

## CHAPTER 7

### Cișii's Description of Xinjiang: Its Context and Circulation

Matthew W. MOSCA

In 1778, a low-ranking Manchu official named Cișii composed a manuscript in Xinjiang that became the single most popular and widely circulated item among the voluminous Qing-era descriptions of Inner and Central Asia. Almost every major Qing scholar interested in those regions had read it and, since all or part of the text was issued under more than twenty different titles by 1911, it presumably reached an audience far beyond specialized researchers. Despite this influence, relatively little is known about the life of its author or the development of his book.<sup>1</sup> This essay attempts to clarify these topics, paying particular attention to the changing reception of his work between 1778 and 1810. Despite its author's modest foothold on the Qing bureaucratic ladder, his account circulated more widely than more complete and factual treatises composed by authors of far higher rank. After 1805, this wide circulation continued, but the book's reputation experienced a sudden collapse among academic specialists, who increasingly denounced it as unreliable. Its sudden and somewhat improbable rise to influence, and its equally sudden decline in authority, can be explained by studying the sequence and circumstances in which other descriptions of the Western Regions emerged and circulated.

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<sup>1</sup> Cișii's work is widely cited in Western language scholarship about Xinjiang, for instance L. Newby's "The Chinese Literary Conquest of Xinjiang." *Modern China*, 25.4 (1999): 451–74. As far as I know, the only work in a Western language wholly devoted to his work is D. Borei's "Images of the Northwest Frontier: A Study of the *Hsi-yü wen chien lu* (1777)," an article primarily concerned with its content, not its textual history or Cișii's biography (*The American Asian Review* 2 (1987): 26–45). Chinese scholars have done far more to illuminate Cișii's life and the editorial history of his work; already in the 1930s, Wang Zhongmin and Wan Sinian had used the most important non-archival sources available. Their contributions are cited in the appropriate footnotes below.

Studies on the circulation and influence of works on Qing Inner Asia cannot ignore the question of genre. Regions of the empire not governed according to the Chinese *junxian* system were likewise excluded from regular modes of official Chinese geographic description based on that system, which ascended in a hierarchy from local gazetteers, through the provincial gazetteers (*tongzhi*), to the comprehensive gazetteer of the realm (*yitong zhi*). Instead, for Inner Asia, the Qing state reserved the task of geographic description for its editorial organs in Beijing. In Xinjiang itself, numerous attempts were made between 1755 and 1810 to provide local descriptions. Most can be termed “proto-gazetteers,” an attempt to supply something approximating the systematic, administration-oriented coverage granted to territories within China proper. Although these works were invariably authored by officials, active or in exile, they were not published as official gazetteers. Cǐshì’s work, by contrast, occupied a more ambiguous position that I term a “pseudo-gazetteer.” Superficially it appeared to be a systematic and complete geographic work, providing entries for each major settlement in Xinjiang and foreign country in contact with that territory, as well as narratives of important political events between 1755 and the early 1770s. However, much of its content—peppered with digressions, anecdotes, and the occasional marvel—would have been inappropriate for a formal gazetteer, a fact acknowledged in its preface and original title. Readers of this “pseudo-gazetteer” therefore had great latitude to interpret its status, particularly in the absence of alternative descriptions of the Western Regions. Cǐshì’s contemporaries, as this paper will show, placed his book on a spectrum ranging from de facto provincial gazetteer to an insubstantial collection of trivial tales.

## 1. The Life of Cǐshì through His Tenure in Xinjiang

Little is known of the life and career of Cǐshì (Ch. *Qǐ-shì-yī* 七十一; *zì* 字, *Chunyuan* 椿園), said to be of the Nimaca (Ch. *Ni-ma-cha* 尼瑪查) clan, belonging to the Manchu Plain Blue Banner.<sup>2</sup> In 1754 he earned his *jinshi* degree, and was part of the

<sup>2</sup> Both Xiong Baotai’s postface and the cover of Cǐshì’s collected writings confirm that in Chinese his name was Qi-shi-yi, his style was Chunyuan, and he adopted the choronym Changbai 長白. The Manchu spelling Cǐshì is taken from his superior’s memorial reporting his return from exile in Xinjiang. Another Manchu form, Cǐ šī i, is found in a Manchu translation of his preface, but this was a transcription from the Chinese by someone who had not met him. His banner affiliation is recorded in the *Qingchao xu wenxian tongkao*, 19: 10114 (j. 267). The only Qing-era reference for his membership in the Nimaca clan seems to be a note in one of the earliest manuscripts of the work. See Zhongguo kexueyuan Beijing tianwentai, ed. *Zhongguo difangzhi lianhe mulu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985): 236. His choronym was widely used among Manchus as a reference to Changbaishan, the place of their legendary origin, and the name Qi-shi-yi (“seventy one”) should refer to the age of his grandfather at the time of Cǐshì’s birth; on these two point see M. Elliott, “Manchus as Ethnographic Subject in

cohort selected for service in the provinces as a country magistrate.<sup>3</sup> As he commented of himself in the 1778 preface to his work:

余生于燕, 長而游宦于秦晉齊楚吳越之郊, 足迹略遍, 南及嶺表, 東過醫無閭, 渡遼水而及朝鮮之疆, 近年復西出陽關, 星宿海三千餘里, 往來龜茲大夏諸邦, 而五易裘葛, 目見夥矣

I was born in Yan [Beijing], and long have I traveled in official service in the cities of Qin [Shaanxi], Jin [Shanxi], Qi [northeastern Shandong], Chu [Hubei], and Wu-Yue [Zhejiang]. My footprints have covered almost everywhere. To the south I have reached Lingbiao [Guangdong], to the east I have passed beyond Yiwulü [Mountain, in Shengjing], crossed the Liao River and reached the border of Korea, and furthermore in recent years I went to the west, out the Yang Pass, [crossed over] three thousand *li* beyond the source of the Yellow River, and five times changed seasonal garments while traveling in the lands of Qiuci [= Kucha] and Daxia. My eyes have seen much.<sup>4</sup>

Attempts to cross-reference these autobiographical claims with other evidence are inconclusive, in part because several officials named Cīshī were active in Qing service around this time.<sup>5</sup> An edict of Sept. 4, 1762 (QL27/7/17) cited a memorialist,

the Qing,” in *Empire, Nation, and Beyond: Chinese History in Late Imperial Times: A Festschrift in Honor of Frederic Wakeman*, eds. J. Esherick et al. (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley): 31. Wen Tingshi's (1856–1904) *Chunchangzi zhiyu* (j. 23) suggests that it could also be the age of his grandmother.

<sup>3</sup> *Qing shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986) (hereinafter QSL-QL) 14: 1006 (j. 463: 4a–5a), QL19/IC4/19 [June 9, 1754]. Reference is made on June 9, 1753 [QL18/5/8] to a Qi-shi-yi, likely our author, among a list of Manchu *jinshi* and *juren* degree-holders assigned to county magistracies: QSL-QL 14: 708 (j. 438: 9b–10a). The eminent scholars Qian Daxin 錢大昕, Ji Yun 紀昀, and Zhu Yun 朱筠 also took their *jinshi* degree in this class, but as they were assigned to the Hanlin Academy, and Cīshī to a county magistracy, they likely did not become close acquaintances.

<sup>4</sup> “Xiyu suotan zixu” 西域瑣談自序 in *Xiyu suotan* 西域瑣譚 (National Central Library, Taiwan, #04101). Cīshī himself identifies Kucha with ancient Qiuci.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, one Qi-shi-yi of the Bordered White Banner took the *jinshi* degree in 1723. He likely had an imperial audience in Aug. 12, 1738 [QL3/6/27] (QSL-QL 10: 144–5 (j. 71: 19b–20a), a date that seems somewhat early for our Cīshī, whose career stretched into the 1780s. Reference is made on Nov. 18, 1758 [QL23/10/18] (QSL-QL 16: 280 (j. 573: 5b–6a)) and three subsequent times (Nov. 2, 1761 [QL26/10/6], Mar. 4, 1762 [QL27/2/9], and Dec. 21, 1766 [QL31/11/20]) to a Qi-shi-yi holding high military rank in the Green Standard forces. This Qi-shi-yi has an entry in the provincial gazetteer of Anhui for his service as regional commander there in QL27/1762. That gazetteer identifies this commander with our Cīshī, attributing to him the *zi* Chunyuan and the authorship of the *Xiyu wenjian lu*. However, this is almost certainly mistaken. This Qi-shi-yi was a member of the Bordered Red Banner, not the

Haiming, who reported that in the twelfth month of that year (i.e. early 1763) a *zhushi* named Cǐsīi, in Xinjiang since 1760 (QL25), would see his term of service expire.<sup>6</sup> On Dec. 13, 1763 (QL28/11/09), there is a further memorial from Haiming asking to retain Cǐsīi temporarily for service in Aqsu.<sup>7</sup> This Cǐsīi, however, was not our author. In a postface to Cǐsīi's book, Xiong Baotai 熊寶泰 (d. 1816) reported a conversation with De-qing 德慶 (*zi* Yicun 一村), whose older sister was Cǐsīi's wife, which alluded to Cǐsīi's service as a magistrate in Wuzhi 武陟 county, Henan.<sup>8</sup> This is corroborated by the Wuzhi county gazetteer, which states that Cǐsīi began his service there in 1761 (QL26) and left his post sometime before 1763 (QL28).<sup>9</sup> Thus, the author Cǐsīi was in Henan, rather than Xinjiang, during the term of service of Haiming's subordinate of the same name.

Knowledge about Cǐsīi's career after 1754 is scant. On Jan. 9, 1765 (QL29/12/18) Qianlong assigned a certain Qi-shi-yi to take up a vacancy as district magistrate in Qinzhou, Guangdong (his reference to official service in that province?); an edict of May 15, 1766 (QL31/4/7) dealt with accusations that a certain Qi-shi-yi, magistrate of Jiangxia county, Hubei, had allowed corruption among his household servants, clerks, and runners (his service in Chu?).<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, in neither case do county gazetteers give details of the magistrate in question.<sup>11</sup>

A manuscript copy of Cǐsīi's collected writings, excluding his monograph on Xinjiang, is preserved in the National Library of China, consisting of the *Chunyuan yishi* 椿園遺詩 and *Chunyuan wencun* 椿園文存, bound together in a single

Plain Blue Banner. Also, more definitively, our Cǐsīi was a county magistrate in this period (see below). The editors of this Guangxu-era gazetteer presumably confused this commander with the more famous Cǐsīi (*Chongxiu Anhui tongzhi* 重修安徽通志, j. 147). Finally, the *Qing shigao* lists a Qi-shi-yi as the seventh-generation inheritor of the rank of "baron of the first class" (*ashan-i hafan*/一等男) in QL45 (1780/1). See *Qing shigao jiaozhu* (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1999), 6: 4989 (j. 178). This Qi-shi-yi, however, was a Hanjun and member of the Plain White Banner. Moreover, given that the son of this Qi-shi-yi inherited the title in DG7 [1827/8], while our Cǐsīi was dead by 1790 and according to Xiong Baotai had no son, this is not a reference to him. At minimum, then, there seem to have been two other Qi-shi-yis active in the Qianlong period, possibly more.

<sup>6</sup> QSL-QL 17: 454–5 (j. 667: 1b–2a), QL27/7/17 [Sept. 4, 1762]; the full version of this memorial is contained in Qingdai Xinjiang Manwen dang'an huibian (hereinafter XMD) (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2012), 57: 157–9.

<sup>7</sup> XMD 65: 330.

<sup>8</sup> Xiong Baotai, "Yiyu suotan ba" 異域瑣談跋, *Ouyi leigao* (National Library of China, #25413), j. 19: 14a.

