

Cengtān 層檀 and Fulin 拂菻: The Saljuqs in Chinese Sources*

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Introduction

The Saljuq Turks, known in Islamic sources as the Ghūzz, Turkmān or al-Saljūqiyya, rose from tribesmen dwelling in the West Eurasian steppes to rulers of an empire that dominated the Middle East and Central Asia. These Turks were recent converts to Islam when they began to migrate westward as a military power in the early eleventh century. After the capture of Baghdad in 1055, the leaders of the Saljuqs assumed the title *sultān* and considered themselves guardians of the caliphate. During the mid-eleventh century the Saljuqs steadily expanded the territory under their control until they had created an empire stretching from Transoxiana to Anatolia centered in Iran.¹

Traditional Turkic political inheritance, which viewed the state as the collective property of the royal clan and divided territory between a deceased leader's sons, fragmented the Saljuq Empire (ca. 1040–1194) into sultanates and emirates. The Saljuqs had lost power everywhere by the end of the twelfth century except Anatolia, which was known to Muslim chroniclers as Rūm. Therefore, a Saljuq ruler of the Sultanate in Anatolia (ca. 1081–1308) was known in the Islamic world as Sultan of Rūm (*sultān al-Rūm*), Master of Rūm (*ṣāhib al-Rūm*) or King of Rūm (*malik al-Rūm*).²

Any research on Saljuq history is mainly based on Muslim and Christian sources. Chinese primary and secondary sources have usually not been consulted. However, China was one of the closest neighbours of the Turks and a source of luxurious commodities highly prized in the Islamic world. The Saljuqs sought to

* This paper was written within the framework of a project supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference “Memory and Commemoration in Islamic Central Asia” at Leiden University, November 2016. I would like to thank Prof. Elyor Karimov and Prof. Ralph Kauz for their valuable comments on earlier drafts. Any errors are my own.

1 For the early history of the Saljuqs and the formation of the Saljuq Empire, see Peacock 2010; Peacock 2015.

2 Korobeinikov 2013, 79. For the history of the Saljuq Sultanate of Rūm, see Peacock and Yildiz 2013.

establish diplomatic relations with the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), sending several envoys to the imperial Chinese court. The Chinese recorded envoys from the Great Saljuqs and the Saljuqs of Rūm offering interesting information on diplomacy and trade with China that cannot be obtained from other sources. It also gives us an understanding as to how the Saljuqs were viewed in the Sinitic world. Moreover, the main accounts of the Saljuqs, as for any nomadic peoples, were written by the settled people they conquered, who often offered an uncomprehending view of these alien invaders. Chinese sources provide perceptions of the Saljuqs outside their realm, which can be used to counteract these slanted views. However, Chinese sources should be consulted very carefully, taking into account that the Chinese considered their country the center of the world, and foreign peoples and polities mostly were viewed as barbarians and tributaries. They applied various terms for foreigners that often differed from the names the people used themselves and could carry a neutral or pejorative meaning.

The Turks were known to China by the autonym Tujue 突厥, which derived from the Turkic word “Türk” (“Türküt”) and was used from the sixth until the middle of the tenth century.³ The mass conversion among the Turks reflected to their representation in the Sinitic world and the name Dashi 大食 meaning Muslims applied to them as a generic term. The Saljuqs were also viewed as a part of the Islamic world and were recorded in Chinese sources generally as Dashi. In the meantime Chinese official chronicles applied individual names to the polities founded by the Saljuqs: Cengtan 層檀 to the Saljuq Empire in Central Asia, Iran, and Transcaucasia and Fulin 拂菻 to the Saljuq Sultanate in Anatolia. This paper analyses Chinese records on the Saljuqs as well as interpretations of Chinese terms applied to the Saljuqs and provides translations of relevant text passages.

1 The Saljuq Empire in Chinese sources

The official history of the Song dynasty, *Song shi* 宋史, compiled by a group of scholars under the direction of the Mongol official Toqtoqha (Tuotuo 脫脫, 1314–1356) during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), has a chapter on the state

3 For the chronology of the usage of Tujue in Chinese sources see Liu 1958, 1. The last envoy from the Tujue, probably the Qarakhanids, came to the Chinese court in 941. *Xin Wudai shi* 74.913. For the German translation of the Tujue section in *Xin Wudai shi* see Liu 1958, 390. For other possible origin of the term Tujue see Golden 2011, 20–21.

of Cengtan, which was mentioned only in sources for the Song history and did not appear in sources for other periods.⁴

The first scholars who attempted to identify the location of Cengtan were Friedrich Hirth and William Rockhill. They suggested that Cengtan is the same as Cengba 層拔 (Zanzibar) mentioned in *Zhufan zhi* 諸蕃志 (Records of Foreign Peoples) written by the Song official Zhao Rugua 趙汝适 (1170–1228).⁵ The Japanese scholar Fujita Toyohachi 藤田豐八 (1869–1929) rejected this view and assumed that Cengtan was a Chinese transliteration of the main Saljuq title *sultān*, and thus refers to the Saljuq Empire.⁶ Some Chinese researchers recently tried to locate Cengtan in Arabia;⁷ however, in Chinese scholarship it is also mainly associated with the Saljuq realm.⁸

