

# THEOPHYLACTUS SIMOCATTA

## ON SILK AND TAUGAST (CHINA)

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Theophylactus Simocatta or Simocattes (first half of Seventh Century) wrote a history of the Emperor Maurice (539-602 CE). According to Whitby (1988: 29) he was probably born in c 585-90 CE in Alexandria and moved from there to Constantinople. He seems to have been trained as a lawyer and shows a good knowledge of Classical authors such as Homer, Euripides, Menander etc. as well as later writers like Lucian and Aelian. The eight books of his *History*, which include more specifically Christian material than any of his surviving predecessors, complete the reign of Maurice, but he may have planned to write more. Book VII contains the longest digressions which include the Central Asian Turks and the flooding of the Nile. See Whitby 1988:43, 45, 48-50. His work continued the tradition of Procopius, Agathias and Menander Protector who had covered the period from the accession of Justin I to the death of Tiberius i.e. 518-582 CE. As well as the *History* three minor works of a quasi-philosophical nature have survived. See Whitby and Whitby 1986: xiv to xvi. Nicolaus Copernicus translated his copy (the only book he ever bought on his own account) into Lat. and had it printed in Cracow in 1509. Gibbon called him 'a vain sophist', 'an imposter', 'diffuse in trifles, concise in the most interesting facts'. See Yule 1915 p 29 n1. The most important evaluation of Simocatta is Haussig 1953. Whitby and Whitby 1986 provides the first complete English translation and a useful introduction. Boodberg 1938 remains the most valuable source for the history in the section on Taugast (VII 9 1-11). de Boor 1887 used by C has been revised in de Boor with Wirth 1972 in the Teubner series.



### *Selections from his Historiae*

Ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig, Teubner, 1887.

VII,6,5:

Ταῖς ἐαριναῖς τοιγαροῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν  
νηστεῖαις ἐναβρυνόμενος, χαίρειν φρά-  
σας ταῖς χρυσαῖς καὶ λιθοκολλήτοις  
κλῖναις τοῖς τε νήμασι τῶν Σηρώων, ἐπὶ  
τοῦ ἱερέως ξυλίνην στιβάδα ὁ βασιλεὺς  
κατεπαννουχίζετο, θείας τινὸς ἐντεῦθεν  
ὥσπερ οἰόμενος μεταλήψεσθαι χάριτος.

Priding himself on the spring fasts of the  
Christians and renouncing golden and gem-  
encrusted beds and silk garments, the  
emperor (Maurice) spent the night on the  
priest's wooden bed, as though he thought  
that he would acquire some divine grace  
from there.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from G. Coedès, *Texts of Greek and Latin Authors on the Far East From the 4th C. B.C.E. to the 14th C. C.E.*, translated by John Sheldon, *Studia Antiqua Australiensia* 4 (Turnhout: Brepols 2010) 135-38 and J. Sheldon, *Commentary on George Coedès' Texts of Greek and Latin Authors on the Far East*, *Studia Antiqua Australiensia* 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012) 242-51.

## NOTES

**5. ταῖς ἑαριναῖς ... χάριτος** Maurice was greatly influenced by the Patriarch John Nesteutes (the 'Faster') and, when the latter died in 595 CE, the emperor found that the priest's possessions consisted of a cheap wooden bed, coarse blankets and an unsightly cloak. Inspired by this he practiced great austerity in his own private life as exemplified here. A brief Syriac hagiography describes the austere prayerful life of the Christian Maurice (Whitby 1988 p xvii). Theophylactus himself seems to have been an orthodox Christian. In saying that Maurice hoped to obtain divine grace from his ascetic life, the author is sincere and in no way sceptical.

