide-reaching network of contact and interaction.

10.2 The complexity of the Silk Roads and the futility of the search for a “single solution”

Returning to the overarching questions regarding the Silk Roads phenomenon, I do believe that the case study has shown that it does make sense to speak of a Silk Road exchange network across Inner Asia in late antiquity, insofar as this term is understood as a model for a network of contacts and exchange rather than a historical reality as such. I will, however, further contend that the conclusions of the second part of the case study also argue for a re-evaluation of some of the common assumptions about how the Silk Roads exchange network might have functioned. As discussed in the introduction, a number of approaches seeking to explain how the Silk Road exchange network functioned have been proposed. These can broadly be categorised into four types or focuses, namely a traditional “Silk Road of Empires”, a “Tributary Trade” approach, a “Steppe Road” approach, and a “Trans-regional organisations” approach. Yet as shown in chapter eight and nine, neither of these explanations alone appear to encompass the realities of long-distance exchange in the Southern Tarim Basin, as seen through the available sources.

The four approaches and the evidence in support of their interpretations were considered in detail in chapter eight, which discussed how the various imports seen in chapter six were brought to Kroraina. Examining the evidence for various forms of gift exchange, as implied in the “Tributary Trade” and “Steppe Road” approaches, it is found that there is only very limited evidence for such mechanisms, though it cannot be entirely discounted. Next various “trans-regional organisations” proposed by previous research, more specifically Buddhist organisations and the Chinese imperial military, were considered. It was shown how Buddhist organisations in the Krorainan case do not appear to have played a major role, but Chinese military forces on the other hand was an important actor, as already observed by Hansen. The Chinese military and imperial presence alone does not, however, account for many important imports observed in chapter six, for example corals or many of the spices. The final part of the chapter therefore turned to the question of the elusive merchants. The chapter showed that, upon closer examination, there is good evidence for both merchants and commercial activities in the Krorainan sources. Chinese and Sogdian merchants are those most readily discernible, though there is also an argument for commercial activities being undertaken by parts of the Krorainan population as well. Seen as a whole, the chapter shows quite clearly that no single previously proposed solution fully encompasses the realities of long-distance exchange seen in the Krorainan sources. Instead, I will argue that this conclusion demonstrates that any serious theory or model of the Silk Roads exchange system must take a far more nuanced approach and that any search for a “single solution” or “prime mover” is ultimately futile.

Building on this, the final chapter of the case study, chapter nine, returned to Faxian’s challenge of how both traders and travellers might have crossed the vast spaces of Eurasia and navigated its many polities and cultures, a question which I believe is of crucial importance to Silk Road studies, yet one that has far too rarely been engaged with. The chapter proposed that the solution to this problem lay with the smaller polities inhabiting Inner Asia and proceeded to examine what solutions might have been offered by the kingdom of Kroraina. Firstly, it was made clear that the kingdom of Kroraina had a well-developed infrastructure in place to make travel

across its territory possible. This was seen in the royal authorities' interest in keeping its roads open and secure by employing, and strictly controlling, forts and their guards across its territory. Perhaps the best example, however, was the Arivaga-system, a system of hereditary guides tasked by the royal administration with escorting official travellers across and beyond its territory. Secondly, the chapter turned to the economic institutions of Kroraina and showed how these could be utilised by foreign actors to conduct their trade within a shared legal framework. This framework was, in fact, part of a larger legal tradition stretching across the Tarim Basin and into Bactria, something that certainly must have made trade across these regions easier. Finally, the chapter ended by discussing evidence for active interest in trade by the kingdoms of the Southern Tarim Basin, and though evidence for this is scant an interesting example of such active interest was found in the Sino-Kharosthi coins of Khotan. I would argue that, examined together, this is ample evidence to show that the kingdom of Kroraina did in fact play an active role in maintaining and facilitating the Silk Road exchange across its region, though the extent to which this was due to an intentional policy is difficult to gauge.

Thus, when returning to the initial problem faced by Faxian and the primary research question of the dissertation, namely “Which structures, factors and actors made travel and contact through the southern Tarim Basin possible between the third and the fifth centuries?”, there are two important points which I believe this conclusion raises.

1. Travel and contact through the southern Tarim Basin between the third and the fifth centuries was a complex phenomenon that was made possible by an interplay between different structures, factors, and actors. Instead of a single “prime mover”, we have seen elites, soldiers, and merchants all playing important roles. Similarly, instead of a single form of exchange, it seems clear that both gift exchange and commercial trade were part of the same exchange network, though there is admittedly better evidence for trade.
2. It is furthermore crucial to recognise that the smaller polities of the Tarim Basin, like the kingdom of Kroraina, were not merely passive middlemen that

just happened to be on an exchange network between the Mediterranean, India, and China. Rather, they were themselves active participants in the Silk Roads exchange network, their elites actively using the network, and their institutions and infrastructure playing a crucial role in facilitating and maintaining it.

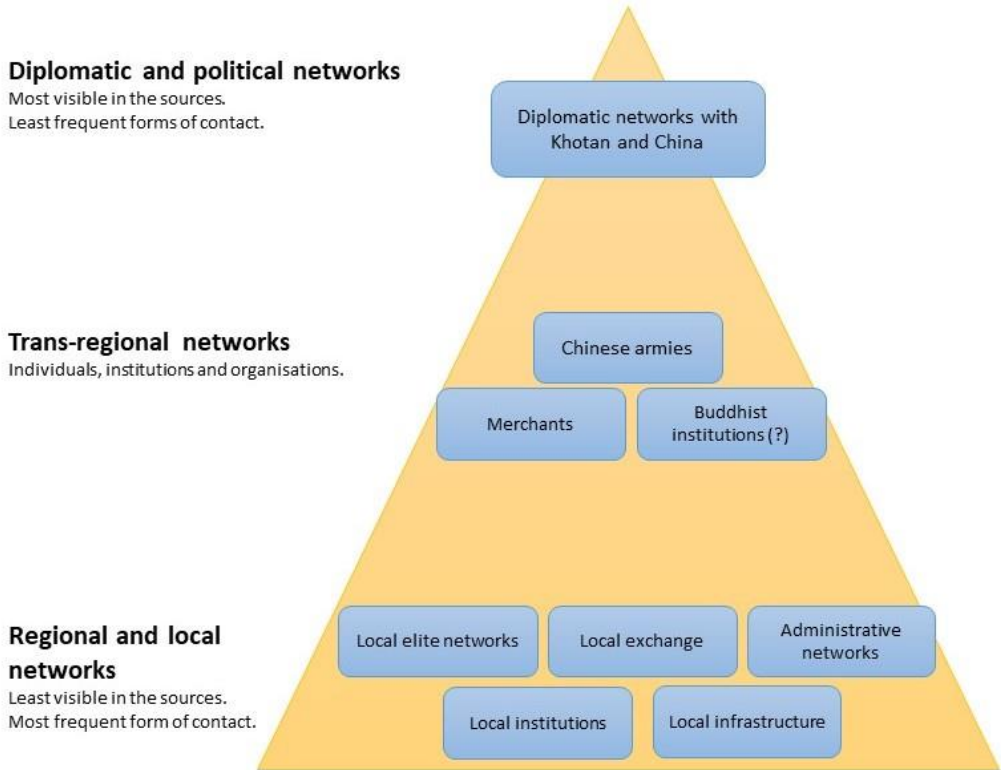
Indeed, it does not seem too far a stretch to argue that without polities like the kingdom of Kroraina, there could have been no contact across the vast and harsh heartlands of Eurasia in the first place.

10.3 A “network model” of Silk Roads exchange

However, do the results of this case study of the Southern Tarim Basin and the kingdom of Kroraina really tell us much about the wider Silk Roads phenomenon, beyond showing that such an exchange network did exist in the Southern Tarim Basin during late antiquity? Certainly, as discussed in the introduction of the case study, a case is strictly speaking only a case of itself, and as such, one should always take care when seeking to generalise from a single case study. At the same time, any general theory must seek to explain all relevant cases, and case studies are therefore ideally suited for testing out existing theories and approaches, as has been done in this case study. Furthermore, case studies are also a good basis from which to develop new theory and new models, precisely because they are in depth studies of a particular example. Thus, while creating a truly accurate model of the Silk Road exchange network would require corroborative evidence, ideally from several other cases along the Silk Roads, this case study can hopefully provide some important clues for ways of understanding the Silk Roads phenomenon.

As such, I would like to end this dissertation by proposing a new model for the Silk Road exchange network, one that I believe better captures the complexity of the phenomenon and that I hope can be a useful tool for further research in the field. This model proposes that the Silk Roads should be understood as a layered network of networks, co-existing and in many cases co-dependant. Describing the Silk Roads as a network of networks is itself not a particularly novel proposal, though it is important, as it avoids the simplistic notions of literal roads and frequent Trans-Eurasian contacts. I believe the key innovation of this model is the idea of a layered model, however, as

this allows for the many observed structures, factors, and actors to co-exist within one model.



In this layered network model three scales are represented: a potentially trans-continental scale on the top, a trans-regional scale in the middle, and a regional or local scale at the bottom. The pyramidal shape of the model furthermore represents the visibility and frequency of the interaction in the networks, with the highest levels being the most visible in historical sources, yet seemingly the least frequently used connections. Thus, in the top layer one finds the diplomatic and state-to-state networks recorded in Chinese and other historical accounts, capable at times of connecting even across the entire Asian continent. In our Krorainan case, this might be represented by the kingdom’s political connections to both China and Khotan and would also encompass such phenomena as the “Tributary Trade”. These were both the historically most visible networks of the Silk Road networks and also the ones crossing the longest

distances. The second level represents trans-regional networks created by individuals, institutions, or organisations, including long-distance mercantile ventures and trans-regional religious communities, as well as travellers such as Faxian. In the Krorainan case this is represented best by the networks of foreign merchants, such as the Sogdians or Chinese, and by the Chinese military garrisons. Though not as visible in the available sources, they were clearly capable of crossing large distances and made up much of the body of what is thought of as the Silk Road itself, with its traditional connotations of exchange and transfer of luxuries and ideas.

Finally, at the fundament one finds regional and local networks of contact, exchange, kinship, and politics, as well as their associated institutions, that had existed across Eruasia since far back into prehistory. It is at this level that most of the actors and networks seen in the Krorainan case study belong, and these networks were fundamentally shaped by the local interests, institutions, and beliefs. The distances travelled here might have been limited, but over time this type of contact too was an important vector for the movement of goods, ideas, and people. Furthermore, as this dissertation has argued, this bottom layer was the fundament upon which the high levels could operate. These smaller networks, their paths and institutions, formed the basic framework upon which the other networks could form and operate.

10.4 The direction of future research

Clearly this model is but a proposal, and modifications are likely needed before it could hope to even partly grasp the complex Silk Roads phenomenon. The separation into three layers, for example, while fitting the Krorainan case fairly well, is perhaps not granular enough, and one could easily argue for separating the bottom layer into regional and local layers. Furthermore, given the unique conditions for the preservation of archaeological materials in Inner Asia and the many new innovations, such as remote sensing, that can aid in discovering them, it seems likely that the decades ahead will see many new discoveries. Some of these will likely challenge and contradict certain conclusions of this dissertation, but hopefully they will also allow for a deeper and more detailed understanding of the many still poorly understood sides of Krorainan and Tarim Basin history.

I do, however, hope that this dissertation can help point the way for future research. In particular, I would argue that approaching the Silk Road exchange network through focused case studies is a fruitful approach in other cases as well. I argue this not only because it forces us to consider the practicalities of Silk Roads contact and exchange, but also because the written evidence from many parts of Central Asia allows for unusually detailed studies, as in the case of Kroraina. Finally, I hope that this dissertation can be a small step towards increasing general awareness of the kingdom of Kroraina and its history, a history which, in this age of globalisation and ever widening networks of connections, surely deserves our attention.

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Appendix I: Tables and Figures

Chapter 2: The archaeological sources of the kingdom of Kroraina

Figure 1: Tokhta Akhun and other men of Abdal¹³²³



91. LOPLIKS ANTHROPOMETRICALLY EXAMINED AT ABDAL.
Tokhta Ākhūn and Mullah third and fourth from left in front row.

¹³²³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, fig. 91.

Figure 3: Interior of *iwan* at Kök Jigda (Photo by A. Cornet)¹³²⁵



Figure 4: Interior of *kichlikeuï* at Kök Jigda (Photo by MAFCX)¹³²⁶



¹³²⁵ Debaine-Francfort and Idriss, *Keriya, Mémoires d'un Fleuve: Archéologie et Civilisation Des Oasis Du Taklamakan*, 38.

¹³²⁶ Debaine-Francfort and Idriss, 38.

Figure 5: Plan of ruined dwelling N.5¹³²⁷

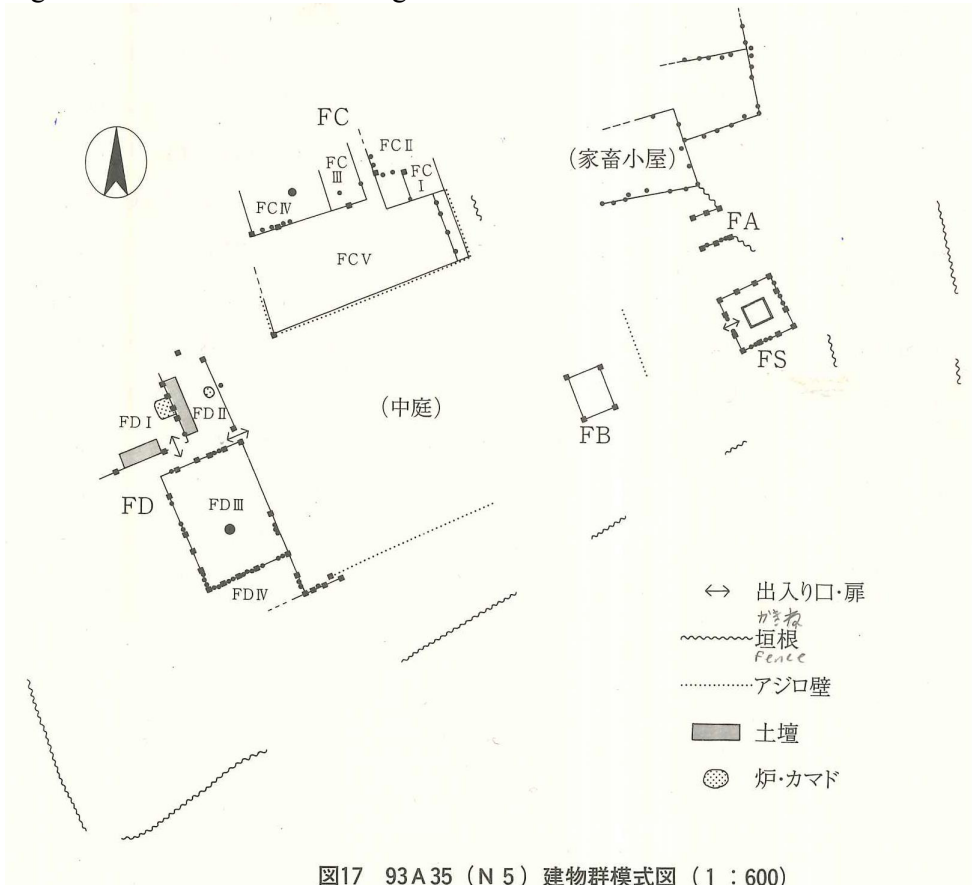


図17 93A35 (N 5) 建物群模式図 (1 : 600)

¹³²⁷ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, 2:63. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 6: Bodhisattva figures from FD¹³²⁸



Figure 7: Reproduction of mural fragment from FS¹³²⁹

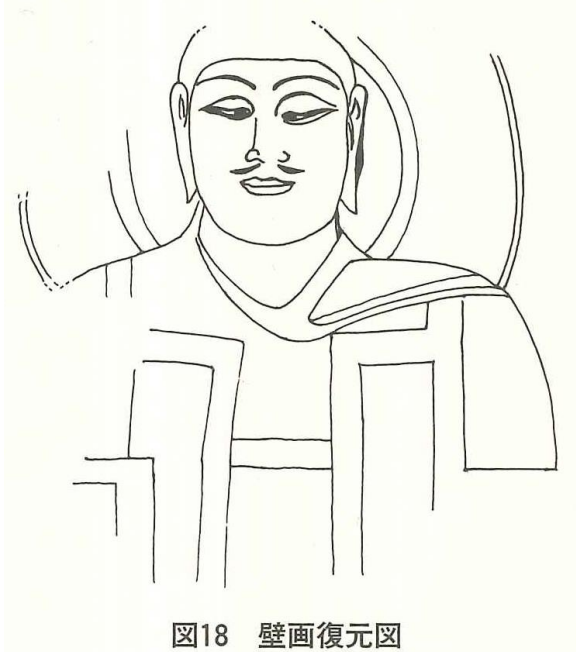
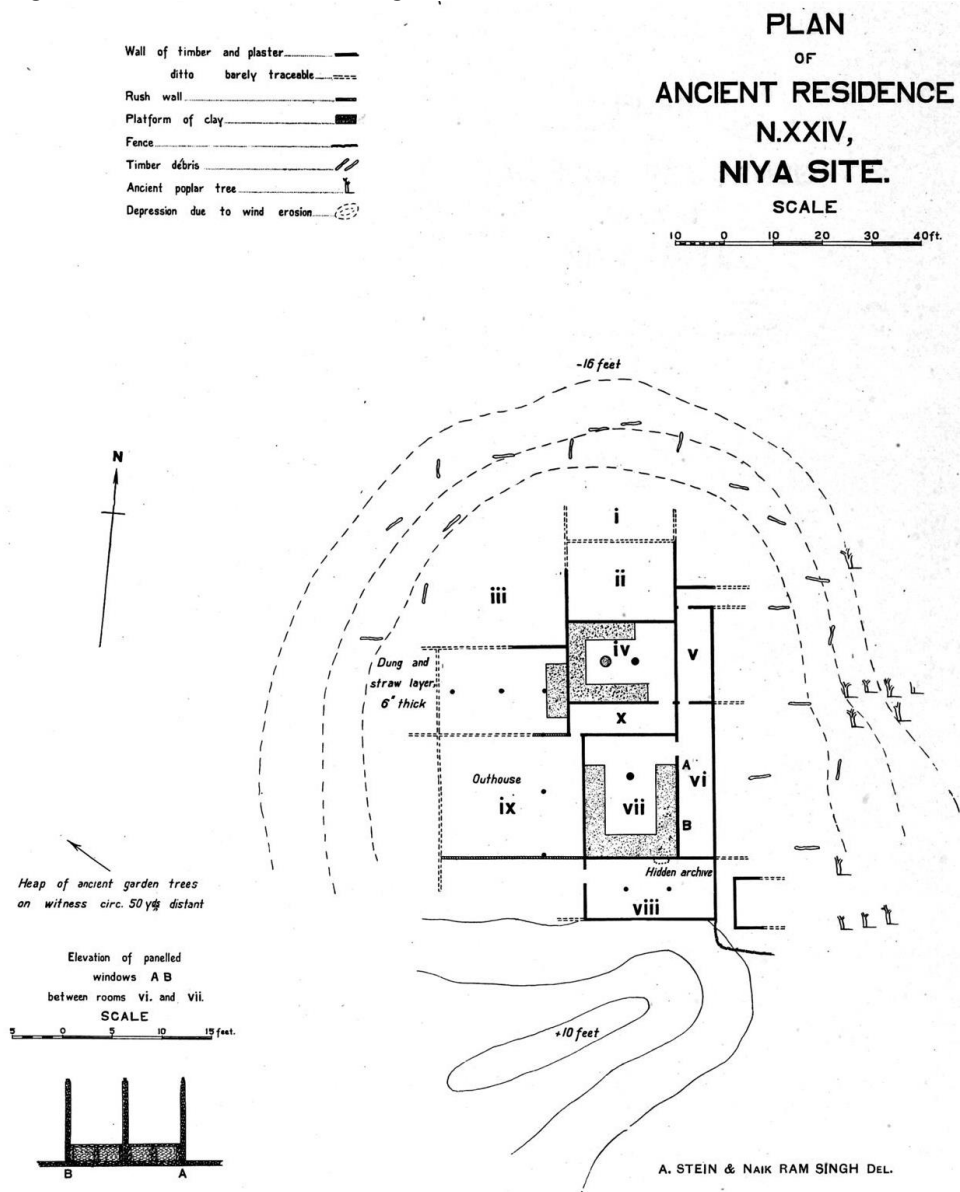


図18 壁画復元図

¹³²⁸ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 60. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

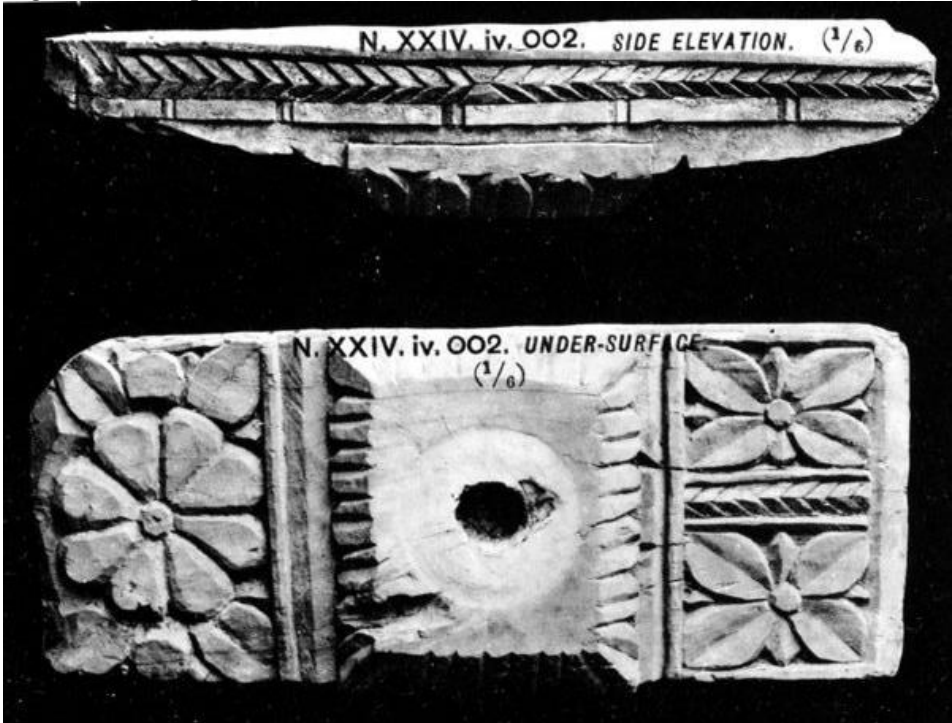
¹³²⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:65. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 8: Plan of ruined dwelling N.24¹³³⁰



¹³³⁰ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*. Plan.14.

Figure 9: Example of carved double-bracket from N.24¹³³¹



¹³³¹ Stein. Plate.17.

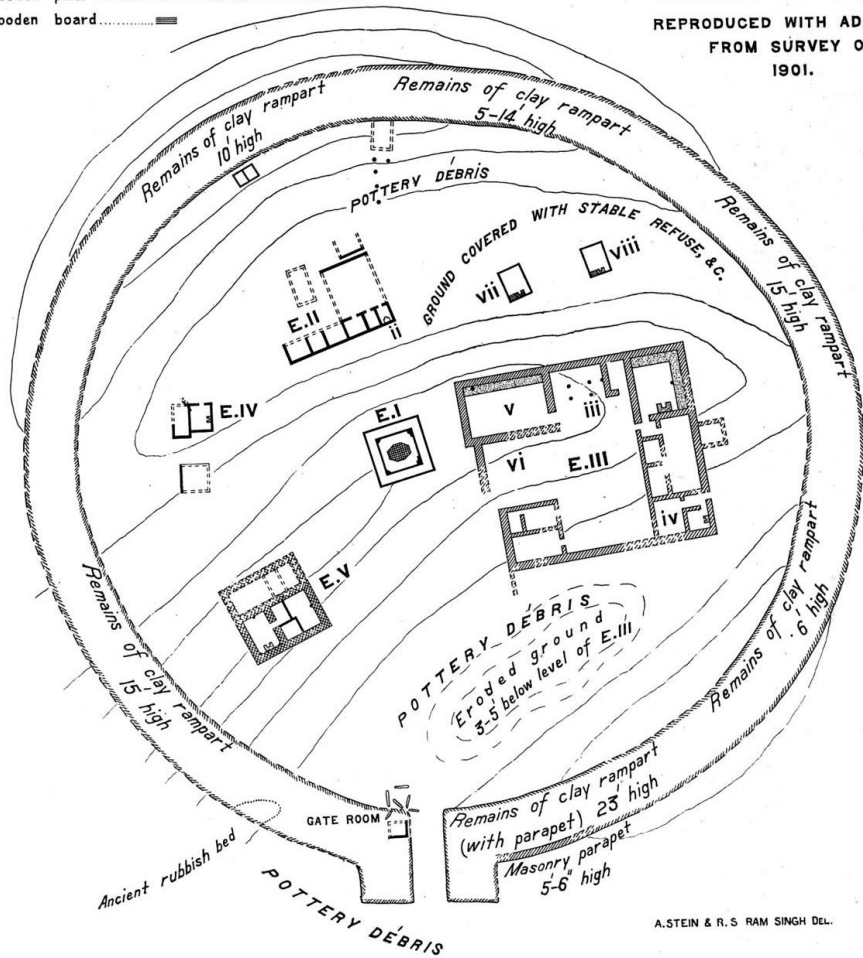
Figure 10: Plan of ruined fort at Endere (Tang-era)¹³³²

- Masonry of sun-dried bricks.....
- ditto ditto ruined.....
- Wall of timber and plaster.....
- ditto ditto barely traceable.....
- Wall of stamped clay.....
- ditto ditto ruined.....
- Rampart of stamped clay.....
- Statue base of plaster.....
- Raised platform (fireplace).....
- Wooden pillar.....
- Wooden board.....

**PLAN
OF
RUINED FORT
OF
T'ANG PERIOD,
ENDERE SITE.**

SCALE
20 0 20 40 60 80 100ft.

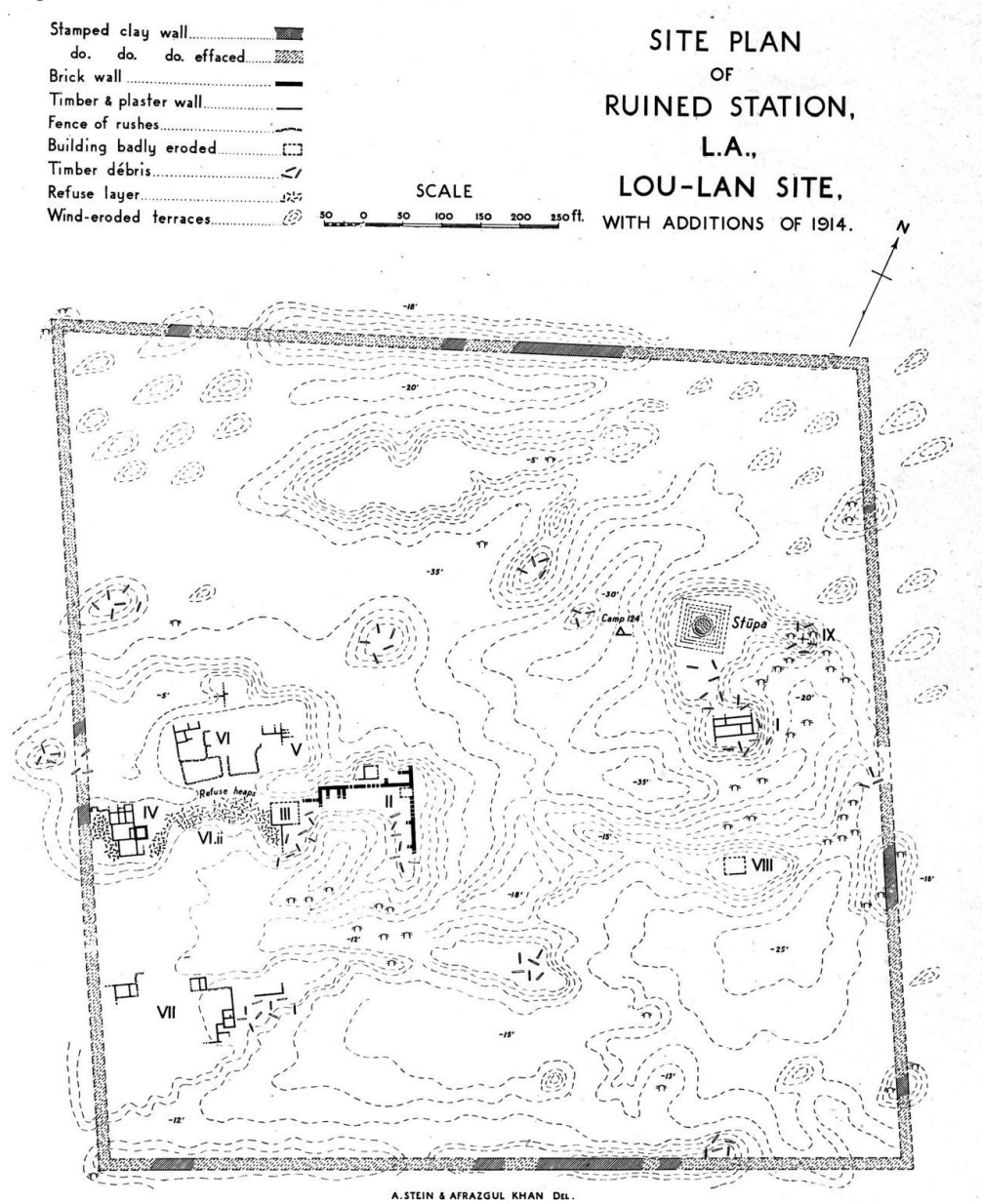
REPRODUCED WITH ADDITIONS
FROM SURVEY OF
1901.



A. STEIN & R. S. RAM SINGH DEL.

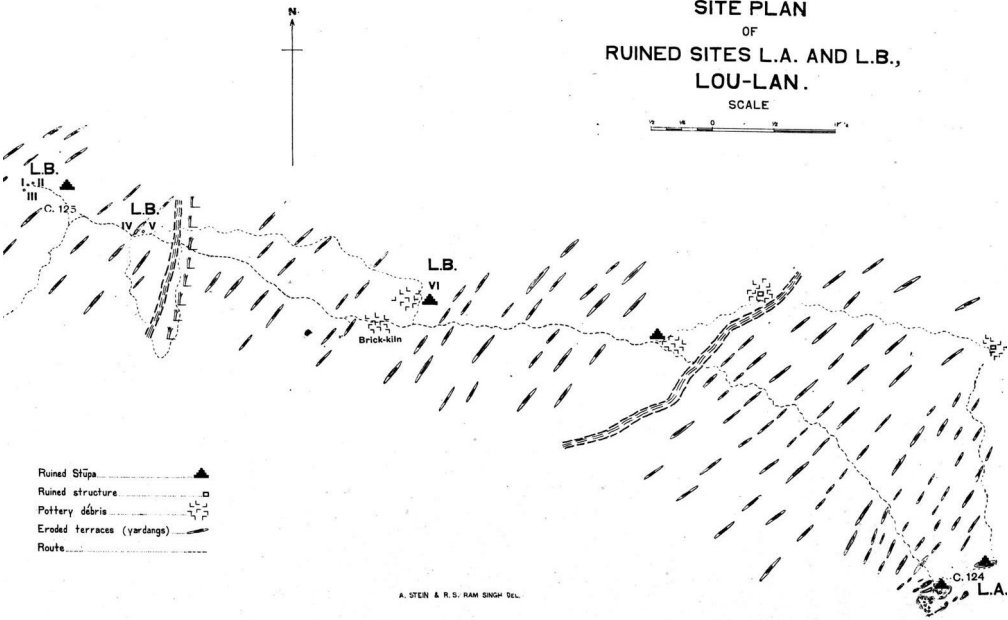
1332 Stein. Plan.20.