<sup>9</sup> *Wuzhi xian zhi* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1976): 342 (j. 6: 21b).

<sup>10</sup> QSL-QL 17: 1078 (j. 725: 3a–b), QL29/12/18 [Jan. 9, 1765]; QSL-QL 18: 350 (j. 758: 6b–7a), QL31/4/7 [May 15, 1766].

<sup>11</sup> I failed to find a listing for this Qi-shi-yi in the 1869 *Tongzhi Jiangxia xian zhi* 同治江夏縣志, in *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng* 中國地方志集成, 11: 32 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2001); or in the 1834 *Qinzhou zhi* 欽州志 (HYC 3230 8830.85).



volume.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, these writings yield limited biographical information. In his collected writings, Cİşii penned a record (*ji*) about his brother-in-law's study in Beijing, named the *Qiushui shanfang*, composed in QL31 (1766).<sup>13</sup> We learn from this essay that De-qing<sup>14</sup> had lived in Beijing while his father Tang-qi 塘琦<sup>15</sup> was serving as a circuit intendant in Nanchang, and that De-qing had by that point taken up his first official post. A second piece by Cİşii states that "in the third month of the *wuzi* year [i.e. QL33, April-May, 1768] my various fellow officials (*zhu tongguan*) in Shenyang agreed to meet in the Pear Garden (Liyuan) of Mr. Wang..." (his trip across Yiwulü Mountain?).<sup>16</sup>

Details of Cİşii's stay in Xinjiang are also elusive. One entry in his book notes that, "in QL40 (1775) a *qalandar* [itinerant Muslim ascetic] of Hindustan traveled to the Muslim Region, and I spoke with him," apparently the only comment in the body of the text that explicitly dates his time in the region.<sup>17</sup> Fortunately, we gain a more complete picture from the relevant Manchu-language archives. In a memorial of May 3, 1778, the official in charge of Kucha, Canghi, submitted a memorial explaining that Cİşii, holding the rank of *zhushi* in the Seals Office (*Ma. kuce i doron ba i ejeku hafan*), had fulfilled his three year tour of duty in QL42/7 (Aug. 3–Sept. 1, 1777), meaning that he must have taken up his post in the late summer of 1774.<sup>18</sup> It should be noted, however, that in his preface of early 1778 Cİşii commented that while in the Western Regions he had "five times changed between winter and summer clothes," which seems to suggest a five-year stay that would put his arrival early in 1773.<sup>19</sup> Canghi had requested a replacement for Cİşii, and this official, one Minggan, reached Kucha on Feb. 11, 1778 to begin a short apprenticeship. As his superior put it, "Cİşii for a time managed together with Minggan the Seals Office and Muslim affairs (*Hoise-i baita*), which he administered, and also all the matters of pay and provisions, military post stations, and the horse stud, explaining them and successfully

<sup>12</sup> This book is held at the National Library of China (Beijing), Putong guji collection, #104552. Cİşii's poetry is studied in Xing Han, *Qingdai Xiyu shi yanjiu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009): 107–12.

<sup>13</sup> "Qiushui shanfang ji" 秋水山房記, in *Chunyuan cunwen*.

<sup>14</sup> According to Xiong Baotai, De-qing belonged to the Plain White Banner. He became a *bithesi* sometime after his father's promotion to surveillance commissioner in 1772. He was later magistrate in Wucheng 烏程 county, Zhejiang. According to Xiong, he died at the age of 69.

<sup>15</sup> Cİşii's father-in-law, Tang-qi, was received in audience on QL24/5/4-*guiwei* [May 29, 1759] (QSL-QL, j. 586); he rose to become Surveillance Commissioner 按察使 in Anhui. On QL39/2/13-*bingshen* [Mar. 24, 1774] (QSL-QL, j. 952), he was summoned to Beijing under investigation for administrative malfeasance and reassigned to a capital agency.

<sup>16</sup> "Wangshi Liyuan ji" 王氏梨園記, *Chunyuan cunwen*.

<sup>17</sup> *Xiyu suotan* (National Central Library, Taiwan, #04101), j. 4: 48a.

<sup>18</sup> XMD 135: 52.

<sup>19</sup> "Zixu" 自序, *Xiyu suotan* (HYC).

transferring the responsibility for them.” “Muslim affairs” presumably meant liaising on administrative matters with the various local *begs*. On April 21, 1778 (QL43/3/25) Cišii set off for the capital.<sup>20</sup> Thus, his preface, dated Jan. 17, 1778, was composed right before Minggan arrived in Kucha to relieve him.

It is worth noting that this document disproves the tenacious error that Cišii composed his work while holding the post of *Zhen-Di guan* 鎮迪觀察, intendant of the general surveillance circuit of Barsköl (Barkul) and Ürümchi for grain transport and military affairs. This post was created in an edict of Jan. 12, 1777 (QL41/12/20), when Cišii was serving in a different capacity in Kucha.<sup>21</sup> The claim that Cišii held this position seems first to emerge in an 1803 preface of Zhou Zhairen 周宅仁. Zhou evidently did not know Cišii personally, having obtained a copy of the work from a colleague in Gansu. His preface was written after Cišii’s death, and the basis of his statement is unclear.<sup>22</sup>

## 2. The Editorial History of the Work

Before turning to Cišii’s career after his return to Beijing, it is useful to consider what can be gleaned about the editorial history of his work on the basis of internal evidence. All full versions of his text, whatever their provenance, contain in various order the same six basic components: 1) Descriptions of the major administrative centers of Xinjiang; 2) Descriptions of foreign countries that could be reached overland from Xinjiang; 3) Brief histories of the first campaign against the Junghars, the Amursana rebellion, the rebellion of Khoja Jahan and Burhan al-Din, the Ush rebellion, and the return of the Torghuts; 4) A description of the customs of the local Muslim population; and 5) A list of the distances between locations in Xinjiang. Nonetheless, a comparison of known editions of the work reveals significant and systematic differences that allow us to identify two major recensions of the text, the original composed by Cišii during his service in Xinjiang and a later revision by Cišii himself or another editor.

A number of Chinese scholars have attempted to unravel the editorial history of the work. The modern study of the question dates back to two articles by Wan Sinian written in 1936 and 1937. His basic conclusion was that the manuscript series with titles ending in *suotan* represented an “unfinished draft” (未定稿), and the printed version entitled *Xiyu wenjian lu* version his “final edition” (定本).<sup>23</sup> Gao Jian

<sup>20</sup> XMD 135: 52.

<sup>21</sup> QSL-QL 21: 708–9 (j. 1023: 9b–11a), QL41/12/20 [Jan. 28, 1777].

<sup>22</sup> “Zhou Zhairen xu” 周宅仁序, *Xiyu zongzhi* 西域總志 (Qiangshutang, 1818) (HYC 3079 4141.1).

<sup>23</sup> Wan’s first foray into the topic was his “*Xiyu wenjian lu zhi banben yu zhuzhe*” in

has more recently elaborated on this thesis by observing that all complete versions of the text that might have come directly from Cīshī fall into two categories: manuscripts with titles ending in *suotan*, and printed editions entitled *Xiyu wenjian lu*.<sup>24</sup> Gao modified Wan's thesis and concluded that the *Suotan* version was the original, and the *wenjian lu* a later commercial printing.<sup>25</sup> I accept Gao's emendation to Wan's thesis, and will henceforth divide versions of the text into Text A-*Suotan* and Text B-*Wenjian lu*. For analysis in this paper, I will focus on one key difference between the two versions, their treatment of foreign countries. As can be seen in Table 6. 1., Text A gives the sequence Kashmir-Hindustan-Yindi, while Text B inverts this as Hindustan-Kashmir and omits Yindi.

These tables establish first that there are two slightly different versions of the text, A and B, and second, that those ending in *suotan* ("Trivial Chats") are manuscripts while those ending in *wenjian lu* are in most cases printed. An exception proving the rule can be found in the Fu Ssu-nien Library of the Academia Sinica, where a manuscript (A 927.61 003) catalogued under the title *Xiyu wenjian lu* proves upon inspection to have originally been entitled *Xiyu suotan*. A later editor changed the title and made corrections to bring it nearer to the *Xiyu wenjian lu* version in content and format, but it still corresponds to Text A in the sequence of foreign place names.

A further distinction between Text A-*Suotan* and Text B-*Wenjian lu* lies in the preface. That of the *Suotan* version is dated as follows: "Chunyuan Cīshī himself composed this preface in the military office at Kucha, on the 42nd year of Qianlong, the *dingyou* year, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month [Jan. 17, 1778]."<sup>26</sup> By contrast, that in the printed *Xiyu wenjian lu* reads: "Prefaced by Chunyuan Cīshī in the *Fusi shanfang* 復四山房, on the 42<sup>nd</sup> year of Qianlong, the *dingyou* year, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of the twelfth month."<sup>27</sup> One interpretation of this is that Text A-*Suotan* was completed by Cīshī in

*Dagongbao* (*Dagongbao tushu fukan*, Dec. 3, 1936). His next article, a reply to Wang Zhongmin, was "Ba 'Qi-shi-yi zhuan'" of the June 16, 1937 edition of the same publication (reprinted in *Lenglu wensou*: 229–32). It should be noted that a short note on Wu Yunian's book, "Ba *Xiyu wenjian lu*," was published in the journal *Yugong* (1936).

<sup>24</sup> One printed version of the work is entitled 新疆(外藩)紀略, which seems likely to be a reprint of the *Xiyu wenjian lu* under another title. As noted below, Wang Dashu at some point before 1800 attributed to Cīshī both the *Xinjiang jilüe* and the *Xiyu wenjian lu*.

<sup>25</sup> J. Gao, "'Xiyu wenjian lu' yiming ji banben kaoshu," *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 17.1 (2007): 118–22. In an article the following year, Wang Zhiqiang proposed the view that both the *Suotan* and *Wenjian lu* first emerged as manuscripts, the latter being closer to Cīshī's original. See Z. Wang, "'Xiyu wenjian lu' zhi banben zhuzhe kaoshu ji shiliao jiazhi lunlue." *Yili shifan xueyuan xuekao* (*Shehui kexue ban*) 1 (2008): 30–6. However, I do not see convincing evidence in his article for this conclusion. In an article of the same year Li Yaru 李亞茹 suggests that a printed edition actually appeared in 1777 (sic), a conclusion that is clearly untenable and dismissed by earlier scholarship.

<sup>26</sup> "Xiyu suotan zixu," *Xiyu suotan* (National Central Library, Taiwan, #04101).

<sup>27</sup> *Xiyu wenjian lu*, *you ming Xiyu ji*, in *Qing chaoben Lin Zexu deng Xibu jixing sanzong* (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2001): 5.