**Σηρώων** This form is anomalous and should probably be emended to Σηρών.

VII 7 10-12:

Ἦττηθέντων γοῦν τῶν Ἀβάρων, οἱ μὲν πρὸς τοὺς κατέχοντας τὴν Ταυγάστ τὰς ἀποφυγὰς ἐποιήσαντο. 11. Ἦ δὲ Ταυγάστ πόλις ἐπιφανής, τῶν τε λεγομένων Τούρκων ἀπώκισται χιλίοις πρὸς τοῖς πεντακοσίοις σημείοις· αὐτὴ ὁμορος καθέστηκε τοῖς Ἰνδοῖς. Οἱ δὲ περὶ τὴν Ταυγάστ ἀυλιζόμενοι βάρβαροι ἔθνος ἀλκιμώτατον καὶ πολυανθρωπότατον, καὶ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἔθνεσι διὰ τὸ μέγεθος ἀπαράλληλον. 12. Ἔτεροι τῶν Ἀβάρων διὰ τὴν ἦτταν πρὸς ταπεινότεραν ἀποκλίναντες τύχην παραγίνονται πρὸς τοὺς λεγομένους Μουκρί.<sup>2</sup> Τοῦτο δὲ τὸ ἔθνος πλησιέστατον πέφυκε τῶν Ταυγάστ, ἀλκὴ δὲ αὐτῷ πρὸς τὰς παρατάξεις πολλὴ διὰ τε τὰ ἐκ τῶν γυμνασίων ὀσημέραι μελετήματα διὰ τε τὴν περὶ τοὺς κινδύνους τῆς ψυχῆς ἐγκαρτέρησιν. ...

Of the Abari who had been conquered some made their escapes to those who lived in Taugast. 11. Taugast is a famous city; it is established at a distance of 1500 miles from those called Turks. It is situated on the border of India. These barbarians dwelling around Taugast are a most valiant and populous race, and unparalleled in size among races in the inhabited world. 12. The remainder of the Abari on account of their defeat, turned to a much lower station in life and joined the so-called Moucri. This race live very close to Taugast and their bravery is considerable in military engagements owing to their daily practice of gymnastic exercises and the fact that they prepared psychologically for dangers. ...

## NOTES

**10. Ἦττηθέντων ... ἐποίησαντο** Ἄβαροι is the normal spelling for the Avars in the *History*. The reign of Maurice was dominated by warfare in the Balkans against Slavs and Avars, as well as problems with the Persians on the eastern frontier. The origin of the Eurasian Avars is unknown, as is their ethnicity. Menander Protector (Sixth Century CE) said that the language of the Ουαρχωνῖται (Ουαρχωνῖται / *Varconites*) was the same as that of the Huns. They may have been an Oghuric Turkic people; Iranian and Mongol ethnicity has been suggested for them on inadequate evidence. It seems that by the time they arrived in Europe they were a heterogeneous polyethnic people. As steppe nomad warriors they would have been united but of multiple ethnicity. By 600 CE they had established a nomadic empire stretching from modern-day Austria to the Pontic steppes ruling over a multitude of peoples. During Maurice's Balkan campaigns in the 590's the Avars experienced setbacks. Some defected to the Byzantines in 602 CE. See Dobrovits 2003, Beckwith 2009 p 390 and Sinor 1990 chapter 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Var.* Μούκνη ; ἔθνος τῶν Μουκρικῶν (*ap.* Nicephorus Callistus). (Coedès).

**11. ἡ δὲ Ταυγάστ ... ἀπαράλληλον** Taugast is here a city on the border of India. The surrounding people are described in the same way as *Seres* in other authors. Taugast correctly describes Northern China elsewhere so that we can only assume the misapplication of a people name to a place. Simocatta's source, which is vague about people further east, may derive from Turkish ambassadors. See Boodberg 1938 and note on **πρὸς τοὺς Ταυγάστ** in VII 9 1. See further Yule 1915 pp 31-34 and Herrmann *RE* IV A 2 (1932) 2523-4.