Figure 11: Plan of the L.A site¹³³³



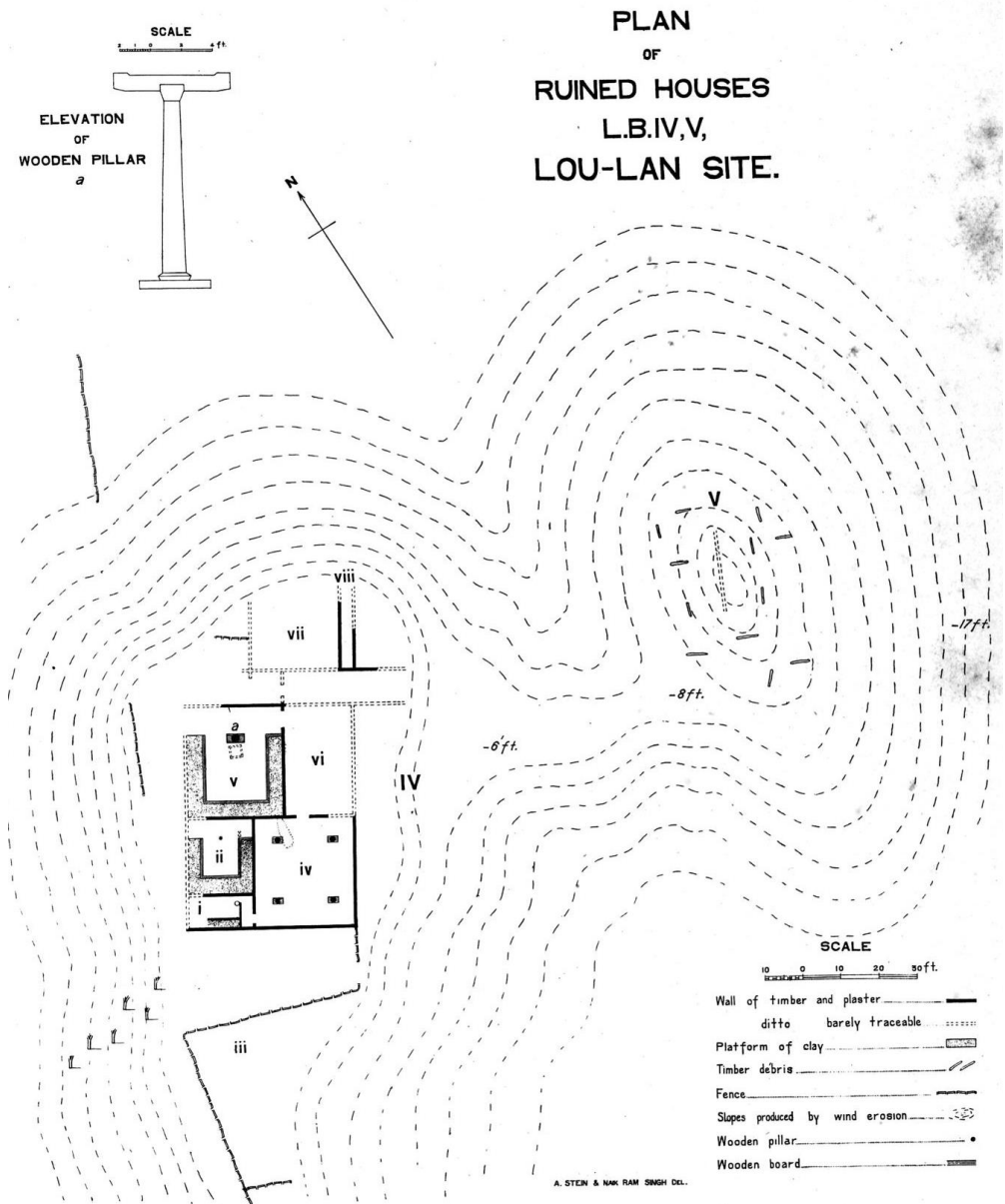
¹³³³ Stein. Plan 23

Figure 12: Plan of the L.B sites¹³³⁴



¹³³⁴ Stein. Plan.22.

Figure 13: Plan of the ruined dwellings L.B.4-5¹³³⁵



¹³³⁵ Stein. Plan.28.

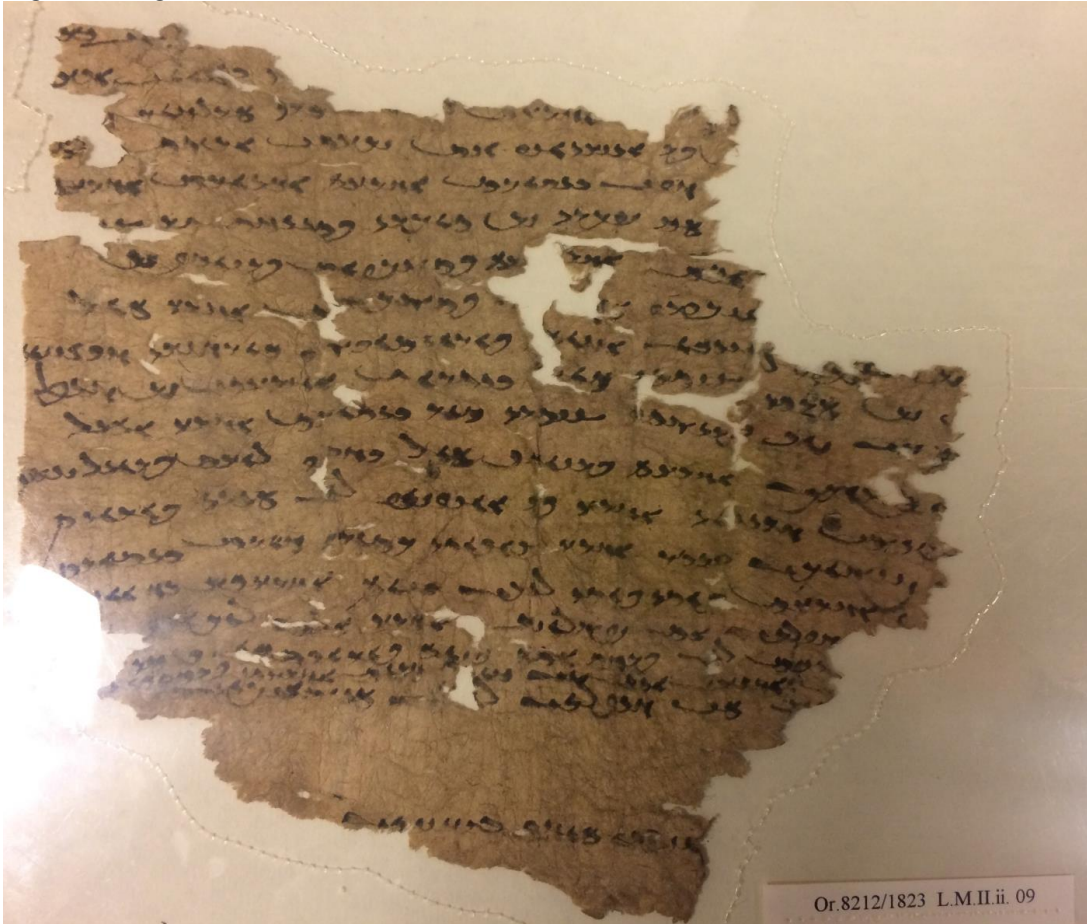
Chapter 3: The written sources of the kingdom of Kroraina

Figure 1: Table of the dates of the Chinese documents, by Rhie¹³³⁶

Number of Docmts	Western Date	Chinese Date
<i>Ts'ao Wei (220-265)</i>		
(1)	252 A.D. Chia-p'ing 嘉平 (however, this has another date 264 A.D., so the later date should be taken)	4th year
(1)	263 Ching-yüan 景元	4th year
(1)	264 " "	5th "
(1)	264 Hsien-hsi 咸熙	1st "
(3)	265 " "	2nd "
(3)	266 " "	3rd "
(1)	" "	" "
<i>Western Chin (265-317)</i>		
(4)	266 T'ai-shih 泰始	2nd year
(3)	267 " "	3rd "
(8)	268 " "	4th "
(10)	269 " "	5th "
(6)	270 " "	6th "
(4)	" "	" "
(2)	310 Yung-chia 永嘉	4th year
(2)	312 " "	6th "
<i>Former Liang (313 or 324-376)</i>		
(1)	324 letter of Li Po to king of Karashahr	
(1)	330 Chien-hsing 建興 calculated to be 330 A.D. of an outdated Western Chin nien-hao	18th year

¹³³⁶ Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia*, 1:334.

Figure 2: Sogdian Letter L.M.II.ii.09¹³³⁷



¹³³⁷ Provided for the author by the British Library.

Figure 3: Various shaped Kharosthi wooden documents¹³³⁸

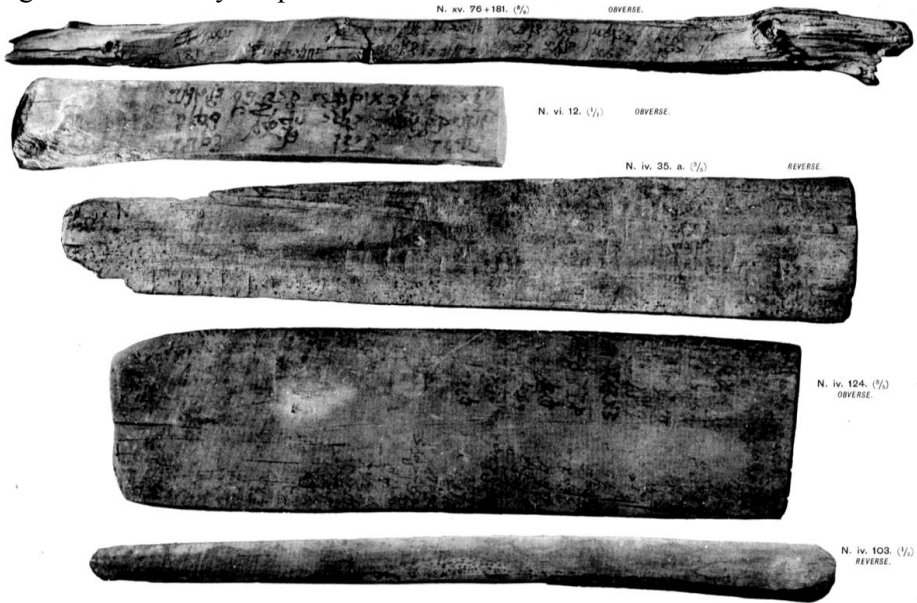
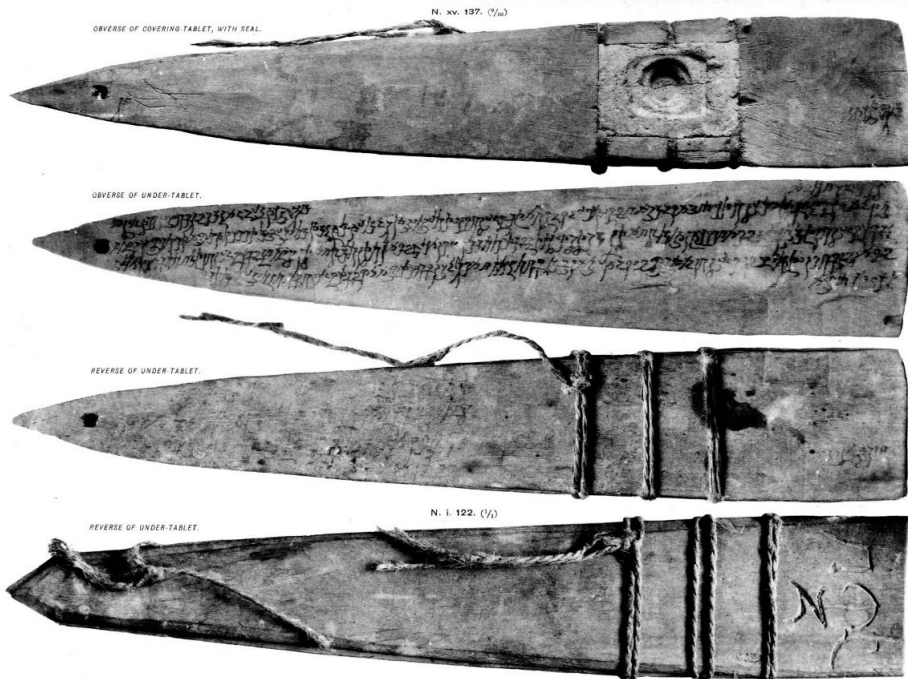


Figure 4: Wedge-shaped double-tablet¹³³⁹



¹³³⁸ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, vol. 1, fig. 102.

¹³³⁹ Stein, vol. 1, fig. 98.

Figure 5: Rectangular double-tablet¹³⁴⁰

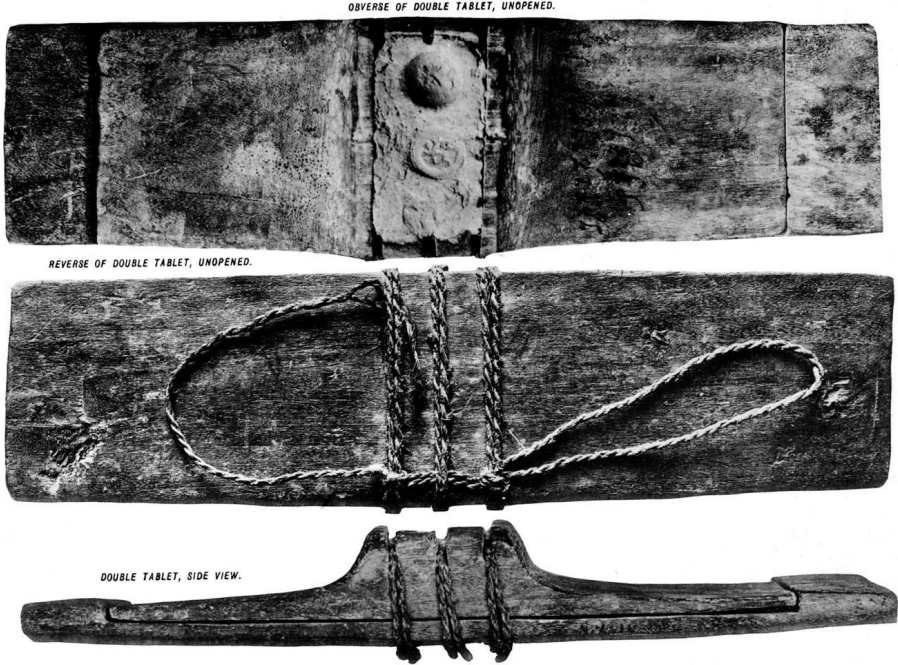


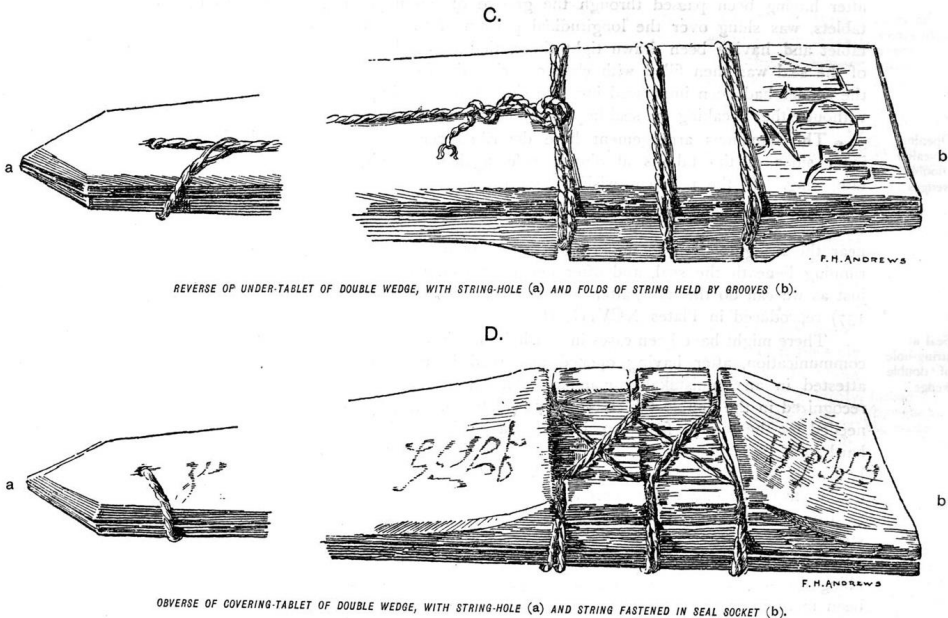
Figure 6: “Takhti”-shaped tablet and rectangular double-tablet.¹³⁴¹



¹³⁴⁰ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*. Plate.21.

¹³⁴¹ Stein. Plate.23.

Figure 7: Stein's schema showing sealing technique of a wedge-tablet¹³⁴²



¹³⁴² Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 1:349.

Figure 8: The seals of the cozbos Soṃjaka and Kaṃciya¹³⁴³

N. XXIV. viii. 72.



N. XXIV. viii. 86.



¹³⁴³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*. Plate.20.

Figure 9: The Chinese seal of document n.571¹³⁴⁴

N. XXIV. viii. 74

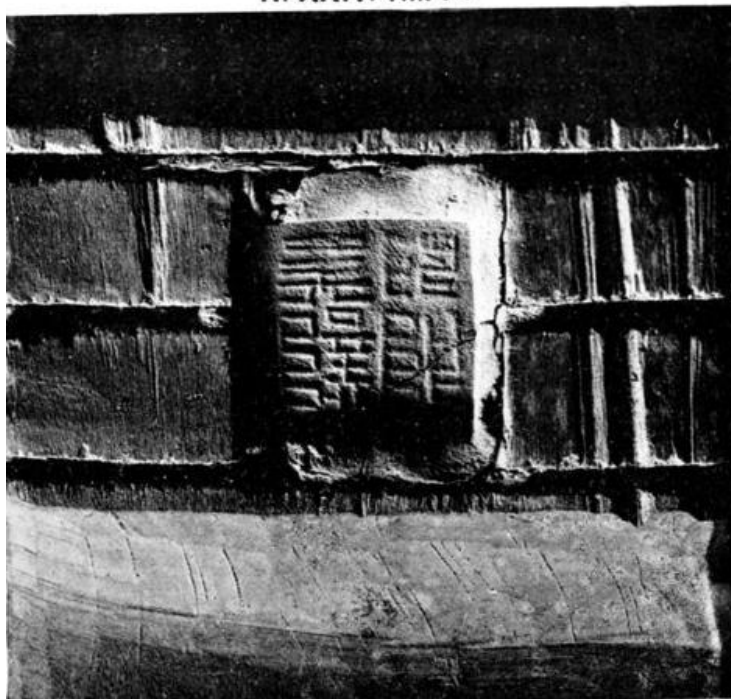


Figure 10: A seal imitating Chinese on document n.332¹³⁴⁵

N. xv. 167 (enlarged).



¹³⁴⁴ Stein. Plate.20.

¹³⁴⁵ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, vol. 1, fig. 72.

Figure 11: Database card, document

Records 1 880 Total (Sorted)

Show All New Record Delete Record Find Sort Share

Layout: Kharosthi documents fr... View As: Preview

Document Number 1 Date - Local NA Date - CE NA Type Royal Command

Content

Wedge Cow-tablet. Obv.
To be given to the cozbo Tamjaka.

Wedge Under-tablet. Obv. & Rev.
His majesty the king writes, he instructs the cozbo Tamjaka as follows: Lyipeya makes a complaint here now that soldiers of Saca carried off two cows of his. One cow they sent back, one they ate. This dispute must be carefully investigated by you in person and a decision made according to law, if you are not clear about it there, they must be sent here in custody.

Actors in the Document

Tamjaka	1	Male	Cozbo / Great (Mahamta) Cozbo	Official, Doc.97,159: Addressee, Doc.130,139:
Lyipeya	2	Male	NA	Doc.1: Plaintiff, Doc.6: Debtor?, Doc.575: Part in a
Soldiers of Saca	3	NA	NA	Accused

Locations

Saca.

Resources/Trade Goods

Animals: Two cows.

Document location

Ruin N. I. I.

Notes/Remarks

NA

Figure 12: Database card, actor

Records 1 1513 Total (Sorted)

Show All New Record Delete Record Find Sort Share

Layout: Actors in the Kharosthi ... View As: Preview

Name Tamjaka Actor ID 1

Gender Male **Title** Cozbo / Great (Mahamta) Cozbo (Doc.541) **Notes** (Fictive) Brother of sothamga Lyipeya n.8.

Role in texts

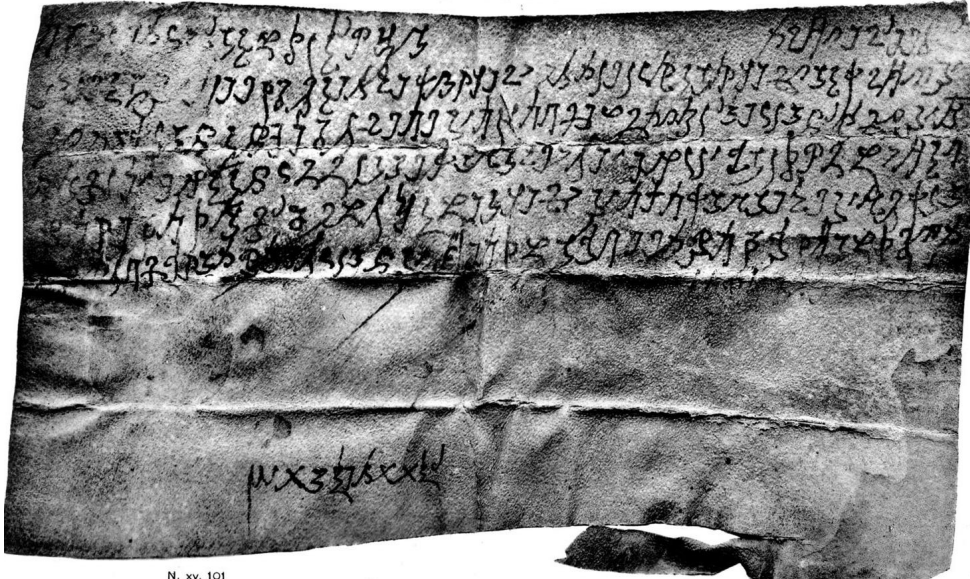
Official, Doc.97,159: Addressee, Doc.130,139: Addresser, Doc.575: Witness, Doc.829: To speak at the royal court

Appears in Documents

1	NA	NA	Royal Command	NA
7	NA	NA	Royal Command	NA
15	NA	NA	Royal Command	Related to doc.13 and
24	NA	NA	Royal Command	Notes on the laws
26	NA	NA	Royal Command	NA
55	NA	NA	Royal Command	Details of the royal camel

Figure 13: Kharosthi leather document¹³⁴⁶

N. xv. 310. UNFOLDED.



N. xv. 101

¹³⁴⁶ Stein, vol. 1, fig. 91.

Chapter 4: The socio-political landscape of Kroraina

Table 1: All individual sites

Locations		
Ajiyama-avana.	Kusala's area.	Seni.
Alma Bhumi.	Lominana.	Sitga?
Apemna's area.	Lustu's area.	Snuna.
Asga's area.	Lyilpejya's kilme.	Sokhaliga (?).
Asoga's kilme.	Masina.	Sorkotsa
Ayamatu Vasa.	Nastimta's kilme	Suhasura's region.
Bhagasa.	Navaga-avana.	Suliga (Sogdia).
Bhoti-nagara.	Navote.	Suryada (?).
Bumni.	New village of the Queen.	The desert.
Cadota.	Nina.	The Mountain (Parvata).
Calmadana.	Opimta.	Tomgraka-maharayasa-avana.
Calmasa's kilme.	Pagine-avana	Trasa-avana.
Camu Prete.	Parcona Bridge.	Tsaga.
Catisa devi-avana.	Peta-avana.	Usasa(?)
China.	Peta-nagara	Vamtu-avana. (Also Amtu)
Deviyae Ogu Anugaya's Avana.	Pisali.	Varua's area.
Duki mountains.	Protsa kresa (uncertain)	Vasu's area.
Jayasa's kilme.	Pumni.	Vega-kilme.
Kacaka's kilme.	Pumnyasa's kilme.	Village of Kamcaga.
Kapegya's kilme.	Pusgari.	Vrganicita.
Khamni.	Remena.	Vugto's area.
Khema.	Rocakhora of Ogu Jayasa.	Vurcuga Luthu's area.
Khotan	Saca.	Vuru's area.
Kilme of ogu Azuraka.	Samana.	Yasala.
Kilme of the ogu Asoka.	Samarena.	Yave-avana.
Kogitasasa.	Samarsa.	Yirumdhina-avana.
Kroraina. (Capital/Great City)	Sapuka?	
Kuci.	Satre.	

Chapter 5: The economic landscape of Kroraina

Table 1: Number of documents mentioning domestic animals¹³⁴⁷

Type of animal	Number of documents mentioning
Camel	145
Horse	59
Sheep	41
Cow	22
Goat	2
Donkey (?)	2

Table 2: Type of document containing the word *palyi*

Type of document	Number of documents
Royal Command/Decree	15
Letter	13
List	5
Report	1
Unclear	2

Table 3: Resources paid as *palyi*

Resource	Number of documents
Grain	5
Textiles (Various)	5
Ghee	5
Sheep	4
Fruit (Various)	4
Wine	3
Camels	3
Cow	1
Ropes	1
Unknown/Unclear	5

Table 4: Table of resources listed in list-type documents

Resource	Number of documents
Grain	38
Camels	20
Wine	17
Sheep	16
Textiles (Various)	10
Ghee	4
Cows	3
Fruit (Various)	3
Horses	2
Rope	2

¹³⁴⁷ Including uncertain identifications.

Slave	1
Unknown/Unclear	9

Table 5: Resource bought in contracts

Resource	Number of contracts
Land (All types)	26
Slaves	9
Camels	2
Horse	2
Sheep	1
Pot	1

Table 5: Resource paid with in contracts

Resource	Number of contracts
Camels	9
Cloth	9
Horses	6
Gold/Money (<i>masa</i>)	5
Grain	4
Wine	3
Sheep	2
Cows	2
Land	1

Table 6: Titles of buyers and sellers

Title of Buyers	Number of contracts	Title of Sellers	Number of contracts
No title	21	No title	29
Scribe	9	Slave	3
Monk	3	Monk	3
Şoṭhaṅga	2	Carapurşa	2
Vasu	2	Arrow-maker	1
Cozbo	1	Chinese	1
Monks of Cadota	1	Kala	1
<i>Suliga</i> (Sogdian)	1	Khotanese	1
Slave	1	Korara	1
-	-	Of the Mountain	1
-	-	Scribe	1

Table 7: Frequency of standard elements in contracts (Across 63 contracts, 20 of these are more or less fragmented)

Standard element	Number of occurrences
Summary of content	29
Seal	14
Date	45
Statement on equality	17
Bought and sold well	5
Statement of authority	32
Statement of ownership	24
List of witnesses	39
Penalty clause	11
Name of the scribe	29
“Cut the string”	14

Table 8: Lengths of authority (Across 24 documents)

Stated length	Number of occurrences
As long as life	16
A hundred years	11
A thousand years	6

Table 9: Goods lent/owed

Resource	Number of occurrences
Grain	8
Wine	4
Camels	3
Horse	3
Silk	1
Unknown	3

Table 10: The titles of individuals involved with “money”

Title	Number of occurrences
No title	7
Monk	2
Chinese	1
Khotanese	1
Palayamnaga (Fugitive)	1
Queen	1
Sogdian	1
Vasu	1

Table 11: The use/meaning of the term *muli*

Use of <i>muli</i>	Number of occurrences	Occurs in document (L=List-type document)
Price	59	3, 113, 121, 122, 140, 160, 181, 186, 209, 241, 324, 327, 335, 348, 419, 422, 431, 433, 437, 468, 495, 500, 530, 545, 549, 566, 571, 573, 574, 575, 579, 580, 581, 582, 586, 587, 589, 590, 591, 592, 598, 624, 648, 652, 654, 655, 678, 709, 715, 762 (?), 782, 795, 801, 808, 815, 831, 833, 858, 866
Unit/Measure	22	81 (L), 102 (L), 105 (L), 118 (L), 199 (L), 210 (L), 337 (L), 343, 345, 382 (L), 393 (L), 411, 419, 437, 539, 576, 615 (L), 628 (L), 631 (L), 774 (L), 786 (L), 838 (L)
Measure of value	16	222, 327, 345, 382, 437, 495, 549, 571, 579, 580, 582, 589, 590, 592, 782, 866
<i>Atga muli</i>	5	327, 571, 580, 591, 592
“Abstract price”	4	140, 160, 433, 468
<i>Muli pimda</i> (total amount)	2	437, 590
<i>Arohaga muli</i>	1	420
Unclear	7	104, 252, 428, 613, 656, 677, 855

Table 12: An overview of the recorded value of goods in *muli*

Grain			Wine		
Amount	Value in <i>muli</i>	Doc	Amount	Value in <i>muli</i>	Doc
20 khi = 1 milima	1	n.210	10 khi	10	n.571
5 milima (?) ¹³⁴⁸	5	n.549	6 khi (+10 khi grain)	10	n.587
10 khi (+6 khi wine)	10	n.587	-	-	-
Camel			Horse		
Amount	Value in <i>muli</i>	Doc	Amount	Value in <i>muli</i>	Doc
<i>Viyala</i>	42	n.437	3 years	30	n.495
2 years old	50	n.571	4 years	40	n.580
1 year old	40	n.587	3 animals	15 each (?)	n.582
<i>Viyala</i>	40	n.590	Cow		
<i>Amklatsa</i>	30	n.590	Amount	Value in <i>muli</i>	Doc
<i>Amklatsa</i>	30	n.592	1 animal	10	n.327
<i>Pugetsa</i> , female	20	n.782	-	-	-
Rug (<i>Kojava</i>)			Carpet (<i>Tavastaga</i>)		
Amount	Value in <i>muli</i>	Doc	Amount	Value in <i>muli</i>	Doc
1 unspecified	10	n.222	12 hands and 11 hands	20 in total	n.590
1 unspecified	5	n.327	-	-	-
1 Khotanese <i>alena</i>	10 (?)	n.549	-	-	-

¹³⁴⁸ Document n.549 has a payment done in 1 khotanese *alena* rug and 5 milima of grain, to a total of 15 *muli*. Given the assumed relationship between milima and *muli* this would give 10 and 5, though this cannot be said with absolute certainty.

Land¹³⁴⁹					
Amount	Value in muli	Doc	Amount	Value in muli	Doc
13 kuthala of misi	15	n.327	<i>Akri</i> cap 1 milima, 10 khi of <i>adimni</i>	12	n.579
Cap 1 milima, 10 khi	30	n.495	24 kuthala of <i>misi</i> , fell <i>akri</i>	15 or 45 (?)	n.582
Cap 1 milima, 10 khi	15	n.549	<i>Ciraimta</i> cap 7 khi of <i>sahini</i>	10	n.587
<i>Misi</i> cap 3 milima <i>juthi</i> seeds, and trees	60	n.571	<i>Misi</i> cap 1 milima of <i>cuthie</i>	20	n.782
Slave					
Amount	Value in muli	Doc	Amount	Value in muli	Doc
Man	110	n.345	Woman	98	n.590
Girl, 5 <i>disti</i> tall	45	n.437	Girl, 4 <i>disti</i>	30 muli (+1 rug (10?))	n.592
Girl, 4 <i>disti</i> tall	40	n.589	-		-
Wages					
Amount	Value in muli	Doc			
Man, seven day's wages	20	n.866			

Table 13: References to laws, by topic

Royal Law			
Topic	Document	Topic	Document
Exchange	n.492	-	-
Law of the Kingdom			
Topic	Document	Topic	Document
Rights of new householders	n.638	<i>Palayamnaga</i> (Fugitives)	n.403
Responsibility for stolen property	n.212	Herders and herding	n.19, 134
Adoption	n.31	The debts of slaves	n.24
State employment	n.435	Unclear/Unspecified	n.229, 334, 423, 679, 729, 854
Aid for envoys	n.223	-	-
Old Law			
Topic	Document	Topic	Document
Adoption	n.11	Use of the <i>pirova</i>	n.639
<i>Hasga</i> (?)	n.297	Old debts (treatment of fugitives)	Doc.861
Penalty for felling trees on another man's land	n.482	-	-
Law of the World (Justice?)			
Topic	Document	Topic	Document
Exchange/Debt	n.130	Penalty on disputing exchange	n.661

¹³⁴⁹ Land units were usually given with a reference to their capacity for seeds. Given as "cap ... milima".

