

# Studies on the Country of T'iao-Chih

By Takashi SŌMA

## Introduction

Investigations of the location and name of the so-called 'T'iao-chih-kuo' 條支國 to be found in the historical records of the Han 漢 and Wei 魏 periods [of Chinese history] have already been conducted by a number of Oriental scholars. Outstanding among these scholars is [the late] Dr. Kurakichi SHIRATORI 白鳥庫吉, author of the valuable 'Geography of the Western Lands as Discerned in the *Ta-ch'in-chuan*' 大秦傳より見たる西域の地理. This work, taking into consideration the fact that the castle town of Mesene—Characene (Hyspaosines' Wall) at the head of the Persian Gulf was, from the days of the Syrian kingdom, a pivot of East—West communication, sought to locate the sphere of influence of so-called 'T'iao-chih' in this area. Going on to interpret the old Seleucid Dynasty name for the region, 'Antiochia', as being (the origin of) the abbreviated form 'T'iao-chih',<sup>(1)</sup> this work thus solved what had been a thorny problem within the history of the lands westwards of China 西域史. Using Dr. Shiratori's superlative, penetrating study as a guide, the present writer will seek, in this study, to record his own unskilful impressions and, at the same time, to present a tentative thesis concerning T'iao-chih.

## I

Concerning the name of the capital city of the kingdom of Mesene—Characene, called in Arabic 'Maisan', Volume One, Section 145 of the *Anti-*

(1) Dr. Kurakichi SHIRATORI: 'The Geography of the Western Lands as Discerned in the *Ta-ch'in-chuan*' 大秦傳より見たる西域の地理, in *Shigaku Zasshi* 史學雜誌 Volume 42, Numbers 4, 5, 6, 8, April, May, June, August, 1931. See particularly Number 8, page 50.

Also Dr. Kurakichi SHIRATORI: 'A Study of T'iao-chih Kuo' 條支國考, in *Naitōhakushi Kanreki Kinen Shinagaku Ronsō* 内藤博士還暦記念支那學論叢 (A Collection of Essays on Sinology in commemoration of the 61st Birthday of Dr. Naitō), 1926, pages 948–952.

Now, both these essays listed above are included in *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* (The Oriental Library), Number 15 (1956): A Special Number in Memory of the Late Professor Dr. Kurakichi SHIRATORI, under the titles, respectively, 'The Geography of the Western Region studied on the Basis of the *Ta-ch'in* Accounts', and 'A Study on T'iao-chih 條支'.

*quitates Judaicae* of Flavius Josephus (AD 37–38) seems to be instructive. It tells us that the third child of Noah, Shem, had five sons; that one of them, Aramus, sired four sons; and that one of these four, Mesas, was the ancestor of the people of the Spasinu Charax region, the Mesanaioi *Μησαναίοι*; in other words, he was the ancestor of the people of Mesene.

*Μησας δὲ Μησαναίους, Σπασίνου Χάραξ ἐν τοῖς νῦν καλεῖται.*

(“Mesas was to the people of this land currently called Spasinu Charax. . .”)

There is evidence from this text that, in at least the first half of the first century AD, the generic term for the people inhabiting the region between the Gharraf River and the head of the Persian Gulf—in modern terms, between the Iraq/Iran border area and the Arabian Peninsula—was ‘Mesanaioi’; and, moreover, that the name of the country around the time of the birth of Christ was referred to as Spasinu Charax. Not so long after Nearchus of Crete passed by the head of the Persian Gulf, Alexander established Alexandria between the mouths of the rivers Tigris and Eulaios, between the southern shore of the lake and the sea. In later years, this region, thanks to its being administered during the period of the Seleucid Dynasty, would come to be known as Antiochia.

Dr. Kurakichi SHIRATORI, in his valuable work ‘Geography of the Western Lands as Discerned in the *Ta-ch’in-chuan*’, puts forward the following excellent hypothesis concerning the location of the so-called ‘T’iao-chih-kuo’ to be found in the historical records of the Han and Wei dynasties. Namely: while the name ‘T’iao-chih’ (*dieu*, *diau-ki* in the Han period) cannot be said to resemble [in pronunciation] either Alexandria or Spasinu Charax, there is, it is held, some correspondence between it and that of Antiochia; hence ‘T’iao-chih-kuo’ is taken to be the abbreviation for the old name used during the Seleucid Dynasty, Antiochia.

The area in question suffered frequent destruction through the flooding of rivers, and was repaired by the son of one Sagdodonacus of neighbouring Arabia. The son’s name was Spaosines, and, as noted earlier, the area came to be called *Σπασινοῦ χάραξ* or *Χάραξ Πασινοῦ*, *Χάραξ Σπασινου* ([Hy] spaosines’ Wall). Assuming that the reign of Hyspaosines (ie, Spasinus) began in about the year 129 BC, this would correspond perfectly with the time when Chang Ch’ien 張騫, having set off from China and travelled via the Wu-sun 烏孫, Ta-yüan 大宛 (Ferghana), and K’ang-chü 康居 (Sogdiana), was staying among the Ta Yüeh-chih 大月氏 [people] (Dr. KUWABARA’s *Kuang-yüan* 光元 year 6 = 129 BC thesis). Accordingly, the reports to be found in the ‘*Ta-yüan lieh-chuan*’ 大宛列傳 of the *Shih-chi* 史記 and the ‘*Chang-ch’ien-chuan*’ 張騫傳 of the *Han-shu* 漢書 may be presumed to be referring primarily to Chang Ch’ien’s sojourn among the Ta Yüeh-chih. It may be further inferred that this would have been just at the time when the name of the small state at the head of the Persian Gulf changed from Antiochia, its title

during the Seleucid Dynasty, to Spasinu Charax.

These things are extremely important if one cares to reflect upon the fact that, notwithstanding all that must have been heard and directly observed later by Kan Ying 甘英 when he arrived in T'iao-chih en route to Ta-ch'in 大秦 on the orders of Protector-General of the Western Regions 西域都護 P'an Ch'ao 班超 in year nine of the reign period Yung-yüan 永元, Kan Ying mentioned no change in the name 'T'iao-chih-kuo' in respect to this country at the head of the Persian Gulf. For it is plain that, both in the ninth year of the reign period Yung-yüan—AD 97 according to the Western calendar—when Kan Ying arrived at the head of the Persian Gulf, and also in the thirteenth year of Yung-yüan, when the king of An-hsi 安息, Man Chüeh 滿屈, again presented lions 獅子, and great birds from T'iao-chih 條支大鳥 to the Han court, there had been no change in the country's name: that is, T'iao-chih. In which case, to identify T'iao-chih with the kingdom of Mesene Characene would mean that, despite the old name of Antiochia's having been completely changed in 129 BC by some Arab or possibly Iranian administrator, more than two centuries later, at the end of the first century AD, the old name of Antiochia used under the Seleucid Dynasty still remained; and, finally, it would mean that, in highly-unorthodox fashion, the Han Dynasty chronicles did not relate the formal title of the kingdom of Mesene Characene.

Consequently, therefore, it seems likely that 'T'iao-chih-kuo' referred to a city known, at least from the time of the *Shih-chi* and the *Han-shu* through to that of the *Hou Han-shu* 後漢書 and the *Wei-liao* 魏略, that is, throughout the Former Han and Later Han periods and even up to the beginning of the Three Kingdoms 三國 period, by a name approximating to the pronunciation 'T'iao-chih'; a name for which, even as late as the Later Han Dynasty, the necessity for change did not arise. The possibility that it was not the Mesene Characene kingdom at all, but the name of an altogether different city, can also not be rejected. The reasoning behind this statement is that Kan Ying brought back his own direct reports, and, should there have been any change in the country's name, he should not have been lacking in materials based on his own personal observation.

## II

Next the writer must set aside for the time being the T'iao-chih = Mesene Characene kingdom thesis, and describe the reasons why in this study he led off with the viability of Dr. SHIRATORI's theory of T'iao-chih's being a kingdom at the head of the Persian Gulf left unchallenged, rather than suggesting a different thesis.