**12. ἕτεροι τῶν Ἀβάρων ... ἐγκαοτέρησιν** If Moukri is Korea, these Avars have certainly been displaced a long distance. For Pelliot's equation of Moukri and Korea see Noh, Tae-don 1977. The vagueness of the Turkish reports is almost certainly at the bottom of this. The reported athleticism of the Moukri and their psychological preparedness for dangerous (warlike) activities cannot help but recall tribal warrior culture in Japan and Korea, but this cannot go beyond speculation in the light of the evidence available here. Μουκρί here is rightly imported from Photius, as C.s footnote acknowledges. Photius is quoting the definition of Μουκρί by Nicephorus Callistus in his *Ecclesiastical History* XVIII 30, where he calls them ἔθνος τῶν Μουκριτῶν. Μούκνη is read in Vaticanus Graec. 977, our best ms., and is a mistake. Μουκρί for Μουκροί is a Latinism in Callistus and Photius.

VII,9,1-11:

Ὁ μὲν οὖν τῶν Τούρκων<sup>3</sup> Χαγάνος τὸν ἐμφύλιον καταλυσάμενος πόλεμον εὐδαιμόνως ἐχειραγῶγει τὰ πράγματα, ποιεῖται δὲ καὶ συνθήκας πρὸς τοὺς Ταυγάστ, ὅπως βαθείαν πάντοθεν τὴν γαλήνην ἐμπορευόμενος ἀστασίαστον τὴν ἀρχὴν καταστήσῃται. 2 . Ὁ δὲ τῆς Ταυγάστ κλιματάρχης Ταῖσάν ὀνομάζεται, ὁπερ υἱὸς θεοῦ ταῖς Ἑλληνικαῖς φωναῖς ἐνσημαίνεται. Ἡ δὲ ἀρχὴ τῆς Ταυγάστ οὐ στασιάζεται· γένος γὰρ αὐτοῖς τὴν χειροτονίαν τοῦ ἡγεμόνος παρέχεται. Τούτῳ δὲ τῷ ἔθνει θρησκεία ἀγάλματα, νόμοι δὲ δίκαιοι, καὶ σωφροσύνης ἔμπλεος ὁ βίος αὐτοῖς. 3. Ἔθος δὲ τούτοις νόμον μιμούμενον, μηδέποτε κόσμῳ χρυσῷ καλλωπίζεσθαι ἄρρενας, καίτοι ἀφθονίας πολλῆς ἀργύρου τε καὶ χρυσοῦ κύριοι καθεστῶτες διὰ τὰς μεγάλας καὶ ἐπωφελεῖς ἐμπορίας. Ταύτην τὴν Ταυγάστ ποταμὸς διορίζει. 4. Πάλαι τοίνυν ποτὲ δύο μεγίστοις ἔθνεσιν ὁ ποταμὸς ἐμεσίτευεν ἀντιθέτοις ἀλλήλοις· ἐσθῆς δὲ τῷ μὲν ἐνὶ μέλαινα, 5. τῷ δὲ ἐτέρῳ κοκκόβαφος. Ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις τοίνυν τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς, Μαυρικίου τὰ Ῥωμαίων σκῆπτρα ἐπέχοντος, καὶ τὸ ἔθνος τῶν μελαινοφύρων τοῖς τὴν ἐρυθρὰν περιβεβλημένοις ἐσθῆτα διαπε-

When the Khagan of the Turks had concluded the civil war he handled his affairs successfully and made a treaty with the men of Taugast so that, capitalizing on the profound peace on all sides, he might settle the kingdom without seditious elements. 2. The Climatarch of Taugast is called Taisan which means 'son of god' in Greek speech. The kingdom of Taugast is not riven by factions; birth status provides them with the appointment of their leader. This race worships statues, but its laws are just and their way of life full of wisdom. 3. They have a custom, which has the force of law, that males should never adorn themselves with golden ornaments although they possess a boundless supply of silver and gold on account of large scale profitable trade. A river forms the boundary of Taugast. 4. In former times the river divided two very considerable races who were hostile to each other; one race wore black garments, the other scarlet. 5. In our times when Maurice was emperor of the Romans the black-clothed race, having crossed the river engaged in war against those clad in scarlet; then being victorious the former took over the entire realm. 6. The barbarians say that Alexander the Macedonian founded this city

<sup>3</sup> Var. Τῶν εἰς ἔω Τούρκων (ap. Nicephorus).