The Law (Unspecified)			
Topic	Document	Topic	Document
Adoption	n.45, 564, 769	Delayed payment	n.7
Marriage exchange	n.32, 555, 848	Rent	n.559, 815
Aid for envoys	n.14	Ownership of animals	n.356
Duties (Of various groups)	n. 10, 38, 439, 520	Ownership of slaves	n.364
Herders and herding (Royal herd)	n.524	Ownership of land	n. 235, 503, 734
Theft	n.1, 561	Disputes (Various)	n. 480, 489, 720
Property damage	n.606	Dispute on exchange	n.545
Rape	n.730	Resolution of judged cases	n.359
Murder	n.58	Moratorium during wartime	n.17, 494
Kidnapping	n.848	Unclear/Unspecified	n.3, 51, 224, 689, 857
Inter-Kilme disputes	n.338, 713	-	-

Table 14: Frequency of standard elements in legal documents (Across 52 legal documents, 11 of which are more or less fragmented)

Standard element	Number of occurrences
Cover and seal	29
Date	37
List of court magistrates	23
Oaths or statement by witnesses	15
List of witnesses (To the procedure)	22
Penalty clause	6
Name of the scribe	9
Statement of authority	6

Table 15: Titles of presiding officials in legal documents

Title	Number of occurrences
Cozbo	19
Ogu	8
Camkura	8
Tasuca	5
Cuvalayina	5
Gušura	5
Kori	5
Suyetha	4
Kitsaitsa	3
Carapuru	3
Tuguja	3
Šothamga	2
Kala	2
Scribe	1

Table 16: Topic of cases mentioning witnesses swearing oaths

Topic	Number of occurrences
Exchange dispute	2 (n.527, 577)
Debt	2 (n.576, 820)
Theft	2 (n.345, 506)
Murder	2 (n.834, 856)
Property dispute	1 (n.90)
Inheritance dispute	1 (n.326)
Kidnapping	1 (n.436)
Witchcraft	1 (n.857)
Unclear/Unspecified	2 (n.325, 384)

Table 17: Types of cases in “Royal Command”-type documents (51 “Economic”, 51 “Social”)

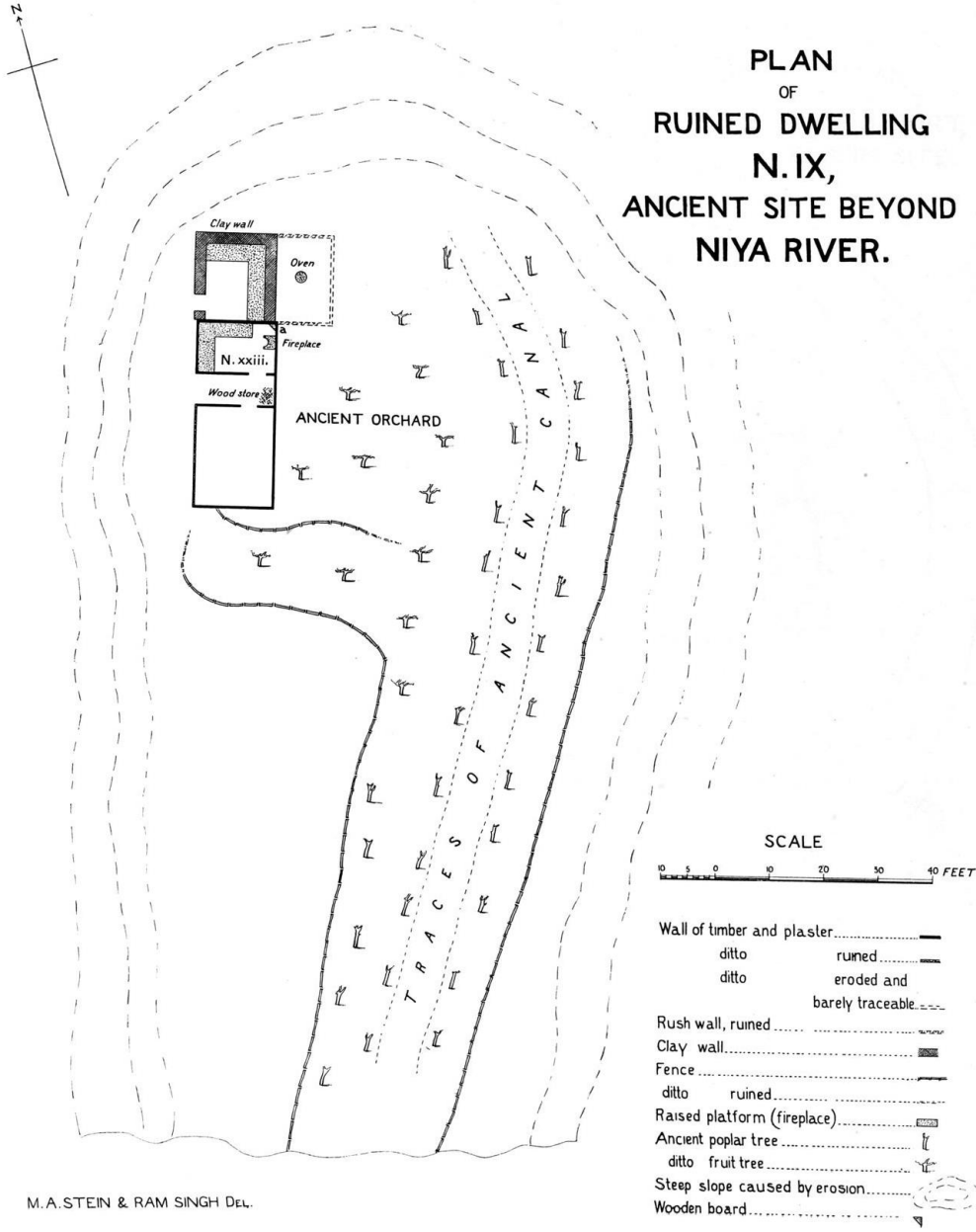
Type of case (Economic)	Number of occurrences	Type of case (Social)	Number of occurrences
Property dispute/damage	19	Violence/Murder/Rape	12
Debt dispute	9	Marriage dispute	11
Land/Border disputes	8	Adoption dispute	10
Exchange dispute	8	Theft	9
Inheritance	6	Kidnapping	6
Water dispute	1	Avana-affiliation dispute	2
Unclear (Both)	11	Missing people	1

Table 18: Types of cases in “Legal”-type documents (30 “Economic”, 12 “Social”)

Type of case (Economic)	Number of occurrences	Type of case (Social)	Number of occurrences
Exchange/Hire/Property dispute	13	Theft	3
Unclear property dispute	6	Violence/Murder	3
Loan/Debt dispute	4	Adoption dispute	1
Agreements	3	Bringing poison	1
Inheritance dispute	3	Divorce agreement	1
Dispute over duties	1	Kidnapping	1
Unclear	7	Witchcraft	1
-	-	Miscellaneous dispute	1

Figure 1: Plan of ruin N.9¹³⁵⁰

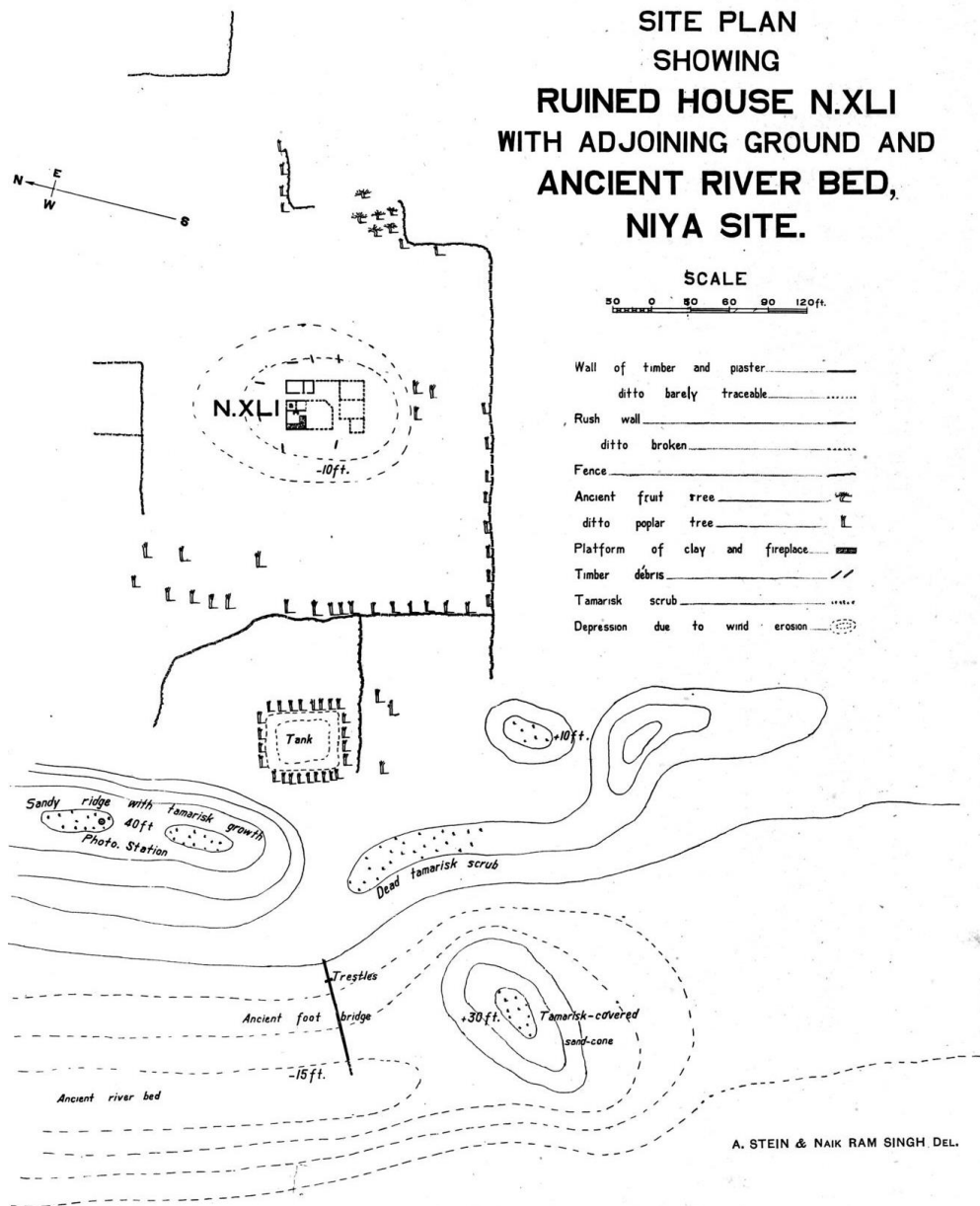
XXXV
[PLAN.]



M. A. STEIN & RAM SINGH DEL.

¹³⁵⁰ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*. Plate XXXV.

Figure 2: Plan of the ruin N.41 and environs.¹³⁵¹



¹³⁵¹ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*. Plan 18.

Figure 3: Example of modern shaded channel near Dunhuang and Turfan (Author's photography)



Chapter 6: Commodities from beyond the kingdom

Table 1: Full list of grave goods from the 95MN1 tombs¹³⁵² (Categories after original report)

Tomb M1 (Boat-shaped) (Not all items reported)	
Earthware (1)	1 Jar (Yellow glaze).
Wooden goods (7)	1 Wooden stand/table. 2 Combs (Carved animals). 2 Fine combs. 2 Bow-shaped sticks (Silk bands).
Ironware (2)	2 Belt buckle (Leather belt).
Leather goods (1)	1 Leather bag.
Textiles (14)	1 Coat (Jin-silk, Yuan-silk and wool). 1 Lined tunic (Green and yellow silk). 1 Tunic (Silk). 1 Hat (Yellow silk). 2 Face cover (Yellow silk). 3 Mittens (Plain silk). 1 Duvet. 1 Pillow (Jin-silk). 1 Handkerchief (Silk). 1 Comb bag (Silk, cotton and beads). Scent bag (Jin-silk, yuan-silk and cotton).
Ornaments (5)	4 Necklace (Glass beads and silk bag). 1 “Chest” accessory (Glass beads).
Wargear (14)	1 Dagger sheath (Black lacquer). 2 Bows (Tips wrapped with silk bands. Kharosthi inscriptions). 8 Arrows. 1 Bow bag/holster (Felt and leather). 2 Quivers (Leather and lacquer).
Tomb M3 (Box-shaped)	
Earthware (2)	1 Twin eared jug (millet porridge). 1 Spout jug (millet porridge).
Wooden goods (9)	1 Tray (Sheep shank, millet). 1 Bowl (Lamb leg, small iron knife.) 2 small “Stands/Pedestals”. 2 Cups/Bowls (Grapes, dates and pears). 1 Pail. 2 Pronged sticks.
Wargear (12)	1 Bow (Silk band wrap). 1 Bow cover/bag (Leather). 2 Quivers (Leather). 4 Arrows. 1 Sword/Dagger sheet (Cow leather). 1 Leather belt (Iron fastenings and details). 2 Sword/Dagger sheets (Four lobed style. Red lacquer).
“Makeup” and ornaments	1 Lacquered “makeup” box (Wood and bamboo. Red and black lacquer. Chinese?). 1 Wooden spindle (With silk thread). 4 Scent bag (Silk. Unknown content). 1 Mirror bag (Silk, also Jin-silk). 1 Bronze Mirror (Dragon design. Late Han Chinese). 1 Felt comb pouch and comb (Silk band, beads). 1 Jin-silk comb pouch (Polychrome, running animal design, dragon, tiger, turtle). 1 Necklace (Silk beads and 20 pearls). 2 Bracelet (Metallic/Golden?). 2 Ear-ornament (Metal, beads, 4 pearl strings). Glass bead (?). 1 Jin-silk mirror bag (Without mirror). 1 silk “fish” (Many-coloured, also Jin-silk).
Textiles (3)	Blankets: 2 Wollen blankets (Yellow-brown, multi-coloured “turtle” design). 2 Wollen carpets (multi-coloured). 1 Brocade blanket (Polychrome, Jin-silk. Chinese character design.) Bedding and clothing (13 types of Jin-silk used, three layers of silks): 1 Hood/headgear (Plain silk). 1 Brocade and felt headgear (Chinese character design, same as blanket.) 1 Silk Belt (Red and blue silk). 1 Male silk upper-garment (Including Jin-Silk.) 1 Female silk upper-garment (Including Jin-silk. Chinese character design. 13 animals.) 1 Male silk undergarment. (Two types of silk) 1 Male upper-garment (Polychrome, Jin-silk and cotton. Chinese characters.) 1 Male pants (Jin-silk.) 1 Male silk gloves (Polychrome Jin-silk. Chinese characters.) 1 Arm-cover (Polychrome silk, including jin-silk. Chinese characters.) 1 Female silk blouse (Two types of silk). 1 Female silk upper-wear (Two types of silk). 1 Female silk pants (Polychrome jin silk. Chinese characters. Animal designs). 1 Female silk skirt (Plain yellow-brown silk.) 1 Silk socks (Silk bands). 1 Female silk gloves (Various silks. Polychrome jin-silk.

¹³⁵² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 2:100–153.

	Chinese characters). 1 Handkerchief (Plain yellow silk). 1 Embroidered boots (Mainly jin-silk. Chinese characters. Clouds and dragons). 1 Leather shoe pair. (Silk embroidery. Jin-silk.) 2 Silk pillows (Jin-brocade. Chinese characters. Grass filling). 1 Wollen pillow (Polychrome). 2 face-covers (Various silks. Jin-silk. Chinese characters.) 1 Wollen waist-string (Polychrome.)
Other (9)	1 Leather ring. 1 Iron piece. 1 Leather bag. 1 Wood tool. 1 Piece of iron ore. 1 Robe (silk). 1 Silk string. 1 Wooden hair stick (?). Bone ornament.

Tomb M4 (Box-shaped) (“Ordinary” items not reported)	
Earthware (2)	1 Jar. 1 Whetstone.
Wooden goods (8)	2 Wooden bowls. 2 Wooden cups. 1 Spindle. 2 Wooden combs. 1 Fire-stick.
Ironware (2)	1 Scythe (Handle of wood. Small, for one handed use). 1 Dagger (Leather sheath).
Bronzeware (1)	1 Bronze mirror (Only knob and string remaining.)
Leather goods (1)	1 Leather bag
Textiles (4)	2 Large fragments (Polychrome jin-silk. Hunt scenes). 2 Waistbands (Polychrome wool).
Ornaments (2)	2 “Make-up” box (Bovine horn. Painted inside).
Wargear (2)	2 Bows.

Tomb M5 (Boat-shaped)	
Earthware (1)	1 spout jar.
Wooden goods (7)	1 Platter. 1 Bowl. 1 Bucket (with strap and beads.) 1 Pedestal. 1 Spindle (and 2 wheels). 2 Forked sticks.
Ironware (2)	1 small knife (wooden handle). 1 belt clasp (much corroded).
Bronzeware (1)	1 Bronze mirror (Four animal style).
Leather goods (2)	2 leather bags.
Textiles (19)	1 Coat (Silk with cotton). 1 Tunic (Silk, grey and crimson). 1 “Top” garment (Grey silk). 1 set of pants (Wool). 1 Skirt (Crimson silk). 1 Headgear (Silk. Greenish and crimson. “Giant bird” head with beads/coral). 1 face cover (Crimson silk). 1 pair of shoes (Silk decoration. Yellow.) 2 Rugs (Sheep and camel wool). 1 Pillow (Silk. Yellow and crimson). 6 waistbands. 1 Comb pouch (Silk and cotton. Beads.) 1 Pouchette (Woollen. Silk decorations.)
Ornaments (1)	1 ear-ornament (Bronze. Glass- and stone-beads.)

Tomb M6 (Boat-shaped) (Not all reported. Badly preserved)	
Wooden goods (3)	1 Bowl. 1 Cup. 1 Spindle base.
Textiles (1)	1 Face cover (Fragment. Yuan-silk).

Tomb M8 (Box-shaped) (Report does not include worn clothing.)	
Earthware (2)	2 Spout jars. (One with the character 王 drawn on in black ink and an engraved “bird’s foot” mark).
Wooden goods (9)	3 Wooden cups (One with a swastika and one with a cross carved on the underside). 2 Wooden stands/tables. 2 Forked sticks. 1 Spindle. 1 Spindle box.
Textiles (12)	1 Woollen carpet (Polychrome. “Tortoise-shell/lozenge” pattern). 1 Felt blanket (Polychrome. Embroidered). 2 Pillows (Jin-silk. Chinese characters). 1 Arm

	cover (Jin-silk. Chinese characters.) 1 “Make-up” bag with a fish-shaped attachment (Jin-silk. Animal designs). 1 Comb bag (Jin-silk. Figured design.) 1 Headgear (Jin-silk. Figures and Chinese characters). 1 Silk jacket (Yuan-silk. Yellow. Blue border decoration.) 1 Male face cover (Yuan-silk. White). Silk belt/band (Yuan and Jin-silk. Chinese characters.) 1 Cotton cloth (Silk decoration along edges.) 1 Handkerchief (Jin-silk).
Ornaments (8)	Metal belt-clasps. 4 Glass beads. 1 Coral pendant. 1 Bronze mirror (Four nipple style). 1 Small leather bag (Containing a brown powder).
Wargear (12)	1 Bow (Tips wrapped with two silk bands. Silk bands carry kharosthi characters.) 2 Quivers. 4 Arrows. 1 Bow bag/holster (Jin-silk, cream-coloured and wavy design). 2 Four-lobed dagger sheaths (Coloured leather and metal details. Flower patterns). 2 Iron daggers.

Table 2: Silk in the Kharosthi documents

Document	Description	Amount (In total)	Context
n.3	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	41 units	Exchanged
n.35	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	Unspecified	Debt
n.225	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	5 units	Received/Listed
n.316	<i>Prigha</i> silk	A textile	Sent as a gift
n.318	White silk	A jacket	Stolen
n.345	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	42 units	Stolen/Fine
n.348	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	12 units	Fine
n.489	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	33 units	Various fines
n.566	Many-coloured silk	A textile	Stolen
n.660	<i>Pamdura</i> silk, <i>sanapru</i> silk, royal silk, silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	15 units (2, 2, 1, 10)	Taken/Sent
n.697	<i>Yirka</i> (silk?)	5	Sent
n.699	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	Unclear	Unclear (fragmented)
n.756	A silk bag (written on)	1	Present
n.807	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	100 <i>panaya</i> (??)	Label
n.871	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	40 unspecified	Label
n.872	Word missing, implied	30 <i>dithi</i>	Label
n.873	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	More than 20 <i>dithi</i>	Label
n.874	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	30 <i>dithi</i>	Label
n.875	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	30 <i>dithi</i>	Label
n.876	Silk (<i>paṭa</i>)	30 <i>dithi</i>	Label
n.877	Word missing, implied	30 <i>dithi</i>	Label

Table 3: Commodities sent as gifts, by individual items.

Commodity	Number of appearances	Note
Not specified	9	-
<i>Lastuga</i>	4	Cloth
Ginger	4	Includes <i>ariḍi</i> and <i>ariḍaga</i> .
<i>Hastavarṣaga</i>	3	Cloth. Possibly mittens as <i>hasta</i> means hands.
<i>Sira</i>	3	-
Arrow	2	Said to be a token of luck in n.231.
Jewel	2	-
Betel	2	A bag worth sent in n.721.
Bow-string	1	-
<i>Chotaga</i>	1	-
<i>Cinaveḍha</i>	1	Means a Chinese wrap/turban. Likely silk.

Coat	1	-
<i>Leśpa</i>	1	-
<i>Livaṣa</i>	1	-
<i>Mepoḡa</i>	1	-
<i>Paṃzavaṃta</i>	1	Cloth. Made from <i>prigha</i> silk.
Rope	1	Length and material not given.
<i>Sidha</i> salt	1	Possibly “Salt from Sindhu” (?)
Silk bag	1	Written on.
<i>Vatu</i>	1	-

Table 4: Commodities sent as gifts, by identifiable type.

Commodity	Number of appearances	Note
Cloth	8	-
Unknown	8	-
Spices	7	Six of which are certainly imported.
Silk	3	Including the <i>Cinaveḡha</i> .
Weapons	3	-
Jewels	2	-
Tools	1	-

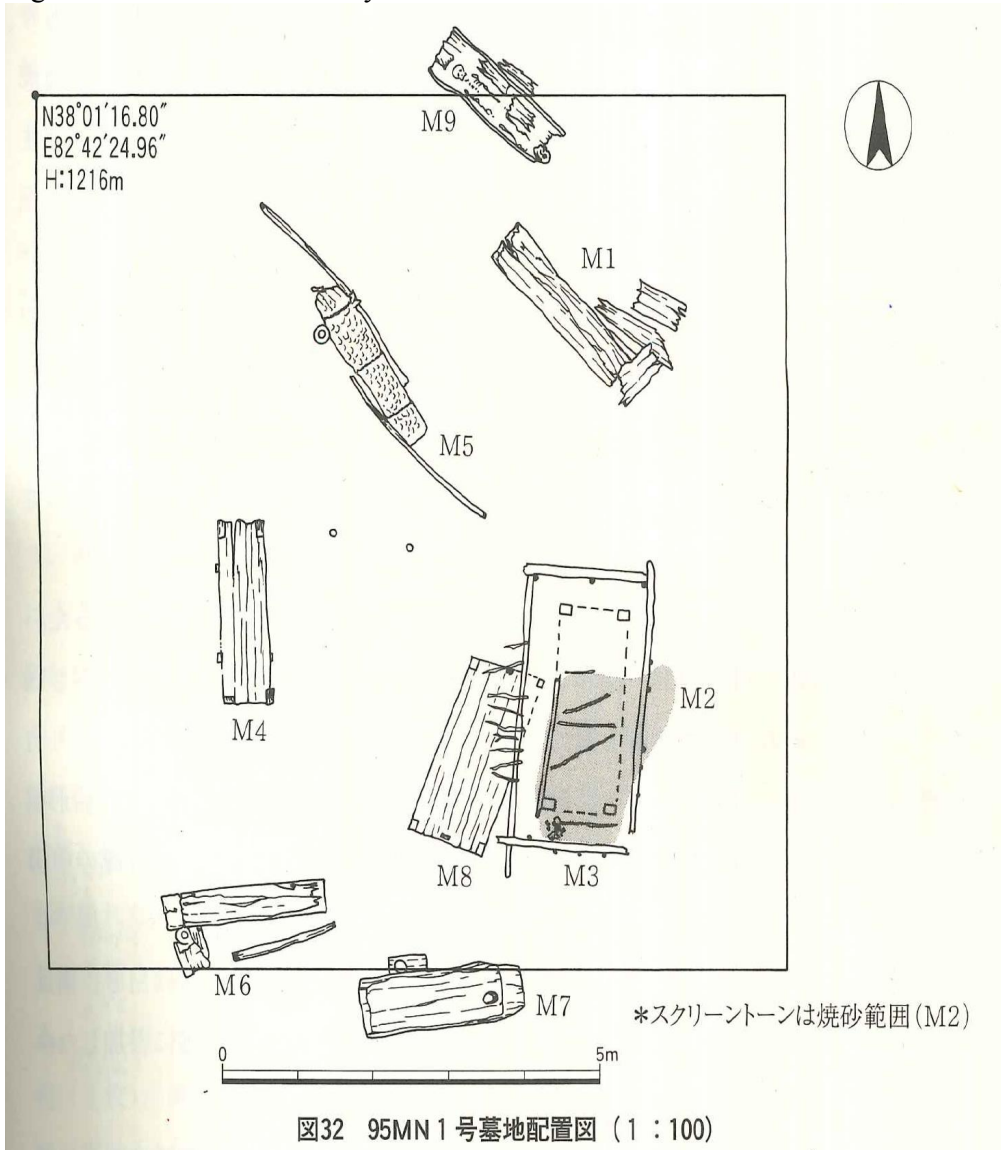
Table 5: Nature of the relationship between sender and receiver.

Relationship	Number of letters	Note
Unclear	10	-
Between officials	9	-
To officials	3	Sent from non-officials.
Close kin	3	Parents and children, or siblings.
In laws	3	Usually sent to both in-law and child.

Table 6: Term used for the gift.

Relationship	Number of letters	Note
Present	14	<i>Prahuḡa</i> meaning gift or present.
Token of Remembrance	10	<i>Maṃnasimkaro prahuḡa</i> , literally “Gift to keep one in mind”.
Not stated/legible	3	-
Token of Luck	1	<i>Maghalartaya</i> , literally “Present for the sake of good luck”.