The description of Cengtan in *Song shi* was taken from earlier sources of the Southern Song period (1127–1279), which possess some crucial differences. One of the first descriptions of Cengtan was probably recorded by Zhou Hui 周輝 (ca. 1126–1198) in his *Qingbo biezhi* 清波別志 (Other Miscellaneous Notes from the Gate of Qingbo). Zhou Hui was a Song official who, many years after retirement lived in Hangzhou 杭州 near the Qingbo gate. This gate served as one of the important entry points for ships from foreign countries. Zhou Hui left records on foreign countries and peoples that he probably obtained from merchants, envoys, interpreters and many others who arrived to Hangzhou by the gate of Qingbo:

層檀，南海旁國也。國城距海二十里，海道須便風百六十許日，晝夜行。經勿巡、古林、三佛齊國乃至廣州。國主名亞美羅亞眉蘭，傳國五百年，十世矣。春冬暖。貴人以好越布纏頭，服土產花綿白疊布，不服綾羅絹帛，出入乘象馬。官有月俸。其法輕罪杖，重者死。有稻、麥、粟、胡羊、山羊、沙牛、水牛、駝、馬、魚、犀、象、熏陸、沈水香、血竭、沒藥、鵬砂、阿魏、蘇合香、真珠、玻璃、葡萄、千年裘、密沙華三酒。交易用官鑄錢，三分其齊，金銅相半而加銀一分，禁私鑄。人之語音如大食國云。國朝承平日，外國朝貢，間數年必有之。史策但書某國貢方物而已，如封域風俗皆略焉，獨於層檀所書如此。

Cengtan is a neighbour state of the Southern Sea lands. The state city is twenty *li*⁹ from the seaside.¹⁰ The sea road takes with a favorable wind 160 days traveling day

4 *Song shi* 490.14122-14123; English translation: Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 127, n. 4.

5 Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 127, n.4.

6 Fujita Toyohachi 1936, 222.

7 Zhou Yunzhong 2014, 27-35.

8 Zhang Xinglang 1977, 815; Chen *et al.* 1986, II, 1047, 1076; Lu Yun 2015, 32.

9 Twenty *li* was equivalent to 11.3 km during the Song period. Cf. Wilkinson 2015, 554-556.

and night; passing by Wuxun [Mezoen],¹¹ Gulin [Quilon],¹² and Sanfoqi [Śrīvijaya]¹³ and go so far as to Guangzhou. The name of the ruler is Yameiluo Yameilan [Amīr al-Mu'minīn?],¹⁴ [his family] had ruled the country for five hundred years and ten generations.¹⁵ Springs and winters are [equally] warm. The noble people like to wear turbans of fine muslin, clothing made from local flowered brocade and cotton cloth, they do not like to wear patterned thin fabric and silk. They ride elephants and horses. Officials have monthly salaries. By their law minor offences are punished with flogging and serious crime with death. They have rice, wheat, millet, Central Asian sheep, goats, buffaloes, water-buffaloes, camels, horses, fish, rhinoceros, elephants, frankincense, aloe incense, dragon's blood, myrrh, borax, asafoetida, storax incense, pearls, glass, grape, date and three kinds of wine named *mi*, *sha* and *hua*.¹⁶ In commerce they use coins minted only by the state; three parts consist of gold and copper in equal proportion and the fourth of silver. It is forbidden to mint coins illegally. Their language sounds like a speech of the Muslim states (*Dashi guo*). If the [Song] dynasty continues its peaceful reign, there will certainly be foreign countries presenting tribute to the court for many years. However, historical documents only record that a certain country presented local products and such things as fiefs and territories, customs and habits are all omitted; only records on Cengtan have information like that.¹⁷

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- 10 The center of the Saljuq Empire in this period was Isfahan. However, the envoy most likely was dispatched from one of the port cities in the Persian Gulf.
- 11 Wuxun 勿巡 Mezoen is Sohar in modern Oman, one of the important trade ports located in the maritime road between the Islamic world and China.
- 12 Gulin 古林 (Quilon) is an old seaport and city situated on the Malabar coast of southwestern India.
- 13 Sanfoqi 三佛齊 (Śrīvijaya) was a city-state located in the island of Sumatra, Indonesia.
- 14 Hirth and Rockhill (1911, 127, n. 4) identified Yameiluo Yameilan 亞美羅亞眉蘭 with the title *Amīr-i Amīrān*. Some Saljuq amirs used this title. For instance, Uthman, the uncle of the Saljuq Sultan Malik Shāh I (1072–1092), who was a governor of Saklakand in Tukharistan, was known as *Amīr-i Amīrān*. See Richards 2002, 180. However, this title was not used by the Saljuq Sultans and I do not think that Uthman could dispatch an envoy to China. It could also be a corruption of the title *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, which was borne by the Caliphs. The Saljuq ambassadors could introduce the Caliph as the spiritual ruler. Moreover, the Saljuq Sultan Alp Arslan (1063–1072) has a title *Burbān Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (“Proof of the Commander of the Faithful”) granted by Caliph al-Qā'im.
- 15 The sentence “they had ruled the country for five hundred years and ten generations” can refer in this context to the Caliphs.
- 16 The Chinese words *mi* 密, *sha* 沙 and *hua* 華 can refer to the Persian word *mai* and Arabo-Persian words *sharāb* and *khamr* for wine. Also see Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 126, n. 4.
- 17 *Qingbo biezhī* 1.141.