ραιοσάμενον τὸν ποταμὸν συνίστησι πόλεμον, εἶτα νενικηκὸς τῆς ὅλης ἡγεμονίας γίνεται κύριον. 6. Ταύτην δὴ τὴν Ταυγᾶστ οἱ βάρβαροι λέγουσι κτίσαι τὸν Μακεδόνα Ἀλέξανδρον, ὀπηνίκα τοὺς τε Βακτριανούς καὶ τὴν Σογδοανὴν ἐδουλώσατο δέκα καὶ δύο καταφλέξας μυριάδας βαρβάρων. 7. Ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει τὰ τοῦ βασιλεύοντος γύναια ἐκ χρυσοῦ πεποιημένας ἔχουσι τὰς ἀρμαμάξας, ἐλκομένην ἐκάστην ὑπὸ βοϊδίου ἐνὸς κεκοσμημένου πολυτελῶς ἐκ χρυσοῦ καὶ λίθου μεγατιμίου· εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ χαλινοὶ τοῖς βουσὶ χρυσοκόλλητοι. 8. Ὁ μὲν οὖν τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τῆς Ταυγᾶστ ἀνειληφὼς ἐπακοσίαις γυναιξὶ κατεπαννυχίζετο. Τὰ δὲ γύναια τῶν περιφανεστέρων τῆς Ταυγᾶστ ἀργυραῖς κέχρηται ταῖς ἀρμαμάξαις. Λόγος δὲ καὶ ἑτέραν τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον δεῖμασθαι πόλιν ἀπὸ σημείων ὀλίγων· Χουβδάν<sup>4</sup> ὀνομάζουσι ταύτην οἱ βάρβαροι. 9. Τεθνηκότα δὲ τὸν ἡγεμόνα ὑπὸ τῶν γυναιῶν πενθεῖσθαι διὰ παντὸς ξυρομένων μὲν τὰς κεφαλὰς καὶ μέλαιναν περιβαλλομένων ἐσθήτα· καὶ νόμος αὐταῖς μηδέποτε τὸν τάφον ἀπολιπεῖν. Ἡ δὲ Χουβδάν δύο μεγάλοις διείληπται ποταμοῖς, αἱ δὲ τούτων ὄχθαι ταῖς κυπαρίττοις ὡς ἔπος εἶπεν κατανεύονται. 10. Ἐλέφαντες δὲ τῷ ἔθνει πολλοί. Τοῖς δὲ Ἰνδοῖς κατὰ τὰς ἐμπορίας συναναμίγνυνται· τούτους δὲ φασὶ τοὺς περὶ τὰ βόρεια τετραμμένους Ἰνδοὺς καὶ λευκοὺς πεφυκέναι. 11. Οἱ δὲ σκώληκες, ἐξ ὧν τὰ Σηρώων καθέστηκε νήματα, πάνυ παρὰ τῷ τοιούτῳ ἔθνει πολλοὶ ἐναλλάξ καὶ ποικίλην τὴν χροιάν κεκτημένοι, τὴν τε περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ζῶα φιλοτεχνίαν φιλοτίμως ἀσκούσιν οἱ βάρβαροι.<sup>5</sup>

of Taugast when he reduced to slavery the Bactrians and the land of the Sogdians, destroying 120,000 barbarians. 7. In this city the wives of the ruler have carriages made of gold, each one drawn by one steer richly adorned in gold and highly precious metal; the reins of the oxen are encrusted with gold. 8. The man who has assumed sovereignty of Taugast spends his nights with seven hundred wives. The wives of the more important citizens of Taugast make use of silver carriages. The story is that Alexander built another city some miles away; the barbarians call it Chubdan; 9. when the ruler dies he is mourned by the women whose heads are completely shaven and are clad in black garments; and their law is that they should never leave the tomb. Chubdan is divided by two great rivers; their banks are overhung by cypresses. 10. The nation possesses many elephants. They associate with the Indians in commercial matters. They say that those Indians reared in the north are born white-skinned. 11. The caterpillars from which the textures of the Seroes are woven exist in very considerable quantities among that race and possess crinkled and dappled skin; the barbarians assiduously practice the cultivation of these creatures.