**Table 7. 1. Sequence of Foreign Countries<sup>27</sup>**

Text A- <i>Suotan</i>		Text B- <i>Wenjian lu</i>	
Kazakhs	哈薩克	Kazakhs	哈薩克
Burut (Kirghiz)	布魯特	Burut	布魯特
Andijan	按集延	Andijan	安集延
Bolor	博羅爾	Bolor	博羅爾
Russia	鄂羅斯	Afghans	敖罕
Khungghar (Ottomans)	控噶爾	<b>Hindustan</b>	<b>溫都斯坦</b>
<b>Kashmir</b>	<b>克食米尔</b>	<b>Kashmir</b>	<b>克什米爾</b>
<b>Hindustan</b>	<b>溫都斯坦</b>	Badakhshan	巴達克山
<b>“Hindi”</b>	<b>音底</b>	Timur Shah	退木爾沙
Badakhshan	巴打克山	Shah Wanji	沙關記
Timur Shah	退木爾沙	? Saike	塞克
Afghans	敖罕	Russia	鄂羅斯
Kokand	郭訥	Khungghar	控噶爾
“Tibet” (Ladakh)	退擺特	Kokand	郭罕
? Saike	塞克	“Tibet”	退擺特
Shah Wanji (of Shughnan)	沙閔記	Shahr-i Sabz	轄里薩普斯
Shahr-i Sabz	轄里薩普斯	Qarategin	哈拉替艮
Qarategin	哈喇替艮	Bukhara	布哈拉
Bukhara	布哈拉		

**Table 7. 2. Selected Editions Following Sequence of Text A:**

Title	Provenance <sup>28</sup>	Format
西域瑣談	HYC 3079 4141.1c	MS
遐域瑣談	HYC 3079 4141.1	MS
西域瑣譚	TW NCL 04101	MS
異域瑣談	TW FSN	MS
異域瑣談	PRC NLC 地 610 934.6	MS

**Table 7. 3. Selected Editions Following Sequence of Text B:**

Title	Provenance	Format
新疆外藩紀略	HYC 3079 4141.3	Print
西域聞見錄	HYC 3079 4141.1b	MS
西域聞見錄	UCB 3079 4141	Print
西域聞見錄	TW FSN A 928.9 003	Print

<sup>28</sup> I am grateful to Dr. David Brophy for his help in identifying a number of these place names, including Shah Wanji, Qarategin, and Shahr-i Sabz.

<sup>29</sup> HYC = Harvard-Yenching Library; TW-NCL = National Central Library, Taipei, Taiwan; TW-FSN = Fu Ssu-nien Library, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan; PRC NLC = National Library of China, Beijing, China; UCB = University of California, Berkeley

Kucha, and that when the text was subsequently emended the office in which it was composed was granted a studio name. Interestingly, however, the earliest dateable manuscript of the *Xiyu suotan*, from 1780, gives its place of composition as the *Fusi shanfang* and is textually closer to the version of the preface found in the printed *Wenjian lu*.<sup>30</sup> However, the version of foreign countries in that manuscript follows the *Suotan* order. This might suggest that a touched-up version of the preface was composed shortly after Cİšii's return to Beijing. In sum, internal evidence allows us to hypothesize that Cİšii's work originally circulated in manuscript under variant titles ending in *suotan*, and at some later point was substantially edited and printed as the *Xiyu wenjian lu*.

### 3. Circulation of the Work to 1800

The earliest external evidence we have concerning Cİšii's text comes from Xiong Baotai, an old friend of Cİšii's in-law De-qing, and of De-qing's father Tang-qi.<sup>31</sup> Xiong was residing with De-qing in Beijing in the very *dingyou* year in which Cİšii completed his manuscript. At this time conversation turned to Cİšii, and De-qing mentioned that his relative had composed a *Suotan* in four *juan* during his stay in Kucha (Xiong referred to the work as the *Yiyu suotan*). De-qing explained that Cİšii was scheduled to return to the capital, and requested that Xiong write a preface for the work. Unfortunately, the latter was compelled to leave Beijing before he could meet Cİšii, nor did he then have leisure to read the manuscript. Later, in the *gengxu* year (QL55, 1790–1), he met a mutual friend, the magistrate Xu Ligong 徐立功, and learned that Cİšii had in the interim died without progeny. Only in the winter of that year, during another visit to De-qing, did Xiong finally have a chance to see what Cİšii had written.<sup>32</sup>

Xiong is not the only source to suggest that the work's original title ended in *suotan*. The following two tables compare the first four known references to both variants of the text.

<sup>30</sup> This manuscript is held by the National Library of China, call number /41215. It was kindly examined for me by Xiaoshun Zeng and David Porter. On the rear cover of the second *juan* is written 乾隆庚子三月廿一日校閱 "collated and read on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of the Qianlong *gengzi* (i.e., 45<sup>th</sup>) year [=Apr. 25, 1780]," together with two of his personal seals, "皇六子" and "真趣非外借."

<sup>31</sup> The first scholar to make use of Xiong's invaluable information, as well as other essential biographical data extracted from gazetteers, was Wang Zhongmin in his 1937 "Qi-shi-yi zhuan," (reprinted in *Lenglu wensou*: 228–9).

<sup>32</sup> Xiong, "Yiyu suotan ba," *Ouyi leigao*, j. 19: 14b–15a.

**Table 7. 4. Text A-*Suotan***

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of Reference</i> <sup>33</sup>	<i>Comment</i>
Yong-rong 永瑢 (1744–90)	1780	Marginal note on manuscript of <i>Xiyu suotan</i> 遐域瑣談 indicating that he had read it in that year. <sup>34</sup>
Ruan Kuisheng 阮葵生 (1727–89)	By death (1789)	In his <i>Chayu kehua</i> 茶餘客話 he copied the entries on foreign countries from Cišii's work, in the exact Text A- <i>Suotan</i> order, including <i>Yindi</i> . <sup>35</sup>
Fuking (Ch. Fu-qing 福慶) (d. 1819)	1790	In preface to his <i>Zhiyi xinbian</i> 志異新編, dated 1790, he refers to Cišii's work as the <i>Yiyu suotan</i> . In his <i>Yiyu zhuzhici</i> 異域竹枝詞 he gives the sequence of foreign countries (including <i>Yindi</i> ) in the Text A- <i>Suotan</i> order. <sup>36</sup>
Xiong Baotai 熊寶泰	1790–1	Refers to reading <i>Yiyu suotan</i> in winter of Qianlong <i>gengxu</i> (1790–1)

**Table 7. 5. Text B-*Wenjian lu***

Wang Dashu 王大樞	? 1788–1800	In his <i>Xizheng lu</i> 西徵錄 states that Cišii wrote the <i>Xinjiang jilie</i> , <i>Xiyu wenjian lu</i> . <sup>37</sup>
Guan Ganzhen 管幹珍 (1734–98)	By death (1798)	In his <i>Zhifang zhi</i> 職方志 he cites entries on foreign countries in the Text B- <i>Wenjian lu</i> order. <sup>38</sup>
Hong Liangji 洪亮吉 (1746–1809)	? 1788–1802	Cites Cišii's work (edition unclear) in his <i>Qianlong fu-ting-zhou-xian tuzhi</i> 乾隆府廳州縣圖志 (preface 1788, printed 1803). <sup>39</sup> Cited as <i>Xiyu wenjian lu</i> in author's <i>Gengshengzhai wen</i> 更生齋文, printed 1802. <sup>40</sup>
He-ning 和寧	1804	Refers to <i>Xiyu wenjian lu</i> in his 1804 <i>Huijiang tongzhi</i> 回疆通志 <sup>41</sup>

<sup>33</sup> One further case, although not susceptible to dating, deserves to be noted. A manuscript now held by the Nanjing Library bears the note 南昌清淇伯綿熊季堯參訂. The only Xiong Jiyao I have been able to identify is a Hanjun captain (*zuoling*) in the Plain Yellow Banner. He appears to have been active as late as QL48 (1783), but is listed as retired in the *Baqi tongzhi* (1796). He is listed as one of the poets presenting verse to Qianlong in QL50 (1785) for the *Qinding qiansouyan shi* 欽定千叟宴詩 (j. 8), when he was said to have been 66 years old. His age, career, and location fit the profile of someone who would have had access to an early manuscript version of the work in Beijing, possibly in the 1780s. This manuscript is said to have belonged to the Danning tang 澹寧堂. Although this is the study name for a number of



These tables show that the *Suotan* version was in circulation as early as 1780, while the *terminus ad quem* for the existence of the *Wenjian lu* version is either 1798 (for its reordering of foreign countries) or 1800 (for the title).

Interestingly, the earliest dateable evidence for the existence of the *Xiyu wenjian lu* as a commercially printed work comes from a Japanese printing, with a local preface of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of Kansei 寛政 12 (Dec. 16, 1800–Jan. 14, 1801).<sup>42</sup> Although there is no conclusive evidence that a printed edition of the *Xiyu wenjian lu* existed in China before it appeared in Japan, this seems likely to have been the case.<sup>43</sup> In his preface, the Japanese editor Ōta Kinjō (1765–1825) referred to the work only under the title *Xiyu wenjian lu*, making no reference to the *Suotan* title, and described his work as a “new printing” (新刊). This strongly suggests that he was working from an existing Chinese printed edition entitled *Xiyu wenjian lu*, reinforcing the view that one was in circulation by 1799 or 1800 at the latest.

Thus, the central outstanding question in its editorial history is when, and in what circumstances, it was printed. Xiong Baotai offers two leads, but both in my view are dead ends. First, he explains that after he read a manuscript version provided

Qing scholars, it is also the name of Qianlong's personal study in the Yuanming yuan. Whether this indicates that Qianlong himself may have held a copy of the work, perhaps via his son Yong-rong, is unclear.

<sup>34</sup> See footnote 30; this information is also found in *Zhongguo kexueyuan Beijing tianwentai*, ed. *Zhongguo difangzhi lianhe mulu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985): 236.

<sup>35</sup> Ruan Kuisheng, *Chayu kehua* (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 196): 398–407 (j. 13).

<sup>36</sup> Fu-qing, *Zhiyi xinbian* (1799 printing), Fu Ssu-nien Library, Academia Sinica, A857.2 587. Reference is in preface dated QL54/10 (Nov. 17–Dec. 16, 1789); *Yiyu zhuzhici* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985): 25–37.

<sup>37</sup> Wang Dashu, *Xizheng lu*, in *Guji zhenben youji congkan* (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2003): 6871.

<sup>38</sup> Guan Ganzhen, *Zhifang zhi*, in *Songya wenchao* (NLC PTGJ 152 025), *mulu*.

<sup>39</sup> Hong Liangji, *Qianlong fu-ting-zhou-xian tuzhi*, in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu*, 627: 749–66 (j. 50: 17a–25b).

<sup>40</sup> Hong Liangji, *Gengshengzhai wen, jiaji*, in *Hong Liangji ji* (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 3: 966.

<sup>41</sup> He-ning, *Huijiang tongzhi* (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1966): 10. In his text He-ning refers to the *Xiyu suotan* (401; j. 12: 17a), the *Xiyu wenjian lu* (j. 11: 10a), and *Xichui jiliu* (355; j. 11: 11a).

<sup>42</sup> *Xiyu wenjian lu*, Waseda University Library, Rare Book Room, #J5-3045-1. The printing itself seems to be dated to the first ten days of Kansei 13/1 (Feb. 13–22, 1801). Interestingly, a copy of this edition seems to have entered the Chosŏn royal collection, although details of its arrival in Korea remain to be determined.

<sup>43</sup> One manuscript edition entitled *Yiyu suotan* contains the note “Recompiled [or, recopied] in JQ4, the *jiwei* year, in the third month [i.e., Apr. 5 to May 4, 1799]” (嘉慶四年歲次己未三月重錄). Wang Zhongmin regards this as indicating that no printing of the work as the *Xiyu wenjian lu* was then in existence. If his supposition is correct, this is further evidence that the printing of the work dates to the period around 1800 (*Zhongguo shanbenshu tiyao*: 192). This manuscript, held in the Library of Congress, follows the standard *Suotan* format.

by De-qing he took a copy to Jiangsu, evidently in the early 1790s. There, he showed it to Mao Xiaoguang 毛孝光 (*zi* Chuwen 初文, 1752–?) and his brother (*zi* Rongping 榕坪), and all three conceived of the plan to print and propagate it. Even if they managed to do so, the result is unlikely to have been the *Wenjian lu* edition: the very title of Xiong’s essay, “Postface to the *Yiyu suotan*,” makes clear that the work, if printed, would have carried that title. Much depends then on how we interpret the note below the title to Xiong’s postface, “now, editions sold in bookstores have changed this to *Xiyu jianwen* [sic] *lu*.”<sup>44</sup> If this was written by Xiong when he first composed his postface, then it would prove that commercial printings under that title were circulating in the early-to-mid 1790s. However, if this were the case, Xiong would almost certainly have explained why he and the Mao brothers wanted to print a book already in circulation. Rather, it seems likely that the note about commercial printings was inserted by Xiong or his editor during the mid-to-late Jiaqing-era printing of this essay in his collected works, to indicate that in the interim the work had been commercially published under a different title—entirely in line with what we know about the chronology of the work.<sup>45</sup>

Another implication of Xiong’s postface should be noted. If we assume that Cišii’s brother-in-law De-qing was the person most likely to possess the definitive version of his work, the fact that Xiong acquired from De-qing a work in the *Suotan* series after Cišii’s death makes it less likely that the *Wenjian lu* series represents a final version of the text from the author’s own hand.