The same description, with some changes and additional information, appeared in another historical book of this period written by Li Tao 李燾 (1115–1184), a secretary in the Veritable Records Institute (*shilu yuan* 實錄院) in the Southern Song dynasty. He compiled the historical chronicle of the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Extended Continuation to the Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government), which was finished in 1183 and presented to the emperor of the Southern Song. Li Tao made use of official dynastic histories, veritable records as well as unofficial histories and sometimes even provided his own opinion to certain events.

The text of Li Tao provides some differences as well as new information. For instance, he applied the term “Muslims” (Dashi 大食) to the name of the state, calling it “the Muslim Cengtan state” (Dashi Cengtan *guo* 大食層檀國). He recorded that “the capital of the state is situated 20,000 *li* from the Southern Sea”, and added costus root to the list of the products, while excluding millet and aloe incense. Moreover, he states that in 1071, the ruler of Cengtan for the first time sent an envoy to the court of the Chinese emperor, and then did so again in 1081 and 1083. He also mentions the Saljuq ambassador Cengjiani 層伽尼 (al-Zanjani)¹⁸ with the Chinese title *baoshun langjiang* 保順郎將 (Maintaining Submission Commandant),¹⁹ who came twice to the Chinese court and received imperial gifts, as well as two thousand *liang* 兩 (80 kg) of silver.²⁰ All this information appears in the chapter on Cengtan in the official history of the Song dynasty, *Song shi*. However, Chinese chroniclers of the Mongols, who compiled it, records only two envoys sent by the Saljuqs in 1071 and 1083.²¹ Therefore, it is crucial to compare accounts provided in the official history of the Song with earlier sources.

The envoys from the Saljuq realm were sent to China during the rule of Alp Arslan (1063–1072) and his son Malik Shah I (1072–1092), the most prosperous period of the Saljuq Empire. They greatly expanded the empire’s territory and consolidated their power, defeating rivals to the south and northwest.

18 For the name see Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 127, n. 4.

19 *Baoshun langjiang*, laudatory title conferred on friendly alien military chiefs. See Hucker 1985, 369. *Baoshun* 保順 was a laudatory epithet commonly prefixed to titles of nobility and friendly alien rulers. For instance, the Qarakhanid ruler Toghril Qara Khan Yusuf ibn Sulayman and Uyghur Qaghan of Ganzhou 甘州, Yelage 夜落隔 (1023–1028) were granted the title *guizhong baoshun* 歸忠保順 (“Faithful Alien for Maintaining Submission”). *Song shi* 490.14108, 14117.

20 *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 225.5469; 313.7592; 332.7998; 333.8017.

21 *Song shi* 490.14122–14123.

Therefore, it seems obvious that the Saljuq Sultans sought to have direct contacts with China, which, despite the “silver crisis” of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, paid pure silver for commodities from the Islamic world. Malik Shah I was well known in Song China: his name was even applied to the Saljuq territories in description of Anatolia, where the territories of Mielisha 滅力沙 (Malik Shah) were depicted as the south-eastern neighbours of the Sultanate of Rūm.²²

The interesting part of the passage on Cengtan is the use of elephants in logistics. Elephants are normally associated with sub-Saharan Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. However, the use of elephants in warfare and logistics was not unique or entirely unknown in Iran and Central Asia. Elephants were deployed, for instance, during the Sassanid dynasty (224–651) that procured these animals from their Indian allies.²³ The most famous dynasty in the Islamic world that extensively used elephants in military affairs and made them symbols of power and authority were the Ghaznavids (977–1186), who ruled in Khurasan and al-Hind. Among this Turkic dynasty the possession of elephants was a royal privilege; however, elephants could be granted to Amirs in some circumstances or used as diplomatic gifts to allied rulers. For instance, the Ghaznavid historian al-Uṭbī (d. 1022) in his *Kitāb al-Yamīnī* mentions war elephants in the list of gifts presented by Sultan Mahmud (998–1030) to the Qarakhanid ruler.²⁴ The presence of elephants in the Qarakhanid army is stated in Chinese sources, too. The Khotan ambassador who arrived at the court of the Song Emperor Taizu 太祖 (r. 960–976) in 971 reported their victory over the Kashgar state [Shule guo 疏勒國, the Qarakhanids] and the capture of one dancing elephant.²⁵ According to Juvaynī’s *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, Indian elephants were used even in the army of the Qara Khitai (1124–1218), who obtained them in the battle with the Ghurids (1186–1215) and brought them to Balasaghun.²⁶ The Saljuqs also received elephants as diplomatic gifts during peace negotiations or obtained them during war with the Ghaznavids.

These sources are not the earliest Chinese sources on the Saljuqs. The earliest source in which the Cengtan state was mentioned is *Wenchang zalu* 文昌雜錄 (Miscellaneous Records from Wenchang) written by Pang Yuanying 龐元英

22 *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 317.7661; *Song shi* 490.14124.

23 For Elephants in the Sassanian army see Charles 2007.

24 Reynolds 1858, 316.

25 *Song shi* 490.14107.