In the section on T'iao-chih contained in Chapter 63 of the '*Ta-yüan lieh-chuan*' of the *Shih-chi*, we read as follows:

"[T'iao-chih] is located several thousand *li* westward of An-hsi, bordering upon the Western Sea. It is hot and humid, and the people there plough the fields and plant rice. There are great birds [which lay] eggs as big as water jars. The people are exceedingly numerous, and there are petty chiefs in every place. [The country] is subordinate to An-hsi, which treats it as a foreign country. The people of the country are adept at tricks which dazzle the eyes. The elders of An-hsi report that in T'iao-chih may be found the River of Weak Water and the Queen Mother of the West, but that they have not yet seen them."

在安息西數千里臨西海暑濕耕田田稻 有大鳥卵如甕 人衆甚多往往有小君長  
而安息役屬之以爲外國 國善眩 安息長老 傳聞條支有弱水西王母而未嘗見

In the *Ch'ien Han-shu* 前漢書, in the section on Wu-i-shan-li-kuo 烏弋山離國 which is contained in Chapter Sixty-Six of the '*Hsi-yü-chuan*' 西域傳, the circumstances of T'iao-chih are mentioned as follows:

"[Wu-i-shan-li-kuo] has on its western borders Li-kan [Petra] and T'iao-chih. If you go, you may arrive in T'iao-chih in more than one hundred days. [T'iao-chih] borders upon the Western Sea. The climate is hot and humid, and the people plant rice in the fields. There are great birds [which lay] eggs as big as water jars. The people are exceedingly numerous, and there are petty chiefs in every place. [The country] is subordinate to An-hsi, which treats it as a foreign country. [The people of T'iao-chih are] adept at tricks that dazzle the eyes. The elders of An-hsi report that in T'iao-chih may be found the River of Weak Water and the Queen Mother of the West, but that they have not yet seen them. If you leave T'iao-chih by water travelling west, they say, in more than a hundred days you may arrive at the place of the setting of the sun."

西與犁軒條支接 行可百餘日乃至條國臨西海暑溼田稻有大鳥卵如甕 人衆甚多往往有小君長安息役屬之以爲外國 善眩安息長老傳聞條支有弱水西王母未亦嘗見也  
自條支乘水西行可百餘日近日所入會

Finally, in Chapter 78 of the '*Hsi-yü-chuan*' contained in the *Hou Han-shu* it is recorded:

"The city of T'iao-chih is set upon a hill-top, and its circumference is more than forty *li* around. [T'iao-chih] faces onto the Western Sea. It is surrounded by a curving stretch of sea water, [so that] three sides, the south, the east and the north, are impassable to traffic. Only in the north-western corner can a road pass through. The region is hot and humid, and produces lions, rhinoceros, humped buffalo, peacocks, and great birds. The eggs of these great birds are as big as water jars. By turning north, then east, one may arrive, after a journey of more than sixty days on horseback, in An-hsi. An-hsi later subjugated T'iao-chih, and so appointed

a military commander to be stationed there to watch over all the small cities therein."

條支國城在山上周回四十餘里臨西海海水曲環其南及東北三面路絕唯西北隅通陸道土地暑溼出獅子犀牛封牛孔雀大雀其卵如甕轉北而東復馬行六十餘日至安息後役屬條支爲置大將監領諸小城焉

Tracing the location of T'iao-chih as described above, it would seem, first of all, that 'T'iao-chih-kuo' was located several thousand *li* west of An-hsi, bordering upon the Western Sea 西海. It was west of Wu-i-shan-li-kuo (Arachosia Drangiana), and required a journey of more than a hundred days from Kandahar in modern-day Afghanistan to get there. Seen from China, surely, this must have been the western extremity of the world 西極絕遠.

According to the section on An-hsi-kuo 安息國 contained in Chapter 66 of the 'Hsi-yü-chuan' of the *Ch'ien Han-shu*, Book 96:

"[An-hsi] borders to the north upon K'ang-chü; to the east upon Wu-i-shan-li; and to the west upon T'iao-chih."

北與康居東烏弋山離西與條支接

From this passage we learn that T'iao-chih was situated to the west of An-hsi. The sections on the Western Lands 西域 and on T'iao-chih contained in Chapter 78 of the 'Lieh-chuan' in the *Hou Han-shu*, Book 118, reveal the distance from this country to An-hsi:

"By turning north, then east, one may arrive, after a journey of more than sixty days on horseback, in An-hsi."

轉北而東復馬行六十餘日至安息

From this record it becomes apparent that the position of T'iao-chih must have been to the south-west of An-hsi. Thus the 'Ta-yüan lieh-chuan' of the *Shih-chi*, the 'Hsi-yü-chuan' of the *Han-shu*, and the 'Hsi-yü-chuan' of the *Hou Han-shu* are all agreed on certain points: namely, that T'iao-chih was located to the south-west of An-hsi; that it bordered upon the Western Sea; and that it was hot and humid. Now this fact alludes to an extremely important point: that the number of spots bordering upon the Western Sea, having high temperatures and a humid climate, and being located to the south-west of An-hsi, must naturally be limited.

In connection with this point, the climate of the sea-board region around Antiochia in Syria (modern-day Antachia) is of the so-called Mediterranean type, similar to that of Lebanon, and in general is warm with dry summers. The severe heat of summer is avoided by its being high ground and therefore extremely healthy; the Syrian desert has a Continental-type climate. Considering these things, from the point of view of both climate and location, the thesis identifying T'iao-chih with Antiochia in Syria contains some problematic points.

Taking into account the reports that it had high temperatures and high humidity, that it bordered upon the Western Sea, that it was to the south-west of An-hsi, that it was west of Arachosia, Drangiana (Wu-i-shan-li-kuo), and, moreover, that rice-farming was carried out there, the possibility that these reports referred to the area around the head of the Persian Gulf is a strong one.

As concerns the rice cultivation, Diodorus Siculus writes in Book 19, Chapter 13 that Alexander, when food supplies [for his army] had run out, divided rice and other things out amongst the officers and men. Of the rice cultivation in the Susiana area, Diodorus Siculus records as follows:

ὄρυζαν δὲ καὶ σῆσαιμον καὶ φοίνικα διέδωκε τοῖς στρατιώταις, θαφιλῶς ἐχούσης τῆς χώρας τοὺς τοιούτους καρπούς

("He distributed rice, sesamum and dates to the soldiers, because this region was abundant in such fruits.")

We thus find further evidence [for our thesis] in this passage. Yet more evidence may be had from Strabo's note that rice cultivation was being carried out in Bactria, Babylonia, Susis, and Lower Syria:

φύεσθαι δὲ καὶ ἐν τῇ Βακτριανῇ καὶ Βαβυλωνίᾳ καὶ Σουσίῃ, καὶ ἡ κάτω δὲ Συρία φύει.

("'Rice' is cultivated in Bactria, Babylonia, Susa and Lower Syria.")

From this one may surmise that the rice cultivation performed in Susis and Susiana was widely known. It must surely be admitted, therefore, that the rice cultivation of the damp and humid area around the head of the Persian Gulf corresponds most closely to that recorded in the 'Ta-yüan lieh-chuan'. Judging from the circumstances described above, T'iao-chih would seem to bear a close resemblance to the distinctive features commonly found in the Khuzestan region of Iran.

Next, the "great birds' eggs as big as water jars" 大鳥卵甕如 refer, needless to say, to ostrich eggs. In Book Two, Chapter 50 of Diodorus Siculus there is a note on the ostriches to be found in the Arabian Desert area and on their peculiar features, together with a detailed description of the στρουθοκάμηλοι, the offspring of a bird and a camel. From this too it may be seen, as will be described later on, that while this species of fauna could not possibly be a native of the Mesene Characene kingdom, the Antiochia-in-Syria thesis is not so impeded. For at the very least, as Xenophon says, in the Assyria—Babylonia region this στρουθοκάμηλοι species was by no means rare. Accordingly, it is entirely conceivable that the ostriches found from the northern reaches of the Arabian Desert to the fringes of the Syrian Desert, and their eggs, should have been presented to the Han court as the great birds of T'iao-chih.