Figure 1: Plan of the Cemetery 95MN1¹³⁵³



¹³⁵³ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 2:101. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 2: Plan of the Cemetery 97MN1¹³⁵⁴

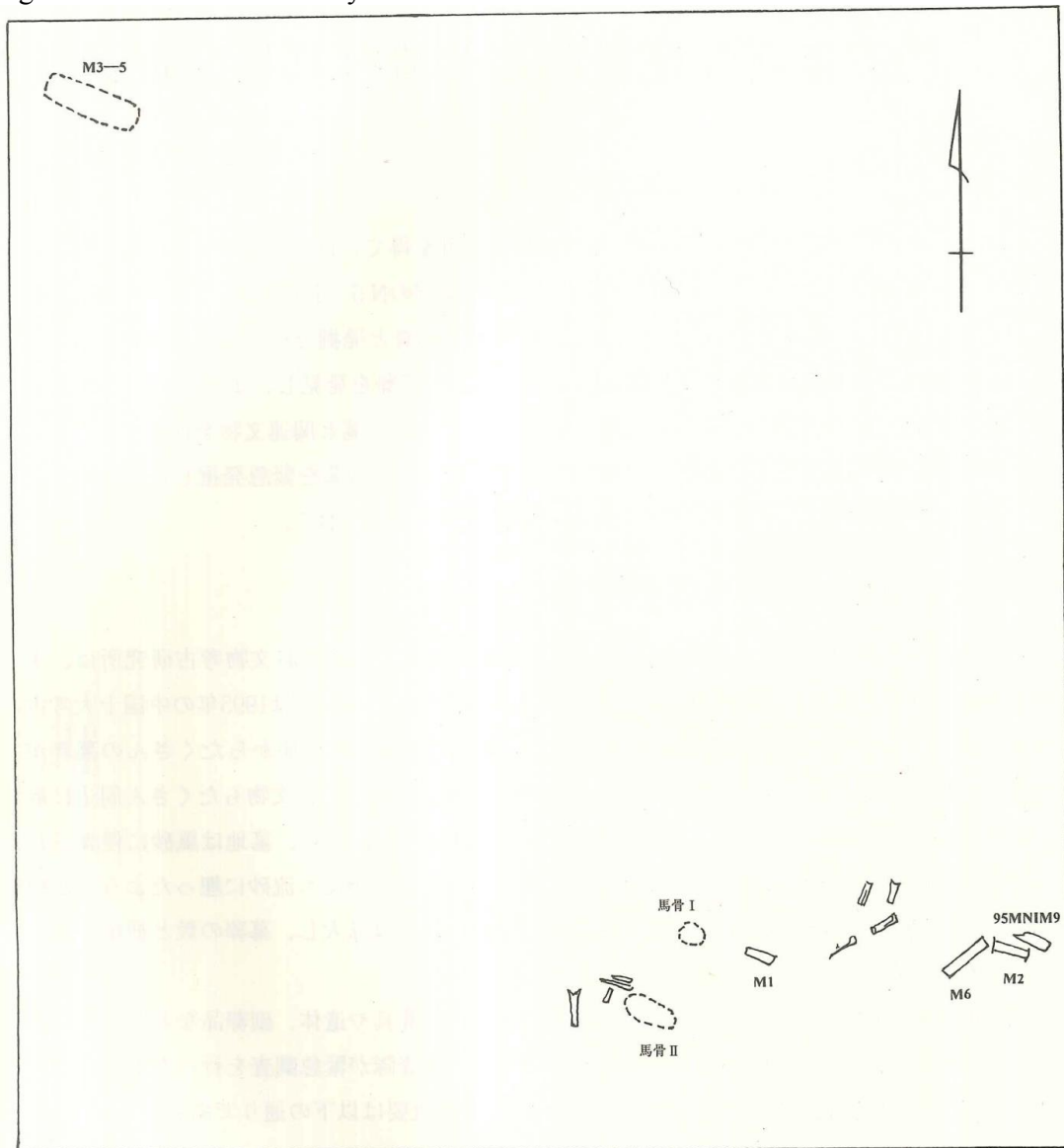


図1 ニヤ遺跡97MNI号墓地墓葬M1～M6配置図(1/400)

¹³⁵⁴ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), 日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China), 3:30-31. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

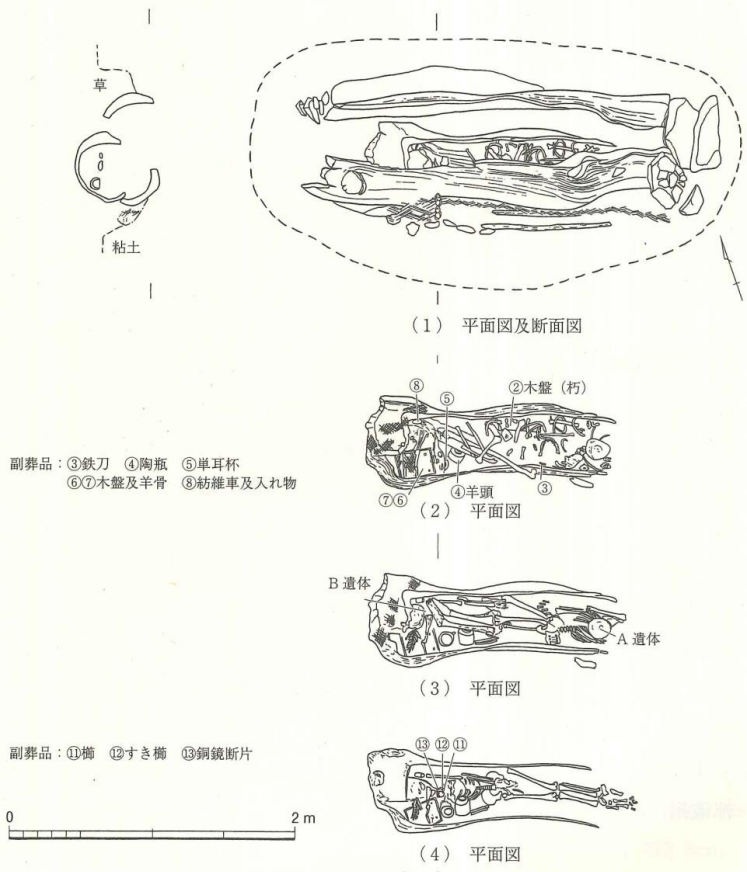


図2 97MNIM 1 墓実測図

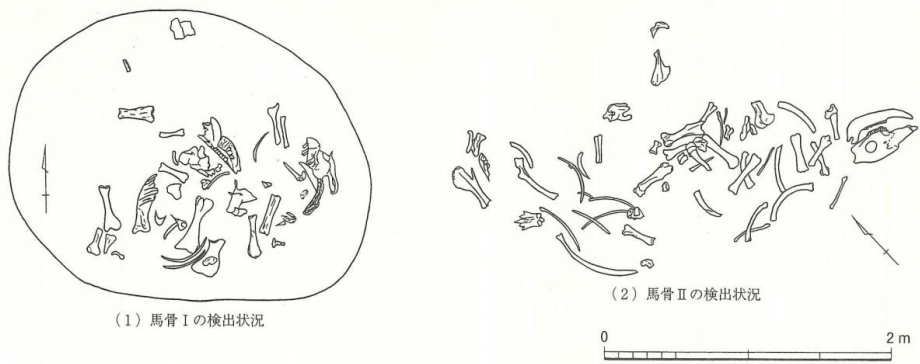


図3 97MNIM 1 墓と馬骨の検出状況

Figure 3: Tomb M5¹³⁵⁵



5. M 5 棺中情况
M 5 棺内状况

6. M 5 木棺中女性尸体
M 5 女性被葬者

7. M 5 木棺中女性尸体的发型
M 5 女性被葬者髮形

8. M 5 木棺中的女性尸体（去覆面后）
M 5 女性被葬者（覆面取り外し後）

¹³⁵⁵ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, vol. 2, fig. 87. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 4: Silk pillow, pouchette and headgear from M5¹³⁵⁶



32. 絹枕 33. 錦枕 34. 手套 35. 毛织袋 36. 帽
 絹枕 錦枕 手袋 毛織リポシェット 帽子
 37. 帽（部分“凤头”形装饰）
 帽子（部分鳳頭形装饰）

图版九十二 95MN1号墓地(二十二) M1・5・6文物照片

¹³⁵⁶ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 92. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 5: Tomb M3¹³⁵⁷



95MN 1 号墓M 3 木棺出土状态 (朝向北)
95MN 1 号墓M 3 木棺出土状态 (南から)

¹³⁵⁷ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 1. (Front)
(Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 6: Couple of tomb M3¹³⁵⁸



95MN 1 号墓M 3 棺内状态
95MN 1 号墓M 3 棺内状况

¹³⁵⁸ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 2. (Front)
(Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

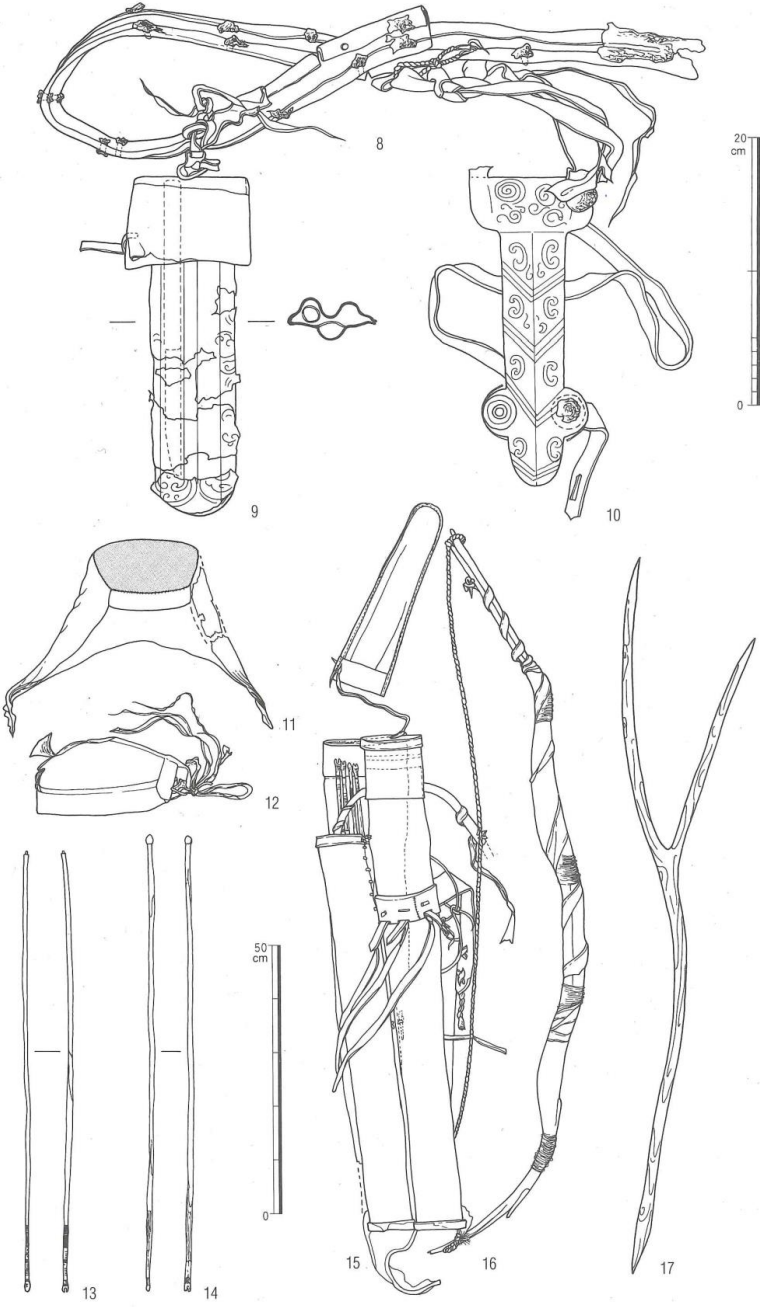
Figure 7: Inner garments of the couple of M3¹³⁵⁹
 (The right hand garments, 2, 4 and 6, belonged to the female)



- | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. 男戸內衣
男性肌着 | 2. 女戸絹上衣
女性絹ブラウス | 3. 男錦面錦深衣
男性錦上着 | 4. 女戸絹夾衣
女性絹上着 |
| 5. 男錦袴
男性錦ズボン | 6. 女錦袴
女性錦ズボン | 7. 錦腰靴
錦ブーツ | 8. 勾花皮鞋
刺繍付革靴 |

¹³⁵⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 75. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

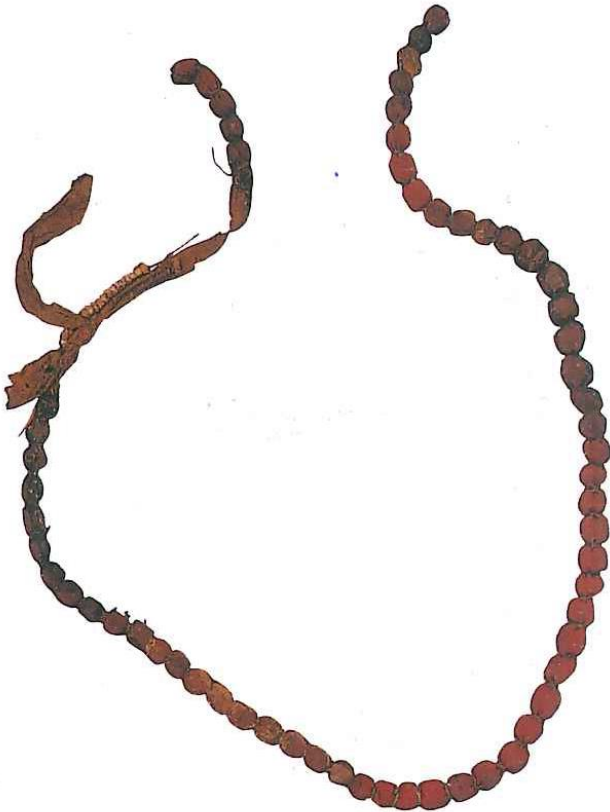
Figure 8: Wargear of tomb M3¹³⁶⁰



M 3 出土文物实测图
M 3 出土遺物実測図

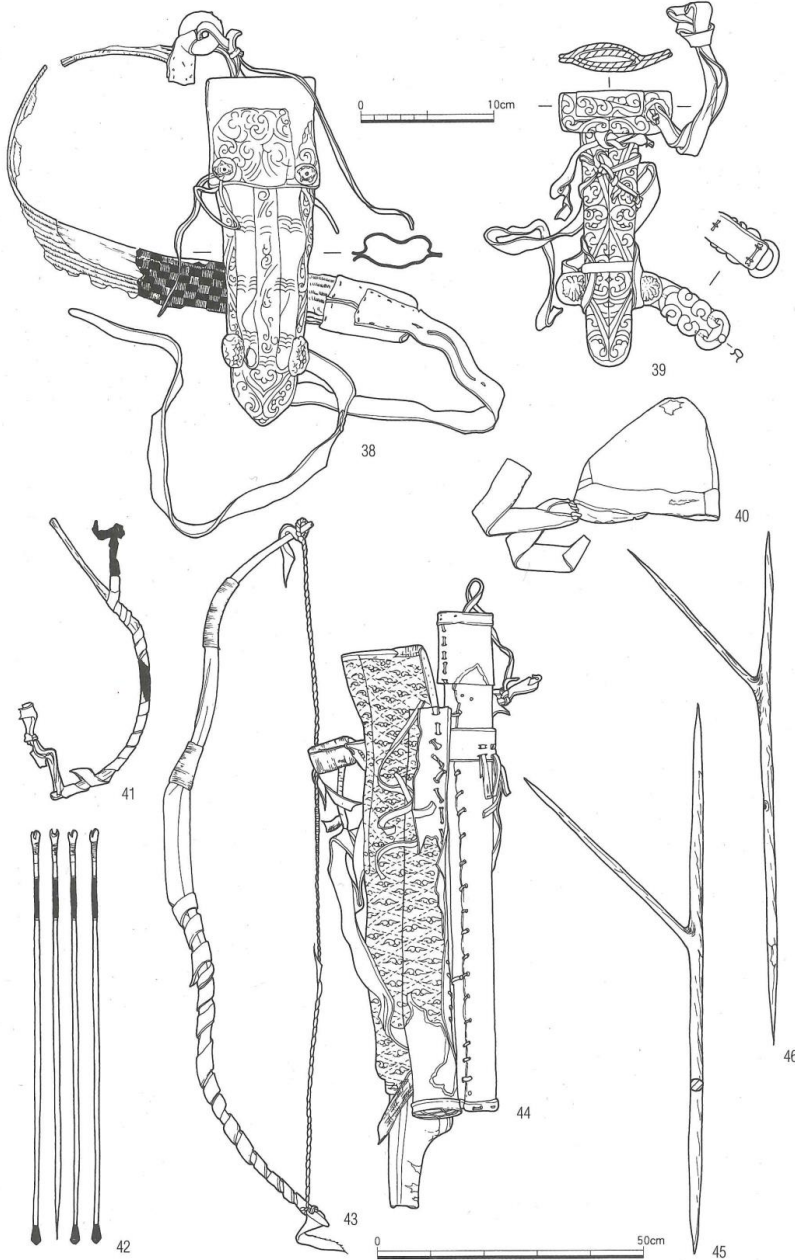
¹³⁶⁰ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 23. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 9: Necklace worn by the woman of M3¹³⁶¹



¹³⁶¹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 77. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

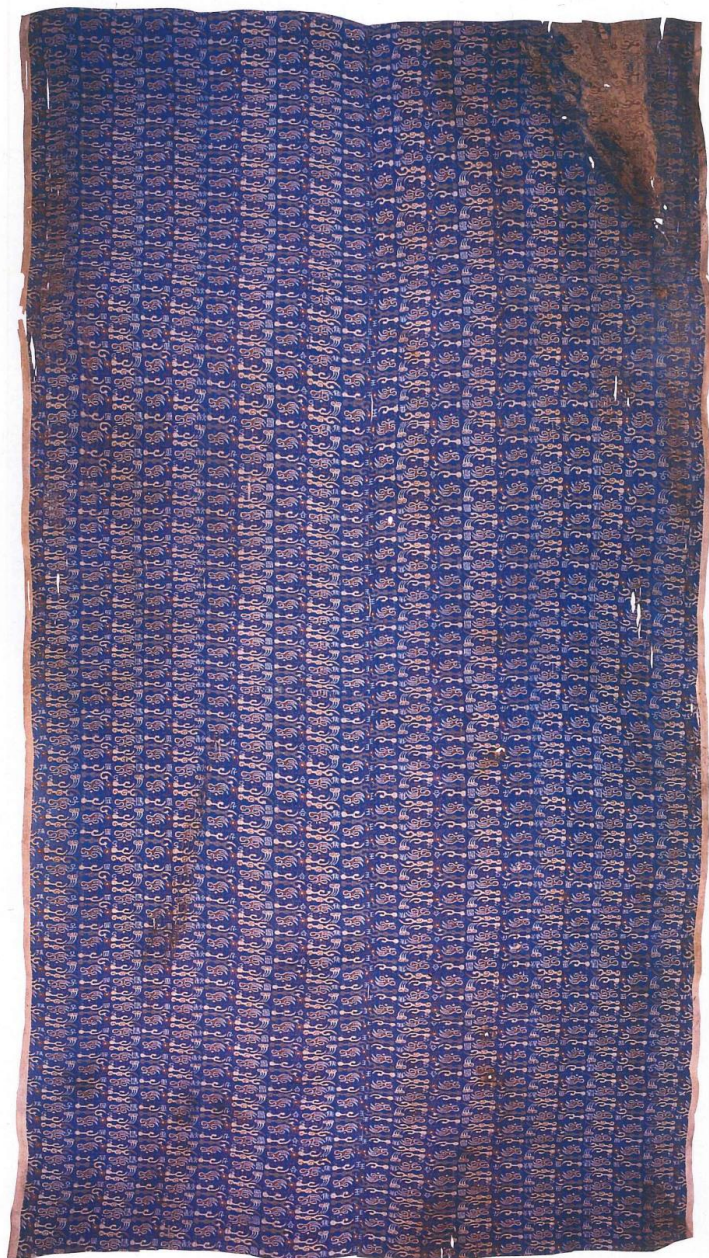
Figure 10: Wargear of tomb M8¹³⁶²



M 8 出土文物实测图
M 8 出土遺物实测図

¹³⁶² The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 30. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 11: “Kings and Lords” blanket from M3¹³⁶³



95MN 1 号墓M 3 出土 “王侯合昏千秋万岁宜子孙” 锦衾
95MN 1 号墓M 3 出土 「王侯合昏千秋万歳宜子孫」 錦

¹³⁶³ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 3. (Front)
(Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 12: “King” jug from M8¹³⁶⁴



1. 帶流罐
注口壺

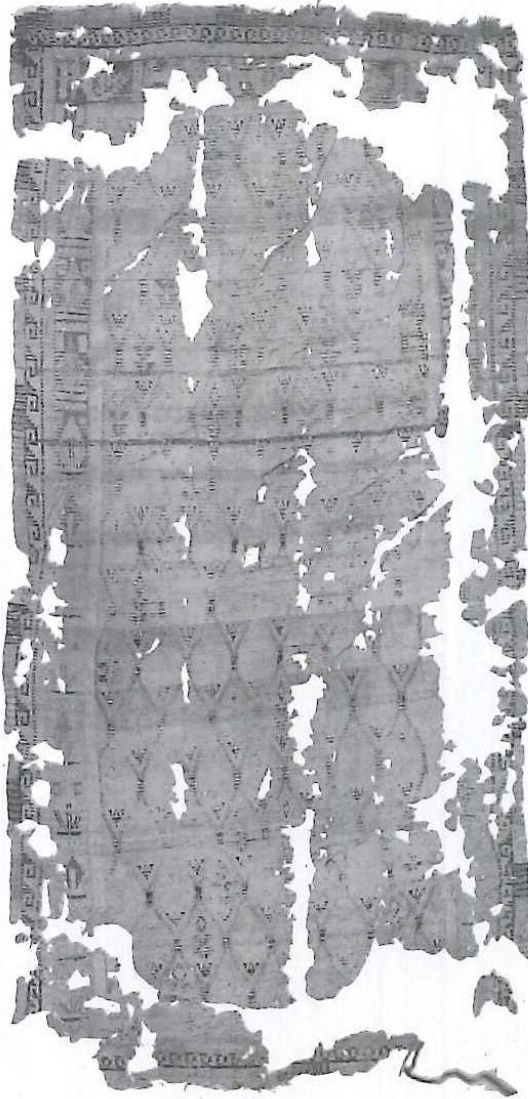
Figure 13: Comb and mirror bags in *jin*-silk from M3¹³⁶⁵



¹³⁶⁴ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 85. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

¹³⁶⁵ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 77. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 14: Lozenge (Turtle-patterned) carpet from M3¹³⁶⁶



4

4. 彩色龟甲纹裁绒毛毯
彩色龜甲文毛布

¹³⁶⁶ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 73. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 15: Doll from ruin N.22. In a dress of coloured silk.¹³⁶⁷



¹³⁶⁷ The British Museum, 'Doll from the Niya Site'.

Figure 16: Mirrors from M3 and M5¹³⁶⁸



2



7

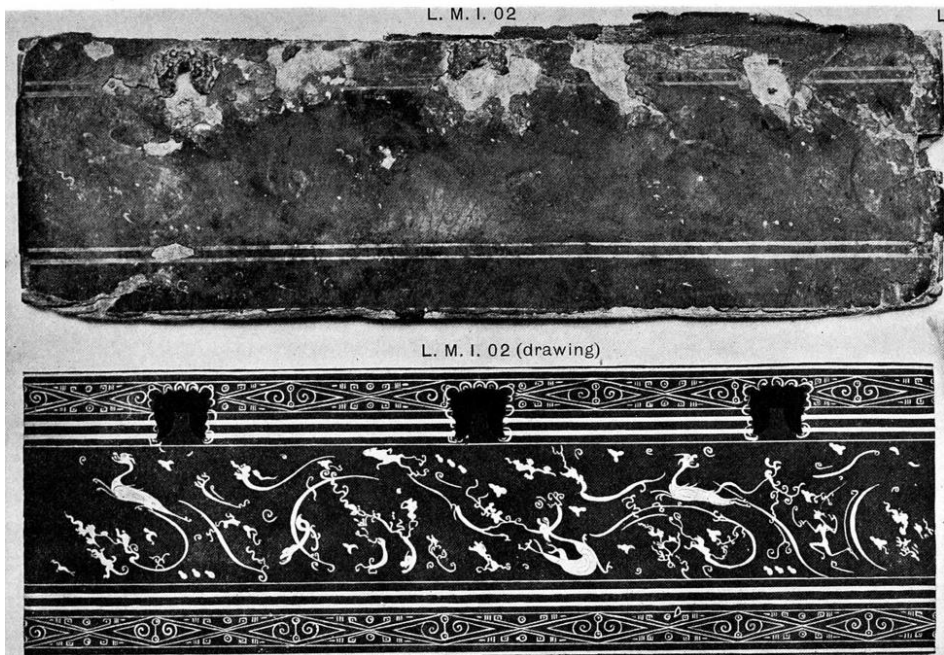
¹³⁶⁸ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, vol. 2, figs 74, 88. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 17: Lacquered box from M3¹³⁶⁹



10

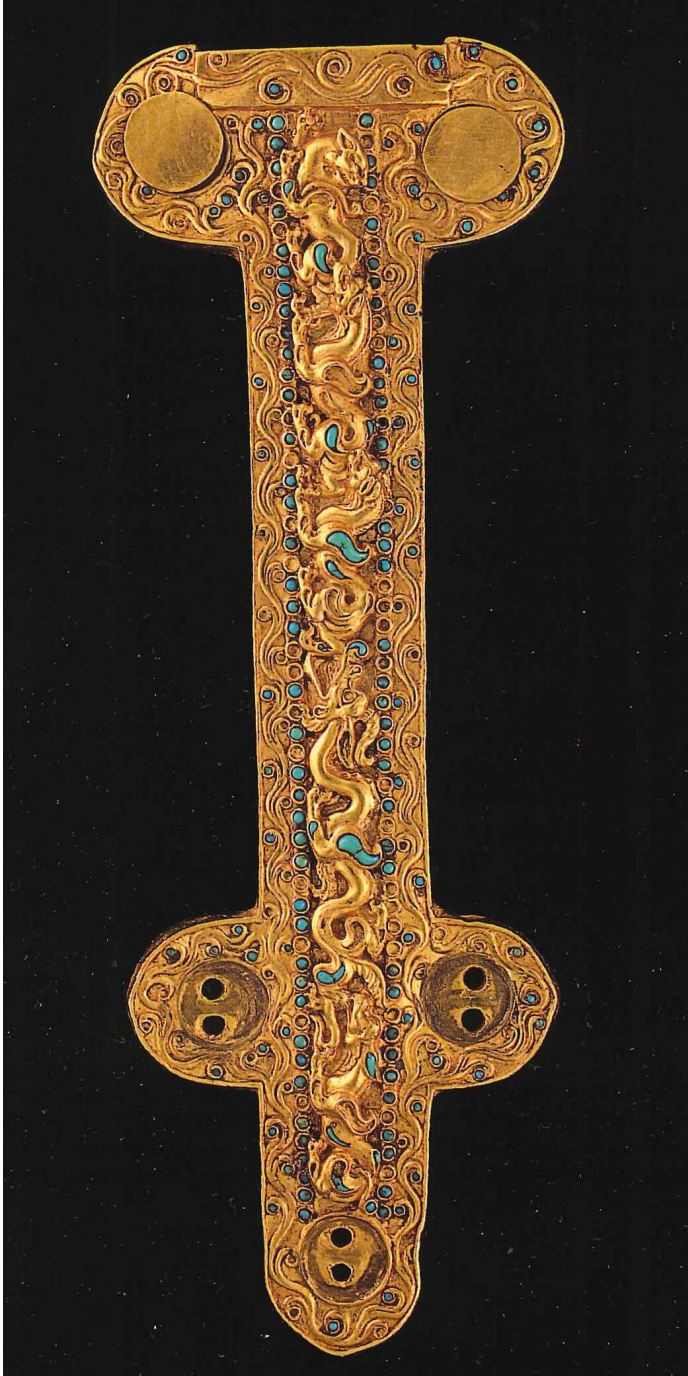
Figure 18: Parts of lacquered casket from L.M.1¹³⁷⁰



¹³⁶⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 74. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

¹³⁷⁰ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*, fig. 25. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 19: Four-lobed dagger sheath from Tillya Tepe, tomb 4¹³⁷¹



¹³⁷¹ Schiltz, 'Tillya Tepe, the Hill of Gold: A Nomad Necropolis', 272.

Figure 20: Seal imprints of document n.235 (N.xv.24) and n.332 (N.xv.167)¹³⁷²

N. xv. 24.



N. xv. 167 (enlarged).

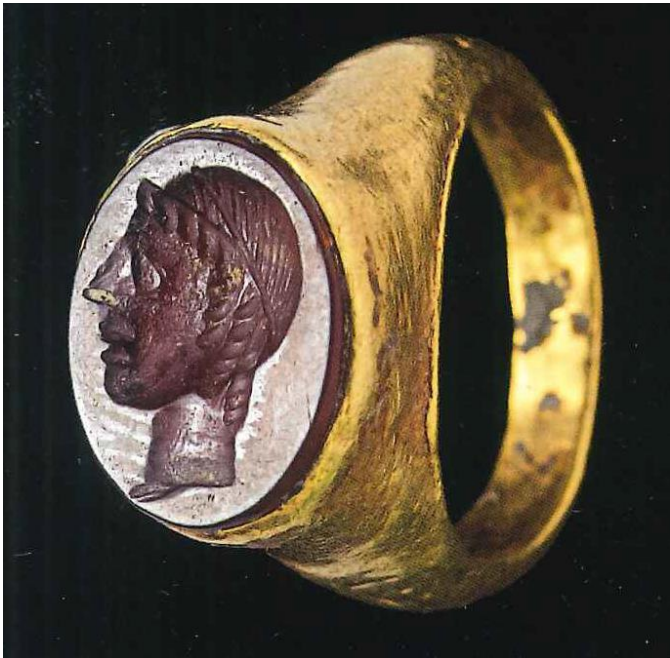


¹³⁷² Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, vol. 1, figs 71-72.

Figure 21: Seal imprint on document n.328 (N.xv.163) and signet ring from Tillya Tepe, tomb 6¹³⁷³

N. xv. 163.

[ANI.]



¹³⁷³ Stein, vol. 1, fig. 72; Schiltz, 'Tillya Tepe, the Hill of Gold: A Nomad Necropolis', 290.

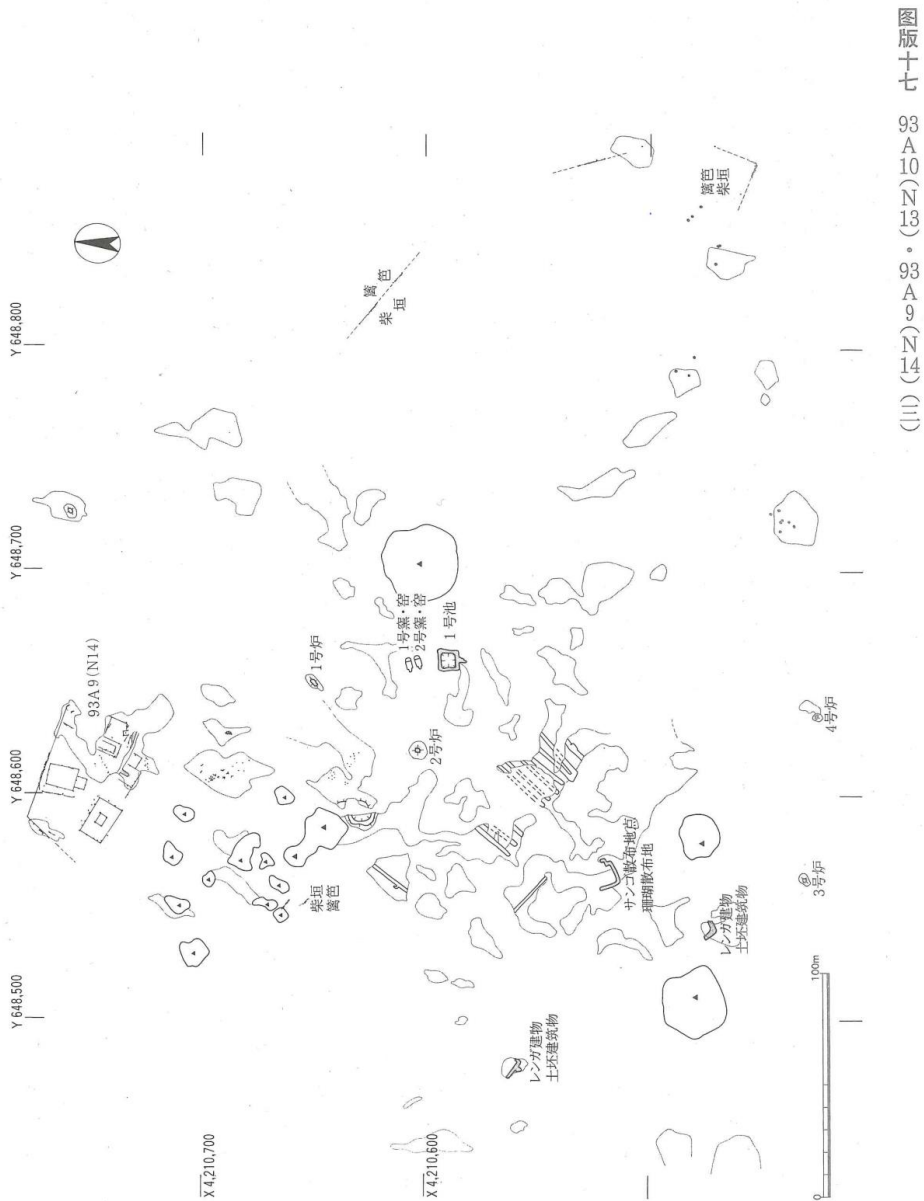
Figure 22: Beads and ornaments found by the Niya Minfeng Museum¹³⁷⁴



民豊県ニヤ文物館収蔵文物 (5)

¹³⁷⁴ Bukkyo Daigaku (佛教大学アジア宗教文化情報研究所), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, vol. 3, fig. 28. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 23: Plan of the “Southern Workshop” area and ruin N.14¹³⁷⁵ (“Furnaces” marked with 炉 and “kilns” with 窯)



図版十七
93A10(N13)・93A9(N14)(三)

93A9 (N14) 南部作坊遗址周边实测图 (1 : 2500) 浓淡点图表示灰白色粘土层的露出部分。
93A9 (N14) 南方工房址周边实测图 (1 : 2500) ハーフトーンは灰白色粘土層の露出部分を示す。

¹³⁷⁵ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), 日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China), 1999, vol. 2, fig. 17. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 24: Coral and Cowry finds from the “Southern Workshop” area¹³⁷⁶



2. 93A10 (N13) 周辺、93A9 (N14) 南部作坊遺址采集珊瑚、貝制裝飾品
93A10 (N13) 周辺・93A9 (N14) 南方工房址採集サンゴ・貝製裝飾品

¹³⁷⁶ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), vol. 2, fig. 68. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 25: Carved and painted wood, including parts of a chair, from ruin
 L.B.4¹³⁷⁷



¹³⁷⁷ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, fig. 33.