Xiong’s second lead is his comment that he was told by De-qing (apparently in 1790), that: “In the past, there was in the capital a man of rank (*guiren*) who wished to alter the term *suotan*, desiring to have the book printed. Chunyuan would not consent to this.”<sup>46</sup> The *guiren* in question was almost certainly Ruan Kuisheng. Fuking (ca. 1747–1819), an early admirer of Cišii’s work, wrote a set of poems entitled the *Yiyu zhuzhi ci* based on its contents. In the preface to those poems he referred to the *Yiyu suotan*, but commented, “In regard to this book, his fellow official (*tongguan*) Ruan Kuisheng, vice-president of the Board of Punishment, changed its name to *Xinjiang jishi zhengxin lu* 新疆紀實徵信錄; he wrote a preface and circulated it.”<sup>47</sup> A later scholar, Chen Kangqi 陳康祺 (1840–90), perhaps making inferences on the basis of Fuking’s comment, stated that “It is narrated in an especially fine style, probably it was in reality polished by the President of the Board

<sup>44</sup> Xiong, “Yiyu suotan ba”: 14a–15a.

<sup>45</sup> As Wan Sinian pointed out, Xiong dated the self-preface of his collected works to the winter of JQ12/1807–8. It was later printed by his son Xiangjie 象階 (1796–1850), also in the Jiaqing period (“Ba ‘Qi-shi-yi zhuan’”: 232). Print versions of the *Xiyu wenjian lu* were certainly circulating by 1807.

<sup>46</sup> Xiong, “Yiyu suotan ba”: 14a–15a.

<sup>47</sup> Fu-qing, *Yiyu zhuzhici*: 1.

of Punishments, Ruan Kuisheng.<sup>48</sup> Ruan never achieved the rank of board president, and was only vice-president of the Board of Punishment from 1785–87, leaving office and dying in 1789. Fuking describes Cīšii as a *bucāo*, a term that here indicates that he served in a bureau within one of the six boards.

Fortunately, Ruan's preface to this work is preserved in his collected writings. There he recalled first becoming friends with Cīšii in Beijing in 1754 (QL19), the year the Manchu passed the *jinshi* examination. After his return from Kucha, Cīšii had come to share Ruan's desk in the same section (*cao*) of the Board of Punishments, reviewing judicial cases. As Ruan recalled, they spent their breaks discussing Xinjiang, and after a time he urged Cīšii to compose a work. Six months later, Cīšii showed him a manuscript entitled the *Xiyu suoji* 西域瑣記, which he greatly admired. Ruan (like Xiong's grandee) wrote that he disagreed with the choice of the term *suoji*, and claims to have changed the title to *Xinjiang zhengshi lu* 新疆徵實錄.<sup>49</sup> Wittingly or not, Ruan's preface accords himself too great a role in the development of the work: we know from Xiong's talks with De-qing, and from Cīšii's own testimony, that the *Xiyu suotan* was already prepared in 1778 in Kucha before his return, not composed at Ruan's behest. It is possible, though, that these talks led the author to edit his original text.

Still, it is doubtful that the present *Xiyu wenjian lu* version of the text can be traced back to Ruan. He does not record giving it that title, nor does he mention printing the work (and it seems unlikely that a print version under that title was in circulation by his death in 1789). Also, no version of the text bears his preface, as we would expect if it were his version that was popularized and printed.<sup>50</sup> Finally, when

<sup>48</sup> Chen Kangqi, *Langqian jiwen chubi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997): 155 (j. 7). This view is also mentioned by Yao Chun (1777–1853) in his *Wanxuezhai wenji* (j. 2: 8b–9a), in *Qingdai shiwenji huibian* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), 522: 399–400.

<sup>49</sup> Ruan Kuisheng, “Xinjiang zhengshi lu xu” 新疆徵實錄序, in *Qiluzhai wenchao*, *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, 1446: 103–4 (j. 4).

<sup>50</sup> The title *Xinjiang jishi zhengxin lu* is listed as a work of Cīšii in the catalog, D. Shicun and Ch. Shijie, eds. *Zhongwen Xinjiang shumu* (Chongqing: Guofu shiye jihua yanjiu hui; Guoli zhongyang daxue dilixi, 1943): 13, but without any further information. I have discovered only one extant manuscript of the text bearing this title, held in the rare book room of Fudan University in Shanghai (call # 0208). Interestingly, the catalogue bears the note 清和邦額(霽園氏)訂, “revised by He-bang-e (Jiyuan) of the Qing.” This tantalizingly suggests a possible link between Cīšii and one of the leading Manchu authors in the tales-of-the-strange genre. We know little about Hehengge's life and career, but the idea that he had emended the text is not implausible: He took his *juren* degree in QL39 (1774) and evidence shows him to have been in Beijing in QL44 (1779) and QL51 (1786), exactly when Cīšii's work was going through its initial period of circulation and editing. See P. Ji, “He-beng-e shengping xinkao,” *Liaoning jingji zhiye jishu xueyuan xuebao* 2 (2007): 114–5, 124. Through the kind intercession of Dr. Wei-chieh Tsai, this manuscript was examined for me by Dr. Qiu Yihao. He found that it bore only a preface by Cīšii, none by Ruan Kuisheng or Hehengge. Moreover, it is an incomplete manuscript, lacking the section on foreign countries. Nothing explicitly connected

Ruan copied Cǐshì's text into his *biji* he gave entries on foreign countries in the Text A-*Suotan* order, which makes it unlikely that he created, or even consulted, the Text B-*Wenjian lu* format of the work.<sup>51</sup> It therefore seems possible that Ruan merely circulated a manuscript version of the Text A-*Suotan* version under a new title of his own, that Ruan's version is now lost, and that some unknown third party, perhaps a commercial publisher, was responsible for the further editing and printing of the work.

Cǐshì's assignment to the Board of Punishments may have had significance for the reception of his work beyond his encounter with Ruan. In his "Song on two [books entitled] chats at the Board of Punishments" (比部二談歌), Wang Youliang 王友亮 (1742–97), who worked at that Board from 1781 to 1788, compared Cǐshì with another colleague, the section director Ming-qi 明琦.<sup>52</sup> Both men had written books with the word "chat" in the title, in Ming-qi's case a book of supernatural tales entitled *Xiaoxia qingtan* 消夏清談. As this suggests, Wang regarded Cǐshì's book as a compendium of curious and strange anecdotes, similar to Ming-qi's accounts of ghosts and spirits. Given that he must have known a very early incarnation of the book, it is significant that Wang gives the title as *Xiyu suotan* 遐域瑣談, the same title as the edition Yong-rong looked over in 1780.<sup>53</sup> A later critic expanded on Wang Youliang's note to comment, "at that time the flourishing of talent at the Board of Punishment was first among the various Boards," and listed a further nineteen literary men who served there in the late Qianlong or early Jiaqing period. Although I have not found evidence that any of these men aided in the transmission of Cǐshì's work, this sort of environment would certainly have been conducive to its circulation.<sup>54</sup>

A final question concerns the Manchu version of Cǐshì's work. In a recent article, Laura Newby has pointed out the existence of one (possibly two) Manchu versions of the work in Russia, and one in China, and suggested that their existence "must at least raise the question of whether the *Xiyu wenjianlu*, or some part of it, might not have been written originally in Manchu."<sup>55</sup> Of the two versions available

it to Hebungge, leaving the basis for the statement in the catalogue unclear. Finally, the Fudan catalogue dates the manuscript to the Jiaqing-Daoguang period. Although the possibility of a Hebungge-Cǐshì connection is intriguing, further evidence is required.

<sup>51</sup> Ruan, *Chayu kehua*: 398–407 (j. 13).

<sup>52</sup> I have been unable to find further information on Ming-qi (*zi* Zhen'an 珍菴/庵). The *Baqi yiwen bianmu* (1941) which supplies no information beyond that found in Wang's preface, gives his name as Yue-qi 玥琦 (j. 1: 43a).

<sup>53</sup> Wang Youliang, *Shuangpeizhai shiji*, j. 6, in *Qingdai shiwenji huibian*, 401: 717.

<sup>54</sup> Yang Zhongxi, *Xueqiao shihua* 7 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1971): 4157–8 (三集, j. 8: 32a–b).

<sup>55</sup> L. Newby, "A Preliminary Discussion of Sources in Manchu Relating to Xinjiang (c. 1760–1912)," in *Studies on Xinjiang Historical Sources in 17–20th Centuries*, eds. J. Millward et al. (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 2010): 168.

to me, one is a manuscript bearing the title *Wargi jecen i bade bifi donjiha sabuha babe ejehe bithe* (“A record of things heard and seen while in the Western Frontier”), clearly corresponding to the Chinese title *Xiyu wenjian lu*. Moreover, this text states that the author “composed its preface at a place in Fu Si Mountain” (*fu si alin i bade šutucin araha*), corresponding to the passage *xu yu Fusi shanfang* 序於復四山房 found primarily in the *Xiyu wenjian lu* series.<sup>56</sup> In 1818, a partial French translation of Cišii's work was published. Significantly, according to the prefatory note the work was first translated from Chinese into Manchu, then into Russian, and ultimately into German. The conclusion to the preface is translated, “J'ai écrit cette preface sur le mont Foussi,” linking it to the *Wenjian lu* series.<sup>57</sup>

The second Manchu text bears no title or preface, and has been given the Chinese title *Xiyu Huizu fengsu zhi* 西域回族風俗誌. As demonstrated in the appendix (below), this Manchu text differs from that held in Russia, but also clearly corresponds to the Text B-*Wenjian lu* series. Thus, it appears most probable that both Manchu versions are translations of the Chinese *Xiyu wenjian lu*, not the basis for the original Text A-*Suotan* version.<sup>58</sup>

In short, all that can be said for certain is that the editorial and circulation history of Cišii's work is particularly complex. There is an urgent need for a critical edition that makes a careful textual study of the various editions of the work, a task that would require Herculean effort but perhaps clarify some of the problems identified above.

<sup>56</sup> *Wargi jecen i bade bifi donjiha sabuha babe ejehe bithe*: 1–3. For a description of this work see M. Volkova, *Opisanie Man'chzhurskikh rukopisei: Instituta narodov Azii AN SSSR* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965): 19–20. I am grateful to Dr. David Brophy for drawing this work to my attention and helping me gain access to it.

<sup>57</sup> “Géographie chinoise,” *Journal des voyages, ou Archives géographiques du XIXe siècle* 2 (1818): 105–42. This article names [Joseph] Rehmann in connection with the translation, and Hartmut Walravens suggests that the likely translator from Chinese to Manchu was Anton Vladykin (1761–1811) who had lived in Beijing (1780–94) and accompanied the abortive Russian mission to the Qing Empire in 1805–6. When and where the Chinese text was acquired is unclear: “A Manchu Gynaecology,” in *The Role of Women in the Altaic World*, ed. V. Veit (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007): 320–1.