Next, from the fact that the 'people were exceedingly numerous, and the existence of many petty chiefs' 人衆甚多往往有小君長, it may be assumed that T'iao-chih was a capital city of considerable scale. Taking this point

alone, the Antiochia-in-Syria thesis can still not be discarded. However, in the section on T'iao-chih contained in Chapter 63 of the *'Ta-yüan lieh-chuan'* in the *Shih-chi* we read:

"[The country] is subordinate to An-hsi, which treats it as a foreign country."

而安息役屬之以爲外國

In the light of the fact that the same passage is found in the section on Wu-i-shan-li contained in Chapter 66 of the *'Hsi-yü-chuan'* in the *Ch'ien Han-shu*, in which T'iao-chih also appears, this point, namely, that by the time of the Former Han Dynasty the country known as T'iao-chih was already one of the vassal states of An-hsi, is extremely important.

Furthermore, from the following passage contained in Chapter 78 of the *'Hsi-yü-chuan'* in the *Hou Han-shu*, namely:

"An-hsi later subjugated T'iao-chih, and so it appointed a military commander to be stationed there to watch over all the small cities therein."

安息後役屬條支爲置大將監領諸小城焉

It can only be deduced that T'iao-chih remained a vassal state of An-hsi even as late as the Later Han Dynasty. From the time of the Former Han Dynasty to that of the Later Han—at the very least, from the time of Chang Ch'ien's report of things concerning T'iao-chih-kuo etc, in other words, the time of the reign of the emperor Han Wu-ti 漢武帝, to the year when Kan Ying brought back his own personally-gathered information, that is, the thirteenth year of *Yung-yüan*, when the great birds of T'iao-chih were being presented to the Han court by An-hsi—throughout this period, T'iao-chih was nothing less than a vassal state of An-hsi.

This being the case, where then would the above-mentioned so-called Antiochia-on-the-Orontes [theory] stands? Does it really meet the conditions given above? Next it will be necessary to give a brief account of the epoch of the invasion and conquest of Antiochia by the soldiers of An-hsi—that is, by the Parthians—as seen in the history of Antiochia.

The first Parthian invasion of Antiochia in the Kingdom of Syria took place in August of the year 51 BC. This was also the invasion under way when M. Calpurnius Bibulus, successor to Governor-General Crassus, left Italy on a journey [to find that] the men of Parthia were attacking Syria and were besieging Antiochia.

The second invasion took place in the spring of the year 40 BC, just when Anthony was tied down in Alexandria over the Cleopatra crisis. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Pacorus, son of the Parthian king Orodes, and Labienus, Roman ambassador to Parthia, took charge of the Parthian army to launch the invasion. They then routed Anthony's governor-general in

Syria, Decidius Saxa, forced him to flee to Cilicia, and there executed him, after which Antiochia surrendered to Parthia, that is, to An-hsi.<sup>(2)</sup> In Book 48 of the *History of Rome* authored by Dio Cassius, Chapter 25, Section Four, we can find further clarification:

καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὴν Ἀντίοχειαν ἐκλειφθεῖσαν  
 ("And after this he forced Antiochia to submit.")

It is particularly noteworthy that the administration of Antiochia by Parthia/An-hsi was extremely short, lasting only until the summer of the following year, 39 BC.

The above was an outline of the conquest of Antiochia by the men of Parthia, as found in the history of Antiochia. Consequently, since, as has already been explained, the conditions for identifying 'T'iao-chih-kuo' insist that it be a country which, as historical evidence shows, was consistently a vassal state of An-hsi from the time of the Former Han Dynasty to that of the Later Han, it may be declared that the possibility of Antiochia on the Orontes being 'T'iao-chih-kuo' is extremely slight indeed. Taking this one point alone, we can therefore say that the theory that T'iao-chih referred to Antiochia in Syria is totally off the mark. For there is no evidence whatsoever that Antiochia on the Orontes was a vassal state of An-hsi from Former Han to Later Han times.

By now the fact has become decisively clear that Antiochia in Syria was not a vassal state of An-hsi from the time of the Former Han Dynasty to that of the Later Han, and that it did not conform to the accounts found in Chinese records.

There is an additional point: whereas the southern, eastern, and northern sides of the city of T'iao-chih-kuo were impassable to traffic, leaving only the north-western corner where a road could pass through 其南東及北三面路絕唯西北隅通陸道 from Antiochia [in Syria], on the other hand, roads ran southwards to Laodiceia, eastwards to Chalchis and Hierapolis, and northwards to Nichopolis, making it the meeting-place of the kingdom's major highways, and thus, again, quite incongruent with the accounts found in the *Hou Han-shu*.

Next, from the following passage to be found in the 'Hsi-yü-chuan' of the *Hou Han-shu*, namely

"An-hsi later subjugated T'iao-chih, and so appointed a military commander to be stationed there to watch over all the small cities therein."  
 安息後役屬條支爲置大將監領諸小城焉

the phrase "and so appointed a military commander to be stationed there to watch over all the small cities therein" 爲置大將監領諸小城焉 [will be taken up]. As to the expression, "a military commander was stationed there" 置大將, the

(2) Glanville Downey: *A History of Antioch in Syria*, Princeton, 1974, pages 150-159.



facts contained in the following example are instructive.

The Iranian Prefect 大守 of Susa, Zamaspes (1-2 AD), was known at the beginning of the first century AD as *σατράπης*, or Prefect, but also at the same time by a little *στρατ-αρχός*, 'Military Commander (of Susa)', a phonetic word originating in *στρατηγός* or 'general' (將軍), (大將). This fact also unquestionably reveals to us the nature of the functions of the Parthian 'Prefect' 將軍, in other words, the 'military commander' of the *Hou Han-shu*, at the beginning of the Christian era.

The expression, "to watch over all the small cities therein" 監領諸小城焉, telling as it does of the '*satrapēs*' character of An-hsi, is a precious record, a lead from which the size of 'T'iao-chih-kuo may easily be inferred. Unfortunately, there is absolutely no evidence to be found in Western histories to attest that Parthia was a sufficiently-large *satrapēs* as to be able to oversee, from the time of the Former Han Dynasty to that of the Later Han, all the small cities of Antiochia in Syria.

As to the phrases, "the people of the country are adept at tricks which dazzle the eyes" 國善眩, and "adept at tricks which dazzle the eyes" 善眩, found in the '*Ta-yüan lieh-chuan*' of the *Shih-chi* and the '*Hsi-yü-chuan*' of the *Ch'ien Han-shu* respectively, it is not conclusive as to whether the reference is to the tricks carried out by the disciples of the Magi of Persia 波斯國, to [the influence of] drugs like hashish, or, perhaps, to the sword-swallowing 吞刀, fire-exhaling 吐火, melon-planting 植瓜, tree-cultivation 種樹, the killing and subsequent restoration to life of humans 屠人 and horses 截馬, and the other strange skills practiced by magicians 術者 and tricksters 方術士 to deceive the ears and dazzle the eyes of people watching, as recorded in the section titled '*Hsüan-jen*' 眩人 contained in the '*Chang-ch'ien-chuan*' of Book 61 of the *Han-shu*. Neither is it clear whether it would be appropriate to interpret the phrase "the people of the country are adept at tricks that dazzle the eyes" 國善眩 as meaning simply that people good at conjuring tricks were numerous there. The home of conjuring tricks at that time is known to have been 'Li-kan-kuo' 犁鞞國, and the fact that [the jugglers] presented as tribute by the ruler of An-hsi to emperor Han Wu Ti were not from T'iao-chih is also a commonly-known one.

According to the present writer's investigations, 'Li-kan-kuo' corresponded to Petra *Πέτρα* in what is now Jordan; in which case the "magicians of Li-kan" 犁鞞眩人 were perhaps magicians, jugglers 手品師 and tumblers 輕業師 from that region who had come in the company of merchants to the head of the Persian Gulf (Spasinu Charax), and of whom knowledge had made its way to China. The fact that there existed at the head of the Persian Gulf, in the kingdom of Spasinu Charax, a forward settlement by name of *Forat* for the people from Petra/Li-kan Kuo has in fact been described elsewhere (in the Writer's thesis 'Studies on the Regions to the West of the Sea' 海西國

雜考, included earlier in this book.<sup>(3)</sup>

Next, both the '*Ta-yüan lich-chuan*' of the *Shih-chi* and the '*Hsi-yü-chuan*' of the *Ch'ien Han-shu* state:

"The elders of An-hsi report that in T'iao-chih may be found the River of Weak Water and the Queen Mother of the West, but that they have not yet seen them."