Chapter 7: Islands in a sea of sand

Table 1: Number of documents containing locations by type

Type	Frequency
Royal Command	81
Letter	39
List	25
Legal	25
Contract	21
Report	15
Royal Decree	7
NA	5

Table 2: All individual sites

Locations		
Ajiyama-avana.	Kusala's area.	Seni.
Alma Bhumi.	Lominana.	Sitga?
Apemna's area.	Lustu's area.	Snuna.
Asga's area.	Lyi[pe]ya's kilme.	Sokhaliga (?).
Asoga's kilme.	Masina.	Sorkotsa
Ayamatu Vasa.	Nastimta's kilme	Suhasura's region.
Bhagasa.	Navaga-avana.	Suliga (Sogdia).
Bhoti-nagara.	Navote.	Suryada (?).
Bumni.	New village of the Queen.	The desert.
Cadota.	Nina.	The Mountain (Parvata).
Calmadana.	Opimta.	Tomgraka-maharayasa-avana.
Calmasa's kilme.	Pagine-avana	Trasa-avana.
Camu Prete.	Parcona Bridge.	Tsaga.
Catisa devi-avana.	Peta-avana.	Usasa(?)
China.	Peta-nagara	Vamtu-avana. (Also Amtu)
Deviyae Ogu Anugaya's Avana.	Pisali.	Varua's area.
Duki mountains.	Protsa kresa (uncertain)	Vasu's area.
Jayasa's kilme.	Pumni.	Vega-kilme.
Kacaka's kilme.	Pumnyasa's kilme.	Village of Kamcaga.
Kapgeya's kilme.	Pusgari.	Vrganicita.
Khamni.	Remena.	Vugto's area.
Khema.	Rocakhora of Ogu Jayasa.	Vurcuga Luthu's area.
Khotan	Saca.	Vuru's area.
Kilme of ogu Azuraka.	Samana.	Yasala.
Kilme of the ogu Asoka.	Samarena.	Yave-avana.
Kogitasasa.	Samarsa.	Yirumdhina-avana.
Kroraina. (Capital/Great City)	Sapuka?	
Kuci.	Satre.	

Table 3: All sites except *kilme* and *avana* and their number of occurrences.

Locations	Number of occurrences
Alma Bhumi.	1
Ayamatu Vasa.	1
Bhagasa.	4
Bhoti-nagara.	2
Bumni.	1
Cadota.	45
Calmadana.	17
Camu Prete.	1
China.	6
Duki mountains.	1
Khamni.	1
Khema.	7
Khotan	41
Kogitasasa.	1
Kroraina.	25
Kuci.	5
Lominana.	1
Masina.	6
Navote.	2
Nina.	10
Opimta.	1
Parcona Bridge.	1
Pisali.	1
Protsa kresa (uncertain)	1
Pumni.	1
Pusgari.	2
Remena.	3
Rocakhora of Ogu Jayasa.	1
Saca.	17
Samana.	1
Samarena.	1
Samarsa.	1
Sapuka?	1
Satre.	1
Seni.	1
Sitga?	1
Snuna.	1
Sokhaliga (?).	1
Sorkotsa	1
Suliga (Sogdia).	1
Suryada (?).	1
The desert.	1
The Mountain (Parvata).	19
Tsaga.	4
Usasa(?)	1
Village of Kamcaga.	1
Vrganicita.	1
Yasala.	1

Table 4: Betweenness Centrality, graph one. Table 5: Betweenness Centrality, graph two.

Locations	Betweenness Centrality (in percentages)	Locations	Betweenness Centrality (in percentages)
Cadota	80,04	Calmadana	24.08
Saca	7	Pisali	13.11
Kroraina	4,56	Khotan	11.91
Khotan	3,08	China	11.21
Calmadana	2,43	Saca	10.69
China	1	Cadota	10.56
Nina	0,97	Kroraina	7.85
Pisali	0,58	Tsaga	5.94
Parvata	0,22	Nina	2.49
Khema	0,07	Parvata	2.05
Tsaga	0,06	Khema	0.09
All others	0	All others	0

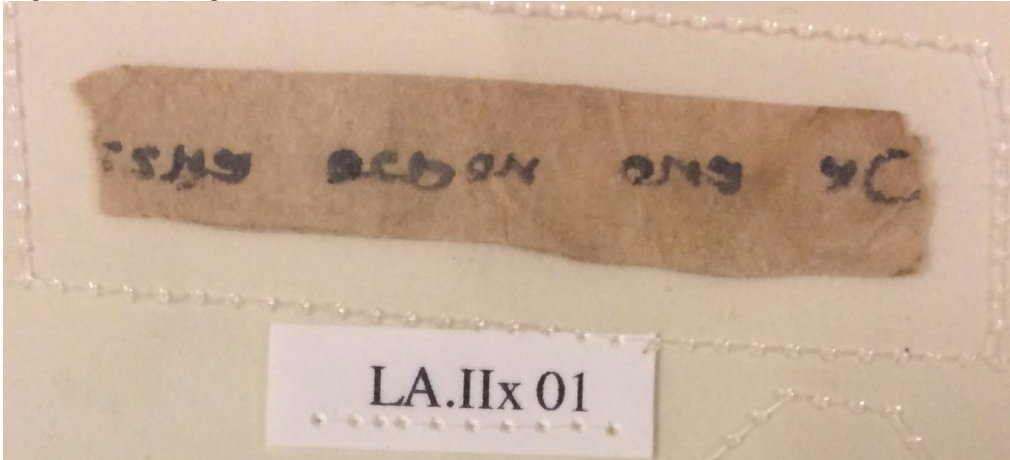
Table 6: Betweenness Centrality, graph two, without document n.122

Locations	Betweenness Centrality (in percentages)
Kroraina	21.28
Pisali	17.76
Cadota	11.51
Khotan	11.10
China	9.30
Calmadana	8.34
Saca	8.28
Tsaga	4.86
Nina	4.81
Parvata	2.38
Khema	0.37
All others	0

Table 7: Contact matrix of major sites

Locations	Cadota	Calmadana	China	Khema	Khotan	Kroraina	Kuci	Nina	Parvata	Saca	Suliga
Cadota	0	4	0	3	8	4	3	3	5	8	0
Calmadana	4	0	2	0	3	2	0	2	0	1	0
China	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Khema	3	0	0	0	4	1	0	1	0	2	0
Khotan	8	3	1	4	0	2	0	2	3	6	1
Kroraina	4	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	1	0
Kuci	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nina	3	2	1	1	3	1	0	0	1	4	0
Parvata	5	0	0	0	4	2	0	1	0	3	0
Saca	8	1	0	2	6	1	0	4	3	0	0
Suliga	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 1: The Sogdian document L.A.2.x.01



Chapter 8: Forms of long-distance exchange in the Southern Tarim Basin

Table 1: Overview of Chinese-Krorainan interaction in Chinese sources

<i>Hanshu</i>		
Date	Type	Context
Ca. 110 BCE	Offered tribute to Han	King of Loulan defeated in battle
Ca. 110 BCE	Hostage sent to Han	King of Loulan defeated in battle
Ca. 104-101 BCE	King taken prisoner	King of Loulan aided the Xiongnu
Ca. 92 BCE	Hostage sent to Han	Son of the new king of Loulan
Between 92 and 77 BCE	King ordered to court	Refused to come
Ca. 77 BCE	Gift given by Han	As a pre-tense for an assassination
Ca. 77 BCE	Gift given by Han	Seal and ribbon to new king
Ca. 77 BCE	Wife sent by Han	A woman of the palace.

<i>Hou Hanshu</i>		
Date	Type	Context
38 CE	Offered tribute to Han	Together with the king of Yarkand
45 CE	Offered tribute to Han	Asking for a Protector General
45 CE	Offered hostage to Han	Asking for a Protector General
46 CE	Asked aid from the Han	Asked for a Protector General
94 CE	Submitted, sent hostage.	“More than fifty kingdoms” (?)
119 CE	Submitted to the Han	After the Han re-occupied Hami
127 CE	Submitted to the Han	“Other kingdoms, seventeen altogether”

<i>Sangou zhi</i>		
Date	Type	Context
222 CE	Offered tribute to Wei	In the reign of Wendi of the Wei dynasty

<i>Jinshu</i>		
Date	Type	Context
Ca. 283 CE	Sent hostage to Jin	In the reign of Wudi of the Jin dynasty
Ca. 283 CE	Offered tribute to Jin	In the reign of Wudi of the Jin dynasty
Ca. 330-331 CE	Attacked, sent daughter to Western Liang	In the reign of Zhang Jun of the Western Liang
Between 376 and 382 CE	Came to court to Former Qin	In the reign of Fu Jian of the Former Qin dynasty
Between 376 and 382 CE	Offered tribute to Former Qin	See above
Between 376 and 382 CE	Received court dresses from the Former Qin	See above

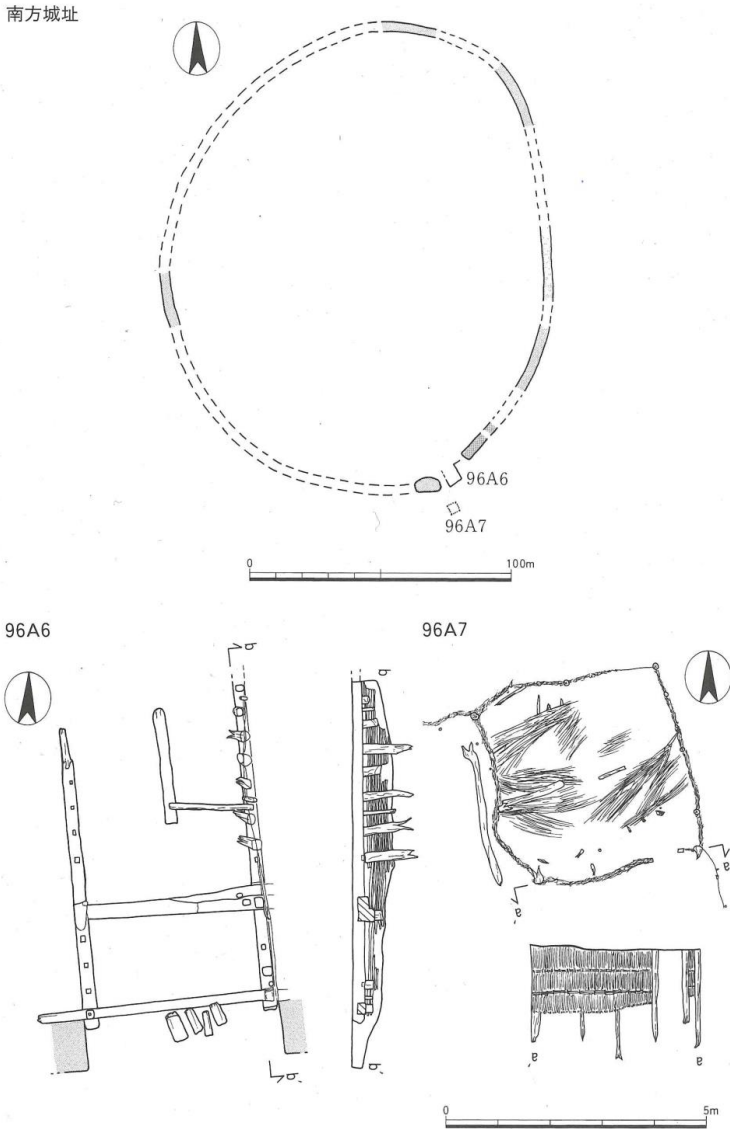
Figure 1: Chinese wooden slip N.xv.78 from ruin N.5¹³⁷⁸



¹³⁷⁸ Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, vol. 1, fig. 112.

Chapter 9: The Tarim States as actors in regional exchange networks

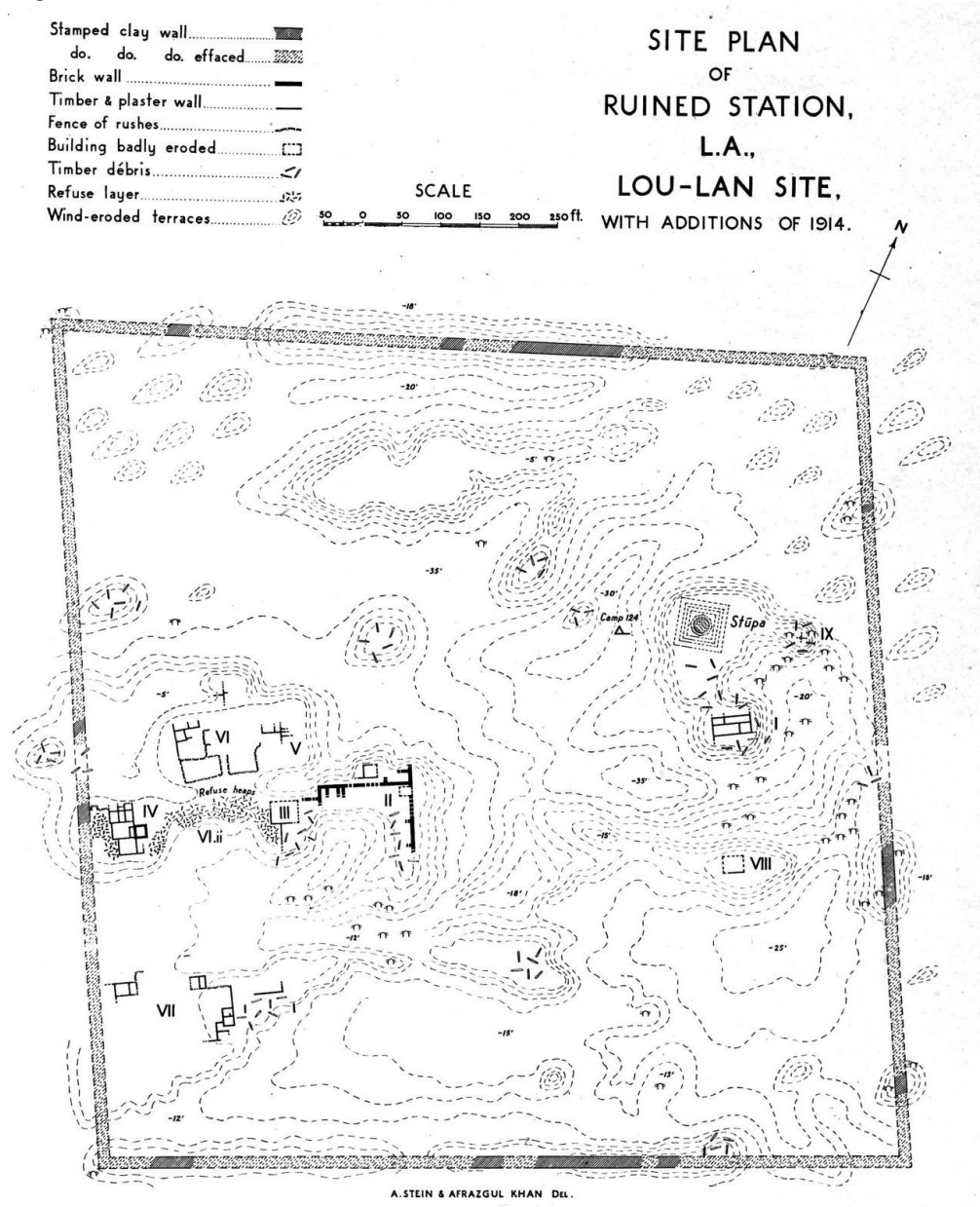
Figure 1: Plan of the circumvallation in the southern part of the Niya site¹³⁷⁹



南方城址示意图 (1 : 2000) 96A 6 城门、96A 7 房址实测图 (1 : 100)
 南方城址模式图 (1 : 2000) 96A 6 城门・96A 7 住居实测图 (1 : 100)

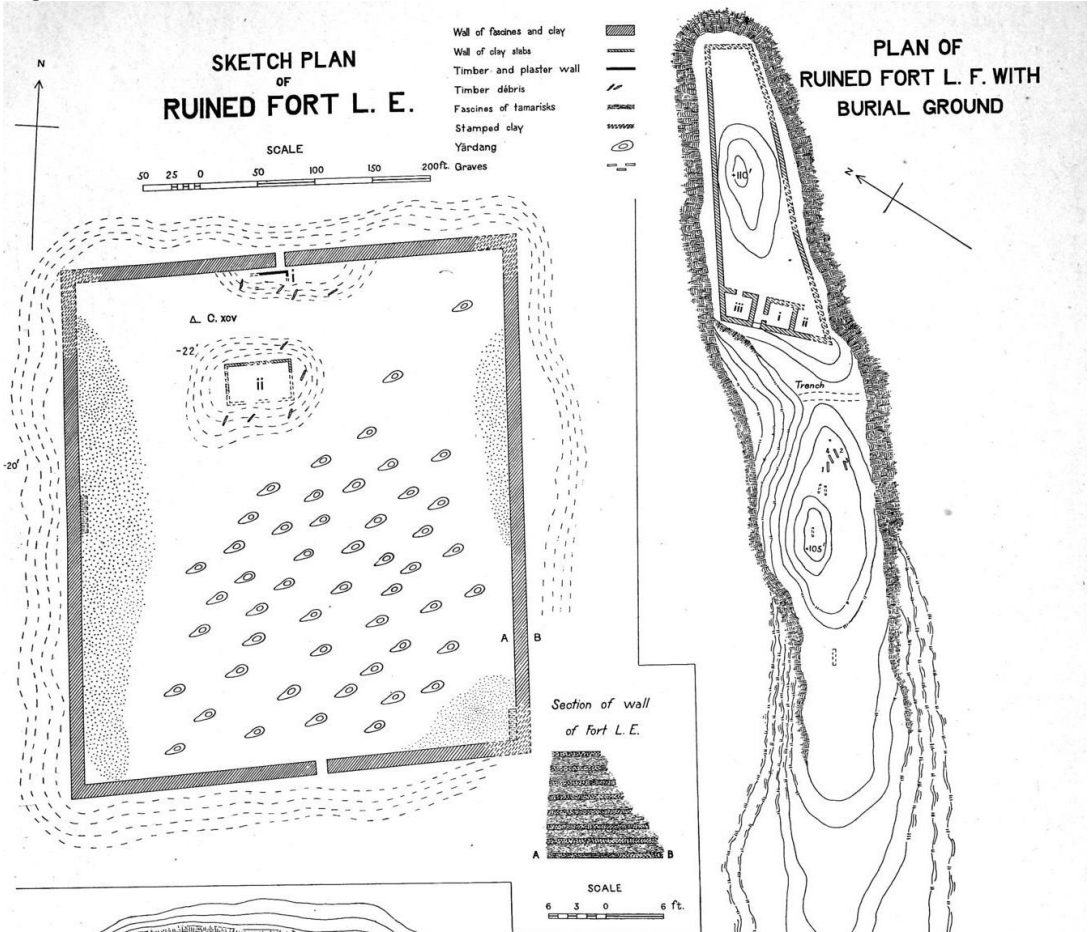
¹³⁷⁹ The Sino-Japanese Joint Research of the Niya Site (日中共同ニヤ遺跡学術調査隊), *日中共同尼雅遺跡学術調査報告書 (Niya Site: Research Report into an Ancient Town in Xinjiang, China)*, 1999, vol. 2, fig. 38. (Images used courtesy of the Academic Research Organization for Niya, Bukkyo University, Japan.)

Figure 2: Plan of the circumvallation at the L.A site¹³⁸⁰



¹³⁸⁰ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*. Plan 23

Figure 3: Plan of the fort L.E and L.F¹³⁸¹



¹³⁸¹ Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su and Eastern Iran*. Plan 12

Figure 4: Plan of the fort L.K.¹³⁸²

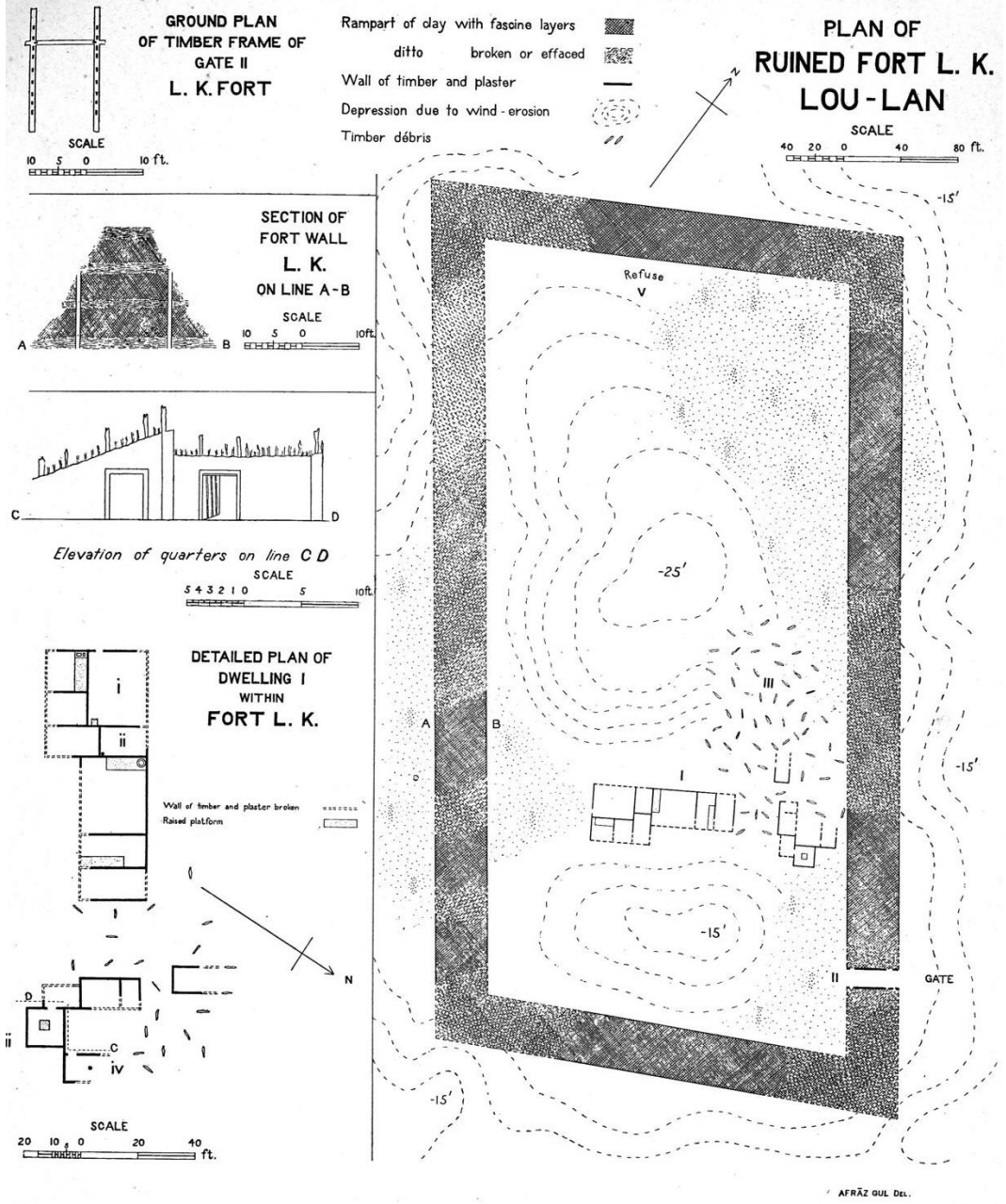
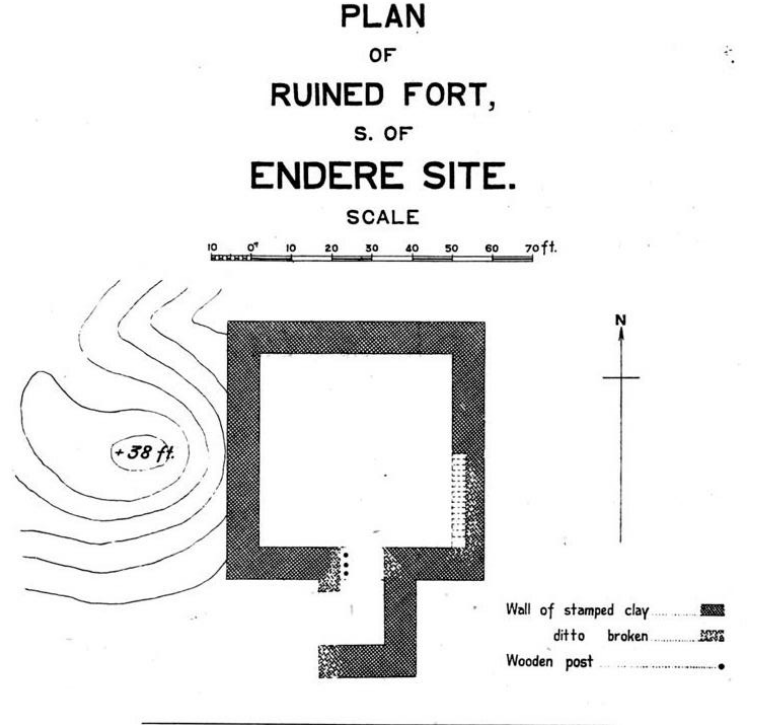


Figure 5: Plan and picture of the southern fort at the Endere site¹³⁸³



82. ANCIENT FORTIFIED POST AT S. END OF ENDERE SITE, SEEN FROM SOUTH.

¹³⁸³ Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, 282. Plan 21.

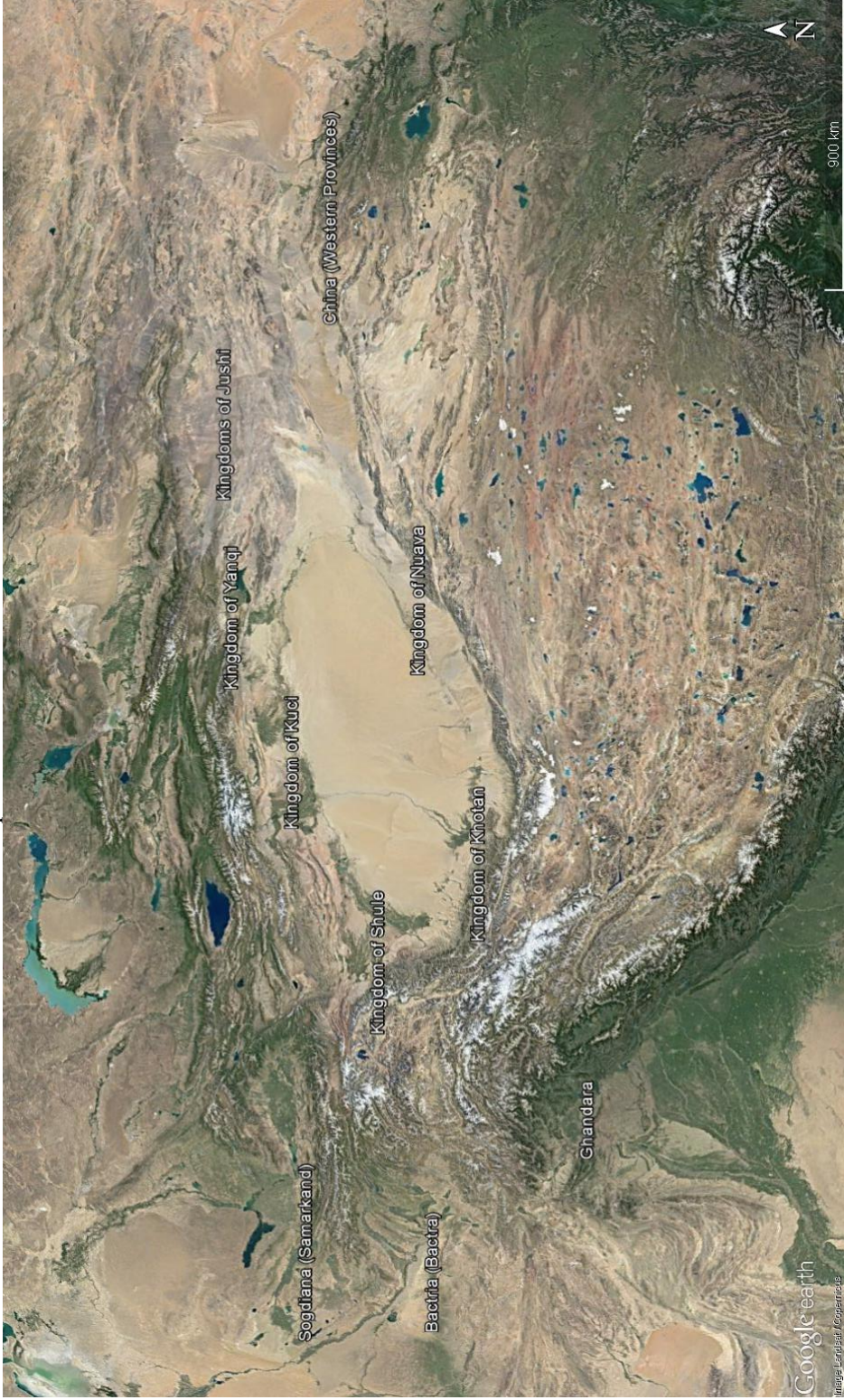
Figure 6: The two denominations of Sino-Kharosthi coins (24 and 6 zhu)¹³⁸⁴



¹³⁸⁴The British Museum, 'Sino-Kharosthi Coin of Khotan (24 Zhu)'; The British Museum, 'Sino-Kharosthi Coin of Khotan (6 Zhu)'.