<sup>4</sup> Var. Χουμαδάν.

<sup>5</sup> Apart from some unimportant differences and the variants cited in the notes, this passage is reproduced word for word by Nicephorus Callistus, *Ecclesiastical History* XVIII,30.

## NOTES

**1. ὁ μὲν οὖν τῶν Τούρκων Χαγάνος** The Turks took over the title Khagan from tribes of Xianbei origin, the last of whom to use it were the Ruanruan. See Liu 1989 and Beckwith 2009 p 104 n 36. and pp 114-116. I note that Turkish *qut* ‘luck’ which accompanies the title Khagan, like *tianming* in Chinese, is used in the same way as Iranian *farrah/farn*. Cf. Dobrovitz 2003 p2-3.

**πρὸς τοὺς Ταυγάστ** Ταυγάστ is used here as a plural i.e. ‘the men of Taugast’. Pelliot saw in Taugast (China) a description of the Turkish or Mongolian speaking Tuobawei 拓跋魏 dynasty (Tuoba = *T’ak-buât* in Early Middle Chinese). The name appears as *Tabyač* or *Tabqač* in Turkish and other Central Asian (including Arabic) sources. Schaeder 1934 p 44 notes that this Turkish name for China is found on the early Eighth Century Orchon Inscription as well as in Uighur Turkish texts. See Müller 1908 13 ff and Ferrand p 243. Boodberg 1938 pp 238-241 explores a number of popular etymologies assigned to the ethnonym Tuoba (*T’ak-buât*) (Taugast) in Chinese histories. While of considerable interest in themselves, they do not shed light on the ultimate derivation of Taugast, which this author sees as ‘a primary ethnic name’ and consequently ‘has no etymology.’ ‘Applied by the Turks to the whole of northern China, the name of Tuoba was apparently used by them in the Sixth Century to refer also to the Chinese court and its seat.’ Schaeder 1934 p 45 suggested that this toponym reached the Turks not directly from Chinese, but through Sogdian. He rightly notes that the ending *-č* is used in that language to form adjectives. See Gershevitch 1954 p 159 with example *-’nc*. The adjectival form could be an abbreviation of ‘the Tabgač Kingdom’; Schaeder 1934 p 46 provides parallels for such usage. The milieu in which Sogdian words for Chinese toponyms could come into Turkish has been thoroughly explored in de la Vaissière 2004 pp 180-189 and lends support to Schaeder’s theory. However, Professor Sims-Williams points out that there is a confusion here between two Sogdian suffixes forming ethnic adjectives: *-’nc* (fem. of *’ny*) and *-c* (common gender) as in *sm’rkndc* ‘of Samarkand’ and concludes (pace Schaeder) that there is no reason to think that the form *Tavgack* contains a Sogdian suffix. Important evidence is found in the account of the visit to Constantinople by the Sogdian Turkish ambassador Maniakh in 568 CE found in the fragments of Menander Protector. See Blockley 1985 p 15. The earliest reference to the Turks in the Chinese Dynastic Histories involves a Sogdian intermediary in 545 CE. See *Zhoushu* chap. 50 p 908 translated in Liu Mau-Tsai 1958 pp 6-7. Doerfer 2002 p 482 in discussing the Bugut inscription of 581 CE notes that, although this is the earliest evidence for the history of the Turkish emperors, it is written in Sogdian language and script. The only Turkish words are titles all with the *-n* ending ‘characteristic of Tavgatch (Tuoba Wei) a Mongolian language.’ See Yoshida and Moriyasu (ed.) *Bugut Inscription* in Moriyasu and Ochir 1999 p 122-125.

**Ὁ δὲ τῆς Ταυγάστ κλιματάρχης** The description of the governor of a province as a Climatarch is also attested in the Sixth Century historian Joannes Lydus. κλίμα ‘inclination’ moved early into the language of terrestrial geography as a word for ‘region.’