<sup>58</sup> *Xiyu Huizu fengsu zhi*, held in the library of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Chinese Academy of Social Science, Beijing. Dr. Onuma Takahiro informs me that in 2007 he was able to briefly view at the Institute of Ethnography and Anthropology an incomplete and partially damaged Manchu manuscript bearing the title *Si ioi geren gurun i ba be ejeme araha*. This work bears no Chinese title, but is sometimes referred to as (*Jizai*) *Xiyu geguo qingkuang lu* (記載) 西域各國情況錄. He found it to be a partial Manchu translation of the *Xiyu wenjian lu*, specifically the two *juan* of the *Xinjiang jilüe* section (personal communication, Dec. 9, 2016).

#### 4. Proto-Gazetteers Written in Xinjiang

The reasons for the popularity of Cǐshì's manuscript are not hard to discern. When it appeared in 1778, there were already several recent descriptions of the Western Regions, one prepared in Beijing and the others in Xinjiang. These works, however, had virtually no circulation. For at least a decade the *Xiyu suotan* was the only study of Xinjiang available to most scholars and readers, and for several more decades it remained the most accessible. It is therefore necessary to examine why the circulation history of the work differed so markedly from that of comparable, roughly contemporary writings.

Descriptions of Xinjiang by Manchu officials serving there emerged soon after its conquest. The most substantial of these was called the *Huijiang zhi*. The editorial history of this work is complex, and I hope to treat it in detail elsewhere. In brief, an early editor, Suldei, commented in a preface of Dec. 9, 1772 (QL37/11/15) that, "Former board president and banner general, and current President of the Board of Rites, his lordship Yunggui, together with circuit intendant (*guanchashi*) Mr. Gu-shi-heng, edited a book entitled *Huijiang zhi*." Suldei added that he had corrected and edited this work, creating his own edition.<sup>59</sup> This is corroborated in a second, undated preface by one Fusembu.<sup>60</sup> Yunggui, of the Manchu Plain White Banner, began his service in the Western Regions in 1755, in 1761 was made Kashgar Grand Minister Superintendent (*banshi dachen*), and was recalled to Beijing in 1763 (QL28/8).<sup>61</sup> Gu-shi-heng was the circuit intendant for Guisui circuit (Köke qota), but was sent to the Western Regions as a punishment, his term of duty there expiring in April, 1764 (QL29/3).<sup>62</sup> Because Fusembu held Yunggui's old post of Kashgar Grand Minister Superintendent at the time Suldei completed his reediting, we can surmise that Yunggui's draft was kept in that office.<sup>63</sup> One edition contains a preface by a certain Da-fu 達福 who reported that he reached his post in Kashgar in 1784 and obtained a single copy kept by "Assistant Banner General, His Lordship Bao[-cheng], *zi* Jizhai 集齋."<sup>64</sup> Bao-cheng likewise was Grand Minister Superintendent,

<sup>59</sup> Su'erde (Suldei) et al. *Xinjiang Huibu zhi*, in *Siku weishou shujikan*, 9.7: 754–5.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 755.

<sup>61</sup> Li Huan, *Guochao qixian leizheng*, 138: 869–73; according to Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan et al., eds. *Qingdai bianjiang Manwen dang'an mulu* (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanche, 1999) 7: 577, he reported his departure for Beijing in a memorial of QL28/8/16.

<sup>62</sup> According to the *Qing shilu*, Gu-shi-heng was referred for punishment on QL24/IC6/9 (*dinghai*) [Aug. 1, 1759]; an entry of QL25/3/*shenyin* states that he was then in Yarkand. An entry of QL28/8/*renzi*, from Yunggui in Kashgar, suggests that he was in that city.

<sup>63</sup> Fusembu was appointed to the post of Kashgar *banshi dachen* on QL34/9/*bingshen* [Oct. 16, 1769] and continued to hold the position until 39/2/*guimao* [Mar. 31, 1774].

<sup>64</sup> Bao-cheng was appointed to be Kashgar *banshi dachen* in QL47/12 (Jan. 1783), when the incumbent was recalled to Beijing. He served in that post until QL51 (1786).



so presumably Suldei's manuscript, like Yunggui's earlier version, was stored in that office.

Da-fu made his own corrections and supplements, and in his spare time copied several specimens of the work, which he gave to those in Kashgar who treasured rare books, instructing them to take them back into China proper and circulate them.<sup>65</sup> This effort was not notably successful. Only in the 1790s do we find evidence of it outside Kashgar, in the form of a postface to a manuscript version copied by a certain Nan Bingli 南屏理, dated June 27, 1794. Nan explained that he discovered the manuscript while visiting a scholar in Shaanxi. In the spring of 1794 (QL59) he made his own copy, which included a further description of foreign countries written by a certain Wu-cheng-ge (\*Ucengge) 五誠格 in Kashgar in 1778, perhaps added by Da-fu in 1784. Two manuscripts of the Nan Bingli recension exist, each with slight differences. At no point was any edition of this book printed.

The *Huijiang zhi* is an interesting study in failure to circulate, because it had all the hallmarks of success: commenced by one of the highest-ranking officials in Xinjiang, Yunggui, its 1772 revision was backed by one of his successors. Compared to Cİşii's *Yiyu suotan*, its contents were more detailed, accurate, and systematic. Although we have no evidence that it was written in response to a state mandate, or that its authors intended it to be formally printed, it was composed on the model of a gazetteer and explicitly termed a *zhi* from the very beginning. Editorial care was lavished on the work, with the original version of Yunggui and Gu-shi-heng (1763–64) being revised by Suldei (1772), Da-fu (sometime after 1784), and Nan Bingli (1794). Despite these advantages it remained largely unknown in the Qing period, a rare manuscript almost never cited by scholars.

Even deeper obscurity was the fate of a second manuscript about Xinjiang, entitled *Xiyu yicang zaibi* 西域匪載筆, now evidently preserved only in one collection in Russia. We learn from the catalog that this 52-page manuscript was a digest of the history, economy, and natural setting of Xinjiang, probably composed around 1770.<sup>66</sup> Its author, Fusengge (Ch. Fu-zeng-ge 福增格), was cashiered as Fujian banner general in 1763. He seems to have entered Xinjiang in 1768, and Ji Yun encountered him in Pichan as some point during his 1770–1 exile in Xinjiang.<sup>67</sup> No Qing author left a trace, to my knowledge, of consulting this source.

By analogy to practice in China proper, the normal site for composing a gazetteer of Xinjiang would have been its highest seat of regional government, Ili.

<sup>65</sup> *Xinjiang Huibu zhi*, in *Bianjiang congshu (xubian)*: 2b.

<sup>66</sup> A. Melnalksnis, *Opisanie kitaiskikh rukopisnykh knig i kart iz sobraniia K. A. Skachkova* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974), 201. I thank Dr. David Brophy for this reference, and also for his transcriptions from Fusengge's work.

<sup>67</sup> *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao*, 3: 2294; 4: 3254; Ji Yun, *Yuweicaotang biji*, XXSKQS 1269: 256 (j. 15: 12b).

As early as 1775 a certain Ge-beng-e (\*Gebungge) 格琿額, who had arrived a decade earlier and rose to the rank of commandant (*lingdui dachen*), composed a proto-gazetteer of Ili itself, the *Yijiang huilan* 伊江彙覽, but this did not cover Xinjiang as a whole, and was not printed in the Qing period.<sup>68</sup> Around 1789, eleven years after Cīshī finished his piece, the region's highest-ranking official, Ili General Booning [Bao-ning], had evidently begun to recruit a bureau of scholars for the purpose of composing a formal gazetteer of Xinjiang. Wang Dashu, who arrived in exile in Ili late in 1788, submitted an essay on local astronomical correspondences (*xingye shuo*) for Booning's consideration and "was deputed into the bureau."<sup>69</sup> This project lapsed in 1790, however, when Booning was transferred to the governor-generalship of Sichuan. Wang ultimately merged his own findings with the writings of others (including Cīshī) into a manuscript entitled the *Xizheng lu*. This was not printed in the Qing period, and remained extremely rare.<sup>70</sup> Yungboo [Yong-bao], who briefly took over as acting Ili General upon Booning's transfer, is credited with a comprehensive handbook detailing the administrative regulations for Xinjiang.<sup>71</sup> As a final entry in our litany of works failing to circulate, we can include He-ning's *Huijiang tongzhi* 回疆通志. This large work, completed in 1804, was compiled (as the title suggests) in the form of a provincial gazetteer of the southern part of Xinjiang.<sup>72</sup> However, it does not seem to have been printed in the Qing period, and circulated only in Chinese and Manchu manuscripts.<sup>73</sup>

Even the successful creation of an official gazetteer of Xinjiang was long and

<sup>68</sup> Ge-beng-e, *Yijiang huilan*, in *Qingdai Xinjiang xijian shiliao huiji* (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 1990): 87–8.

<sup>69</sup> Wang Dashu, *Xizheng lu*, 13: 6589.

<sup>70</sup> F. Wu, *Wu Fengpei bianshi tiba ji* (Ürümchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1998): 203–4; preface to Wang Dashu's *Xizheng lu* by Cai Shike 蔡世恪 (QL56/1; Feb. 3–Mar. 4, 1791), 14: 6589–91.

<sup>71</sup> Yongbao, *Zongtong Yili shiyi*, in *Xibei shidi wenxian* 6 (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 1999). Based on internal evidence, this work seems to have been completed around JQ1 (1796). It was not printed in the Qing period.

<sup>72</sup> Wu Fengpei believes the original title of the *Huijiang tongzhi* to have been *Huijiang shiyi* (宜 is erroneously printed *ding* 定 in Wu's work), but provides no evidence for his claim (Wu, *Wu Fengpei bianshi tiba ji*: 224). Some manuscripts whose title contains the phrase *shiyi* do exist, with the same 1804 preface, but I have found no evidence that these are earlier than those entitled *tongzhi*.

<sup>73</sup> Authorities differ over the date of the first printing of the *Huijiang tongzhi*. According to the *Siku da cidian* (Changchun: Jilin Daxue Chubanshe, 1996) 1184, it was completed in 1804 as a manuscript, and not printed until 1925. The *Zhongguo difangzhi zongmu tiyao*, 29-7 (Taipei: Sino-American Publishing Co., 1996) maintains that there were other printings, but provides no dates or details. The *Zhongguo bianjiang tuji lu* claims that an 1804 printing existed in the Guoli Beiping tushuguan 國立北平圖書館, but gives no other details; the catalog of the National Library of China, heir to that collection, lists only manuscripts of this work. No other major library in China, Taiwan, Japan, or the United States, as far as I can tell, claims to hold an 1804 printing.

tortuous. One of Booning's successors as Ili General, Sungyūn, reopened work on a gazetteer of the territory shortly after his transfer to the post in 1802. He first employed the exiled magistrate Wang Tingkai and then, around 1805, another exiled official, Qi Yunshi. A version of this work was completed around 1808, but not printed until 1813, under the title *Xichui zongtong shilüe*. (In the meantime Qi had composed a concise version, the *Xichui yaolüe*, which was apparently only printed in 1837.<sup>74</sup>) This 1813 work, although sponsored by Sungyūn, was compiled and printed without formal official sanction or endorsement by the retired official Cheng Zhenjia 程振甲 (1759–1826), an old acquaintance to whom Sungyūn sent the manuscript during his tenure as governor-general of Liangjiang. When Sungyūn later returned to Xinjiang he engaged Xu Song to heavily revise this work. This revision was submitted to the throne and in 1821 given imperial approval and bestowed the title *Xinjiang zhilüe*.<sup>75</sup>

Two last points should be noted. First, despite a large volume of poetry, prose descriptions of Xinjiang by Han Chinese exiles virtually did not exist in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, if we except the writings of Wang Dashu (probably not available in China proper before his return there in 1800), and some anecdotes and jottings penned by Ji Yun in his *Yuewei caotang biji* (published in stages between 1789–98). Only after 1800 did more detailed works by Hong Liangji and Qi Yunshi become available. Second, Cīshī's work also provided accounts of military campaigns, and in this respect preceded the first Han Chinese-authored private history of Qianlong's martial success, Zhao Yi's *Huangchao wugong jisheng* (printed 1799).