安息長老傳聞條支有弱水西王母而未嘗見

On this point, concerning the country of the Queen Mother of the West located in the direction of the sun as it sets in the west, I am inclined to wonder whether, T'iao-chih being the most westerly extremity of the [Chinese] world, it might not have been simply added on to the pantheon of fantastic stories 神仙譚 already existing in the Han era. To tell the truth, the reference to the Queen Mother of the West is quite absent from the '*Hsi-yü-chuan*' contained in Chapter 118 of the *Hou Han-shu*.

However, were we, provisionally at least, to accept as an authentic record the claim that the elders of An-hsi reported hearing of the Queen Mother of the West's existing in the River of Weak Water of T'iao-chih, but admitted that they had not yet seen it, the possibility cannot be rejected that they were referring to the Babylonian goddess Nanaia, espoused, as will be described later in this article, during the period of the so-called Seleucid Dynasty, and which flourished during the Parthian period between the Susa—Susiana region to the shores of the Persian Gulf in the new guise of Artemis. For the Chinese, the Queen Mother of the West, fabled at the end of the Warring States 戰國 period as half-human/half-beast, and subsequently prized during the Han era both as fairy and as female, is recorded in the *Mountain and Seas Classic* 山海經 and in the *Western Mountain Classic* 西山經 as follows:

"The Queen Mother of the West:

"Her appearance is human;

"But she has the tail of a leopard,

"And the teeth of a tiger.

"Her cries are pleasant to the ear;

"Her long, tangled hair she wears crowned with a head-dress."

西王母, 其狀如人, 豹尾, 虎齒, 而善嘯蓬髮戴勝

This form taken by the Queen Mother of the West prevailed consistently down to the Han period. However, whether the subject of the report by the elders of An-hsi and the form taken by the Queen Mother of the West [as

(3) 'Studies on the Regions to the West of the Sea—including the location of the so-called Li-kan' 海西國雜考—所謂犁靛の位置に及ぶ; see pages 291-317 of the book in which the original Japanese version of this study appeared.

conceived by] the Chinese of the Han period might turn out to be of a common appearance, is a question which must await future research. It is self-evident, however, that the elders of An-hsi were only expressing what they themselves had heard within the An-hsi cultural sphere in which they lived.

In the foregoing discussion the author has mainly presented his humble opinions about the accounts of 'T'iao-chih-kuo' contained in the '*Ta-yüan lieh-chuan*' of the *Shih-chi* and the '*Hsi-yü-chuan*' of the *Ch'ien Han-shu*, to which he has added some criticisms of the [Antiochia-in] Syria thesis. The author has also given above his reasons for having come to believe that, as pointed out by Dr. SHIRATORI in his valuable opus mentioned above, the indications suggest that T'iao-chih was beyond a doubt located in the area at the head of the Persian Gulf.

### III

Next we must return to the opening lines of the previous section, and pursue our deliberations upon Dr. SHIRATORI's thesis identifying 'T'iao-chih-kuo' with the so-called Mesene Characene region.

From Section 138 of Book Six of Pliny's *Naturalis Historiae*, the most detailed document remaining to us concerning the Mesene Characene kingdom, otherwise known as the Spasinu Charax kingdom, we learn that the Mesene Characene kingdom, otherwise known as the Spasinu Charax kingdom, was located in the innermost reaches of the Persian Gulf region, having its dominion where the so-called Arabia Felix juts out [into the Gulf]:

"Charax oppidum Persici sinus intimum, a quo Arabia Eudaemon cognominata excurrit."

("The town of Charax lies at the very recess of the Persian Gulf, from where the country called Arabia Eudaemon juts out.")

As for the location of Charax, the case for identifying it with present-day Mohammerah is an extremely powerful one, but, thanks to inundations by rivers, the precise position cannot be ascertained. However, the same source does report that the Charax region was situated on an artificial hill between, on the right, the River Tigris, and, on the left, the River Karün, at the point where the two rivers met:

"habatur in colle manu facto inter confluentes dextra Tigrim, laeva Eulaeum, II p. laxitate."

("It had on its right hand side the Tigris, on its left hand side the Eulaeos, and was situated on an artificial hill at the point where the two rivers met. Its dimensions measured two miles.")

Dr. SHIRATORI, in his valuable opus 'A Study on T'iao-chih' 條支國考,

took up the following passage from the section on T'iao-chih-kuo contained in the '*Hsi-yü-chuan*' of Chapter 118 of the *Hou Han-shu*:

"The city of T'iao-chih-kuo is set on a hill-top, and its circumference is more than forty *li* around."

條支國城在山上周回四十餘里

On the basis of this reference, he then proceeded to identify this hill-top T'iao-chih with Pliny's "*habnatur in colle manu facto*", that is, with the city of Charax situated atop its artificial hill. However, according to the present writer's investigations, Babylonia, Susiana, Elumais and many other ancient cities, not necessarily only in the Parthian period, have been archaeologically identified in the upper cultural strata of the '*tel*' and other types of mound, and it may thus be construed that these cities were built on hill-tops for specific reasons of location. Hence there would appear to be no need to identify Charax exclusively as the city of T'iao-chih.

Again, while the circumference of the city of T'iao-chih-kuo is given as more than forty *li*, that of Charax is just two miles. Even allowing for mistakes in the reporting of the information, the difference between the two [figures] seems surely to be too great. Dr. SHIRATORI surmised that the city of Charax was beyond a doubt located on the delta formed by the rivers Tigris and Karūn, and that it was hemmed in on four sides by river water, connected to the mainland by [a piece of] land rising suddenly in the north-western corner of this island otherwise surrounded by water. As a result, Dr. SHIRATORI concluded that this Mesene Characene kingdom—Spasinu Charax—was the city of T'iao-chih-kuo'.

It was Hypsaosines, it appears, who, in order to protect the city from the repeated inundations by flood water, carried out some basic construction work, and also, it appears, built a dyke for protection against flood damage; this dyke measured six miles in length and a little less than that in breadth (This was the meaning of 'Hypsaosines' Wall'). Charax, it seems, had an exclusive harbour, one and a quarter miles from the sea-coast. In the same source, Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, Section 139, we read:

"primo afuit a litore stadios x et maritimum etiam ipsa portum habuit,"  
("Originally it was one and a quarter miles from the coast; moreover, it had its own sea-port.")

The port of Charax, it would seem, became extremely prosperous thanks to the merchants of Petra and the Nabataeans coming to and from the *Forat*. The fact that the *Forat* was located in the neighbourhood of Charax harbour, and that it was a place where the Nabataean merchants gathered, has already been described by the present writer elsewhere, in the chapter 'Studies on the Regions to the West of the Sea'.<sup>(3)</sup> The forward settlement at the head of the

Persian Gulf for the people of Nabatae and Petra is described in Section 145 of Book Six of Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* as follows:

"deinde est oppidum quod Characenorum regi paret in Pasitigris ripa, Forat nomine, in quod a Petra conveniunt."

("Then there is a town on the bank of the Pasitigris named Forat, subject to the king of the Characeni; this is resorted to by people from Petra.")

The Charax thus seen to be a gathering place for merchants is also known to have been at the same time a highly-inaccessible spot on account of the mud and the marshes which surrounded it, and a dangerous place because of the snakes which collected there after having been carried down by the river. The evidence for this is found in Section 136 of Pliny:

"infestatur et serpentibus quos flumina deportant."

("It is also infested with snakes carried down by the streams.")

Some years ago, as a member of the Japan Mission for the Survey of the Underwater Antiquities at Qurnah クルナ水没文化財調査團, I was on a visit of inspection to Qurnah when I learned that Dr. F. Safar of the Directorate General of Antiquities in Baghdad had identified Mesene, capital city of the Characene kingdom, with Tell I'ran (also known as Imm I'ran) on the western bank of the River Tigris in the region of Qurnah. This theory, leaving aside the question as to whether Mesene Characene was really T'iao-chih or not, is extremely important. The reason is that silver coins of King Attambelos III, it is known, have also been discovered in the same mound or *Tell*. According to the present writer's investigations, this fact tallies remarkably well with the data found in Section Four of Chapter 28 of Dio Cassius' *History of Rome*, Book 48. Namely:

καὶ τὴν μὲν νῆσον τὴν ἐν τῷ Τίγριδι τὴν Μεσσηνίαν, ἣς Ἀθάμβηλος ἐβασιλευεν,  
("Mesene, the island in the Tigris, whose king was Attambelos . . .")