Appendix II: Maps

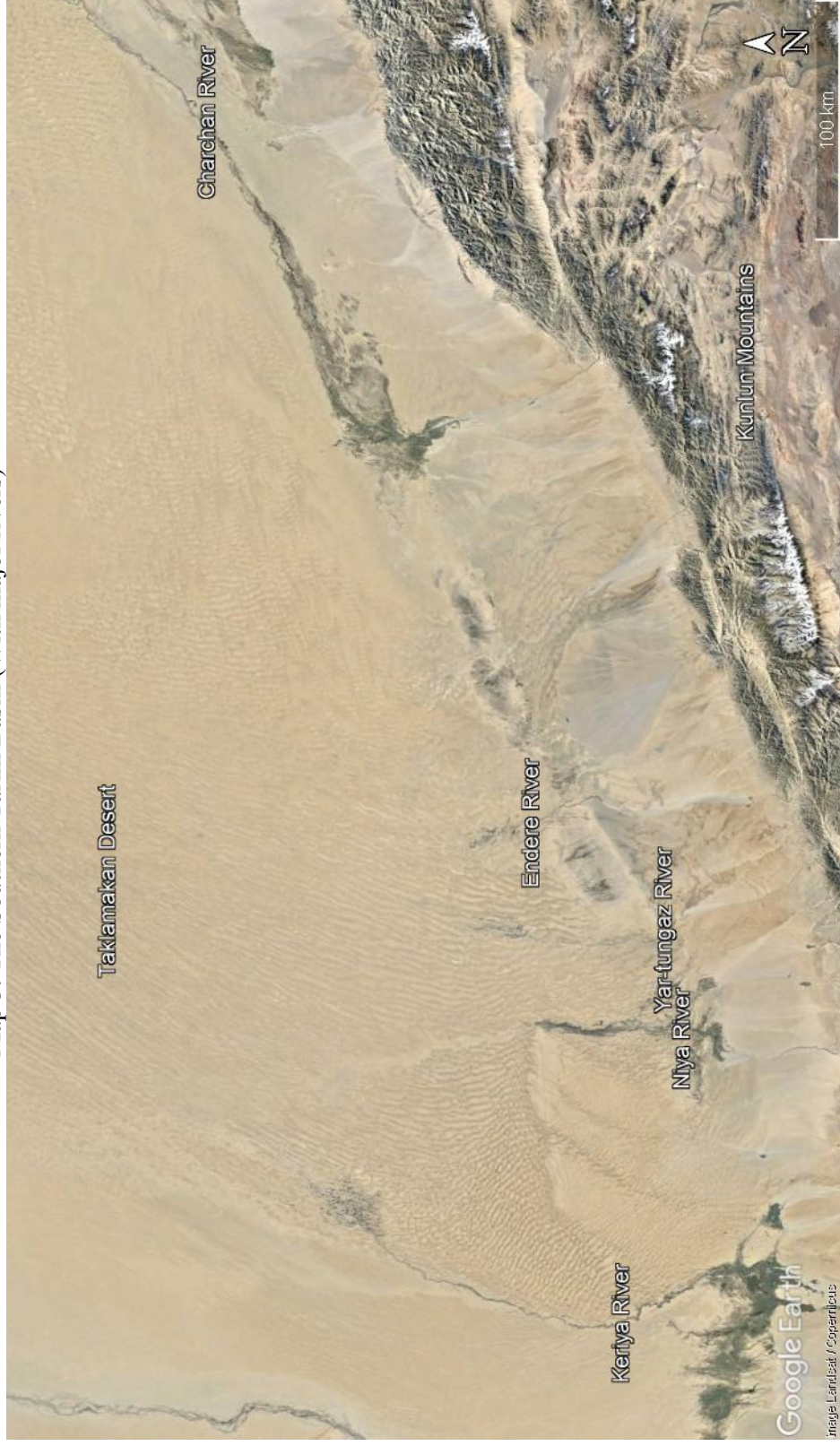
Map 1: Political Overview



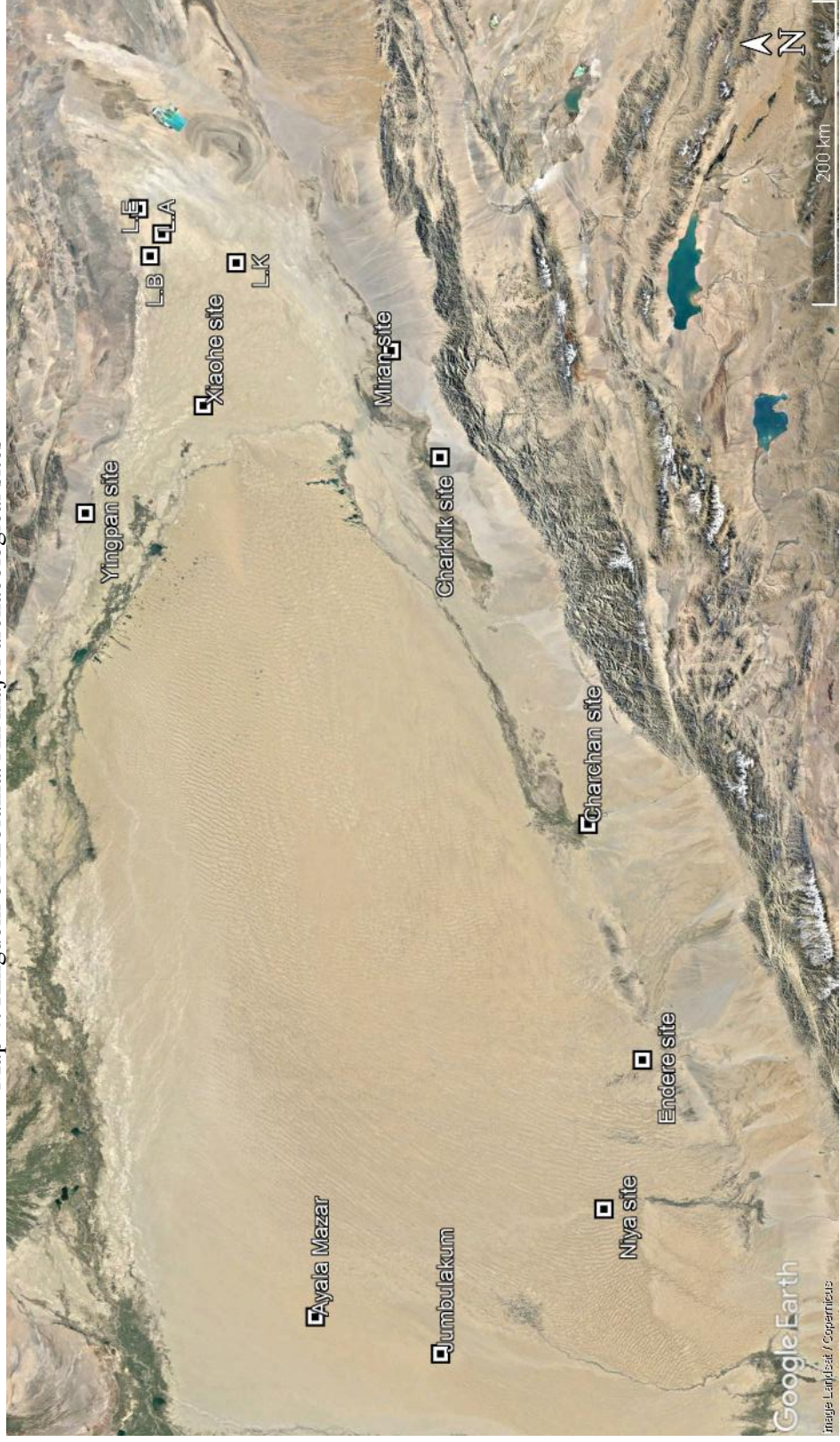
Map 2: The Tarim Basin area (With major features)



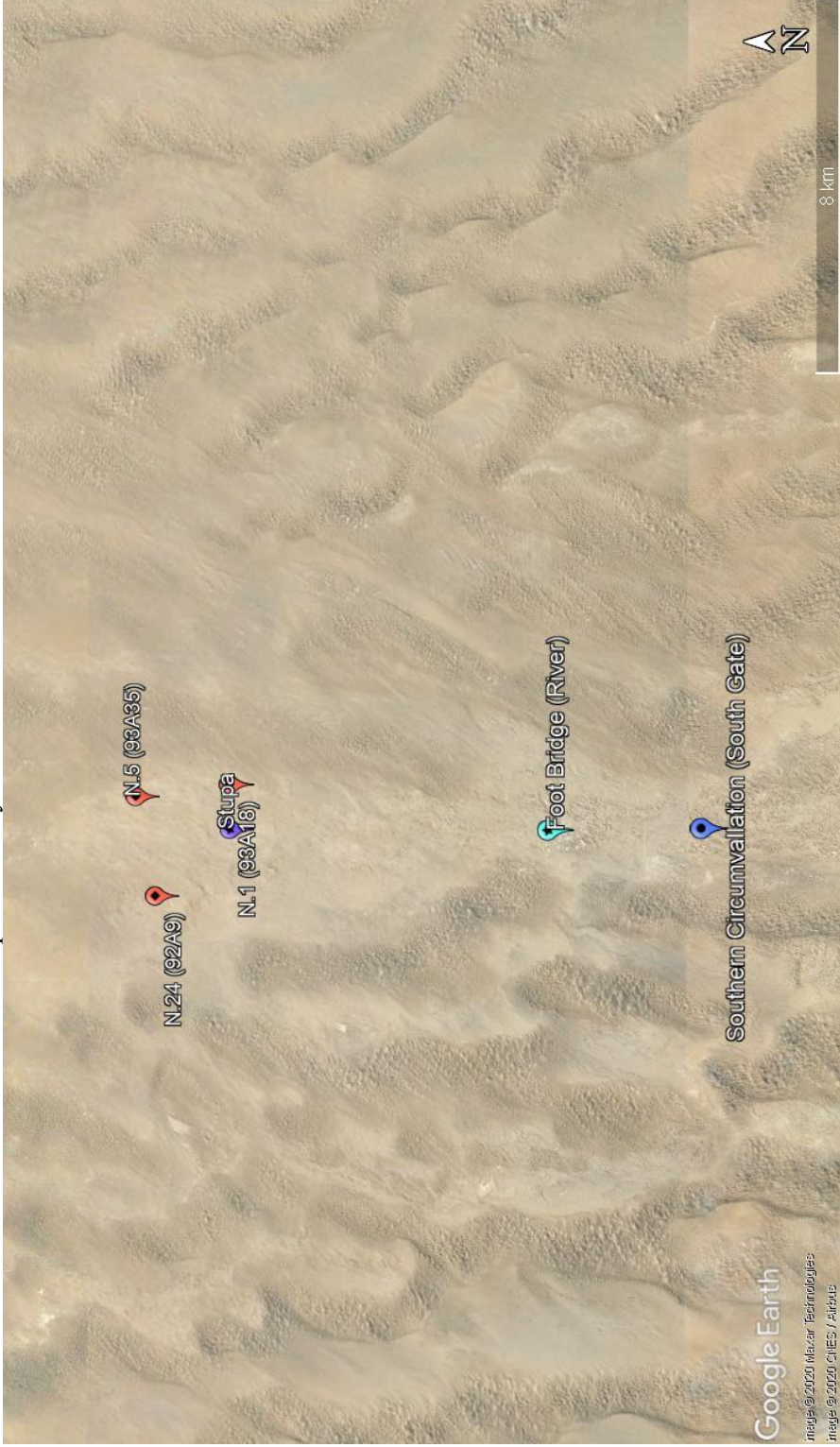
Map 3: The Southern Tarim Basin (With major rivers)



Map 4: Kingdom of Kroraina. All major archaeological sites

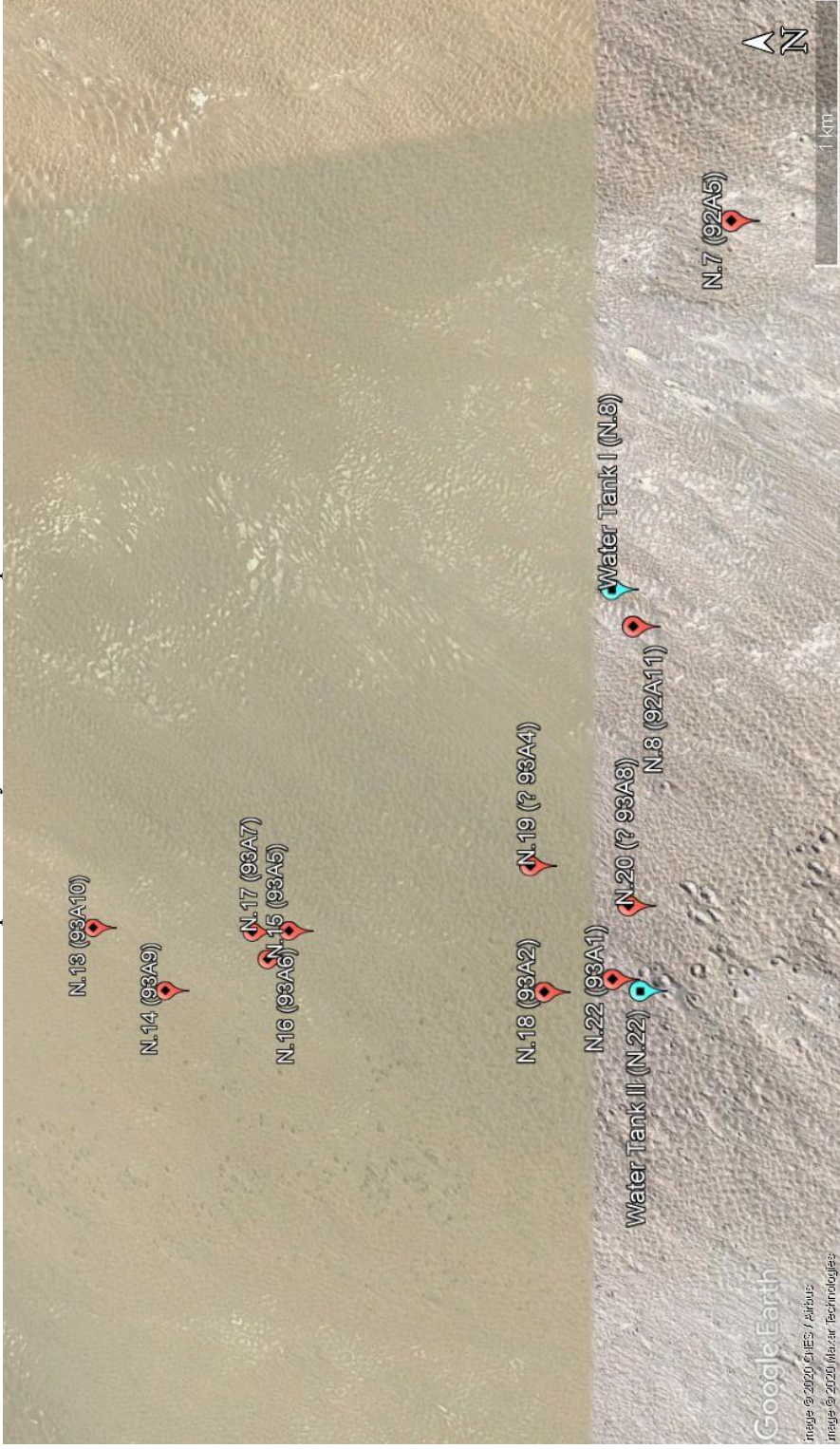


Map 5: The Niya site. Structures of note. ¹³⁸⁵



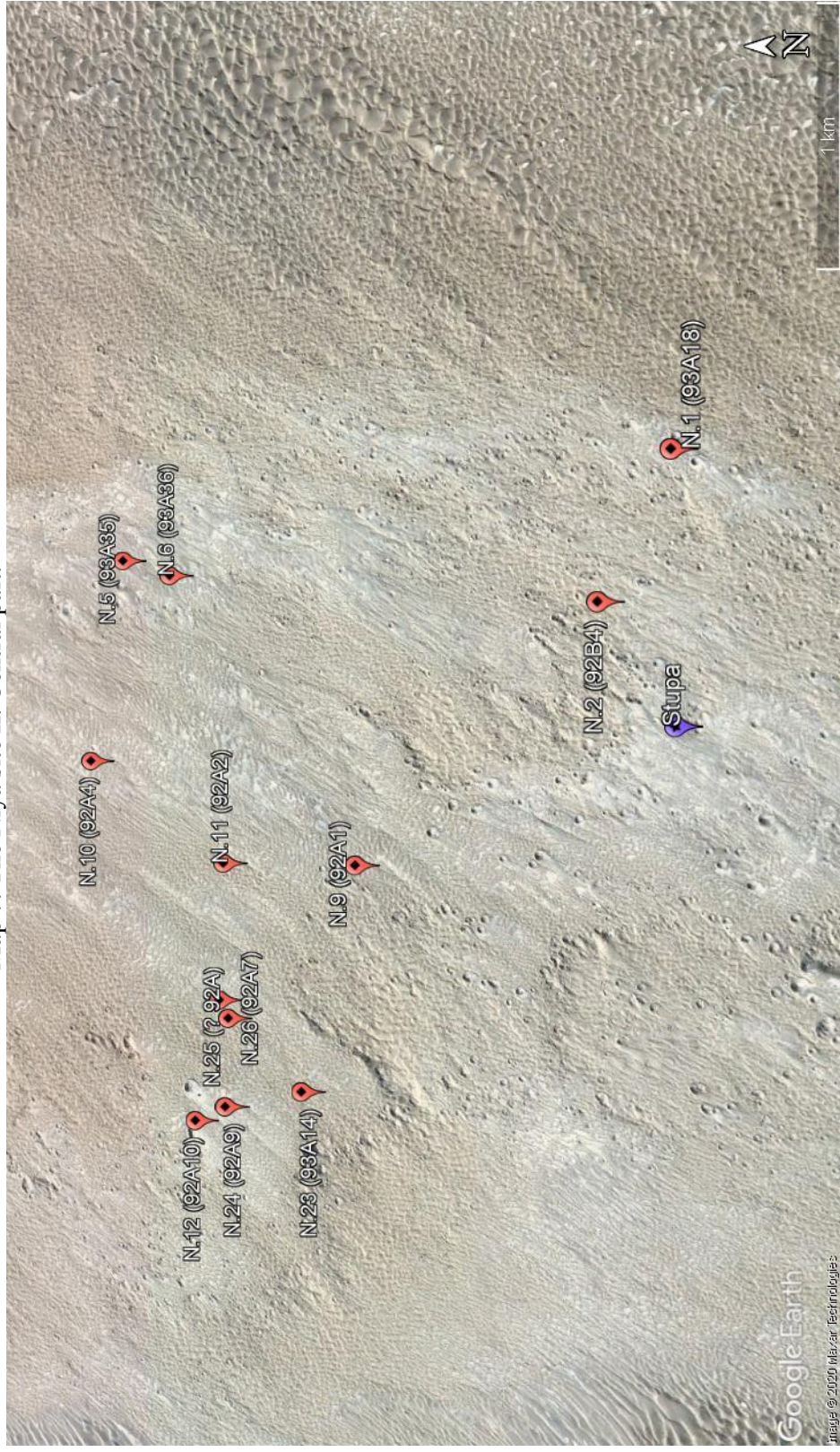
¹³⁸⁵ Map legend: Red = Dwelling, Blue = Fortification, Purple = “Religious” site, Light blue = Water-related structure.

Map 6: The Niya site I. Northern part. 1386



1386 The maps Niya site I-V runs from north to south.

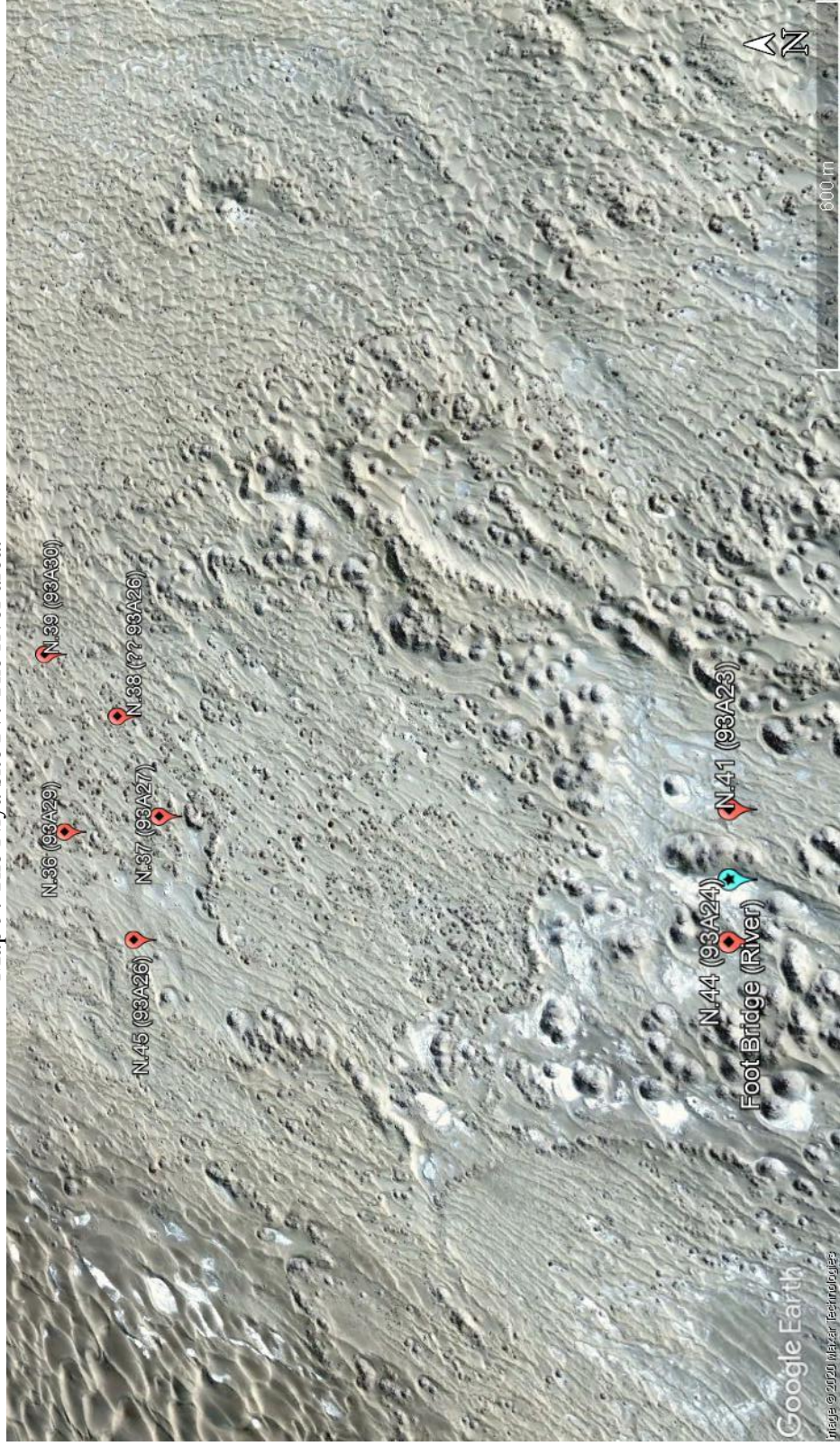
Map 7: The Niya site II. Central part.



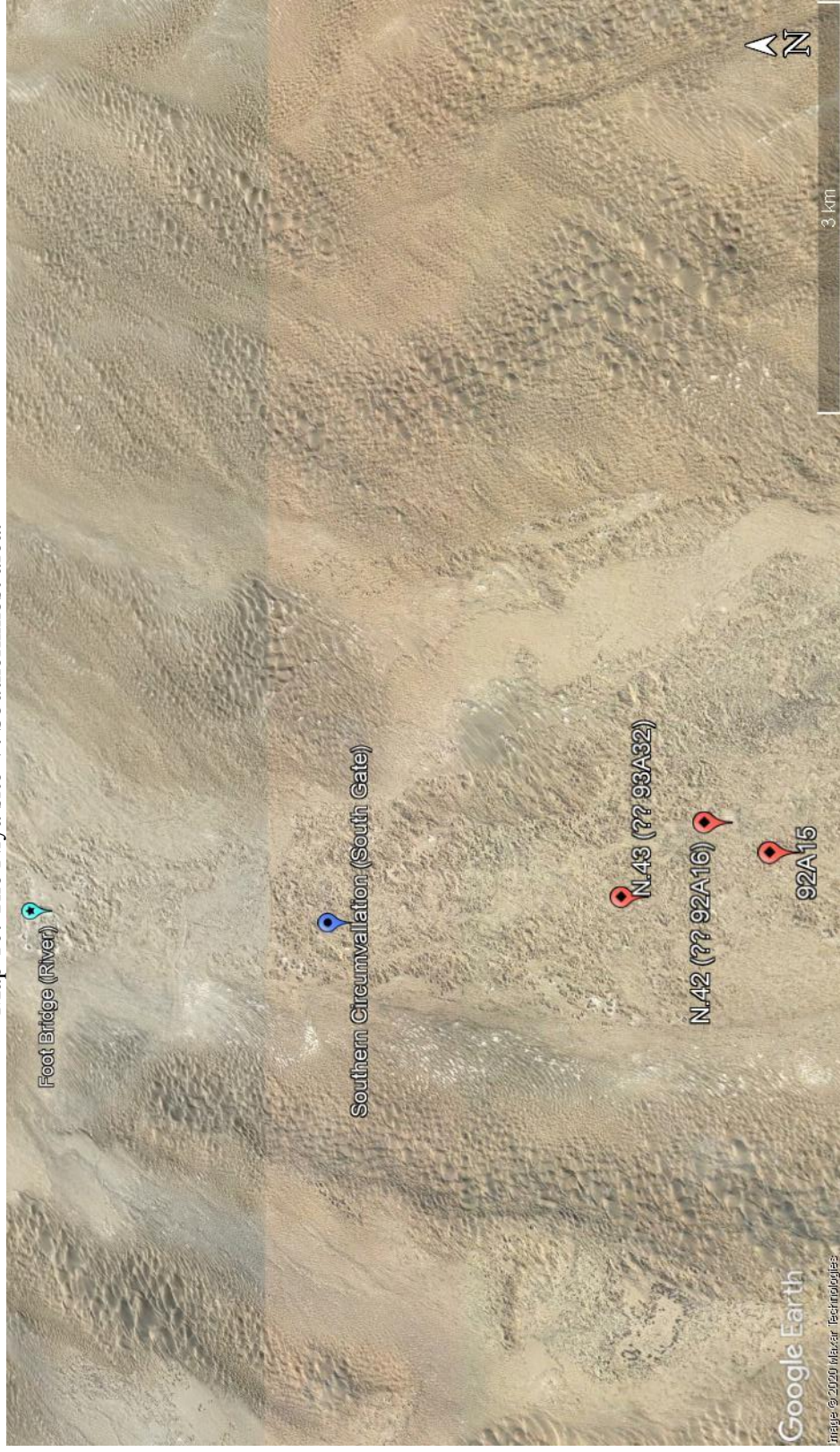
Map 8: The Niya site III. Southern part.



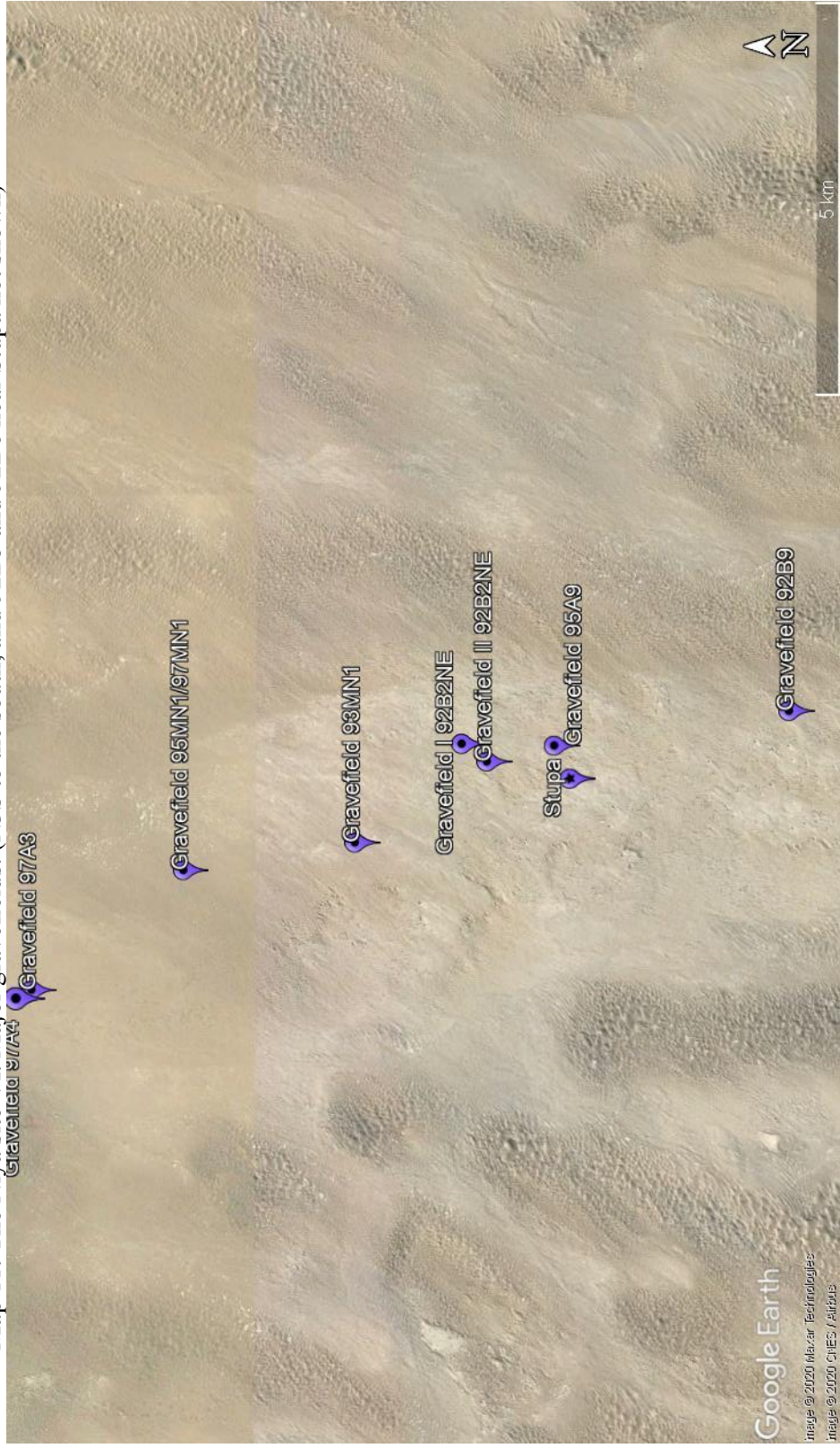
Map 9: The Niya site IV. The river area.



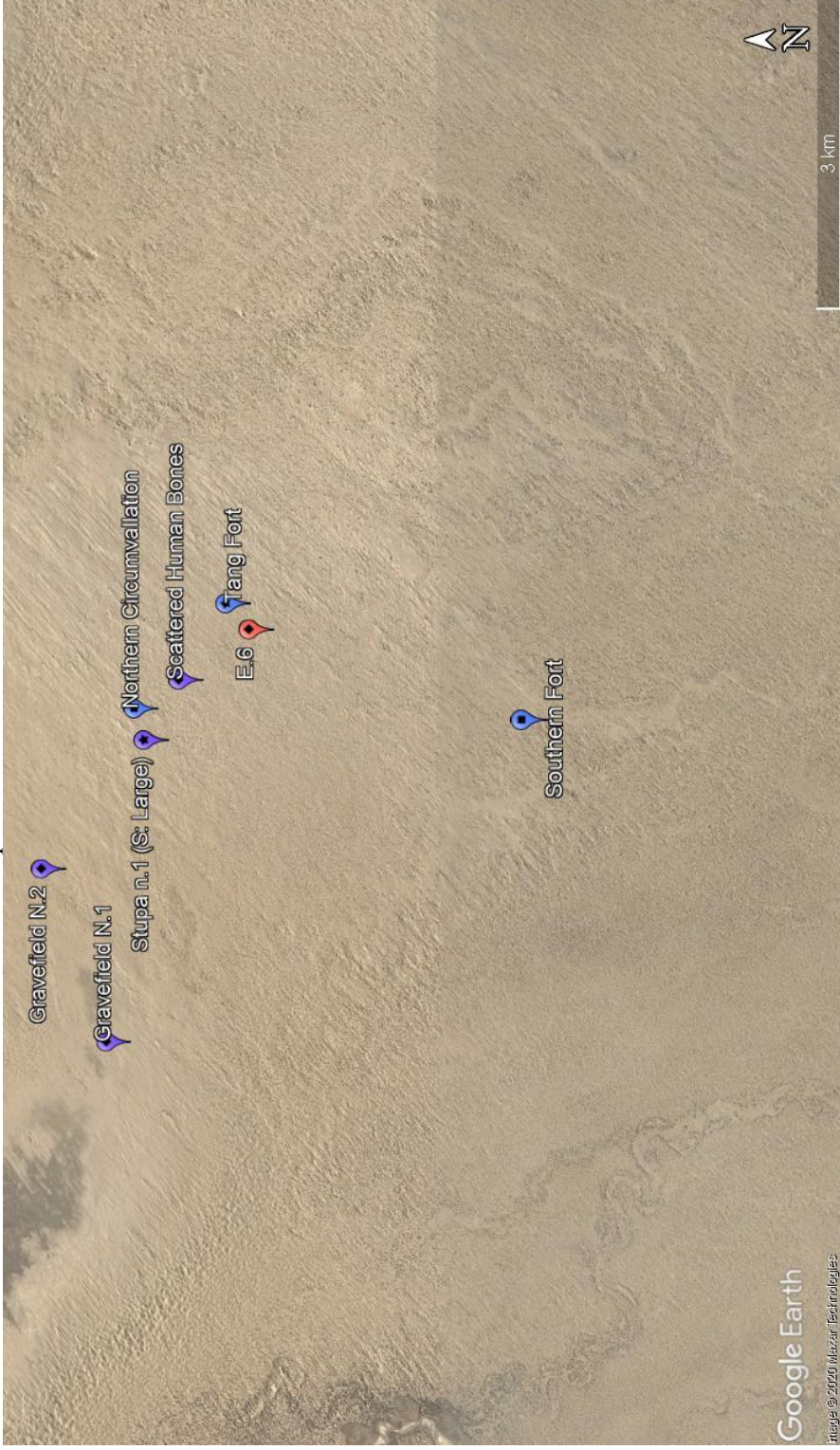
Map 10: The Niya site V. Southernmost area.