In sum, Cīshī was far from alone in writing a description of all or part of Xinjiang, a task also undertaken by several other Manchu and Mongol officials before 1800. What set him apart was the unique speed and effectiveness with which his manuscript spread among scholars in China proper, first in manuscript and then in print, at a time when alternative works were languishing in obscurity on the frontier.

<sup>74</sup> As with the *Huijiang tongzhi*, the date of the first printing of the *Xichui yaolüe* is unclear. Both the *Siku da cidian* and the *Zhongguo bianjiang tuji lu* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1958) list the 1837 printing as the earliest. The *Zhongguo difangzhi zongmu tiyao* states that an 1807 printing exists, but gives no further details. This seems implausible, because Qi was in Xinjiang until 1809. Probably it is dated according to the 1807 preface. As far as I can tell, no major library in China, Taiwan, Japan, or the United States claims to hold a printed edition dated before 1837.

<sup>75</sup> On the editorial projects of Sungyūn see K. Enoki, "Jo Shō no Saiiki chōsa ni tsuite," in *Enoki Kazuo chosakushū 2* (Kyūko shoin, 1992): 69–82. Enoki observes that after the first printing in 1813 an almost identical version was printed under the title *Yili zongtong shilüe*. This was the original title used for Xu's revision, prior to its submission to the throne.

## 5. Qing Court Productions

From the perspective of the Qing central state, the responsibility for compiling and disseminating a formal gazetteer of Xinjiang rested not with administrators in that region, as it would for a Chinese county or province, but with agencies in the capital. As late as 1807, the Jiaqing emperor commented that it was inappropriate for the Ili General to supervise the compilation of a treatise on the territory under his jurisdiction, because his office was intended to supervise frontier affairs and lacked the literary talent necessary for editing books.<sup>76</sup> Thus, the reception of Cǐshì's work depended as much on the progress of editorial work in the capital as on the writings of his fellow Manchu officials in Xinjiang. Here, too, his book's rise to prominence was due less to a lack of literary production than to the inaccessibility of rival works.

Enoki Kazuo has detailed the genesis of the court's projected gazetteer of Xinjiang, the *Qinding huangyu Xiyu tuzhi*. In 1755, when planning for the war against the Junghars was underway, Qianlong already intended to produce a gazetteer for the region to be conquered. A version was submitted to the throne for inspection in 1762, sixteen years before Cǐshì finished his own account. This first *Xiyu tuzhi* in 46 *juan*, however, does not seem to have circulated beyond the palace. No copies are currently known to be extant, and our only knowledge of its content comes from an entry in the 1769 *Guochao gongshi*.<sup>77</sup> This first edition was superseded by a more accurate successor that incorporated the philologically "correct" place names included in a terminological reference book entitled the *Xiyu tongwen zhi*. Only after the completion of this terminological work around 1771–2 did the editing of the new *Xiyu tuzhi* get underway, and it was not finalized until 1782.<sup>78</sup> On this basis, the Western Regions were incorporated into an updated edition of the imperial gazetteer, the *Da Qing yitong zhi*, which was presented to the throne in 1789 (QL54), and printed in 1790.

It is difficult to gauge how far this revised *Xiyu tuzhi* and updated *Yitong zhi* were available to interested scholars. Both were published by the palace Wuyingdian printery, but the extent of their circulation is unknown. They were also available in the *Siku quanshu* manuscript library. Apart from four sets in the palace in Beijing, the Yuanming yuan, the Bishu shanzhuang in Rehe, and Shengjing, a draft was made available in the Hanlin Academy. Three further sets were deposited in Hangzhou, Yangzhou, and Zhenjiang. Not until 1790, however, were these three sets fully

<sup>76</sup> QSL-JQ 30: 248 (172: 22a–b), JQ11/12/14 [Jan. 22, 1807].

<sup>77</sup> Z. Qiao and D. Hou, "Qianlong chao guanxiu 'Xiyu tuzhi' kaoxi." *Qingshi yanjiu* 1 (2005): 106.

<sup>78</sup> K. Enoki, "Researches in Chinese Turkestan during the Ch'ien-lung 乾隆 Period, with Special Reference to the Hsi-yü-t'ung-wên-chih 西域同文志," in *Studia Asiatica: The Collected Papers in Western Languages of the Late Dr. Kazuo Enoki* (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1998): 466–7.

delivered to the Jiangnan repositories housing them.<sup>79</sup> Their influence on Qing scholarly research into the Western Regions was at first rather limited. In 1788, the newly-minted *juren* Wang Qisun was able to follow his patron, Grand Councilor Dong Gao, to Rehe. There he was able to peruse the *Xiyu tuzhi*.<sup>80</sup> In 1792, Zhao Yi referred to consulting the campaign histories in the Yangzhou *Siku quanshu* to prepare his own *Huangchao wugong jisheng*.<sup>81</sup> In a letter of around 1796, Ling Tingkan directed the attention of Ruan Yuan (then educational commissioner of Zhejiang) to the *Xiyu tuzhi* housed in the Hangzhou set, commenting that “it is very convenient to get it” (*qu zhi shen bian*).<sup>82</sup> One wonders if scholars of lesser standing found access equally easy.

At the Qing court, as in Xinjiang, systematic and detailed studies of the Western Regions began to emerge in the early 1760s but circumstances kept them from circulation until the mid-1780s, and their subsequent dissemination was at first quite slow. This lack of rivals makes the unparalleled success of Cīshī's work easier to understand.

## 6. The Changing Reception of Cīshī's Work

When Cīshī's manuscript first appeared in Beijing in 1778, it represented the only work then available about Xinjiang that approximated the systematic coverage of a gazetteer. Cīshī himself seems to have been ambivalent about the status and value of his achievement, and its relationship to court scholarship. His readers, in the absence of comparable works, also had considerable freedom to interpret its significance. Initially, there seems to have been a strong tendency to regard the *Yiyu suotan* as a *de facto* gazetteer. After 1804, however, as more authoritative texts began to emerge, the reception of the work bifurcated: less specialized readers continued to esteem it highly well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but scholarly specialists and rival authors sharply criticized it.

Subsequent tension over the status of Cīshī's work is prefigured in its preface. On one hand, Cīshī downplayed its importance. As he commented, “my nature... delights in listening to petty affairs (*suoshi*),” and his book was therefore a counterpoint to the more authoritative compilations then being compiled in Beijing. After describing the extent of Qianlong's conquests he added,

<sup>79</sup> A. Huang, *Siku quanshu zuanxiu yanjiu* (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1989): 162.

<sup>80</sup> J. Sui, *Wang Qisun nianpu* (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2010): 92–3.

<sup>81</sup> Zhao Yi, *Qingchao wugong jisheng* (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1967): 11.

<sup>82</sup> Ling Tingkan, *Ling Tingkan quanji* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2009), 3: 199.

爰命廷臣，纂輯圖誌，一時載筆之士，巨構鴻裁，彬彬乎輝煌千古矣，至邊徼瑣屑之事，殊方猥鄙之情，或有棄之而不言，抑或採擇所不及，余居其地最久，因亦有所見聞，於是不辭冗俚，作瑣談以紀之，目見者存矣

Thus, it was ordered that court officials compile a [*Xiyu*] *tuzhi*, and the literary men of the age are composing and editing on a grand scale, elegantly making it lustrous for eternity. Yet as for the trivia of the frontiers and the lowly circumstances of foreign regions, perhaps these will be cast aside and not discussed, or perhaps not come across when gathering materials. I have lived in this region for a very long time, and because I have seen and heard things, I have therefore without polish, in a slapdash and coarse way, composed this *Suotan* in order to record them, so that what I have seen and heard may be preserved.<sup>83</sup>

Further evidence of Cǐshì's modest claims for his work can be found in Xiong's anecdote that Cǐshì refused to allow the anonymous grandee to change the title from *Suotan* in order to print it. This is De-qing's version of events, with his own commentary:

謂此書紀道里風俗耳，非為名也，近時說部甚多，不下數十種，竟有因此失名者，名雖如畫餅，不可啖，顧得之甚難，一旦於給閒資暇之書以敗之，不亦慎乎！

[Cǐshì] said that this book simply records distances and customs, it is not [written] for the sake of his reputation. [De-qing adds:] In recent years, there have been very many books of tales, no fewer than several tens of them, and ultimately some have lost their reputations because of them. Although a reputation is like a painted cake that cannot be eaten, yet to obtain one is very difficult. Would it not be mistaken for it to be destroyed in an instant by a [frivolous] book of entertainment?<sup>84</sup>

Even if we take Cǐshì at his word, without detecting false modesty, he clearly believed his work to be accurate: trivial perhaps, but reliable. His preface remarked on the length of his stay in Xinjiang, and the amount that he had seen and heard. As he asserted, "If I have heard something which is even slightly lacking in proof then I put it aside, and as for accounts that involve vacillation or strained interpretations I have not included them. Lacking in Mr. Zuo [Qiuming]'s talent for exaggeration, dare I

<sup>83</sup> "Zixu," *Xiyu suotan* (HYC 3079 4141.1)

<sup>84</sup> Xiong, "Yiyu suotan ba": 15a.



make outlandish discussions like Zou Yan?"<sup>85</sup>

One early reader, Fuking, took Cİşii's work in the spirit described in the author's preface. His own "New Edition of Tales of the Strange" (*Zhiyi xinbian*), as he claimed in its 1789 preface, differed from many others in the genre by excluding unverified accounts of supernatural events, including only "ordinary, commonplace affairs, manifest and reliably supported by evidence." He accepted Cİşii's experiences as truthful but remarkable, censuring him only for his discursive style, which he likened to "a room full of scattered coins that cannot be gathered onto a single thread."<sup>86</sup> Cİşii's colleague at the Board of Punishments, Wang Youliang, also saw parallels between Cİşii's work on Xinjiang and tales of bizarre and supernatural occurrences.

In other cases, it is possible to infer from the context of citations that Cİşii's authority was accepted. Around 1788 Hong Liangji completed his *Qianlong fu-ting-zhou-xian tuzhi*, intended as a concise version of the *Da Qing yitong zhi* for easy reference. Apparently without access to either the *Xiyu tuzhi* or the new edition of the *Yitong zhi*, but needing somehow to describe the newly-conquered lands in and beyond Xinjiang, Hong turned to Cİşii. By digesting information from that book, albeit scoured of anecdotal content, Hong was in effect using Cİşii's writings as the best available source on the Western Regions, functionally equivalent to the not-yet-accessible official works.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, Guan Ganzhen prepared his own comprehensive account of the Qing realm, the *Zhifang zhi*, sometime before his death in 1798. He too used Cİşii's work as his source on Xinjiang and certain foreign countries, whether by preference or for lack of access to other works.<sup>88</sup> Finally, Wang Dashu, exiled to Ili, drew heavily though not exclusively on Cİşii for his description of the lands beyond Xinjiang.