It would thus seem to have been proved that this Tell I'ran or Imm I'ran was probably Mesene, in Arabic 'Maisan' or 'Maishan'. This proposition is made still more convincing by the fact that a similar statement is recorded elsewhere, namely:

ὅτι ὁ Ἀθάμβηλος ὁ τῆς νήσου ἄρχων τῆς ἐν τῷ Τίγριδι.

("Attambelos, ruler of the island in the centre of the Tigris, . . .")

The emperor Trajanus was able to conquer Mesene, the island in the centre of the Tigris, with extreme ease, recording one of the actual achievements of that age.

In AD 116, according to Dio Cassius, the aforementioned Spasinu Charax was also under the rule of Attambelos. It is therefore proved that Mesene,

capital city of the Mesene Characene kingdom, was the island in the centre of the Tigris, ὁ νήσος ἐν τῷ Τίγριδι, present-day Tell I'ran or Imm I'ran. It will also be realized that the hypothesis of Professor Safar has hit the mark.

In which case, the following passage from the section on 'Ta-ch'in-kuo' in the *Wei-liao*, namely:

"The king of Tsê-san is a vassal of Ta-ch'in, and his domain is in the middle of the water. Going northwards, one may reach Lü-fen after a six-month journey by water, or, if the winds are swift, in one month. The nearest city is An-ku [Orchoi] in An-hsi. Going south-westwards one may arrive in Ta-ch'in, but the exact number of *li* is not known."

澤散王屬大秦其治海中央北至驢分水行半歲風疾時一月到最與安息安谷城相近 西南詣大秦都不知里數

particularly when one reflects that the king of Tsê-san and his dominion lay in the middle of the water, and that the country was a tributary vassal of Ta-ch'in, tallies precisely with the description cited above from Dio Cassius. It seems, however, that both Professor Hirth and Dr. SHIRATORI considered this Tsê-san-kuo 沢散國 to refer to Spasinu Charax, that is, to Hyspaosines' Wall itself. And yet, it has become apparent that 'Hyspaosines' Wall' was beyond question a forward settlement for the benefit of the commerce of the Mesene Characene kingdom. It may thus be concluded that, though within the dominion of Attambelos, it was not the city of Mesene known as its capital. The proof for this contention is in the following statement from Section Four of Chapter 28 of Dio Cassius, Book 48, namely:

καὶ οἱ τὸν Χάρακα τὸν Σπασίνου καλουμένον οἰκοντες ἐν δὲ δὴ τῇ τοῦ Ἀθαμβήλου ἐπικρατεῖα ἦσαν

("and the inhabitants of the Palisade of Spasinus were under the rule of Attambelos.")

It is therefore clear that the capital of this trading nation at the head of the Persian Gulf, known variously as Charax Spasini, Spasinu Charax, the Mesene Characene kingdom, etc, was an island in the centre of the River Tigris, the aforementioned Tell I'ran or Imm I'ran. It may also be considered as certain that the ruins of the capital of the kingdom exist somewhere in this region, and much is to be hoped for from future archaeological excavations. When one thinks of the fact, as already noted, that the ruins of Attambelos' capital, Hyspaosines' Wall, the Forat, etc, were all [in] marshy districts located on riversides and therefore always liable to inundation by floodwaters and consequent transformation into isolated islands hemmed in by water, it thus seems not inconceivable that 'Tsê-san-kuo'—'Land of Scattered Marshes'—need not necessarily be considered as no more than the transliteration of a foreign sound at all.

When the problem is considered in this way, it will be seen that the

Mesene Characene kingdom investigated by Dr. SHIRATORI does not necessarily conform in all respects to the circumstances of T'iao-chih as we have found them depicted in the historical records. In the section on T'iao-chih in Chapter 63 of the '*Ta-yüan lieh-chuan*' contained in Book 123 of the *Shih-chi*, the following passage is found:

"T'iao-chih is located several thousand *li* westward of An-hsi, bordering upon the Western Sea. It is hot and humid, and the people there plough the fields and plant rice."

條枝在安息西數千里臨西海暑濕耕田田稻

The section on Wu-i-shan-li-kuo (Arachosia Drangiana) in Chapter 66 of the '*Hsi-yü-chuan*' contained in Book 96 of the *Ch'ien Han-shu* then relates as follows:

"[Wu-i-shan-li-kuo] has on its western borders Li-kan and T'iao-chih. If you go, you may arrive in T'iao-chih in more than one hundred days. [T'iao-chih] borders upon the Western Sea. The climate is hot and humid, and the people plant rice in the fields."

西與犁軒條支接行可百餘日乃至條支國臨西海暑溼田稻

Finally, in the T'iao-chih section contained in Chapter 78 of the '*Hsi-yü-chuan*' in Book 118 of the *Hou Han-shu*, there is another description of T'iao-chih:

"The city of T'iao-chih is set upon a hill-top, and its circumference is more than forty *li* around. [T'iao-chih] faces onto the Western Sea. It is surrounded by a curving stretch of sea water, so that three sides, the south, the east, and the north, are impassable to traffic. Only in the north-western corner can a road pass through. The region is hot and humid."

條支國城在山上周回四十餘里臨西海海水曲環其南及東北三面路絕唯西北隅通陸道土地暑溼

All these descriptions of T'iao-chih 條枝, 條支國 mention its bordering on the Persian Gulf; its hot and humid climate 暑濕, 暑溼, 土地暑溼; and the cultivation there of rice 耕田田稻, 田稻. In the *Hou Han-shu*, though, the circumstances of the capital city of T'iao-chih-kuo are suddenly described.

As described already, the "hot and humid region" 土地暑溼 mentioned in the text seems clearly to depict the climate of Khuzestan and other regions along the coast of the Persian Gulf; the Mesene Characene kingdom, from the point of view of both location and climate, cannot thus be said not to tally with the statements found in the historical records.

But what of the reference to "rice cultivation" 田稻? From the present writer's researches as described above, Susiana was noted among the Persian Gulf region countries as a rice-producing area; the natural conditions of

Mesene Characene, however, needless to say would not permit rice cultivation.

Furthermore, although the chief city of the Mesene Characene kingdom and the lesser cities in its environs were, as it were, resembling to islands dotted about and floating either in the sea or in the rivers, there is no description at all [in the Chinese records] of what should have been a startling sight. All we find is the entry stating that [the country] bordered upon the "Western Sea" or Persian Gulf. Even in the *Hou Han-shu*, with its description of the so-called city of T'iao-chih-kuo as being "surrounded by a curving stretch of sea water so that three sides, the south, the east, and the north, are impassable to traffic" 海水曲環, 其南及東北三面, 路絕, there is no treatment at all of the "islands" which may be found described in Western classical texts.

Needless to say, that the Chinese texts, under the impression that they were describing the main city of T'iao-chih, actually took up not the main city but such trading centres of the Charax kingdom as Hypsaosines' Wall to represent the capital of the country, is almost inconceivable. If the references were indeed to Spasinu Charax, [the islands] should not have been lacking in the documents prepared on the basis of direct observation by people like Kan Ying. And so, of course, there should have been some description similar to the "his domain is in the middle of the water" found in the *Wei-liao*. In the present writer's opinion, 'T'iao-chih-kuo' and 'Tsê-san-kuo' do not represent two different cities at all. The present writer also believes that 'Tse-san-kuo' corresponded to the Mesene Characene kingdom, but he cannot comply with the thesis that T'iao-chih-kuo and Tsê-san-kuo were one and the same place.

According to the '*Ta-yüan lieh-chuan*' of the *Shih-chi*, in T'iao-chih "There were great birds (which lay) eggs as big as water jars." 有大鳥卵如甕.