Map 11: The Niya site VI. Major gravefields. (N3S to the south, and 92B5 and 92B6 near Stupa not shown)

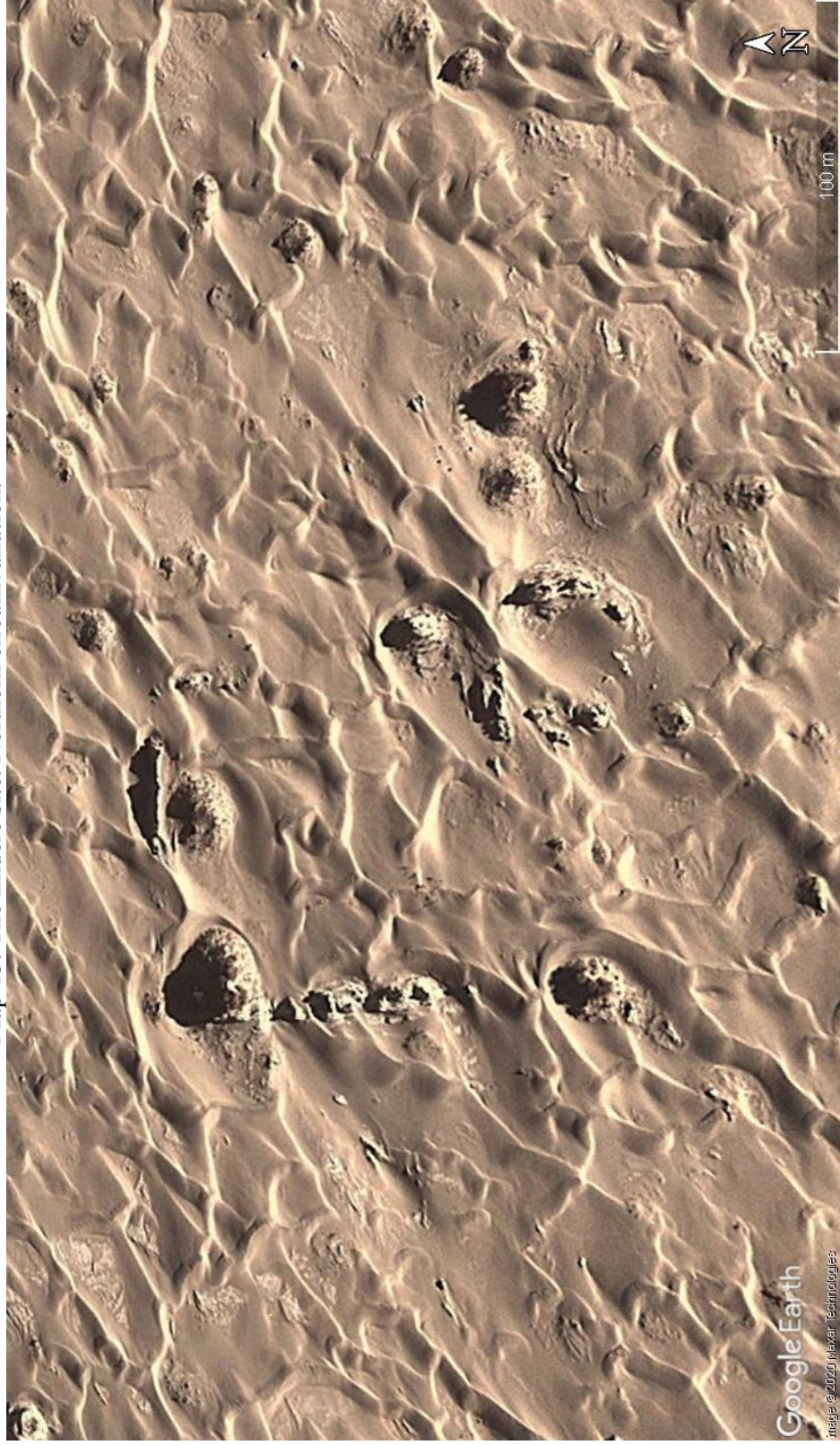


Map 12: The Endere site.¹³⁸⁷

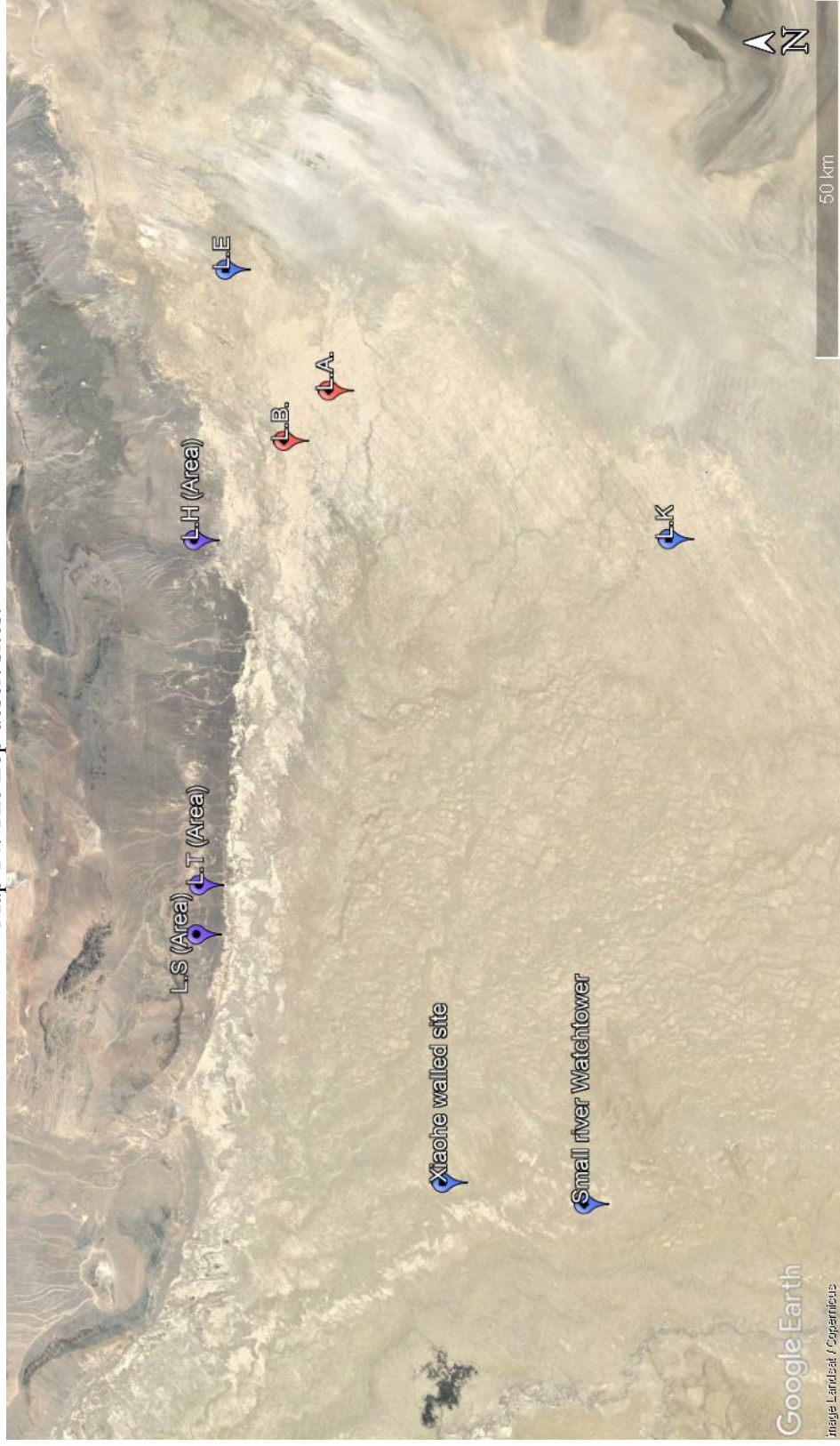


¹³⁸⁷ Note the traces of at least three previous river beds in the lower half of the map. Right, centre, and left.

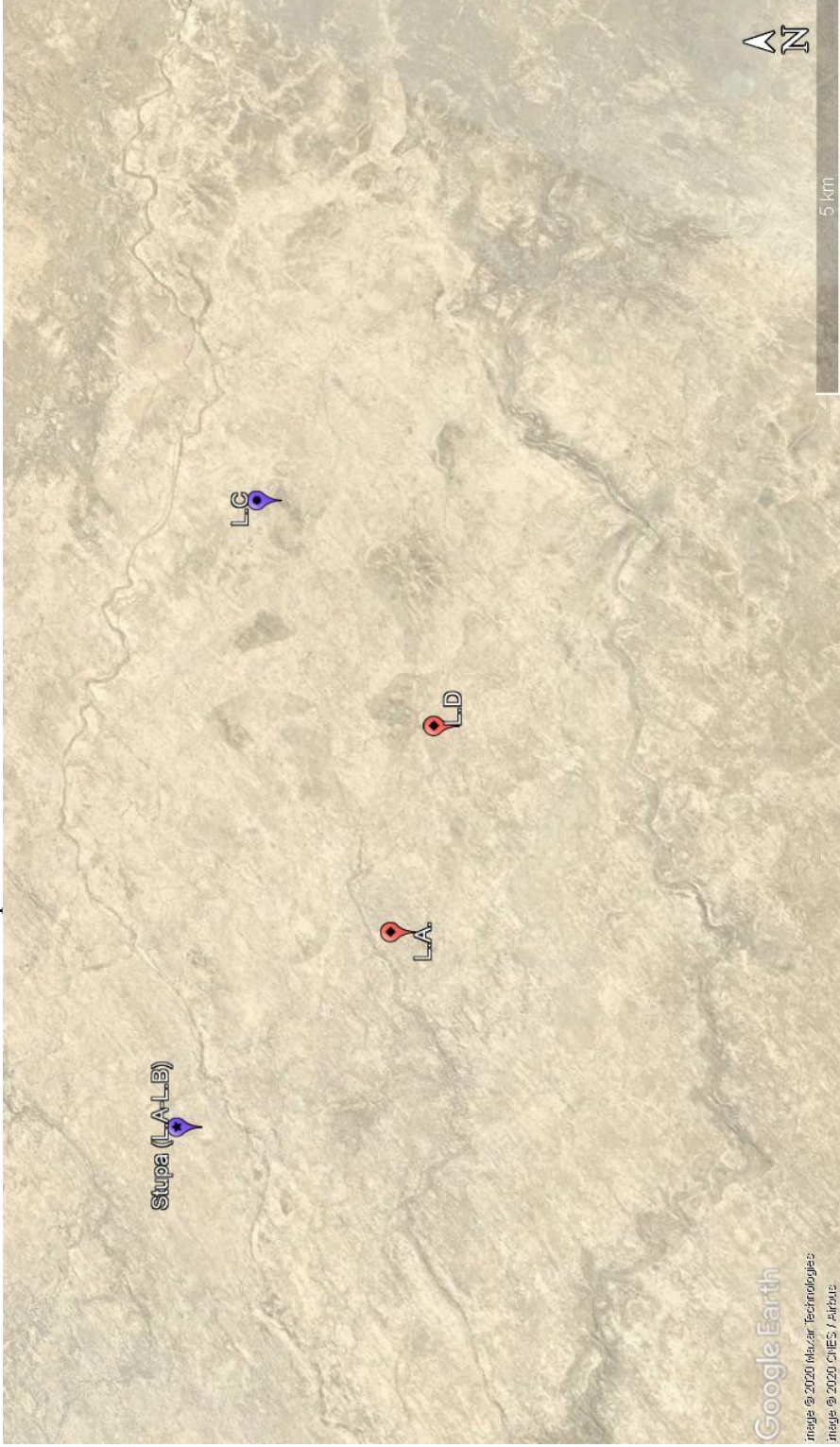
Map 13: The Endere site. Northern circumvallation.



Map 14: The Lop desert sites.

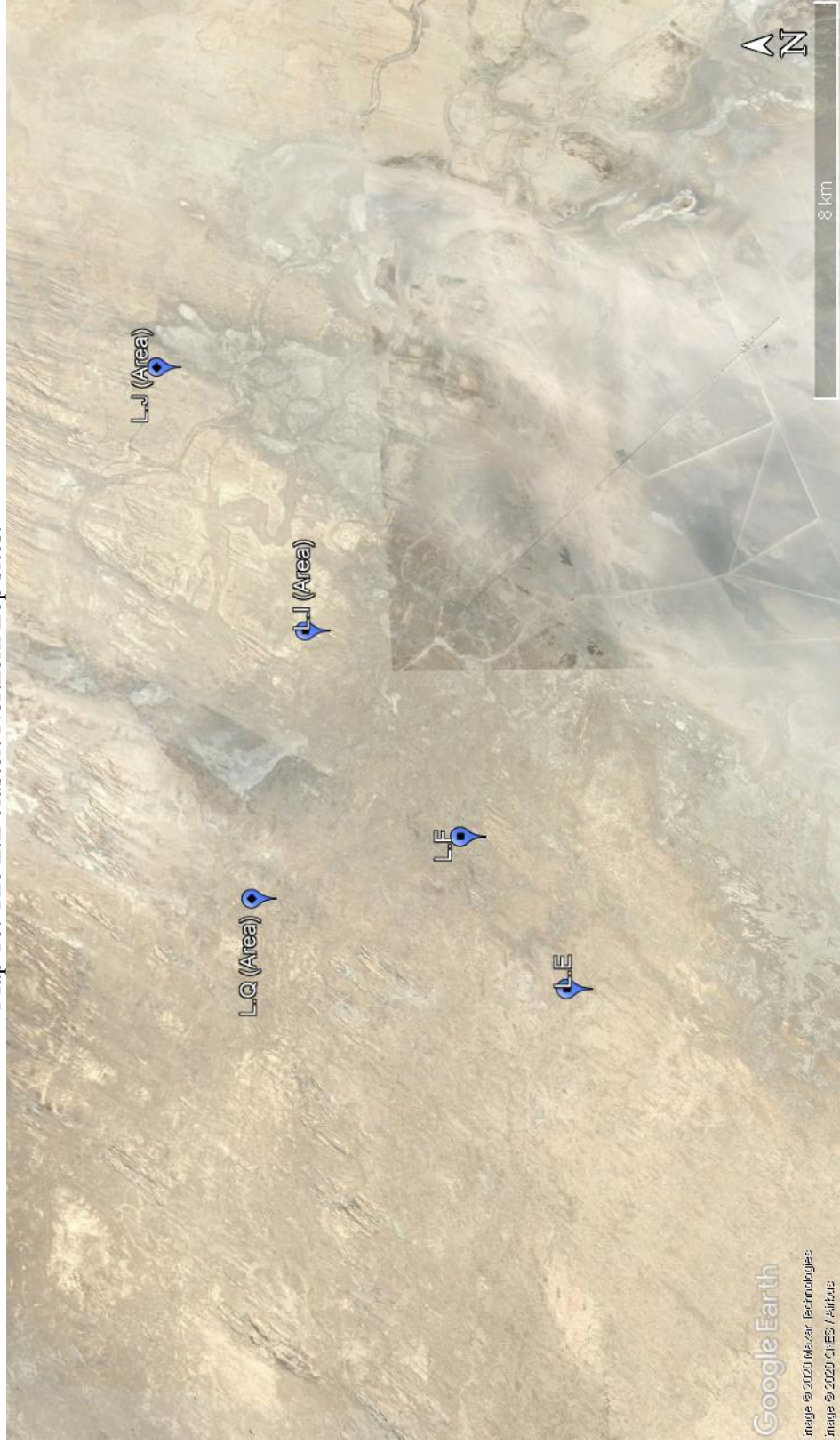


Map 15: The L.A site and environs. 1388

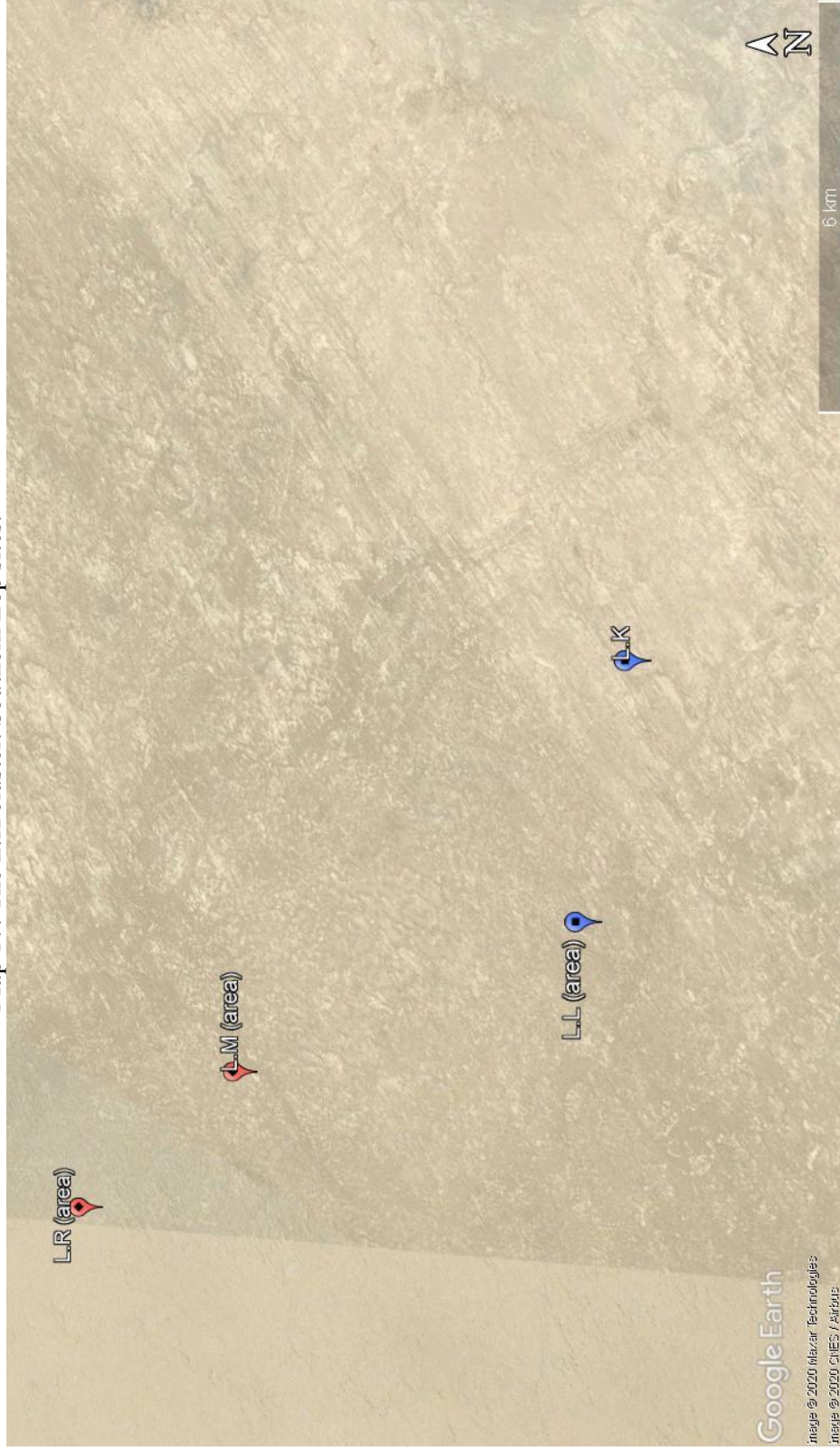


1388 Note the dark coloured, straight-lined patches north of L.D. These have been shown to be the remains of large irrigated fields.

Map 16: The L.E cluster. Northern Lop sites.



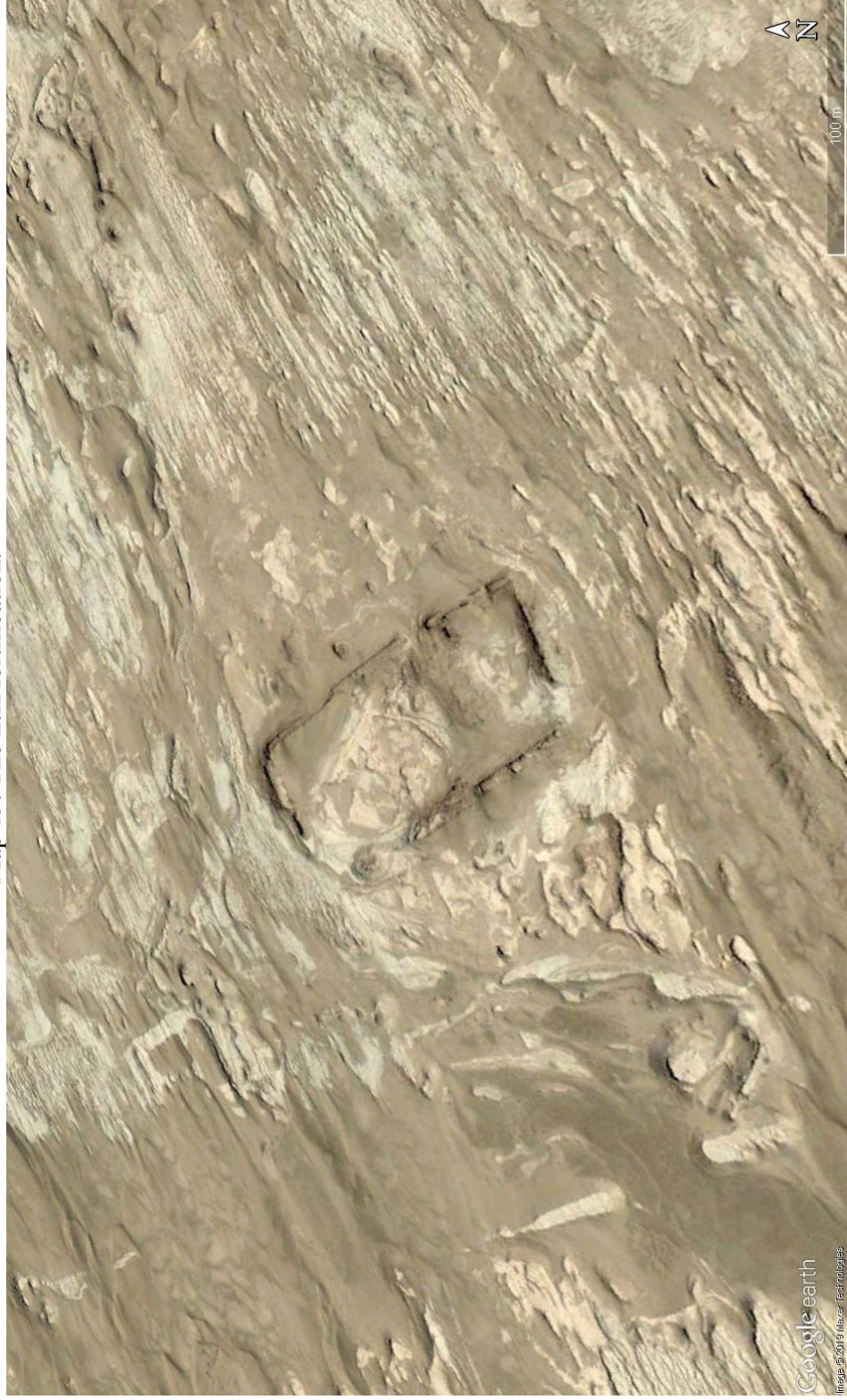
Map 17: The L.K cluster. Southern Lop sites.



Map 18: The L.E fortification.



Map 19: The L.K fortification.



Map 20: The Lop desert fortified sites.

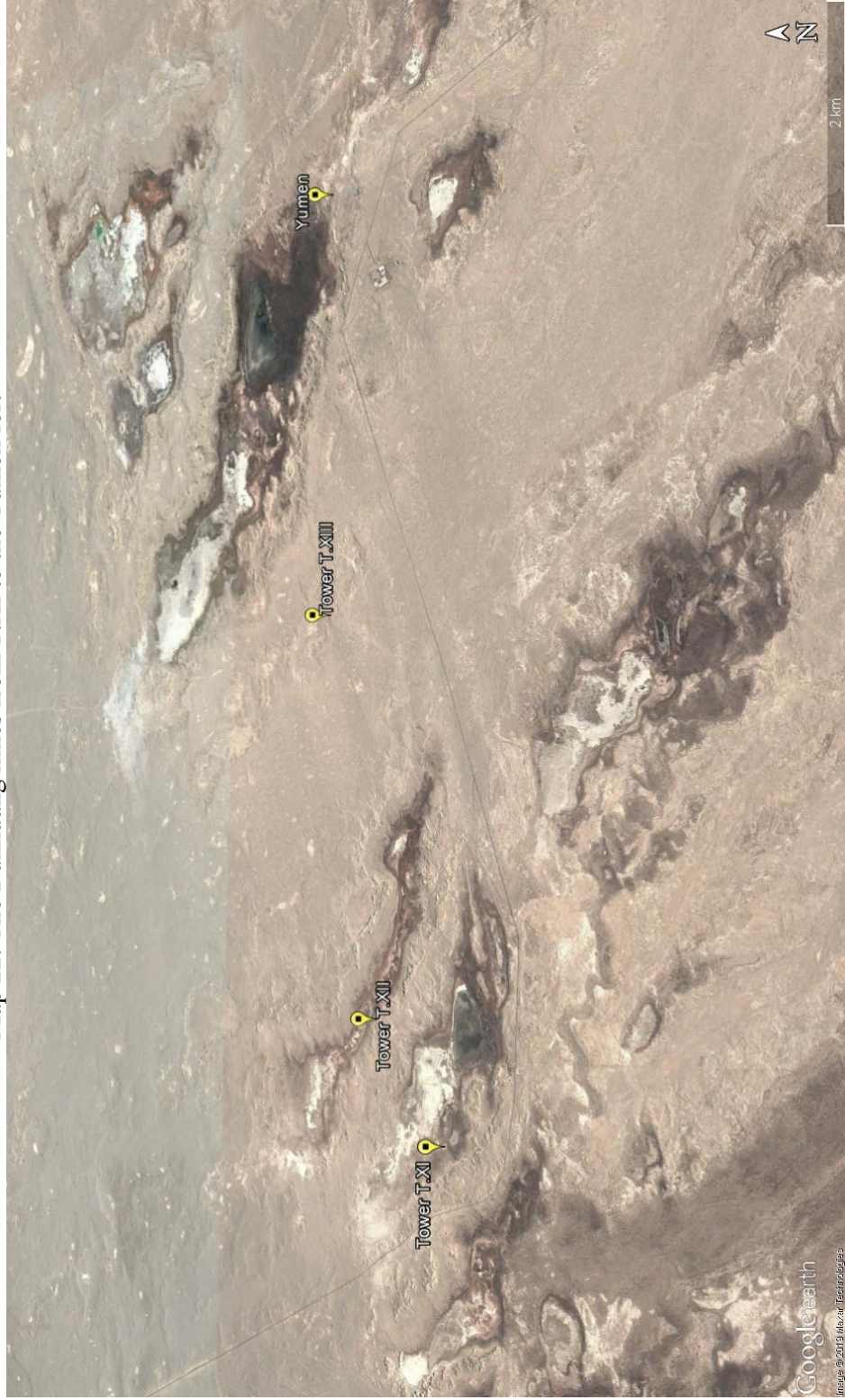


Map 21: The Xiaohu fortified site.¹³⁸⁹



¹³⁸⁹ The remains of the corner of a wall can be seen in the centre left.

Map 22: The Dunhuang limes from T. XI to the Yumen fort



Appendix III: Onomasticon

Institutions and concepts

Avana

The avana was an “Administrative” unit in Caḍota, within whose context both taxes and public duties were paid. There is a very strong association, however, between kinship, the avana and the kilme, suggesting that the avana likely originated from a kin-village/clan’s land as suggested by Padwa.¹³⁹⁰

Kilme

The kilme was a “Lineage” or “Clan” unit in Caḍota, as suggested by Padwa,¹³⁹¹ closely connected to the avana structure. But where avana appears to primarily be the concerned with tax and obligation kilme were closely linked to the systems of marriage and leadership within the oasis.

Klasemci

The klasemci was a hereditary state duty rather than a title as such, apparently carried out on the avana-level. It involved the keeping/herding/providing of animals for state duties, primarily in connection with military units. It was, however, a distinct duty not connected with the *utavala* (royal camel herder).

There were regulations or an agreement in place governing the klasemci duty.

Mahatva

Magistrates, *mahatva*, appears not to have referred specifically to any one office but rather been a term applied to several of the higher titles. In particular, it appears to be closely connected with the officials that had the power to hold court, as their main activity involves overseeing exchanges and judging disputes, as well as interrogating thieves and acting in a supervisory role.

¹³⁹⁰ Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’.

¹³⁹¹ Padwa.

There appears to have been magistrates both at the royal court, but also present across the provinces, more or less permanently.

Epithets, offices and titles

The hierarchy of the highest offices/titles appear to be reflected by the order in which they were given in lists. The order of titles runs as follows, based on a survey of all known lists with titles:

1. Ogu/Guśura
2. Suyeṭha
3. Caṃkura
4. Kori
5. Cuvalayina
6. Tasuca
7. Kitsaitsa
8. Kala
9. Cozbo

Ageta

The ageta was an official/duty, probably appointed, closely connected to both the vasu and the yatma. Agetas were regularly involved with transporting taxes, but except for this they rarely acted on their own. Rather they appear together with vasus as a court of judicial appeal, and with yatmas in matters of transportation.

The ageta is therefore perhaps best understood as an aide, or else possibly a scribe/notary, though there is no apparent connection between agetas and diviras.

Apsu

It is difficult to grasp the nature and the role of the title/office of apsu, as they appear in a wide variety of contexts. Despite being mentioned amongst the *mahatvana* (magistrates) in one document it rather seems that apsu was either a title of nobility and respect or referred to a specific (likely respected) profession. Both senses would work well, as apsus are mentioned as being well-born/noble people, often stood witness, and often headed the tax lists in which they appear.

Caṃkura

The caṃkura is another high title that appears only infrequently and is as such difficult to define. Like many of the other titles the caṃkura appear primarily as judges, making it likely that they belonged to the royal court. A few caṃkura did however appear to

have resided in Caḍota. The prestige of the title/office is underlined by their third/fourth place in the lists.

It seems likely that the title may have been a high-ranking military post, as the word *caṃkura* has been shown by Yoshida to derive from Chinese *jiangjun* (將軍), meaning “general”.¹³⁹²

Carapuraṣa

Carapurusa was a title, used even in “personal” contexts like the official titles. The role of the carapuraṣa is however not entirely clear, as the translation by Burrow of “spy” or “secret agent”, based on the Sanskrit meaning of the word,¹³⁹³ rarely seem to fit. Rather they are associated with the local court, appearing in four documents together with a *cozbo* as magistrates presiding at court, and should perhaps therefore be understood as a detective or investigator of sort.

Cozbo

Governor and/or senior officials in the local administration. Possibly each “town” had its own *cozbo* or else *cozbo*s served in several different fields, which would explain the multitude of *cozbo*s encountered. *Cozbo*s were appointed by the king.

Cuvalayina

The *cuvalayina*, much like the other higher titles, appears only infrequently and is difficult to define. In addition to appearing as judges, one *cuvalayina*, *Maltsuta*, receives royal commands for Caḍota, suggested he was there for a period. It was however clearly a prestigious title, associated with the royal court.

Oddly *cuvalayina* also appears in two documents seemingly as a personal name.

Daśavida

The *daśavida* are the lowest recorded official, appearing almost exclusively either in lists or ending lists. It is unclear if they were really officials at all, or merely local

¹³⁹² Yoshida, ‘Additional Notes on Sims-Williams’ Article on the Sogdian Merchants in China and India’, 70.

¹³⁹³ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 89.

representatives/headsmen who gathered the tax for their neighbourhood, nominally of ten people.

They gathered tax at the local level, mostly grain, distributed *pake* parcels and tallied people (seemingly for a variety of purposes).

Divira

The divira were scribes appointed to the royal administration. They appear primarily as the writers of contracts and legal documents, both on the order of court magistrates, on behalf of the *saṃgha* (Buddhist community) and on private initiatives.

There is a strong association between the office of *ṣoṭhaṃga* and divira, though as document n.520 shows they were considered separate, even though the same literate individuals appear to have filled them.

Finally, it is notable that many scribes either rose to high positions, had relatives in high positions and/or were active in “business”.