Unambiguous support for the value of the *Yiyu suotan* was also forthcoming from Ruan Kuisheng, who believed that it was worthy "first, to complete the gathering of materials for the state histories, and secondarily to fill in things omitted and lost from local gazetteers and topographical works." The book, he added, was detailed in its examination of evidence, and truthful in its narration. He himself had long been interested in frontier affairs, and in the stages of reading Cİşii's work he "increasingly had confidence in its breadth and completeness." Ruan did not go so far as to see it as a gazetteer of the region, regarding it instead as a very systematic "compendium" (*congbian*), but he did believe that "Verified Record of Xinjiang"

<sup>85</sup> "Zixu," *Xiyu suotan* (HYC): 耳之所聞, 少無可據, 則置之, 遊移付會之說, 不以攬入, 既無左氏浮誇之才, 敢為鄒衍荒唐之論哉。

<sup>86</sup> Fu-qing, *Zhiyi xinbian*, preface.

<sup>87</sup> Hong Liangji, *Qianlong fu-ting-zhou-xian tuzhi* 627: 749–66 (j. 50: 17a–25b).

<sup>88</sup> Guan Ganzhen, *Songya wenchao*.

(*Xinjiang zhengshi lu*) was a more appropriate title than *Xiyu suoji*.<sup>89</sup>

Although Hong, Guan, and Wang were using Cǐshì's work as if it were the *de facto* gazetteer of record for the Western Regions, it was not until an 1803 preface by Zhou Zhairén that this assessment of the book was made explicit. After recounting the glories of Qianlong's achievements, Zhou commented that the conquest of the Western Regions was recorded in the state histories (*guoshi*), but still lacked a "specialized gazetteer" (*zhuanzhi*). He proceeded to emphasize Cǐshì's qualifications to have penned such a work: his talent and learning, service and travel in the region, extensive personal experience and interviews, and the fact that his "evidential inquiries are most detailed." Zhou then made the case that Cǐshì had written *the* gazetteer of Xinjiang:

可以擴歷代之紀而証其訛，可以補國史之缺而觀其備...即與十八省之通誌並垂不朽可也，其以瑣談名者，特謙詞耳，其談也，實誌也，余因易為西域總誌云

[This book] can expand the historical record and correct its errors, it can supplement gaps in the state histories and reveal their completeness...it is worthy to be handed down forever to posterity together with the provincial gazetteers of the eighteen provinces. His naming it *Suotan* is simply a polite expression—his "chats" are in fact a gazetteer-record (*zhi*). I have accordingly changed its name to "General Gazetteer of the Western Regions" (*Xiyu zongzhi*).<sup>90</sup>

This is a remarkable statement, given that the court had completed its official gazetteer of the Western Regions, the *Xiyu tuzhi*, almost two decades before Zhou's preface.

Around the same time, however, dissenting view on the veracity and value of Cǐshì's work began to emerge. He-ning, the first of these critics, in 1804 singled out the "*Xiyu wenjian lu*, *Suotan*, and *Xichui jilüe*," together with passages from the *Han shu* and *Tang shi* as descriptions of the Western Regions that "mostly lack probative value; I sometimes excerpt from one or two of them as evidence to establish the truth of a point" (率多無考，或節一二以取信而有徵).<sup>91</sup> Yu Zhengxie 俞正燮, in an undated comment on the *Xiyu wenjian lu*, perhaps written around the time of his first forays in Russian studies in 1806, commented that while it was accurate for the

<sup>89</sup> Ruan, "Xinjiang zhengshi lu xu": 103–4 (j. 4, n.p.).

<sup>90</sup> "Zhou Zhairén xu," *Xiyu zongzhi* 西域總志 (Qiangshutang, 1818) [HYC]

<sup>91</sup> He-ning, *Huijiang tongzhi*: 10. Although his references to the *Xiyu wenjian lu* and [*Xiyu*] *suotan* all refer to Cǐshì's work, the reference to the *Xichui jilüe* is more obscure. I have not yet been able to determine what work he refers to as the *Xichui jilüe*.

“Muslim region” of southern Xinjiang, “many mistakes” existed in regard to northern Xinjiang and foreign countries.<sup>92</sup> But the strongest criticism for Cîşii in this period came from Qi Yunshi, in a preface to his own account of Xinjiang penned in 1807. His view is worth quoting at length:

近年士大夫于役西陲，率攜瑣談，聞見錄等書為枕中祕，惜所載不免附會失實，有好奇誌怪之癖，山川沿革，按之歷代史乘，皆無攷據，又於開闢新疆之始末，僅就傳聞耳食為之演敘，訛舛尤多，夫記載地理之書，體裁近史，貴乎簡要，倘不足以信今而證古，是無益之書，可以不作。

In recent years, when scholars have been sent on service to the Western Regions, they have generally taken along such books as the *Suotan* and *Wenjian lu* as treasured and secret works. Regrettably, the contents of these books cannot avoid errors of interpretation and lapses of fact, and suffer from the faults of delighting in the odd and recording the bizarre. Their treatment of topography and historical administrative geography, when examined against the historical record, proves to have no evidentiary basis. Also, in regard to the events of the opening of Xinjiang, they merely narrate [those affairs] by credulously accepting hearsay; mistakes and discrepancies are very numerous. Now, for books that record geography, their format is near to that of history, which places value on conciseness. If they are inadequate to be trustworthy for current events and serve as evidence for past ones, then they are profitless books and it would be fine if they were never written.<sup>93</sup>

In short, between 1804 and 1810 there suddenly arose a backlash against the widespread influence of Cîşii's work. Critics complained either that the work purported to be a systematic, factual account of Xinjiang, or that it was treated by readers as an authoritative source. In fact, in their view, it was riddled with errors.

The basis of this new appraisal of the book as unreliable and unscholarly is clear. Qi Yunshi explained that his own work was trustworthy because he had once worked in the Office of State History, and had read both the personal prose and poetry of Qianlong and the campaign histories (*fanglüe*) of the conquest of Xinjiang. He-ning quoted Qianlong's poetry and prose extensively, and also referred to other court-produced reference works. Yu Zhengxie also cited official works frequently. It would seem, then, that after 1800 the delayed influence of authoritative and detailed accounts of Xinjiang composed at the Qianlong court manifested itself. Once official alternatives were available, the apparent value of Cîşii's work rapidly declined.

<sup>92</sup> Yu Zhengxie, “Shu Xiyu jianwen lu hou” 書西域見聞錄後, *Guisi cungao*, in *Yu Zhengxie quanji* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2005): 227–30 (6).

<sup>93</sup> Qi Yunshi, *Xichui yaolüe* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968): 1.

This backlash was by no means universal. Editions of Cǐshì's writings continued to be published in far greater numbers than any rival work. Setting aside manuscripts and printings that cannot be dated, we know of printings from 1814, 1818, 1826, 1835, and 1843, to say nothing of those from subsequent reigns.<sup>94</sup> Prefaces continued to praise the work. That of 1826 was written by Gong-san 貢三, a Manchu frontier official and friend of an even more experienced official, Ioilin 玉麟, who would subsequently become Ili general. He observed that Cǐshì's writings matched and complemented the oral testimony of Ioilin about the region. Gong-san did concede, however, that long manuscript transmission of the *Xiyu suotan* edition had corrupted the text and incorporated errors not in Cǐshì's original, requiring him to edit the work.<sup>95</sup> Another preface of 1814 contrasted Cǐshì's account of the Western Regions with the untrustworthy remarks of earlier Buddhist writers, and the incomplete records of Yuan and Ming scholars. He praised it as "getting to the basis of everything, never undetailed or inaccurate."<sup>96</sup> Nor, it should be noted, did Cǐshì's critics absolutely reject his findings. For He-ning, Yu Zhengxie, and even Qi Yunshi, his book remained required reading despite its purported shortcomings, and all three referred to his text selectively in their own works, sometimes to refute it and sometimes to claim its support. Many prominent Chinese scholars continued to do so in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 7. Conclusion

Reconstructing the intellectual and political context of Cǐshì's work raises three major questions. First, why did it achieve such swift and wide circulation, when more comprehensive and accurate works did not? Second, why did its readers make such different appraisals of its worth, and even its genre, ranging from a collection of anecdotes to a *de facto* gazetteer? Finally, why was it consulted as a reliable source by geographers in the late Qianlong period, only to be attacked by leading scholars early in the Jiaqing reign? This essay has tried to offer a solution to these closely-related questions, although a definitive answer must await more information about when and how the *Xiyu wenjian lu* was printed.

One of Cǐshì's advantages was a career, before and after his time in Xinjiang, as a civil official in China proper. He (and his in-laws) had closer relations with Han Chinese degree-holding literati—a crucial constituency for the circulation of writings

<sup>94</sup> These printings are: 1814: *Xiyu ji* 西域記; 1818: *Xiyu zongzhi* 西域總志; 1826: *Xiyu jiyao* 西域紀要; 1835: *Xiyu wenjian lu* 西域聞見錄 (in *Qingzhaotang congshu* 青照堂叢書); 1843: *Xiyu jiuwen* 西域舊聞 (in *Zhouju suozhi* 舟車所至).

<sup>95</sup> *Xiyu jiyao* (Xiyu shanfang, 1826), preface.

<sup>96</sup> *Xiyu ji* (Weijingtang, 1814), preface.

in Chinese—than probably most Manchu scholars describing Xinjiang. Other Manchu frontier functionaries, including Yunggui, Gu-shi-heng, Suldei, Wu-cheng-ge, Fusengge, and Ge-beng-e had composed studies of the Western Regions. Several of them were of much higher official rank than Cīshī: Yunggui attained the rank of board president, Fusengge was a former garrison general in Fuzhou, Suldei's edition had the backing of Fusembu, Grand Minister Superintendent at Kashgar, and Ge-beng-e rose to be commandant at Ili. Yet there is no evidence before the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that any other 18<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript account of Xinjiang had even made it to Beijing, let alone the Jiangnan literary core of the empire. Considering how much information about the early history of Cīshī's manuscript comes from the Board of Punishments, it would seem that his employment there in a mid-level clerical post working alongside Han literati colleagues offered a crucial early venue for making his writings known. His professional and personal networks in Beijing allowed the work to circulate.

Meanwhile, the editorial gears of the Qing court, the only officially-authorized purveyor of knowledge on Xinjiang in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, ground very slowly. When Cīshī brought his manuscript to Beijing in 1778, no court-sponsored geography of Xinjiang was circulating there. Although the official *Xiyu tuzhi* was completed in 1784, it seems that the circulation of court writings in manuscript and print was so restricted that it was not feasible for these works to dominate scholarly understandings of Xinjiang for at least another two decades. Local descriptions of Xinjiang lacked the standing of local and provincial gazetteers in China proper, slowing their circulation, and indeed some were clearly intended as administrative handbooks composed specifically for later incumbents rather than general readers.

Finally, the issue of printing is relevant. As I have argued elsewhere, virtually no private studies of Inner Asian geography and history were printed in the 1770s and 1780s, almost certainly for fear of violating the strict literary surveillance of the Qianlong court in the era of the *Siku quanshu* project, particularly when the court wished to monopolize the provision of "correct" information about newly-conquered lands. Only in the 1790s did studies of Inner Asia again begin to be printed.<sup>97</sup> The printed *Xiyu wenjian lu* emerged during this revival, and likely met a voracious demand among a reading public starved for information on Inner Asia, just as the manuscript had met the needs of better-connected readers in the 1780s.