While the same text is to be found in the *Ch'ien Han-shu*, when we come to the *Hou Han-shu*, the fauna of T'iao-chih, namely, "... lions, rhinoceros, humed buffalo, peacocks, and great birds. The eggs of these great birds are as big as water jars." 出獅子犀牛封牛孔雀大雀大雀其卵如甕 have suddenly multiplied, listing many of the animals characteristically found, as already mentioned, in the Arabia Felix and in the Syrian Desert. On this point too, then, we find some problems, for, needless to say, such animals would not be likely to be produced by the Mesene Characene kingdom when they do not at all suit the natural conditions found in that region.

Furthermore, the following statement may be found in both the *Shih-chi* and the *Ch'ien Han-shu*, namely:

"The people are exceedingly numerous, and there are petty chiefs in every place. [The country] is subordinate to An-hsi, which treats it as a foreign country."

人衆甚多往往有小君長而安息役屬之 以爲外國



In the *Hou Han-shu*, however, the following description is to be found:  
 "[An-hsi] later subjugated T'iao-chih, and so appointed a military commander to be stationed there to watch over all the small cities therein."  
 後役屬條支爲置大將監領小城焉

However, the population of such a small country as Mesene should not be so numerous, while, moreover, bearing in mind the fact that that country was ruled over by a single ruler of its own, the characteristic features of T'iao-chih—namely, the posting of a Parthian military commander—hint at a considerable scale beyond comparison with that of Mesene.

As for the statement that T'iao-chih had been subjugated by An-hsi, two events are instructive. First, the abuses of the people of Babylonia and Seleuchia by Himerus, court favourite of Phraates II, followed by his declaration of war upon Mesene in 127 BC; second, the invasion launched by Mithradates I in 140 BC, which succeeded in bringing Mesopotamia, Assyria, Babylonia, Susiana, and many other regions under the dominion of that king. However, in neither case is there any report offering historical evidence of Mithradates' having subdued Mesene (ie, T'iao-chih).

Hypothesizing that the stronghold character of the Mesene kingdom, thanks to the marshes and rivers that surrounded it, allowed it to avoid being invaded by Parthia, and instead, as with the later invasion by Emperor Trajanus in AD 116, that its people were allowed to become merely nominal subjects paying tributary dues, we still surely have nothing to tally with the descriptions [of T'iao-chih] from the time of the Former Han Dynasty to that of the Later Han, as being a vassal-state of An-hsi. As matters stand, it may be said that the Kingdom of Mesene was never a vassal of An-hsi at all. Still less is there any trace in the history of Mesene of the military commanders appointed by An-hsi to be stationed in 'T'iao-chih-kuo'.

As for the magicians 眩人, too, there is no evidence that they were characteristic of the kingdom of Mesene. On the contrary, it is a well-known fact that they were engaged from Petra 犁国.

As concerns the reports of the elders of An-hsi relating to the Queen Mother of the West, namely:

"The elders of An-hsi report that in T'iao-chih may be found the River of Weak Water and the Queen Mother of the West. . ."

安息長老傳聞條支有弱水西王母

[there are some problems]. Despite the fact that Mesene was surrounded by rivers, we do not hear the name of any goddess whose fame paralleled that of the rivers of the kingdom of Mesene. The reason, we may assume, is that the elders of An-hsi, in referring to the River of Weak Water and the Queen Mother of the West, were in fact speaking of reports of the rivers running through T'iao-chih and of the famous goddess so intimately connected at

that time with those very rivers.

[However], the most decisive reason why Spasinu Charax could not have been the same as 'Tiao-chih-kuo' is the fact that, whereas the circumference of 'T'iao-chih-kuo' as recorded in Chinese texts is given as more than forty *li* around, Hyspaosines' Wall was a small-scale construction of a mere two miles in length. Even the capital, Maisan (Tell I'ran), would surely not have reached a scale of more than forty *li*.

On the basis of the various reasons listed above, it has been clarified that the thesis identifying 'Tiao-chih-kuo' with the kingdom of Mesene meets hardly any of the requirements needed to satisfy the conditions of the descriptions as set out in Chinese historical records. It would thus seem to appear that 'T'iao-chih-kuo' did not after all refer to the kingdom of Mesene.

#### IV

That being the case, exactly what city can it be which is being described, a city which must, after all, satisfy the following long list of conditions? Namely: one which lay westward of Arachosia Drangiana 烏弋山離國, south-westward of Parthia (An-hsi), and bordered upon the Persian Gulf 西海; one which was hot and humid, with rice cultivated in ploughed fields; one which produced great birds 大鳥, lions 獅子, rhinoceros 犀牛, humped buffalo 封牛, and peacocks 孔雀; one whose people were good at conjuring tricks; one which was subordinate to An-hsi from the time of the Former Han Dynasty to that of the Later Han; one where military commanders from An-hsi were stationed; one which possessed a population exceedingly numerous; one where, according to the reports of the elders of An-hsi, the Queen Mother of the West dwelled within the River of Weak Water; one whose capital city was situated on top of a hill more than forty *li* in circumference; one which was surrounded by a curving stretch of sea water; and one whose southern, eastern, and northern sides were impassable to traffic, leaving only its northwestern corner open for a road to pass through.

Strabo, in Section Two of Chapter Three of Book Fifteen, notes as follows:

*μεταξὺ αὐτῆς κειμένη καὶ τῆς Βαβυλωνίας, ἔχουσα πόλιν ἀξιολογοτάτην τὰ Σοῦσα*  
 ("It lies between [Persis] and Babylonia, and contains within it the very famous city of Susa.")

Susis, with its celebrated capital city of Susa, lay between Persis and Babylonia. Though located in the remote reaches of the Choaspes River, its territory, it is known, stretched as far as the head of the Persian Gulf, and reached the mouth of the River Tigris. This appears clearly also in the following passage, found in Section Four of Chapter Three of Book Fifteen [of Strabo], which states:

εκβολῶν σχεδόν τι τοῦ Τίγριος ἀπὸ τῶν ὅρων τῆς Περσικῆς παραλίας

("extending from the boundaries of the Persian seaboard approximately to the outlets of the Tigris.")

Although in Hellenic times the extent of its dominions did not nearly reach that achieved under the Achaemenes Dynasty, still, it did reach westwards as far as Sitacene 思陶國 and Apamaea, and southwards down to the region between the rivers Tigris and Eulaios (Choaspes), thence to Alexandria, Antiochia, and Spasinu Charax. From the time of the Seleucid Dynasty to when it fell under the sway of Parthia, Susa, along with Seleuchia on the Tigris, formed a pair of matching jewels, and, as is surely well known, it must have displayed a startling degree of prosperity by the standards of the Persian Gulf.

What is more, the majesty of the Tel of Susa in Khuzestan must have been enough to stun passing travellers. The way its mountainous shape suddenly loomed up over the desolate plateau was the most deeply impressionistic point on the whole journey.

It can be learned from the same source [ie, Strabo], Book Fifteen, Chapter Three, Section Two, that Susa contained within it Acropolis (today found 38 metres above the level of the River Chaour). Namely:

ἡ δ' ἀκρόπολις ἐκαλεῖτο Μемνόνιον

("Acropolis was called Memnonium.")

Even from this sentence alone we find evidence that Susa, represented by four remaining mounds, was widely known among ancient merchants and travellers as a great city situated on top of a mountain.

The following description, found in Chapter 78 of the 'Hsi-yü-chuan' contained in Book 118 of the *Hou Han-shu*, can only possibly have been referring to the same thing. Namely:

"The city of T'iao-chih-kuo is set upon a hill-top, and its circumference is more than forty *li* around."

條支國城在山上周回四十餘里

Clearly, this is no description of the Mesene Characene kingdom and so on, that place being chiefly composed of islands. Moreover, as I have already said, the fact that [the city's] circumference measured more than forty *li* around means that it could not be referring to either Hyspaosines' Wall in the kingdom of Mesene, or to Tell I'ran. Its scale, beyond a shadow of a doubt, must have been far greater than these.