26 Boyle 1997, 360.

(fl. 1078–1088). Pang Yuanying was a Northern Song official (*zhuke langzhong* 主客郎中) who was in charge of managing visits of foreign ambassadors and maintaining the households of the descendants of the previous dynasties. He was definitely the sort of person who could meet ambassadors from the Cengtan state personally and get reliable information about this place and its location:

主客所掌諸番，[...] 南方十有五：[...] 其十三曰層檀，東至海，西至胡盧沒國，南至霞勿檀國，北至利吉蠻國。其十四曰勿巡，舟船順風泛海，二十晝夜至層檀。

The Bureau of Receptions is in charge of all foreigners [...] There are fifteen countries in the south: [...] The thirteenth country is called Cengtan. In the east of Cengtan is the sea, in the west is the Hulumei state, in the south is the Xiawutan state, in the north is the Lijiman state. The fourteenth country is called Wuxun [Mezoen]; from there the sea road takes with a favourable wind 20 days without stopping to get to Cengtan.²⁷

All the place names mentioned in this passage are unknown and did not appear in any other sources, except for Wuxun 勿巡, which is Mezoen (modern Sohar) in present-day Oman,²⁸ which was an important trade port between the Islamic world and China. The sea that was located in the east of the Cengtan state is probably the Caspian Sea, but it could also refer to the Persian Gulf, or even to the more remote South China Sea.

Lu Yun suggested that the term Hulumei 胡盧沒 (he reads it as Hulumo) should be derived from the word Hurum, which was an Armenian word for Rome and refers to Byzantium.²⁹ However, it seems to be unlikely that the Saljuq ambassadors used this name instead of the Persian term Rūm for Rome, which also applied to former Byzantine territories conquered by the Saljuqs. I suppose that this word should be read as Hu Lumei 胡盧沒 meaning “Rūm of the Turks”. The first part of this name, *hu* 胡, meaning “barbarian”, was a general term for foreign peoples living north and northwest of China and was mainly associated with peoples speaking Turkic, Mongolian and Tungusic languages. However, it could also sometimes refer to other peoples of the Western Regions, like Tokharians or Sogdians. During the Song period, this term was mainly associated with Central Asia. The second part of this term, *lumei* 盧沒, is very similar to the Chinese name Lumei 蘆眉, for the Saljuq Sultanate of Anatolia that originated from the Persian word Rūm and was used by the

27 *Wenchang zalu* 1.3a-b (653).

28 Chen *et al.* 1986, 997-1002.

29 Lu Yun 2015, 30.

Southern Song official Zhao Rugua in his records on foreign countries.³⁰ Sultans of the Saljuq Empire sent three envoys to China in 1071, 1081 and 1083.³¹ All of them were sent after the battle of Manzikert when the Saljuqs began to occupy Anatolia, the territories known in the Islamic world as Rūm. However, despite their conquest of this region, the Sultans of the Saljuq Empire never styled themselves as rulers of Rūm; although it was common practice to include the names of the different countries that they conquered in their titles, Rūm never appeared among them.³² The Saljuq Sultanate of Anatolia was viewed as a subordinate state of the Saljuq Empire until 1084.³³ The ambassadors who came to the court of the Chinese emperor referred to Anatolia and their subjects, the Saljuqs of Rūm, as their western neighbours.

The southern neighbours of the Cengtan state Xiawutan 霞勿檀 were identified by Lu Yun with the Ghaznavid Empire (977–1186) in Afghanistan and northwest India; however, he did not mention anything about the possible origin of this term.³⁴ The Ghaznavids are mentioned in Southern Song sources such as *Lingwai daida* 嶺外代答 (Notes from the Land beyond the Passes) by Zhou Qufei 周去非 (1135–1189) as Jicini 吉慈尼, which is the Chinese transliteration of Ghazni, the capital of the Ghaznavids.³⁵ When the Saljuq ambassadors arrived in China, the Ghaznavids and the Saljuqs signed a peace agreement initiated by the Ghaznavid ruler Ibrahim (1059–1099), which stopped the further Saljuq conquest of Ghaznavid territories. It was a time of cultural and social interaction via marriage alliances between two empires. The Ghaznavids were strong enough in many ways to deal with the Saljuqs on equal footing and used the title *sultān*.³⁶ The Saljuq ambassadors could introduce them to China. Probably, in order to distinguish them from the Saljuq Sultans the Chinese adopted a new transliteration for the word *sultān*.

The Lijiman 利吉蠻 state, which was located in the north of Cengtan, according to Lu Yun, can refer to the western Qarakhanids. He attempted to read

30 *Zhufan zhi*, 116–117; Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 141–142.

31 *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 313.7592; 332.7998; 333.8017.

32 Korobeinikov 2013, 71.

33 Korobeinikov 2013, 72.

34 Lu Yun 2015, 30.

35 *Lingwai daida* 3.3b–4a; Netolitzky 1977, 45–46; *Zhufan zhi*, 112; Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 138.

36 Bosworth 2001.

liji 利吉 as a Chinese word for the Turkic title *ilig*.³⁷ *Ilig* means “prince”, “king” and it was the highest title of the Qarakhanids after the supreme title *qāghān*. Muslim authors, like al-‘Utbi in his *Kitāb al-Yamīnī*, often applied this name to the Qarakhanids.³⁸ The eastern Qarakhanids were well-known to the Northern Song, who since 1009 had established close diplomatic contacts with Song China and were known as “the Qarakhan kings of the Khotan state” (Yutian *guo* Heihan *wang* 于闐國黑汗王).³⁹ The realm of the western Qarakhanids were viewed in China as a part of the Islamic world, and the Qarakhanids as Muslims (Dashi 大食).⁴⁰ I could not find any other name in Chinese sources that refer to the western Qarakhanids, except Puhualuo 蒲花羅 (Bukhara), which is mentioned in the list of the Muslim states recorded by the Southern Song official Zhao Rugua.⁴¹ However, during that period, the Saljuq Sultans established close relative links through marriage alliances not only with the Ghaznavid Sultan, but also with the Qarakhanids, which went on until the times of Sultan Sanjar (1118–1157). For instance, according to *Al-Kāmil fī l-ta’rīkh*, the first wife of the Saljuq Sultan Malik Shāh I was a Qarakhanid princess who was known as Turkān Khatun (“The Queen of the Turks”).⁴² The Qarakhanid ruler Shams al-Mulk Naṣr ibn Ibrāhīm (1068–1080), “the lord of Samarqand, Bukhara and Mawarannahr” also married Saljuq princesses.⁴³ Therefore, the states of Lijiman and Xiawutan recorded by the Chinese official Pang Yuanying 龐元英 should refer to the western Qarakhanids and the Ghaznavids.