**Ταισῶν** Boodberg 1938 has solved the mystery of this word. Based on its given meaning as ‘son of god’ Klaproth 1924-8 saw it as a corruption of Chinese *tianzi* 天子 ‘Son of Heaven’. Yule’s *Taizong* is impossible chronologically as this imperial title belongs to the later period of the Tang; it was the name of one of the Tang emperors. However, as Boodberg 1938 p 235 points out, Ταῖσῶν is a faithful transcription of *taishang* 太上, a title applied between 300 and 630 CE to abdicated emperors, usually those replaced by their son as ruler. Three rulers in Northern China bore this title during the period covered by Simocatta’s description. The details relevant to our text are set out in Boodberg 1938 pp 237-8. He sums up the evidence: ‘The Chinese title of “abdicated” emperors who exercised the real power behind the throne was thus well known at the court of the Turkish Khans.’ He even suggests that the use of this term and other details of the description given here ‘tend to indicate that the Turkish brief of information on which Simocatta’s text is based dates from the last years of the Zhou dynasty, most probably from the period April 579-June 580.’ It may be added that ‘son of the (abdicated) emperor’ is not such a far cry from ‘son of god’ in eastern cultures where divinity and

kingship are closely aligned. The emphasis is on ‘son’. Persian-Turkish *baypur* is the usual translation of Chinese *tianzi* with this meaning ‘son of heaven’.

**2. Ἡ δὲ ἀρχὴ τῆς Ταυγάστ ... ὁ βίος αὐτοῖς** Here the Chinese are seen and assessed from the Turkish viewpoint. The favourable descriptions are in keeping with what we find in most of the sources in C. Boodberg 1938 p 234 calls them ‘natural clichés which nomads would use to describe a thickly settled, highly civilized, and orderly (even in those troubled days) country like China.’ The worshipping of statues recalls Buddhism, ‘stronger in Qi than in Zhou’, as Boodberg notes.

**3. ἔθος ... δὲ τούτοις ... ἐμπορίας** The prohibition of gold ornaments for men, though not for their chariots, has not been satisfactorily explained by reference to Chinese sources. See Boodberg 1938 p 234.

**4-5. Πάλαι τοίνυν ... κύριον** Again Boodberg 1938 pp 224-232 has gone to the Chinese histories to shed light on this episode the details of which have often previously been dismissed as fantasy, although commentators have always seen here some direct or oblique reference to the re-unification of the northern and southern parts of the Chinese empire in 589 CE. Boodberg establishes beyond doubt that the colours black and red refer to the military uniforms of the opposing armies. The black were worn by the Zhou, the red (sometimes yellow in the sources) were worn by the Qi; the former were the successors of the western, the latter of the eastern Wei. ‘The color patterns affected by the two rival Chinese states must have been well known to the Turks who were in intimate contact with both powers, and there is thus no doubt that the famous passage in Theophylactus Simocatta’s text refers primarily to events in Northern China. The river dividing the two nations is thus undoubtedly the Yellow river (Huanghe) and not the Yangzi, as generally believed.’ As for the date of these recorded events, Boodberg 1938 p 232 argues for the period around 577 CE, thus just ante-dating the establishment of the Sui. He relies for this partly on Simocatta’s statement in VII 9 8 that ‘the man who had assumed sovereignty of Taugast spent his nights with seven hundred wives’. This can be related to a Zhou emperor of 579 CE recorded in *Zhoushu* 7. At the same time *Beishi* 8 tells of Guo Hui, the last emperor of the Qi, whose extravagance in the matter of women became proverbial, having a vision in 565 CE which was attested by ‘seven hundred palace women attending the emperor at night.’