Assuming that Kan Ying's report [on T'iao-chih] dated from the ninth year of the reign period of *Yung-yüan*, ie, AD 97, we may attempt a calculation. The standard *li* of the Later Han Dynasty, which seems to have measured

three hundred paces 步 or 414.72 metres, would give a total of 16.5888 kilometers even if the circumference [of the city] was taken as only forty *li*. Seeing that there were actually “more than” forty *li* 周回四十餘里 we would surely not be in great error if we assumed a circumference on a scale of something like seventeen kilometres.

This is profoundly interesting when considered in relation to Strabo’s account of the circumference of the ruins of the city of Susa in Book Fifteen, Section Two of his *Geography*. The city of Susa, he says,

κύκλον ἔχουσα ἑκατὸν καὶ εἴκοσι σταδίων  
 (“... had a circumference of 120 *stadion*.”)

Since one *stadion* measured 606.75 English feet, the circumference of the ruins would have been in the rough neighbourhood of twenty kilometres. Since we must of course allow for two or three kilometres’ distortion thanks to the techniques used for measuring the mound-remains with the methods of the ancient world, we may therefore conclude that no significant difference exists between the statements found in Chinese historical records and the corresponding Western classical texts.

If we may then take the city of Susa as fitting the passage describing ‘T’iao-chih-kuo’, namely, “the city of T’iao-chih-kuo is set upon a hill-top” 條支國城有山上, the next problem which we encounter is posed by the following passage:

“[T’iao-chih] is surrounded by a curving stretch of sea water, [so that] three sides, the south, the east, and the north, are impassable to traffic. Only in the north-western corner can a road pass through.”  
 海水曲環其南及東北三面路絕唯西北隅通陸道

In regard to this, we have a clue in the fact that it has now been confirmed that the river-waters in the vicinity of the ruins of the city of Susa, mixed also with sea water, flood regularly and frequently, and that the rising waters make a swamp of the entire southern, eastern, and northern approaches [to the city].<sup>(4)</sup> There is proof, for example, that, at the beginning of the Christian era, the Karūn river flowed about the city of Susa. Section 135 of Book Six of Pliny’s *Naturalis Historia* is the source:

“circumit arcem Susorum”  
 (“It [ie, the River Karūn] flowed around the citadel of Susa.”)

The closing-off of three sides [of the city of Susa], and the fact that only to the north-west, in the direction of Babylonia, could the so-called “King’s

(4) Georges Le Rider: ‘Suse sous les séleucides et les Parthes; Les trouvailles monétaires et l’Histoire de la ville’ in *Mémoires De La Mission Archéologique En Iran*, Tome XXXIII, *Mission De Susiane*, published Paul Geuthner, 1965, pages 277–280.

Road” 王道 pass through, must then have been the origin of the following sentence:

“Only in the north-western corner may a road pass through.”

唯西北隅通陸道

The next problem is the climate of T'iao-chih as related in the *Shih-chi*, the *Han-shu*, and the *Hou Han-shu*. The hot and humid climate of the region, as has been pointed out earlier, is clearly the climate of Khuzestan. Moreover, since it may be surmised that this constitutes an account of the area around the head of the Persian Gulf, it would also correspond with the climatic characteristics of Susa and Susiana. As for the rice cultivation, we have already demonstrated, drawing upon Diodorus Siculus and Strabo, the existence of cultivated fields 耕田 and rice-paddy 稻作 in the Susa—Susiana region. Accordingly, the reports of rice cultivation contained in the ‘*Ta-yüan lieh-chuan*’ of the *Shih-chi* and in the ‘*Hsi-yü-chuan*’ of the *Ch'ien Han-shu* are unquestionably not founded upon misconceptions of or erroneous reporting by Chang Ch'ien.

As for the fauna of this region, the fact that beasts identical to those inhabiting Assyria, Babylonia, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix were constantly coming and going makes the assumption by the Chinese that the ostriches, lions, etc. were peculiar to T'iao-chih and An-hsi not altogether unreasonable. It would also mean that the appearance of such beasts in the region in question was by no means a rare occurrence. Needless to say, neither the Mesene kingdom, nor Hypsaosines' Wall, nor the city of Maishan, possessed the natural environment likely to produce such beasts, situated as they were in the midst of either sea water or river water. Accordingly, we may assume that only a big city like Susa and the Susiana region within which it fell were suitable.

“The people are exceedingly numerous, and there are petty chiefs in every place. [The country] is subordinate to An-hsi, which treats it as a foreign country.”

人衆甚多往往有小君長而安息役屬之以爲外國

The basis for the above passage, contained in the ‘*Ta-yuan lieh-chuan*’ of the *Shih-chi* and in the ‘*Hsi-yü-chuan*’ of the *Han-shu*, was a sound one. For, by the time Alexander arrived in Susa and Susiana, the area had already become a melting-pot of miscellaneous, mixed-blood races. Outstanding among them were the negroid races, the Elamites, the Sumerians, various Semitic races, Egyptians, Greeks from Macedonia, main inhabitants of Susa, which, under its alternative name of Seleuchia on the Eulaios *Σελεύχεια ἡ πρὸς τῷ Εὐλαίῳ* had been the mainstay of the Seleucid Dynasty, and, of course, the Persians. The phrase, “the people are exceedingly numerous. . . .” 人衆甚多

was surely beyond a doubt referring to this state of affairs.

As for the phrase, "there are petty chiefs *in every place* . . ." 往往有小君長, this must have originated in the several overlords 領主 who existed in Susiana under the rule of Susa.

Parthians first arrived in Susa during the reign of the enlightened ruler Mithradates I. Their territory then stretched over a vast area from Parthia itself to Bactria, Aria, Drangiana, Aracosia, Margiana, Hyrcania, Mardi, Media Magna, Susiana, Persia and Babylonia.

Using Western classical texts, cuneiform materials, plus documents pertaining to ancient numismatics, we find that Susa came under the rule of Mithridates I in or around the year 140 BC.<sup>(5)</sup> The year that Chang Ch'ien set off from China was most likely either the second or the third year of the reign period *Chien-yüan* 建元 (the identification of the second year of *Chien-yüan* (139 BC) has been hypothesized by Dr. KUWABARA), and he returned from his travels in the third year of the reign period *Yüan-shuo* 元朔 (126 BC). After passing through the lands of the Hsiung-nu 匈奴, the Wu-sun 烏孫, Ta-yüan 大宛, and K'ang-chü 康居 (Sogdiana), he stayed among the Ta Yüeh-chih 大月氏 in either the sixth year of the reign period *Kuang-yüan* 光元 (129 BC) or the first year of that of *Yüan-shuo* [128 BC], from where he brought back to report to the Han court his own invaluable impressions.

By that time, Susa and Susiana must have already experienced more than ten years of subordination to An-hsi. When one thinks about it, the situation in An-hsi must undoubtedly have been paid careful attention to by the Yüeh-chih. We thus cannot help but doubt any suggestion that the news should not have been brought to the Yüeh-chih of the conquest by the Parthian ruler Mithradates I of that ancient capital region at the head of the Persian Gulf, Susa, known under the Seleucid Dynasty as "Seleuchia on the Eulaios", and of Mithradates' further pacification of the entire area as far as the shores of the Gulf.

The expression "[The country] is subordinate to An-hsi." 而安息役屬之 in reality then refers to the above-mentioned situation, describing the conditions along the shores of the Persian Gulf: conditions in which the satraps 大守領 of Susa and Susiana paid allegiance to An-hsi. Mithridates I proclaimed benevolent government, treated the Greek cities within Parthia itself with impartiality, gave recognizance to the many self-governing independent states run by Greeks, such as that of Seleuchia on the River Tigris, and, leaving their administration in the hands of independent assemblies composed of wise men, refrained from intervening in their affairs, thus admitting them as 'free' cities.<sup>(6)</sup>

Here, indeed, one may perceive an essential factor in the Parthian kings'

(5) Georges Le Rider, *ibidem*, cf. page 321, page 361.

(6) George Rawlinson: *Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy*, Longman's, London, 1873, pages 88-9; Tacitus: *Annales*, vi, 42, "Trecenti opibus aut sapientia delecti ut Senatos".

voluntary engraving upon their coinage of the inscription "Phil-Hellene"—a practice which was, also, not without its policy considerations. "Seleuchia on the Eulaios", then, was none other than a city of the Macedonian Greeks, while the expression "treats it as a foreign country" 以爲外國 in this way may be seen to be beyond a doubt a report on conditions in Susa.