Guśura

The guśura appears only rarely in the Caḍotan material and almost exclusively in judicial contexts. They are mentioned specifically as heading the royal court and one guśura also lead a group of “army people”. As such they appear to have been the highest officials/nobles at court, possibly fitting Burrow suggested parallel to Iranian “Vizir”, “Visphur” or Kushan “Kujula”.¹³⁹⁴

It is not entirely clear if it was a title of nobility or an official position. But as guśura are mentioned as the head of the *mahamtva* it should likely be seen as an official post or position.

It appears to have been a widespread title in the Tarim Basin, as both a Khotanese and several Kucheana guśura are known from later document collections.

Kala

It is difficult to grasp the exact role/nature of the title/office of kala. Kala appears to have been a prestigious title, as they are generally listed before “local” officials and in

¹³⁹⁴ Burrow, 87.

two cases being named “sons of the king”. Some kala were part of the local Cađotan social structure, appearing in avanas and as householders, while others seems to have resided in the capital. They were often at the head of the social order however, and some Kala were also very rich, owning land run by others and receiving people as rewards from the king.

Notably some kala also served in official capacities, especially kala Karamtsa, who served as administrator and magistrate in several documents, though always in an inferior position to the kitsaitsa and other higher officials.

Thus, kala appears not to have been an office but rather a title of nobility. It was clearly a title of high nobility, as two kala are said to be sons of the king, and it might have indicated something like “prince” as suggested by Burrow.¹³⁹⁵

Kitsaitsa

The kitsaitsa appears to have been a higher rank than cozbo and appears to have administered Cađota in periods. In one case a cozbo later became a kitsaitsa. Thus, the kitsaitsa may well be a type of high magistrate from the king’s court, above the local officials and the cozbo but below the higher officials of the royal court. Due to their limited appearance it is difficult to judge their role, but they appear primarily in contracts as overseers and witnesses.

Kori

Despite appearing fairly frequently it is difficult to grasp the nature and role of the title kori. Koris are often involved with the royal herds, camels and horses (7 cases), but are just as often involved with investigations and legal disputes (8 cases).

The kori was undoubtedly of a fairly high rank, appearing early in most lists of officials, and in one case is furthermore said to have attendants. At least one kori appear to have held land in Cađota while residing in Kroraina, indicating that most kori were connected to the royal capital/court. Thus one must, as with many of the other higher titles, wonder if kori was an official or a title of nobility.

¹³⁹⁵ Burrow, 82.

Koyimaṃḍhi and Tsamghinava

The koyimaṃḍhi and tsamghinava were terms referring to a specific type of grain, but was also the title of officials, likely connected to its collection. There is nothing to indicate their exact roles and they rarely appear, likely meaning they operated on a small area/scale.

Possibly they were actually a type of yatma, as a kuvana (a type of grain) yatma is known.

Ogu

The ogu is one of the most common titles in the documents. While they appear in a variety of context, they primarily appear to have had two roles, as head judges and as heads of kilmes. Given these important functions, the fact that they do not appear in tax lists, and given that they are always first in all lists of titles ogu was likely one of the highest titles/offices in the kingdom.

Notably they never co-appear with guśuras, but several ogu are also guśura, as well as being vasu, suyeṭha and other titles. As they are never specifically said to be an office it is therefore tempting to see ogu as a title of nobility. Possibly they should be understood as the heads of kilme units and thus a form of clan chief.¹³⁹⁶

Śadavida

The śadavida were a lesser official connected with the units of hundred (*śata*) within the Avana. They were likely subordinate to the Vasu. Peta-avana appears to have had two such hundreds. Public duties were performed within these hundreds. Furthermore, tax was also frequently recorded from the hundreds, with the exception of grain which is often listed in lists of “tenths” (*daśa*).

Additionally the śadavida appears to have been a sort of local headsmen, involved in actions such as the apprehension of criminals on a very local level, moving tax, as well as frequently appearing as witnesses.

¹³⁹⁶ See also Padwa, ‘An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd-4th Century C.E. Niya)’.

Şoṭhaṃga

The şoṭhaṃga was an appointed office in the royal administration, appointed by the cozbo. May have been of a higher rank than vasu, though this is unclear. Appear to have been primarily involved in taxation and the movement of goods, but to a lesser extent than the vasu, ageta and yatma. Notably they were absent from the officials called over matters of taxation in document n.714.

There is a very strong link, however, between şoṭhaṃga and divira (scribe) and many şoṭhaṃga were also scribes. This suggests that the şoṭhaṃga was in charge of producing/controlling the tax lists and keeping record, as Burrow also alludes to.¹³⁹⁷ This is also supported by the high number of lists from şoṭhaṃga Lýipeya's house. It should be cautioned however that the role of the şoṭhaṃga in the Krorainan administration is generally overplayed. This is due to şoṭhaṃga Lýipeya's exceptional career and the vast number of documents in which he appears.

Spaşavaṃna

The role of spaşavaṃna was a duty and an office (*dramga*) to which the royal administrator appointed individuals. Those appointed appear to have been free and often of some means. It is unclear if they were provided with salaries, but it appears they had a right to a certain cut of whatever they confiscated.

The spaşavaṃna appear as the primary military force in Caḍota, acting as frontier-guards and being called upon to pursue fugitives. For this role they were provided with camels and were all mounted. At times of conflict, such as with the Supi, they were often used as couriers or sent to various places.

Suyeṭha

The suyeṭha appear only infrequently in the sources, and it is therefore difficult to ascertain exactly what the title meant. They appear frequently as judges at the royal court. The suyeṭha appear however twice on missions to Khotan, amongst a list of the army people, as well as receiving horses. As such it might be understood as a military office/title of sorts.

¹³⁹⁷ Burrow, *The Language of the Kharosthi Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 127–28.

No matter the function it was certainly a high/prestigious title, as they are invariably listed second after the *gušura/ogu* in all lists.

Tomgha

The *tomgha* was an official, possibly appointed for a limited interval, who regularly moved around the kingdom. At least some held royal animals, in particular the *sruva tomgha* who were in charge of the royal mares. But their primary purpose seems to have been to escort tax.

Notably for this last task it is always noted that the *tomgha* had attendants (*vatayaga*) when performing their duties, and judging by the list n.96 these appears to have been units of twenty men.

On the basis of this, a military rank such as captain, which Burrow proposes, appears to fit very well, perhaps more specifically captain of the escort/guards.¹³⁹⁸

As with *šoṭhaṅga Lyipeya* the role of *tomgha Vukto* should likely not be overplayed, as he appears in all manners of contexts together with *cozbo Yitaka*.

-vala

The various *-vala* (keepers/herders) was a duty and an office (*dramga*) to which the royal administrator appointed individuals. It was carried out on the *avana/śada* level. At least in the case of the keeper of sheep (*pasuvala*) this was for shorter terms, and it appears they were paid a hire/salary for their services.

The duty of the *-vala* appears to mainly have related to animals, though a *pirovala* (fort keeper) is also known.

Vasu

The *vasu* was an appointed office in the royal administration who served as the head of the *avana* administration. The *vasu* was responsible for overseeing public duties, matters of marriage, land and boundaries as well as acting as the local court of appeal/complaint. In summary acting as prime administrator and arbitrary in a given

¹³⁹⁸ Burrow, 95.

avana. They likewise headed the tax collection for each individual avana. The various vasu answered to the ruling cozbo.

Vaṭayaga and Upastaga (Attendants)

A range of attendants serving different individuals and officials are evident. These were not slaves or servants, as they are both named as “azade” (noble/freeborn) and some of them are well known (Lýimsu). Considering the example of Lýimsu, son of Lýipeya, it could be that young promising men were taken as vaṭayaga.

The most notable office to have attendants were the tomgha, who are often mentioned with men under their command, though several higher officials also had attendants.

Vuryaga

Vuryaga is a rarely occurring title, mainly appearing in witness lists, and as such it is difficult to say anything precise about their activities. Two documents, however, appear to indicate that they controlled areas and people, and they appear to have been under the king’s command.

Possibly these officials were involved with corvee labour or slaves?

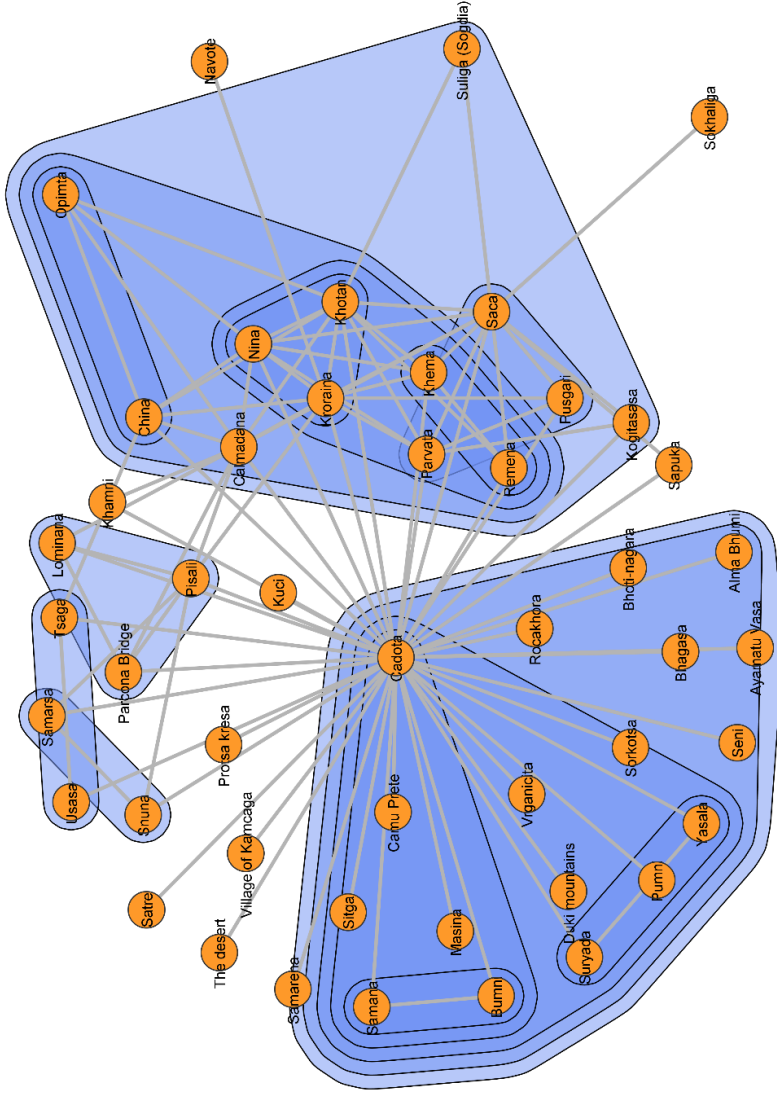
Yatma

The yatma was an appointed office/duty in the royal administration, appointed by the cozbo. They appear to have been of a lower rank than the vasu but likely above the ageta. The yatma was primarily in charge of transporting tax, mainly in grain, both around the province and to the capital. But they also appear partly involved in assessing and collecting tax, often jointly with either a vasu or an ageta.

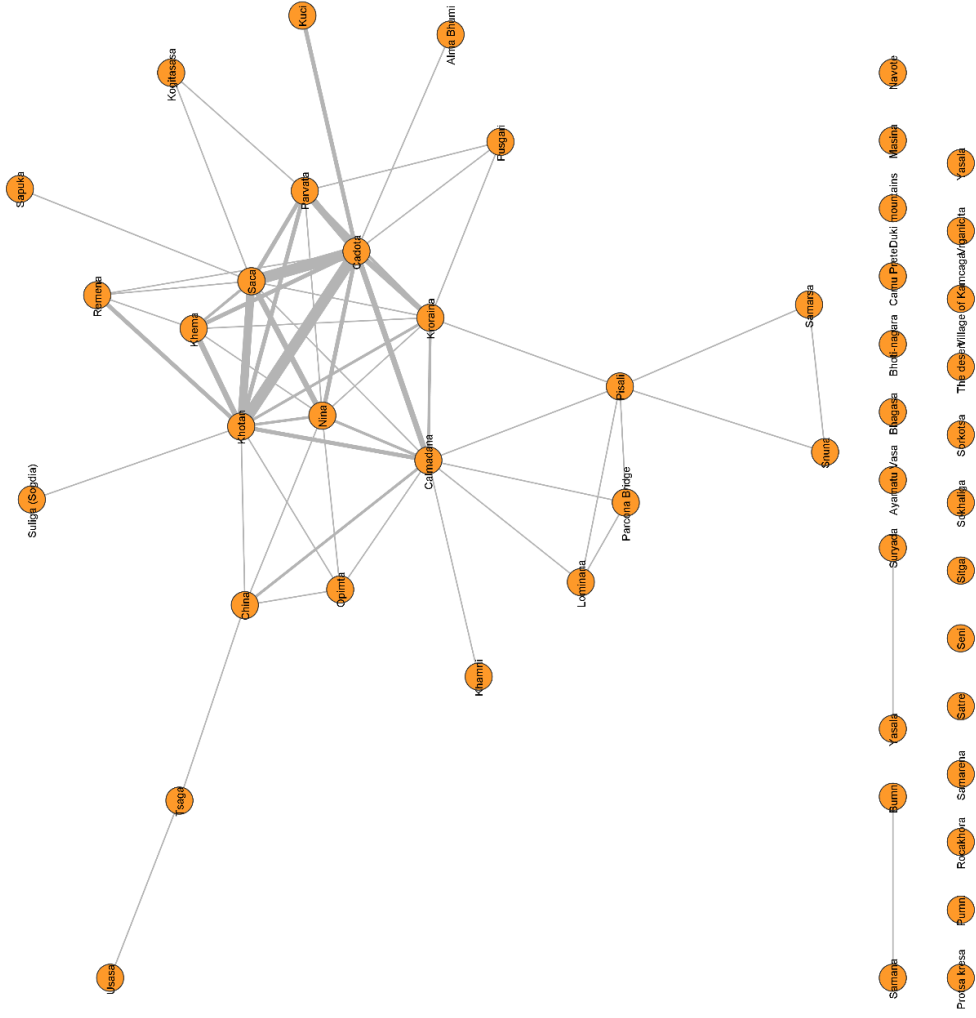
There were different types of yatma, concerned with specific types of grain. Finally, being appointed a yatma appears to at times have been considered a burden/duty, possibly because it involved travel.

Appendix IV: Graphs

Graph 3: Network graph one. Clustered using the Givan Newman clustering algorithm.



Graph 4: Network graph two. Locations only.



Appendix V: Chronological tables (Table 1: Major officials) 13991400

Document n	Name of King	Titles used	Actors ---->	Ki Pitrya n.330	Ki Varpa n.523	Ka Karamista n.455-485 Son: Kamjiya/kamciva n.85	C. Samasena n.81 Lyipeya n.2-18-39 Son: Larsu n.385	C Kranaya n.89	Date - CE
n.422	Taiaka 3rd year	GK, KK, MN, SoH							207 CE~
n.808	Tomgraka 2nd or 36th year	GK, KK, G, V, R, MN, SoH		Magistrate/Witness					220 CE~
n.655	Pepliva 3rd year	KK, G, V, Da, Di, MN, SoH		Magistrate/Witness					235 CE~
n.656	5th year	KK, G, V, Da, MN		Magistrate		A: Witness			237 CE~
n.648	8th year	GK, KK, G, V, Jus, SoH		Magistrate					240 CE~
n.495	8th year, 2nd month	KK, GK, MN (?), SoH		Magistrate		Witness (?)			240 CE~
n.857	Sakta (Likely Amigoka) 25th year	KK, G, V, R, Da, Gi, SoH				Magistrate			271 CE
n.677	Amigoka ...th year	MN, GK, SoH							?
n.782	2nd year	GK, KK, G, V, Ju, MN, SoH							248 CE
n.187	5th year	MN, GK	Received letter						251 CE
n.581	6th year	GK, KK, G, V, Ju, Da, MN, SoH			C: Witness	Magistrate			252 CE
n.654	8th year, 8th month	MN, GK, SoH		Magistrate/Witness		Magistrate/Witness			254 CE
n.579	9th year	GK, KK, G, V, Ju, Da, MN, SoH		Magistrate		Magistrate			255 CE
n.589	11th year	MN, Gi, SoH		Magistrate		Magistrate			257 CE
n.586	16th year	MN, GK, SoH				Magistrate			262 CE
n.590	17th year, 4th month	MN, GK, J, SoH				Magistrate			263 CE
n.571	17th year, 12th month	MN, GK, J, SoH				Magistrate/Witness			263 CE
n.580	19th year	MN, GK, J, SoH				Magistrate (and Kam)			265 CE
n.582	20th year	MN, GK, J, SoH				Magistrate/Witness			266 CE
n.587	21st year	MN, GK, J, SoH				Magistrate			267 CE
n.572	21st year, 6th month	MN, GK, J, SoH				Magistrate (and Kam)			267 CE
n.709	24th year, 1st month	MN, GK, J, SoH							270 CE
n.715	24th year, 11th month	MN, GK, SoH				Magistrate/Witness			270 CE
n.856	26th year	MN, GK, J, SoH				Set seal (Magistrate)			272 CE
n.419	28th year	GK, J, SoH							274 CE
n.506	31st year	MN, GK, J, SoH							277 CE
n.592	32nd year	MN, GK, J, SoH				C Kam: Magistrate/Witness			278 CE
n.583	33rd year	MN, GK, J, SoH				C Kam: Magistrate			279 CE
n.437	34th year, 2nd month, 12th dē MN, GK, J, SoH					Magistrate			280 CE
n.652	34th year, 2nd month, 13th dē MN, GK, SoH					Magistrate			280 CE
n.574	34th year, 2nd month, 24th dē MN, GK, J, SoH					Magistrate			280 CE
n.418	36th year	MN, GK, J, SoH							282 CE

¹³⁹⁹ Estimate for early dates calculated with an average regnal year = 13.8 years.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Royal titles abbreviated as follows, GK = Great King, J = Jitumgha, MN = Mahanuava, SoH = Son of Heaven/God, KK = King of Kings, G = Great, V = Victorious, R = Righteous, Da = Of the Dharma, Di = Divinity in Person, Jus = Just, GJ = Great Jitumgha.

Document n.	Name of King	Titles used	Actors ---->	Ki Varpa n.523	Ka Karamsta n.455+885 Son: Kamjiva/Kamciya	Ki Luthu n.657+814+953 Son: Scri Tgaca n.162	C Somtjaka n.85	C Samtasna n.81 Son: Larsu n.385	Ljyipeya n.2+8+39	C Kranaya n.89	Date - CE
	Mahiri										
n.828	...th year, 1st month, ...th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH									?
n.858	...th year, 1st month, 10th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH					Official				?
n.732	...th year, 2nd month	MIN, GK, (J), SoH					Magistrate				?
n.582	4th year, 2nd month, 28th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH					Magistrate				288 CE
n.584	4th year, 2nd month, 28th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH					Magistrate				288 CE
n.324	4th year, 3rd month	MIN, GK, SoH									288 CE
n.861	6th year, 1st month, 10th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH									290 CE
n.834	6th year, 1st month, 25th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH									290 CE
n.415	7th year, 3rd month	MIN, GK, J, SoH			Hosted mother of S		Magistrate				291 CE
n.573	7th year, 11th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH					Magistrate				291 CE
n.489	10th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH									294 CE
n.570	11th year, 2nd month, 1st day	MIN, GK, J, SoH									295 CE
n.578	11th year, 2nd month, 2nd day	MIN, GK, J, SoH					Magistrate				295 CE
n.331	11th year, 2nd month, 8th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH					Magistrate				295 CE
n.568	11th year, 2nd month, 9th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH					Set seal				295 CE
n.637	11th year, 6th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH					Ruling official	NA: Carried wine			295 CE
n.180	13th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH									297 CE
n.862	13th year, 1st month	MIN, GK, SoH, J									297 CE
n.569	13th year, 2nd month	MIN, GK, J, SoH				Tg: Scribe	Magistrate				297 CE
n.820	14th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH									298 CE
n.591	15th year, 1st month, 11th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH						NA: Buyer			299 CE
n.195	15th year, 1st month, 20th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH									299 CE
n.500	17th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH									301 CE
n.575	17th year, 1st month	MIN, GK, J, SoH						NA: Part in dispute			301 CE
n.298	17th year, 4th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH									301 CE
n.593	17th year, 6th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH						S: Magistrate			301 CE
n.436	19th year	MIN, GK, SoH						S: Magistrate			303 CE
n.577	20th year, 10th month, 3rd day	MIN, GK, J, SoH						S: Magistrate			304 CE
n.588	20th year, 10th month, 3rd day	MIN, GK, J, SoH						S: Magistrate			304 CE
n.322	21st year, 2nd month	MIN, GK, J, SoH									305 CE
n.600	21st year, 6th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH									305 CE
n.866	21st year, 7th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH									305 CE
n.576	21st year, 12th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH						S: Witness			305 CE
n.222	22nd year	MIN, GK, J, SoH					Received land				306 CE
n.169	26th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH									310 CE
n.420	27th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH					L: Witness				311 CE
n.425	28th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH									312 CE

Document n	Name of King	Titles used	Actors --->	Ki Piteya n.330	Ki Varpa n.523	Ka Karamsta n.455+885 Son: Kamjiya/Kamciya	Ki Luthu n.657+814+953 Son: Sri Tigaca n.162	C Somjaka n.85	C Samasena n.81 Son: Larsu n.385	Lyipeya n.2+8+99	C Kranaya n.89	Date - CE
n.823	Vasmana 3rd year, 1st month, 4th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH										317 CE
n.209	3rd year, 1st month, 12th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH										317 CE
n.833	4th year, 1st month	MIN, GK, J, SoH										318 CE
n.496	4th year, 12th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH								N.A: Received land		318 CE
n.617	5th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH										319 CE
n.770	6th year, 2nd month	MIN, GK, J, SoH										320 CE
n.767	6th year, 8th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH								S: Magistrate	C: Magistrate	320 CE
n.204	7th year, 5th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH										321 CE
n.116	7th year, 6th month, 14th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH										321 CE
n.604	7th year, 6th month, 25th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH								S: Broke seal		321 CE
n.801	8th year, 3rd month	MIN, GK, J, SoH										322 CE
n.831	8th year, 12th month, 7th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH								S: Magistrate	C: Magistrate	322 CE
n.343	8th year, 12th month, 9th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH										322 CE
n.345	9th year, 3rd month, 5th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH								CL: Donated		323 CE
n.318	9th year, 3rd month, 19th day	MIN, GK, J, SoH								CL: Part in dispute		323 CE
n.777	9th year, 11th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH								L: Part in dispute		323 CE
n.401	10th year, 6th month, 10th da	MIN, GK, J, SoH								CL: Held camel		324 CE
n.478	10th year, 6th month, 10th da	MIN, GK, J, SoH										324 CE
n.760	11th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH										325 CE
n.788	Sulica 5th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH										340 CE~

Table 2: Major scribes

Document n	Name of King	Titles used	Actors --->	Ramsotsa n.380	Suguta/Sugnuta n.381	Casgeya n.384 Sunamta n.386	F: Scribe Tamaspa S: Scribe Mogata	Scri Apgeya n.685	Scri Vyipaiga n.663
n.422	Tajaka 3rd year	GK, KK, MN, SoH					T: Witness		
n.808	Tomgraka 2nd or 36th year	GK, KK, G, V, R, MN, SoH							
n.655	Peplva 3rd year	KK, G, V, Da, Di, MN, SoH					T: Scribe		
n.656	5th year	KK, G, V, Da, MN							
n.648	8th year	GK, KK, G, V, Jus, SoH					Scribe		
n.495	8th year, 2nd month	KK, GK, MN (?), SoH							
n.857	Sakta (Likely Amgoka) 25th year	KK, G, V, R, Da, Gj, SoH							
n.677	Amgoka ...th year	MIN, GK, SoH							
n.782	2nd year	GK, KK, G, V, Ju, MN, SoH					Unclear		
n.187	5th year	MIN, GK							
n.581	6th year	GK, KK, G, V, Ju, Da, MN, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.654	8th year, 8th month	MIN, GK, SoH					M: Witness		
n.579	9th year	GK, KK, G, V, Ju, Da, MN, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.589	11th year	MIN, GI, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.586	16th year	MIN, GK, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.571	17th year, 4th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.571	17th year, 12th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.580	19th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.582	20th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.587	21st year	MIN, GK, J, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.572	21st year, 6th month	MIN, GK, J, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.709	24th year, 1st month	MIN, GK, J, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.715	24th year, 11th month	MIN, GK, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.856	26th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.419	28th year	GK, J, SoH			NA: Witness		Scribe		NA: Witness
n.596	31st year	MIN, GK, J, SoH							
n.592	32nd year	MIN, GK, J, SoH					M: Scribe		
n.583	33rd year	MIN, GK, J, SoH					NA: Part in dispute		
n.437	34th year, 2nd month, 12th	MIN, GK, J, SoH							
n.652	34th year, 2nd month, 13th	MIN, GK, SoH							
n.574	34th year, 2nd month, 24th	MIN, GK, J, SoH					NA: Buyer		Buyer
n.418	36th year	MIN, GK, J, SoH							

Document n	Name of King	Titles used	Actors ---->	Ramsotsa n.380	Suguta/Sugnuta n.381	Casgeya n.384 Sunamta n.386	F: Scribe Tamaspa S: Scribe Mogata	Scri Apgeya n.685	Scri Lyipatga n.663
	Mahiri								
n.828	...th year, 1st month, ..th da	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.858	...th year, 1st month, 10th d	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.732	...th year, 2nd month	MN, GK, (J), SoH							
n.582	4th year, 2nd month, 28th d	MN, GK, J, SoH		Sc: Part in dispute					
n.584	4th year, 2nd month, 28th d	MN, GK, J, SoH		NA: Part in dispute	NA: Part in dispute				
n.324	4th year, 3rd month	MN, GK, SoH							
n.861	6th year, 1st month, 10th d	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.834	6th year, 1st month, 25th d	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.415	7th year, 3rd month	MN, GK, J, SoH				Ca: Witness			Scribe
n.573	7th year, 11th month	MN, GK, J, SoH				Ca: Part in marriage exchange			Scribe
n.489	10th year	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.570	11th year, 2nd month, 1st d	MN, GK, J, SoH			NA: Part in dispute				
n.578	11th year, 2nd month, 2nd c	MN, GK, J, SoH			NA: Part in dispute				
n.331	11th year, 2nd month, 8th d	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.568	11th year, 2nd month, 9th d	MN, GK, J, SoH			NA: Received gift				
n.637	11th year, 6th month	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.180	13th year	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.862	13th year, 1st month	MN, GK, SoH, J							
n.569	13th year, 2nd month	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.820	14th year	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.591	15th year, 1st month, 11th c	MN, GK, J, SoH		Sc: Father	NA: Scribe				
n.195	15th year, 1st month, 20th c	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.500	17th year	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.575	17th year, 1st month	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.298	17th year, 4th month	MN, GK, J, SoH				NA: Part in dispute S: Part in dispute			
n.593	17th year, 6th month	MN, GK, J, SoH			NA: Part in dispute				
n.436	19th year	MN, GK, SoH				S: Witness			
n.577	20th year, 10th month, 3rd c	MN, GK, J, SoH			Sc: Part in dispute	S: Part in dispute			
n.588	20th year, 10th month, 3rd c	MN, GK, J, SoH				S: Part in dispute			
n.322	21st year, 2nd month	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.600	21st year, 6th month	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.866	21st year, 7th month	MN, GK, J, SoH				S: Scribe			
n.576	21st year, 12th month	MN, GK, J, SoH				NA: Part in dispute Ca+S: Part in dispute			
n.222	22nd year	MN, GK, J, SoH		Sc: Gave a gift	NA: Gave a gift	Ca+S: Gave a gift			
n.169	26th year	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.420	27th year	MN, GK, J, SoH							
n.425	28th year	MN, GK, J, SoH							

Document n	Name of King	Titles used	Actors --->	Ramsotsa	Suguta/Sugnuta	Casgeya n.384 Sunamta n.386	F: Scribe Tamaspa S: Scribe Mogata	Scri Lypatga
	<u>Vasmana</u>			n.380	n.381			n.663
n.823	3rd year, 1st month, 4th day	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.209	3rd year, 1st month, 12th day	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.833	4th year, 1st month	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.496	4th year, 12th month	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.617	5th year	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.770	6th year, 2nd month	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.767	6th year, 8th month	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.204	7th year, 5th month	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.116	7th year, 6th month, 14th day	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.604	7th year, 6th month, 25th day	MN, GK, J, SoH				Ca: Courier		
n.801	8th year, 3rd month	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.831	8th year, 12th month, 7th day	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.343	8th year, 12th month, 9th day	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.345	9th year, 3rd month, 5th day	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.318	9th year, 3rd month, 19th day	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.777	9th year, 11th month	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.401	10th year, 6th month, 10th day	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.478	10th year, 6th month, 10th day	MN, GK, J, SoH						
n.760	11th year	MN, GK, J, SoH						
	<u>Sulica</u>							
n.788	5th year	MN, GK, J, SoH						

Table 3: Documents with unnamed kings (Listing royal officials)

Document n.	Name of King	Titles used	Actors --->	Ki Piteya n.330	Ki Varpa n.523	Ka Karamsta n.455+885 Son: Kanjiyya/Kamdiya	Ki Luthu n.657+814+953 Son: Sri Tigaca n.162	C Somjaka n.85	C Samasena n.81 Son: Larsu n.385	Lyipeya n.2+8+99	C Kranaya n.89	Date - CE
n.870	Unnamed ...th year	L, GK, KK, G, V, P, CoE, HoA	Likely king									
n.120	3rd year, 4th month	NA	Mahiri			Kam: Witness						287 CE ?
n.785	3rd year, 7th month	NA						Official				288 CE ?
n.735	4th year, 2nd month	NA	Mahiri									
n.350	4th year, 3rd month	NA						Official				288 CE ?
n.629	4th year, 6th month	NA	Mahiri						S: Official			319 CE ?
n.864	5th year	NA	Vasmama						S: Addressee			320 CE ??
n.378	6th year	NA	Vasmama (?)									
n.455	6th year	MIN, GK, J										
n.155	6th year, 5th month	NA	Vasmama						S: Official		C: Official	320 CE ?
n.186	7th year	NA										
n.523	8th year, 1st month	NA										
n.121	8th year, 2nd month	NA										
n.461	8th year, 4th month	NA	Vasmama						S: Undealr/Official		C: Official	322 CE ?
n.494	8th year, 5th month	NA	Vasmama						S: Official		C: Official	322 CE ?
n.149	9th year, 1st month	NA										
n.497	9th year, 3rd month	NA	Vasmama						S: Official		C: Official	323 CE ?
n.505	9th year, 4th month	NA										
n.477	9th year, 11th month	NA	Vasmama						C: Official			323 CE ?
n.296	10th year	NA	Mahiri					Official				294 CE ?
n.193	11th year, 3rd month	NA	Vasmama						C: Official			325 CE ?
n.8	11th year, 5th month	NA										
n.527	16th year	NA										
n.701	20th year, 5th month	NA										
n.765	20th year, 8th month	NA	Mahiri						S: Magistrate			304 CE ?
n.236	21st year	NA	Mahiri						S and L: Given grain			305 CE ?
n.327	23rd year, 2nd month	MIN, GK, J	Amgoka			Magistrate/Witness: Magistrate/Witness						269 CE ?
n.428	23rd year, 3rd month	NA										
n.110	23rd year, 6th month	NA										
n.859	24th year	NA	Amgoka			Magistrate						
n.488	24th year, 7th month	NA										270 CE ?
n.5	26th year, 2nd month	NA	Mahiri						NA: Herder (n.80?)			310 CE ?
n.452	28th year	NA										
n.154	29th year	NA										
n.98	29th year, 1st month	NA										
n.469	29th year, 1st month	NA	Mahiri						S: Official			313 CE ?
n.123	30th year, 1st month	NA	Mahiri						S: Witness			314 CE ?
n.90	30th year, 5th month	NA										314 CE ?
n.132	30th year, 9th month	NA	Mahiri					Tg: Informed				
n.676	38th year	MIN, GK	Amgoka (?)									284 CE ?



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