**6. Ταύτην δὴ τὴν Ταυγάστ ... βαρβάρων** Boodberg 1938 p 242 has an ingenious explanation for why a Gk. historian like Simocatta might bother to report such a garbled account of the foundation of Taugast and Chubdan (VII 9 8) by Alexander the Great. In any case the information appeared sufficiently credible for the Arabic geographer Qudāma to repeat it three centuries later. Schaeder 1934 pp 47-48, in line with his emphasis on the part played by the Sogdians in the transmission of the names Taugast and Chubdan, is convinced that the source of confusion is a Sogdian variant of the *Alexander Romance* transmitted by those traders to Byzantium and Central Asia. This work, often cited as Pseudo-Callisthenes, was translated into Middle Persian in Sassanian times and from this came the Syriac which was the source of the Arabic versions. See introductory note on Palladius *De Brachmanibus*. Schaeder speculates that Sogdians brought the story to the far east and made the association with the two capitals Taugast and Chubdan, whence it eventually found its way back to the west and was part of the Turkish information available to Simocatta. In Qudāma, however, we read that the two towns were called Chumdan and Šarag. The latter is well-attested as Luoyang. It is Sarag in Syriac on the Xi’an inscription. Compare **Σάραγα / Σάρατα** in Ptolemy VII 3 5 where *Sagara* is read by Berthelot. See Lieu 2009 p 233 and Schaeder 1934 pp 46-47. For Sarag in Sogdian and a connexion between Sarag and Σηριζή see Schaeder 1934 p 49 and p 49 n 3. In a simpler, though equally unproved explanation, Haussig 1957 p 389 ff suggested that Theophylactus has confused two cities called Taugast, one in China and another in Western Turkestan (Bactria and Sogdiana) where Alexander did found cities. See Whitby and Whitby 1986 p 192 n 51.

**7. Ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει ... χρυσοζόλλητοι** The comment of Boodberg 1938 p 233 is worth quoting in full: ‘For the Qi chariots decorated with gold (gilding or inlay) were in common use at the courts of all dynasties; the minute regulations covering every type of vehicle and the pattern of decoration have been preserved in dynastic histories and those of the period in question are found in *Suishu* 10. The Zhou ceremonial is quite complicated; only some vehicles for women are said to be drawn by oxen, the majority of palace chariots being described as horse-drawn. For Qi only few details are given, but among them we find that princesses of the blood (*gongzhu*) rode in varnished chariots, both chariots and oxen being decorated with gilt and solid silver. At the same time while gold decorations are said to be prescribed for chariots of officers of higher rank, those of lower rank could only use copper which would indicate that there existed a definite gradation in the use of different metals according to official position. The distinction that Simocatta’s text draws between the women of the ruler and those of the nobles (VII 9 8) could thus well have been based on reality.’

**8. Ὁ μὲν οὖν τὴν ἡγεμονίαν ... κατεπαννυχίζετο** See note on VII 9 4-5 *ad fin.*

**Λόγος δὲ καὶ ἑτέραν ... Χουβδάν** The text is dislocated here. These words belong in VII 9 6. After mentioning the foundation of Taugast by Alexander it would be natural to mention his reputed foundation of Chubdan as well. There is a further dislocation after the mention of Chubdan here. Ἡ δὲ Χουβδάν δύο μεγάλοις ... κατανεύονται in VII 9 9 logically belongs in VII 9 6. The intervening references to the ruler’s wives should be connected. The sequence would then be (a) Alexander founded Taugast (b) he is also said to have founded Chubdan (c) Chubdan is divided by two rivers (d) description of the rulers wives (e) the mourning custom of the women instead of the present confused arrangement (a) (d) (b) (e) (c). Chubdan (Khubdan) can certainly be equated with Chang’an 長安 in geographical terms and its derivation from the latter can be explained satisfactorily. Khubdan is clearly the Kūmdān of the Syriac Nestorian Christian inscription there. Boodberg 1938 p 241 tentatively suggested that it might be a transcription of Chinese Xianyang 咸陽 which was the old capital of the Qin and still a city of some importance at this time. This suggestion is attributed to Haloun by Henning 1949 p 608. Its position on the confluence of the Wei and Feng rivers lends some plausibility to this. In the second Ancient Sogdian letter, dated probably to the Fourth Century CE, we find Khumdan (‘*xwmt’n*’) in lines 15 and 18. In the second occurrence *cymn cynstn* (‘out of Čīnastan’) has been written above it. Henning notes here that Čīnastan seems to mean the region around Khumdan, or at least chiefly that region, but not ‘China’. He is surprised that the original meaning of the term (‘the lands of Qin’) was still used at this time. He sees the gloss as a self-correction to give the meaning ‘out of Khumdan – nay, even out of Čīnastan’. Haloun (quoted by Henning 1949 p 608) comments: ‘one would have to assume that this appellation (Xianyang) was continued in use and applied to Chang’an when that town supplanted Xianyang as the capital of the Han empire in 200 BC, but was not the name of Qin (*cynstn*) also so retained as the name for the whole country, after the fall of the Qin dynasty?’ He suggests that both of these names may have come into Sogdian at the same time through contacts made in trading. Schaeder 1934 pp 45-46 points out that the name is certainly attested in Sogdian as *gwmt’n* in a colophon (see Gauthiot 1911 pp 657 ff, Benveniste 1940 2 1233 and Gharib 1995 p 174). On the colophon the name is in an adjectival form in the expression *gwmt’nčw kndyh* ‘city of Chumdan’. See Gershevitch 1954 p 159 and compare remarks on Tabgač in note on **πρὸς τοὺς Ταυγάστ** in VII 9 1.