Liao shi 遼史 (History of the Liao Dynasty) recorded only the Qatwan battle in 1141 near Samarqand (Xunsigan 尋思干) between the Saljuq Sultan San-

37 Lu Yun 2015, 31.

38 For instance, see *Saljuq-nāma*, 29-30; Reynolds 1858, 315-318.

39 *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 362.8655; *Song shi* 490.14106-14109.

40 The terms Heihan and Dashi applied to the Qarakhanids in Chinese sources were also studied in Biran 2001, 79-80. For the Qarakhanid-Chinese relations, see Hansen 2013, 288-302; Biran 2015. For the political history of the Qarakhanids, see Bartold 1900; Pritsak 1953, 17-68; Genç 1981; Karaev (1983); Wei Liangtao (1986).

41 Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 116-117. Zhao Rugua started to write this work in 1190 and completed it in 1225. The Khwarazmshahs defeated the Qarakhanids in 1210 and Bukhara became one of the residences of the Khwarazmshah. However, the author could have obtained information on the territories long before these events, when Bukhara was one of the main cities of the western Qarakhanids.

42 Richards 2002, 187-188.

43 *Mir’āt al-zamān fī tā’rīh al-ā’yān*, 164.

jar and the Qara Khitai Gurkhan Yelü Dashi 耶律大石 (1124–1143). The Saljuq Empire was called Hu'ershan 忽兒珊 (Khurasan) of the Western Region (Xiyu 西域).⁴⁴ Before his reign, Sultan Sanjar was a governor of Khurasan from 1096, appointed by his half-brother Barkyaruq (1094–1105).

2 The Saljuq Sultanate of Rūm in Chinese sources

Chinese sources applied three terms to the Saljuq Sultanate of Rūm: Fulin 拂菻,⁴⁵ Meilugudun 眉路骨忒,⁴⁶ and Lumei 蘆眉.⁴⁷

Fulin, which is most likely derived from Middle Persian *Hrwm* (Rome), originally applied to the Byzantine Empire in official Tang sources.⁴⁸ The description of Fulin in Song sources clearly demonstrates that it refers to the Saljuqs.⁴⁹ Lumei comes from the term Rūm, which derives from Rome and referred to the Byzantine Empire in the medieval Islamic world. The Saljuqs called the lands of their sultanate Rūm because it had been established on territory long considered “Roman” in the Islamic world. Meilugudun was identified by Friedrich Hirth as the Saljuq sultanate of Rūm.⁵⁰ However, he also suggested that it can be a transcription of the Arabic word *mulhidūn*, meaning “infidels”, “heretics”, and referring to Constantinople. Furthermore, he assumes that it can be a composite picture of the remote Mediterranean region in China.⁵¹ However, the Qur'an uses the term *mulhidūn* mainly for disbelievers and does not apply it to Christians. I suggest that Meilugudun probably derives from the designation “*mulk-i Rūm*” meaning “the kingdom of Rūm” and refers to the entire territory of the Saljuq Sultanate of Rūm.

The term Fulin was used by court historians in official Chinese histories, while Lumei and Meilugudun appear in records of foreign countries that were written by officials who served in border regions and relied mainly on information that they obtained from foreign merchants. It seems that court histori-

44 *Liao shi* (30.356) mentioned Hu'ershan as a name for the coalition of the Western Region's states. However, it is clear that it refers to Khurasan.

45 *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 317.7661-7662; *Song shi* 490.14124-14125.

46 *Lingwai daida* 3.4a; Netolitzky 1977, 46.

47 *Zhufan zhi*, 116-117; Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 141-142.

48 For the term Fulin and its origin during the Tang period, see Lieu 2009, 236-245.

49 For the term Fulin during the Song period see Hirth 1909. For recent overview of the issue, see Xu Jialing 2009.

50 Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 141-142.

51 Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 142.

ans preferred to use the familiar term for the region, while other authors applied the name which was in use among the Saljuqs themselves and in the entire Islamic world.