Circulation is also tied to the issue of genre. As Cīshī and his peers in Beijing well knew, his work lived in the shadow of massive official editing projects. He modestly claimed to be recording only that which would find no place in court publications, supplementing the official projects. For this reason, his book was full of color and interest (even prurient interest), livelier than many other studies. Indeed,

<sup>97</sup> M. Mosca, "Empire and the Circulation of Frontier Intelligence: Qing Conceptions of the Ottomans," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 70.1 (2010): 183–5, 205–7.

Wang Youliang and Fuking regarded the work as falling in the genre of “tales of the strange” (*zhiguai*). As Leo Tak-hung Chan has observed, there is “little doubt that during the years 1788–98, more *zhiguai* were published than at any other time during the Qing dynasty.”<sup>98</sup> Its unusual content likely stimulated circulation, and perhaps it rode this wave of interest in fantastic material. However, other readers like Guan Ganzhen, Hong Liangji, and Wang Dashu used it primarily for its geographic content, where normally a gazetteer would have been consulted. Perhaps it can be speculated that as a “pseudo-gazetteer” of a region still little-known, Cǐsī’s work captivated both geographers and readers craving strange tales, giving double impetus to its popularity.

For his self-described supplement, Cǐsī refrained from citing official documents or attempting rigorous evidential research (*kaozhengxue*). To slightly later scholars who did have access to both types of source, his work seemed to have been credited with more authority than it deserved, and had to be impugned in order for “better” works to replace it. Thus, beginning in 1804, it came to be criticized by an emerging generation of Han Chinese specialists in frontier-related scholarship whose primary claim to authority was familiarity with official archives and textual sources.

To understand the circulation of Inner Asian information among Qing scholars in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, we must switch from the perspective afforded by modern printings and research aids to the ground-level view of individual Qing subjects in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Doing so reveals that the geographic location, and scholarly and official networks, of individual scholars greatly influenced their understanding of available sources on Qing Xinjiang: their number, their value, and their proper relationship with each other. At one extreme was the Qianlong emperor, who painstakingly scrutinized court editorial output and surely hoped that his authorized version would circulate without serious rival. At the other extreme was someone like Long Wanyu, who claimed that when he wished to write a study of the Western Regions around 1811 (!) that there “were no gazetteers and histories (*zhisheng*), so there was no evidentiary basis.”<sup>99</sup> In between was a spectrum of researchers operating with no clear guidelines. Unlike administrative units in China proper, there were not yet established precedents for how descriptions of the Western Regions ought to be written. Existing works therefore lacked clear generic categories. Instead, official court works, “proto-gazetteers” with the form but not the standing of provincial *tongzhi*, and entirely personal endeavors like that of Cǐsī circulated (or did not circulate) haphazardly based on personal taste, the nature of individual

<sup>98</sup> L. Chan, *The Discourse on Foxes and Ghosts: Ji Yun and Eighteenth-Century Literati Storytelling* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998): 29.

<sup>99</sup> “Long Wanyu preface” 龍序 in Xu Song, *Xiyu shuidao ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005): 7.

professional and literary ties, and state policies promoting or restricting the use of the court's own literary output. The vagaries of a book's circulation relative to comparable works, much more than its official or unofficial status, or the office and rank of the individual author and reader, determined how studies of the Western Regions were received and used. Not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century did state-sponsored works serve in practice as the most authoritative record of Xinjiang. It was this unsettled context of information circulation that explains the great early success of the *Yiyu suotan*.

### Appendix 1: Preliminary Analysis of Manchu Versions of the Text

This essay has not attempted a systematic comparison of the many Chinese texts of various editions of Cîşîi's work, which would be a mammoth undertaking, nor has it systematically compared the Chinese and Manchu texts with each other. Such comparisons would constitute a study in themselves, in order to determine which manuscript of the Text A-*Suotan* version is the most authoritative and which printed edition represents the earliest form of the Text B-*Wenjian lu* version. It would be especially useful to determine the principles on which the Text A version was modified by an unknown editor: Was this in essence a "polishing" of Cîşîi's literary Chinese to make it more elegant, an effort to make it more concise, or a selective editing to make the text either more believable or more sensationalistic?

This appendix will simply analyze two brief passages to illustrate my preliminary conclusions, referred to in the text above, about the relationship of the Manchu and Chinese versions of the text, and the relationship of the two available Manchu versions to each other.

First, we can compare a passage from the section on foreign countries in the *Xiyu Huizu fengsu zhi* version of the Manchu text with the corresponding passage from a Text B-*Wenjian lu* version and a Text A-*Suotan* version. From the fact that this Manchu text gives the foreign countries in the Text B order, and omits Yindi, we can predict that the Manchu would be closer to Text B than Text A. Indeed, we can see from the Manchu version of the description of Afghanistan (Ch. *Aohan*, Ma. *Oohan*) that it closely corresponds to the Text B version (with one small omission marked in bold), but departs significantly from the corresponding Text A version (with diverging passages underlined).

#### Manchu text:

*oohan emu amba gurun[,] hoise cembe kidzeršan baši sembi, temuršan i wargi ergi[,] ere ba dembei golmin[,] hošonggo ududu minggan ba[,] wang be han sembi,*



*hoton hecen sain fiyangga niyalma i anggala geren bayan[,] abka halhūn, aga muke elgiyen, gebungge ilha encu hacin i tubihe, aisin[,] nicuhe[,] gu boobei wehe, gin g'ang ši sere wehe[,] jakdan[,] cuse[,] šan mu sere moo[,] hing hing sere gurgu[,] niyalma gisun be ulhimbi...*

The Afghans are a great country, Muslims call them Qizilbash, they are west of Timur Shah, their land is extremely long, several thousands of *li* square. The king is called khan. The city wall is fine and decorated. Its people are rich. The weather is hot. Rain is in abundance. [It has] famous flowers, different types of fruit, gold, pearls, precious stones, *jingangshi* stones [i.e., diamonds], pines, bamboo, and fir. The animals called *xingxing* [i.e., orangutans] comprehend human speech...

### **Text B-Wenjian lu:**

敖罕

敖罕一大國也, 回子謂之克則爾巴什, 在退木爾沙之西, 其地絕長補短, 方數千里, 稱其王曰汗, 城池壯麗, 人戶富盛, 天氣酷熱, 多雨, 多奇花異果, 五金, 珠, 玉, 寶石, 金剛石, 松, 竹, 杉, 皆其土產, 有瘴氣多, 猩猩亦通其人言語...

### **Text A-Suotan:**

敖罕 (亦曰愛沃罕)

敖罕, 西域一大國也, 回子謂之克則爾巴什, 在退木沙爾之西, 溫都斯坦之東南, 幅員寬廣, 方數千里, 稱其王曰汗, 都城壯麗, 廛市鱗編, 人民稠密, 亦各富饒, 多寶貨, 其汗之屋宅齊整, 服御奢華, 每出遊, 飲食, 起臥之所, 非需十餘象, 不能負載...

Second, we can compare a brief passage from the two extant Manchu translations available to me, the version entitled the *Xiyu Huizu fengsu zhi* and that held in Russia, to demonstrate that they represent two independent versions of the text with significantly different translations. Nonetheless, it is clear that both translations were based upon the Chinese Text B-Wenjian lu version of the text, given below for reference.

### **Text B-Wenjian lu:**

哈薩克, 伊犁西北一大國也, 即古之大宛, 乾隆二十一年大兵進勦入其巢穴, 其

汗阿布賴面降，歸服王化，受封爵，奉正朔，

***Xiyu Huizu fengsu zhi:***

*hasak[,]* ili i wargi amargi emu amba gurun, julgei dawan gurun, abkai wehiyehe i orin emuci aniya, amba cooha ceni feye de isibume dailaha de han abulai cihanggai dahafi fungnere be aliha,

**Russian Edition:**

*hasak serengge ili i wargi amargi ergi i amba gurun kai, uthai julgei da wan inu, abkai wehiyehe i orin emu aniya de amba cooha dailame genefi, ini tehe hoton de sucunaha manggi, ceni han ablamiyan dahaha, fung jeng šuwe sere fungnehen baha,*

The underlined passages are of particular interest. The *Xiyu Huizu fengsu zhi* chooses to omit the phrase “accepted the [Qing] calendar,” presumably because this was interpreted as a redundant further reference to the Qazaq acceptance of Qing political authority. By contrast, the edition held in Russia makes two obvious misinterpretations of the underlined Chinese passage. First, it interprets the phrase 受封爵，奉正朔 as “he obtained a document of enfeoffment [making him] ‘*feng jeng šuwe/feng zhengshuo*’,” apparently misconstruing the Chinese “accepted the [Qing] calendar” as the name of the particular rank or title he received. Secondly, the translator distorts the Chinese phrase “surrendered in person” (面降), viewing the character *mian* as forming part of Ablai’s name. This supports the view that a) the version of the Manchu text in Russia was made from a Chinese original, which it misinterprets, and b) the author of this version was a foreigner who had studied Chinese but did not have the fluency of a native speaker and therefore misconstrued certain aspects of the text when putting it into Manchu.

Needless to say, these conclusions are preliminary, and await confirmation, complication, or refutation by a systematic textual study.

**Appendix 2: Editions of the Work of Cīšii Consulted:**

HYC = Harvard-Yenching Library

NLC = National Library of China, Beijing, Putong guji collection

NB: Books I have been unable to view directly are marked with an asterisk; reference is made to the footnote giving details of those who inspected the item for me.

*Xiyu suotan* 西域瑣談 MS (HYC Rare Book Room: TNC 3079 4141.1)

\**Xiyu suotan* MS (NLC /41215) [see footnote 30]

\**Xinjiang jishi zhengxin lu* (Fudan University Library, Rare Book Room, Shanghai # 0208) [see footnote 50]

*Xinjiang waifan jilüe* 新疆外藩紀略 (HYC 3079 4141.3)

*Xiyu suotan* 西域瑣談 MS (National Central Library, Taiwan, Rare Book Room #04101)

*Xiyu suotan* 西域瑣談 MS (HYC 3079 4141.1c)

*Xiyu wenjian lu* 西域聞見錄 MS (HYC 3079 4141.1b)

*Xiyu wenjian lu* 西域聞見錄 (University of California, Berkeley, East Asian Library Rare Book Room: 3079 4141)

*Xiyu wenjian lu* 西域聞見錄 (Fu Ssu-nien Library Rare Book Room: A 928.9 003)

*Xiyu wenjian lu*, 1800/1 Edo: 千鐘房 (Waseda University Library Rare Book Room: #ル5-3045-1)

*Xiyu wenjian lu, youming Xiyu ji* 西域聞見錄, 又名西域記, in *Qing chaoben Lin Zexu deng Xibu jixing sanzong* 清抄本林則徐等西部紀行三種 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2001)

*Yiyu suotan* 異域瑣談 MS (National Central Library, Taiwan, Rare Book Room 210.8 04100)

*Yiyu suotan* 異域瑣談 MS 1799 recompilation (Library of Congress, Digital reproduction 000000000B193S9C44)

*Yiyu suotan* 異域瑣談 MS (NLC: 地610 934.6)

*Xiyu Huizu fengsu zhi*, held in the library of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Chinese Academy of Social Science, Beijing (中國社會科學院, 民族學與人類學研究所)

*Wargi jecen i bade bifi donjiha sabuha babe ejehe bithe*

*Xiyu ji* 西域記. 1814. Weijingtang 味經堂.

*Xiyu zongzhi* 西域總志. 1818. Qiangzhitang 強志堂.

*Xiyu jiyao* 西域紀要. 1826. Xiyu shanfang 希西山房.

*Xiyu wenjian lu* 西域聞見錄. 1835. In *Qingzhaotang congshu* 青照堂叢書 93.

*Xiyu jiuwen* 西域舊聞. 1843. In *Zhouju suozhi* 舟車所至.