**9. Τεθνηκότα ... ἀπολιπεῖν** The shaving of the head and the wearing of black garments are familiar symbols of mourning from many cultures. They are well known in Gk. writings from the famous section in Herodotus’ treatment of the subject in Egypt. There is no compulsion therefore to see with Boodberg 1938 p 243 reference to refuge for these widows in Buddhist monasteries.

**αἱ δὲ τούτων ὄχθαι ... κατανεύονται** The two rivers would be the Wei and the Feng. Although Chinese sources can be cited for willows lining the banks of rivers in this region, Boodberg 1938 p 242 n 59 laments the lack of references to cypresses to confirm this statement.

**10. Ἐλέφαντες ... πεφυκέναι** The ἔθνος referred to here must be the inhabitants of Taugast and nearby Khubdan in Western China; hence they may be identified as trading with Indians. As it is the latter that possess many elephants there is good ground to see further dislocation of the text here. If the text is sound, these elephants could only be those found south of the Yellow River which is an area not covered by Turkish information given throughout this section. It is more likely that Indians are the possessors of many elephants, just as those of them dwelling in the north of the country have paler complexions than those in the south.

**11. Οἱ δὲ σκώληκες ... βάραβοι** This paragraph on Chinese sericulture is accurate. The description of the skin of the worms as crinkled and dappled is certainly apt.

### *Summary of Photius (Cod. LXV)*

Cod. 31a30-31b1:

Εδουλώσατο δὲ καὶ Ἀβάρους. Διέξεισι δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ταυγάστ ἔθνῶν, καὶ περὶ τοῦ Μουκρί, ἐν οἷς οἱ Ἄβαροι ἠττηθέντες διεσπάρησαν, ... καὶ περὶ τῆς Ταυγάστ, περὶ τε τῶν σκωλήκων τῶν τικτόντων τὴν ἐσθῆτα τὴν Σηρικὴν, καὶ ὡς πολλή ἐστι περὶ τὴν λεγομένην Χουβδὰν ἢ τῆς μετάξεως γένεσις, καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτὴν νόμιμα. Καὶ τὰ περὶ τῶν Ἰνδῶν τῶν λευκῶν τὸ σῶμα.

He (Emperor Maurice) also enslaved the Abari. (Theophylact) comments on the tribes inhabiting Taugast and the Mucri among whom the Abari were dispersed after they had been defeated ... and (speaks) about Taugast, and about the caterpillars which are the source of Seric raiment, and about how much silk production there is around so-called Chubdan and the customs found there ... and he treats of the Indians with white bodies.

### NOTES

Photius was Patriarch of Constantinople 858-67 CE and again 877-86 CE. He was involved in the Councils of Constantinople, the *filioque* controversy and the Great Schism. See notes on Pseudo-Ctesias and later entries on Theophanes of Byzantium and Photius *Lexicon*. The summary is found in Cod. LXV.

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