The description of Fulin in *Song shi*⁵² was taken from *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*, a history compiled in the twelfth century. The passage in *Song shi* was entirely modified and shortened. It also omitted important information that clearly refers to the Saljuqs of Rūm and not to the Byzantines. Therefore, the description of Fulin in *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* can be applied in tracing the usage of this term during the Song period:

元豐四年，拂菻國貢方物，大首領備廝都令廝孟判言，其國東南至滅力沙，北至大海，四十程。又東至西大石及於闐王所居新福州，次至蕃於闐，次至灼昌城，乃於闐界，次東至黃頭回紇，又東至達靉，次至種樞，又至董種所居，次至林檎城，又東至青唐，乃至中國王界；西至大海約三十程。其名滅力伊靈改撤，國地甚寒，王服紅黃衣，以金線織絲布纏頭，每歲遇三月入佛寺燒香，坐紅床，人昇之。首領皆如王之服，或青綠、緋白、粉紅、褐紫，亦各纏頭跨馬。城市田野各有首領主之。每歲惟夏秋兩得俸，給金、銀、綿、錦、穀、帛，以治事大小為差。刑罪輕者杖五七十，重者一二百，大罪盛以毛囊投之海。土屋無瓦。產金、銀、珠、綿、錦、牛、羊、馬、獨穗駝、杏、梨、糖、千年棗、巴欖子、大小麥、粟、麻，以蒲桃釀酒。音樂彈胡琴、箏篪，吹小箏篪，擊偏鼓，唱歌拍手戲舞。不務戰鬥，事小止以文字往來詰問，事大亦出兵。以金銀為錢，無穿孔，面鑿彌勒佛名，背鑿國王名，禁私造。其言語與滅力沙同。至是貢鞍、馬、刀、劍、珠。

In the fourth year of the Yuanfeng era [1081] (the) Fulin state offered local products as a tribute; the main Chief [*da shouling*]⁵³ Nisi [Naṣr?] and Director-in-Chief [*duling*] Simengpan [Uthmān-bey?]⁵⁴ reported that in the south east of their coun-

52 *Song shi* 490.14124-14125.

53 *Da shouling* 大首領 literally means “big head-neck”. *Shouling* was a generic term to refer to head of tribes, tribal unions or even Khaganates.

54 In the Beijing edition of *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* both names were given as a name of the main chief and written as Nisidulingsimengpan 備廝都令廝孟判. However, Hirth (1909, 29-30) also assumed that this name may refer to one or two persons. He reads this name as Nisidouling Simeng 備廝都令廝孟 which may stand for “Nestorius Simeon” or “Nestorius and Simeon”. He did not consider the last character *pan* 判 to be a part of the name and instead offered a meaning identical to *ban* 伴 “in a company” or *panguan* 判官 “companion officer”, “attaché”. He assumed that governors Nestorius and Simeon could come in a company or the governor was accompanied by Nestorian Simeon. I am not aware of Nestorians’ presence in the Saljuq administration and service. At least the Saljuqs of Rūm did not appoint them as governors and I do not think that they could send them as ambassadors. The Japanese scholar Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉 (1865–1942) suggested that Nisidu 備廝都 should be an official title of the envoy, which he could not identify and Ling 令 may stand for Rūm. Shiratori Kurakichi (1938–1939, 62) as-

try is Mielisha [Malik Shah], in the north is the Big Sea [the Black Sea], both are forty stages of a journey. In the east it reaches western Muslims [Xi Dashi]⁵⁵ and new Fuzhou⁵⁶ occupied by the ruler of Khotan [Yutian],⁵⁷ next comes old Khotan,⁵⁸ then the city Zhuochang⁵⁹ and then the borders of Khotan; next are the Yellow-Head Uyghurs [Huangtou Huihe],⁶⁰ then come the Tatars [Dada],⁶¹ the Chong'uls [Zhongwo]⁶² and places occupied by Dongzhan,⁶³ next is the city Linqin,⁶⁴ then Qingtang⁶⁵ and then comes the boundary of the ruler of the Middle Kingdom. In the west is the Big Sea [the Aegean Sea], which is approximately thirty days of the journey. The name of the ruler is Mieliyi Ling Gaiche [Malik-i Rūm

sumed that the name of the envoy Simeng 廝孟 could be a Chinese transliteration for Uthmān or Sulaymān and *pan* 判 may stand for the Turkic title *beg/bey* or *pasha*. Yang Xianyi 楊憲益 (1915–2009) assumed that Nisiduling 孛廝都令 derives from the honorific noble title *maistre* and Simengpan 廝孟判 is Simon de Monfort. Yang Xianyi (1983, 213–214) suggested that he could be appointed as ambassador by the Byzantine emperor. However, there is no historical record, which proves this assumption. I suggest that the governor (*da shouling* 大首領) Nisi came together with the main director (*duling* 都令) of the delegation Simengpan. Nisi 孛廝 may stand for Naṣr and Simengpan 廝孟判 for Uthmān-bey.

- 55 Xi Dashi 西大石, the Western Qarakhanids.
- 56 Xin Fuzhou 新福州 most probably refers to the contemporary capital Xinfuzhou 新復州 of the Yutian 于闐 Kingdom, that is, modern Khotan.
- 57 The Eastern Qarakhanids.
- 58 Dividing the state of Khotan into new and old is unclear. I suppose that the new Khotan should be the entire territory of the eastern Qarakhanids centered in Balasagun and Kashgar. The old Khotan refers to the previous territories of the Khotan kingdom which was conquered by the Qarakhanids by the eleventh century and served as a residence for the Qarakhanid co-Kaghans.
- 59 Zhuochang 灼昌 is Yuechang 約昌, a city near present-day Cherchen or Qiemo 且末 county in Xinjiang.
- 60 Huangtou Huihe 黃頭回紇, the Yellow Head Uyghurs are seen as a tribe of the Ganzhou 甘州 Uyghurs who established a Khaganate in present Gansu 甘肅 by the tenth century. See Horlemann 2007, 89–93.
- 61 Dada 達鞏 is a designation used since the Tang period for Mongolian-speaking peoples in the northern steppe.
- 62 Chong'ul [Zhongwo 種襁] is a Turkic clan name still in use among the modern Yogurs.
- 63 Dongzhan 董氐 (1032–1083) was the second leader of the Tibetan Tsongkha confederation that was founded by his father Gusiluo 曷廝囉 (997–1065) in present-day Qinghai and parts of Gansu. Dongzhan conquered northern territories of the Yellow River and these places were meant in the text.
- 64 The exact location of the city Linqin 林檎 is unclear. It should be a territory of Tsongkha.
- 65 Qingtang 青唐 is a place near present-day Xining that belonged to the Tsongkha confederation.