Susa, however, as we have seen, also suffered rule by generals 將軍 or military officials 指揮官 stationed there by An-hsi (Parthia). The above-mentioned Zamaspes, (who served there) in about the year AD 2, was an example. The reference is found in the section on T'iao-chih-kuo contained in Chapter 78 of the *'Hsi-yü-chuan'* of Book 118 of the *Hou Han-shu*:

"An-hsi later subjugated T'iao-chih, and so appointed a military commander to be stationed there to watch over all the small cities therein."

安息後役屬條支爲置大將監領諸小城焉

The "military commander" 大將 here, as already explained, corresponded to [the Greek] '*strategos*' or '*stratiarchos*', at the same time carrying the meaning of 'satrap'. It referred to the administrative officials, also charged with military duties, who were assigned to the states within Parthia (An-hsi) ruled over by those of non-Parthian extraction. Beneath the satraps were the chiefs of individual citadels 首長, known, as in the example of Nisa, as "*dyszpty*"; these, equipped with the royal seal, could write documents. Surely, therefore, the expression "to watch over all the small cities therein" 監領諸小城焉 referred to this level of citadel-chief found in all the local regions of Susiana.

Concerning the 'Queen Mother of the West' spoken of in the *'Ta-yüan lieh-chuan'* of the *Shih-chi* and in the *'Hsi-yü-chuan'* of the *Ch'ien Han-shu*, we have already had occasion to make reference. According to reports by the elders of An-hsi, it is stated, in T'iao-chih could be found the 'River of Weak Water' and the 'Queen Mother of the West' 弱水西王母. The goddess reported by the elders of An-hsi, as we have already set forth, was probably Nanaia, the Babylonian goddess worshipped in Susa under the Seleucid Dynasty, and transformed by the time of the Parthian period into Artemis. When Chang Ch'ien heard the reports of Nanaia by the elders of An-hsi, in about the sixth year of the reign-period *Kuang-yüan* (129 BC), or the first year of that of *Yüan-shuo* [128 BC], it was precisely at the time when belief in Artemis—Nanaia—in Susa and Susiana was at its peak, with the main centre of worship being in Susa. Section 135 of Book Six of Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* also makes this point clear, as follows:

"circumit arcem Susorum ac Dianae templum augustissimum illis gentibus, et ipse in magna caerimonia."

("The Karün river flowed around the citadel of Susa and the temple of Diana, supremely sacred to the tribes who lived in the locality; and,

moreover, the river itself was held [by them] in the utmost respect and reverence."

It seems clear that what is being referred to here is, not a temple to Artemis herself, brought to Susa by people from Greece, but a temple of the great indigenous goddess, Nanaia. It is also of extreme significance that the Karūn river itself, owing to its connection with the goddess Artemis—Nanaia—, was held in great reverence—in *magna caerimonia*—for it is related that, for this reason, the king would draw up water from the Karūn river for his own drinking purposes, and would even carry it with him when going on long journeys. The present writer accordingly infers that the reports by the elders of An-hsi concerning the 'River of Weak Water' and the 'Queen Mother of the West', referred to the Karūn river and to the great goddess Nanaia of Susa respectively.

We must turn next to an attempt to identify conclusively the title borne by Susa after it became subordinate to the Parthian dynasty. For it would seem imperative, surely, to find definite evidence that, from the time of the Former Han Dynasty to that of the Later Han, the region was actually known as 'Susa'.

As has already been pointed out, Susa, during the era of the Seleucid Dynasty, was known among the Greeks as "Seleuchia on the Eulaios", forming, as it were, a twin jewel to match that of "Seleuchia on the Tigris". In about 140 BC, the Parthian king Mithridates I, following the precedents set by the empires of Assyria and Persia, rejected the above-mentioned title hitherto used by the Greeks in favour of a revived traditional name, and publicly declared once again the title of 'Susa'.<sup>(7)</sup> This means that the region was still known, even by the time of the beginning of the Christian era, and even among the Greeks, as 'Susa'. We may therefore surmise that the inhabitants of the area were called by the Greeks 'Kissi'. [The evidence for this last assumption may be found] in Strabo's *Geography*, Book Fifteen, Chapter Three, Section Two, namely:

λέγονται δὲ καὶ Κίσσιοι οἱ Σούσιοι

("The people of Susa are said to be the 'Kissi'")

From the fact that here we have exactly the same as the word-ending used in the Persian languages to signify a tribe or race, we may come to know that the people of this region, at around the time of the beginning of the Christian era, were probably called also by those of Iranian extraction as 'Kissi', or as 'Shussi', or, perhaps, as 'Shusshi'.

Moreover, it is clear from the piece of evidence to be given below that Susa, up to the latter half of the second century AD, was called by merchants

(7) George Rawlinson: *ibidem*, page 90.



of Semitic origin, and particularly by those merchants of Aramitic descent, 'shushi' or 'Shushan'. The piece of evidence in question is a stone fragment, measuring ten centimetres in height by nine centimetres in width, discovered in the autumn of 1935 by M. R. Amy in the ruins of Palmyra. The fragment was found amid the layers formed by accumulated strata in the Agora facing the front section of 'Justinus' Wall'.<sup>(8)</sup> It would appear to be a part of a coil-shaped bracket attached to a pillar, and upon it the vestiges of some engraving may be deciphered. It contains in all three lines of engraved Palmyrenean script, a total of fifteen words. Since we know from numismatic evidence that the name of the king mentioned in the inscription, Wrwd (Orodes), [was that of one who reigned] in the latter half of the second century AD, we may conclude that the inscription on the stone fragment also dates from the same era.

The inscription on the fragment reads as follows:

("... , therefore, ... In Susa ... Wrwd, the King, ...")



ל די  
בשושן  
ורוד מלך

Wrwd, then the ruler of the Parthian vassal-state of Susiana, was referred to as "king", and guaranteed [to the Parthian authorities] the trade and the stability of 'Susa'. It may be assumed that the main body of the inscription also extolled King 'Wrwd' 's outstanding virtue. Thanks to this inscription, it has become evident that 'Susa', in the latter half of the second century AD, was a tributary state of Parthia (An-hsi), that it was ruled over by its own local chieftains, and that its correct title, as in Hebrew, was pronounced as 'Shushan', 'Shushi', etc. We may therefore take it as proven that the name of 'Susa' was known among the various races of Aryan and Semitic extraction, from the time of the reign of Mithridates I in 140 BC at least up to the latter half of the second century AD, as 'Shush' or as 'Shushan', while its inhabitants were known by such names as 'Shusi' or 'Shussi'.

#### FINAL REMARKS

While the current pronunciation of the two Chinese characters 條支

(8) Jean Cantineau: 'La Susiane Dans Une Inscription Palmyrénienne', in *Extrait des Mélanges Syriens Offerts à M.R. Dussaud*; cf. pages 277-279.

is 't'iao-chih', as Dr. SHIRATORI has also pointed out, this cannot be assumed as necessarily conveying the old pronunciation in use at the time of the Han Dynasty. Nevertheless, the present writer would hold 't'iao-chih' (Dr. SHIRATORI's 'd'iao-ki') as having a phonetic value equivalent to that of ܫܫܐן *Sshan*, 'Shush' or 'Shushan', and is consequently of the opinion that the two possess between them an extremely close relation.

In short, from an investigation of the 'Ta-yüan lich-chuan' of the *Shih-chi*, of the 'Hsi-yü-chuan' of the *Ch'ien Han-shu*, and of the 'Hsi-yü-chuan' of the *Hou Han-shu*, the present writer has been brought around to the belief that the so-called 'T'iao-chih-kuo' referred to 'Susiana' and its capital city, 'Susa'. He is led to further surmise that the region was an important crossroads point on the ancient traffic routes, where the merchants of Asia would congregate in large numbers. For the Chinese, moreover, it was the most westerly point of the globe. Finally, it was a pivotal spot for travel along the sea routes, particularly for that which crossed from the head of the Persian Gulf over to Petra 犁軒國, to the Roman Empire, and to Egypt. 'Susa', otherwise known as 'T'iao-chih Kuo', had been from of old one of the best known cities of Asia.