Qaiṣar?].⁶⁶ The climate of the country is very cold. The ruler wears red-yellow clothes and a gold threaded silk turban. On the third month of each year he visits the temple of the Buddha to burn incense. He sits on a red bed and peoples carry him on their shoulders.⁶⁷

The chieftains wear the same cloth as their ruler, some in green-blue, [some] dark red, [some] white, [some] soft red, [some] brown and violet, as well as turbans, and ride horses. Each fortified city and province has its own chieftain who is in charge of it.⁶⁸ They get an official emolument twice every year in summer and autumn. They are given gold, silver, cotton, brocade, grain, and silk, and it differs according to degree of seniority of their service. Minor offences are punished with fifty to seventy strokes, more serious crimes with one to two hundred strokes, and big crimes are punished by throwing the accused into the sea in a sack.⁶⁹ Houses are not made from tiles. The products of the country are gold, silver, pearl, silk floss, brocade, cattle, sheep, horses, dromedaries, apricots, pears, sweets, dates, almonds, various kinds of wheat, millet,

66 Malik-i Rūm Qaiṣar – “King of the Roman Caesar”. The envoys from Fulin were sent in 1081 and 1091. The rulers of the Saljuq Sultanate of Rūm in this period were its founder Sulaiman ibn Qutulmish (1077–1086) and his relative Abu’l-Qasim (1086–1092). In *Song shi* it was given in a slightly different form as Mieliyi Ling Gaisa 滅力伊靈改撒. *Song shi* 490.14124. Hirth (1909, 25, 27-28) suggested that Mieliyi 滅力伊 is the name of Nicephorus Melissenus who had a title of the Byzantine emperor in this period, Ling 靈 is imperfect attempt for the word Rūm and Gaisa 改撒 stand for Greek “Kaisar” (Caesar). Shiratori Kurakichi (1938–1939, 61-62) assumed that Mieliyi Ling 滅力伊靈 is the Saljuq title *malik-i* Rūm (king of Rūm) and Gaisa 改撒 is the Islamic title *ghāzī* (warrior). I also suppose that “Mieliyi” 滅力伊 most likely indicates the word *malik-i* (“king”). The title meaning “Emperor of Rome” was obviously used in the Chinese court in Turkic form as “Rūm Qaiṣar” instead of Persian form “Qaiṣar-i Rūm”. Unfortunately, we have no reliable evidence for royal titles of the Saljuqs of Rūm until the mid-twelfth century to confirm the existence of this title. However, the Saljuq Sultan of Rūm could be introduced as a ruler of territories once belonged to the “Roman Emperor”. Moreover, Sulaiman ibn Qutulmish supported Nicephorus Melissenus in gaining the Byzantine throne who received the title “Kaisar” and Sulaiman as his supporter could call himself as “the King of the Roman Caesar”.

67 The visit of the ruler of Fulin to the so-called temple which is a mosque in the third months of each year probably refers to the *Mawlid*, the birthday of the Islamic prophet, which is celebrated in the third month in the Islamic calendar *Rabi’ al-awwal*.

68 It refers to the *iqṭā’* practice.

69 This description seems to correspond with the Romano-Byzantine punishment of *poena cullei* (from Latin “penalty of the sack”). It is likely that Byzantine law influenced Saljuq jurisprudence. For the solid Greek influence in the Sultanate see Korobeinikov 2014, 289-297. This punishment was also adopted by the Ottomans and mainly applied to women. This goes back to an old Turko-Mongol taboo on the shedding of the blood of women. See Peters 2005, 101.

sesame, and wine made from grapes. For music, they play the fiddle [*huqin*],⁷⁰ harp [*konghou*], small zurna [*bili*]⁷¹ and one-sided drum [*piangu*]; they sing, clap their hands and dance. They do not seek to make war; if the problem is small, they solve it by correspondence and only in case of serious matters they dispatch troops. They mint gold and silver coins which have no hole. On the obverse is engraved the name of Milefo [Caliph],⁷² on the reverse there is the name of the ruler. Unofficial minting of coins is prohibited. Their language is similar to the language of Mielisha [Malik Shah]. As tribute to the emperor they offer saddled horses, swords and pearls.⁷³

The entry of Fulin is followed by an interesting commentary by a later scholar that mentions a *Fulin zhengzhuan* 拂菻正傳 (“Official Chronicle of Fulin”), now lost. According to this source the Fulin state had not come to the Chinese court “for more than nine hundred years until today.”⁷⁴ There is no doubt that the information stating that this country did not send envoys in previous times, applied to the new dynasty in Asia Minor, since Chinese sources recorded several embassies from Fulin during the Tang period, when this term was used for the Byzantine Empire.⁷⁵ Therefore, the author of these words obviously meant the Saljuqs of Rūm, who sent their envoy for the first time. Moreover, the dynastic Histories of the Tang both clearly stated that Fulin is ancient Daqin 大秦, the Chinese name for the Roman Empire, and descriptions of Fulin are passages copied from earlier sources.⁷⁶ Song sources offer entirely new infor-

70 *Huqin* 胡琴 is a generic term for a Chinese fiddle, literally ‘barbarian string instrument’. The instruments are held vertically on the player’s lap, and their music is marked by slides and vibratos as the left hand moves quite freely along the strings. Typically the horsehair of the bow passes between the strings and the arched wooden stick remains on the outside. The name *huqin* appears in China during the Song dynasty (960–1279); however, this instrument apparently entered China from nomadic peoples centuries earlier.

71 *Bili* 箏篳 is a Chinese shawm which is probably related to the Central Asian zurna.

72 Milefo 彌勒佛 is Maitreya, the Buddha that will be the next to come after Shakyamuni Buddha. The same term as a Buddhist temple (*fosi* 佛寺) in the text refers to an Islamic mosque, Maitreya also represents a Caliph, a person considered a religious successor to the Islamic prophet Muhammad, who was mentioned as Buddha in Song sources. See Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 124. Therefore, Maitreya as a successor of Buddha refers to the Caliphs who were religious successors of the prophet Muhammad.

73 *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 317.7661-7662. The original text of *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* has not survived and the current edition is a recovered manuscript from the *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典 (Yongle Encyclopedia).

74 *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 317.7662.

75 *Jiu Tangshu* 198.5313-5315; *Xin Tangshu*, 221.6260-6261.

76 For descriptions of Fulin in the Tang sources see Hirth 1885, 51-61; Leslie and Gardiner 1996, 113, 281-282.

mation that did not appear in previous eras and completely differs from the earlier descriptions of Fulin. This term was used as a geographical term during the Song period and applied to the Saljuq Sultanate of Rūm.

The detailed description of territories between Fulin and China illustrates that the envoys from the Saljuqs of Rūm came to China by land roads. *Song shi* confirms this information, stating that the Fulin envoys used overland roads despite the threat of the Khitans and Tanguts on their way to China.⁷⁷ It also confirms that these envoys were dispatched by the Saljuqs of Rūm and not by Byzantium, which was involved in military confrontations with the Saljuq Turks. Ambassadors from Byzantium first had to cross the territories of the Saljuqs of Rūm in order to get to China by land, and then the properties of the Saljuq Sultan Malik Shah and his allies the Qarakhanids. This was not the only mission from the Saljuqs of Rūm. In 1091 Saljuq envoys came to the Chinese court twice to present local products and received two hundred pieces of clothing, silver vessels, garments, and a golden belt.⁷⁸ They came together with Qarakhanid ambassadors, who also confirmed that they passed territories of the “Yellow-Head Uyghurs” (Huangtou Huihe 黃頭回紇), Tatars and Dongzhan.⁷⁹ Fulin ambassadors presented typical nomadic stuff such as horses and swords.⁸⁰

A list of countries between Song China and Fulin was abbreviated in *Song shi*, naming only western Dashi 大食 (Muslims, the western Qarakhanids), Yutian 于闐 (Khotan, the eastern Qarakhanids), Huihe 回紇 (Uyghurs), Qingtang 青唐 (Tsongkha) and then Zhongguo 中國 (China).⁸¹ Moreover, it omitted the important information on language similarities between Fulin and Mieliasha (the Saljuq Sultan Malik Shah), which clearly demonstrates that Fulin refers to the Saljuqs of Rūm and not to Byzantium.

Conclusion

Chinese sources of the Song period recorded envoys from the Saljuq Empire and the Saljuq Sultanate of Rūm sent to the emperor’s court. The Saljuq Sultans Alp Arslan and Malik Shah dispatched envoys to China in 1071, 1081 and 1083 seeking closer relations with the Song. These envoys were sent during the

77 *Song shi* 485.13981.

78 *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 455.10906; 457.10943; 458.11186.

79 *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 335.8061; 455.10906.

80 *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 317.7662.

81 *Song shi* 490.14124-14125.

most prosperous period of the Saljuq Empire by sea routes, while the Saljuq Sultans of Rūm sent their ambassadors in the initial stage of its foundation overland. The first envoy arrived to China in 1081 and was sent by the founder of the Saljuq Sultanate of Rūm Sulaiman ibn Qutulmish; the second ruler Abu'l-Qasim organized the next two envoys in 1091. Both polities most likely pursued economic interests in order to have direct access to Chinese trade. However, they did not achieve their goals, mainly because of the distance between the countries and the endless wars in which the Saljuqs were involved. Moreover, the main trade partner of China from the Turko-Islamic world was the Qarakhanid Khaganate, which traded both in Liao and Song China. In the Islamic world Qarakhanid merchants became the main source of Chinese silk, porcelain, tea, medicine and other luxurious commodities

Chinese records on the Saljuq Empire and the Saljuq Sultanate of Rūm provide not only unique information on diplomatic contacts and gifting between these polities and China that was not depicted in Islamic sources but also illustrate perceptions of the Saljuq Turks in China. Moreover, these sources give a clear idea of the trading networks and land roads that connected Anatolia and China in the eleventh century.

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