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战争 贸易

War *Trade*

Cover figure: The extent of the Han Empire with the Chinese character ‘Han’ written inside the borders. (Adapted from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8a/Flag-map_of_Han_Dynasty.png)

Trade amidst Turmoil: Analyzing the Impact of Conflict on Transnational Commerce during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Aim

The clashing of swords and the clinking of coins, both chapters in the tale of humankind. The phenomena of war and trade arguably play an integral part in both the formation and preservation of nations. Both warrant the meeting of people but one can lead to a nation's prosperity and the other to its destitution – can they coexist or are they mutually exclusive?

Throughout history these phenomena continue to exist as is evidenced by, among other things, the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia, as well as the waging trade war between China and the US. In this increasingly globalizing world, the impact of these conflicts is felt internationally. From the increased energy prices in Europe to the increase of international export in some countries (Kilfoyle, 2023; Fajgelbaum *et al.* 2023); the fact that there is a relationship between conflict and commerce is clear. This thesis aims to study this dynamic in the hopes of contributing to our understanding of the consequences that war has on international trade, and enriching contemporary perspectives on the relationship between conflict and trade.

To approach this dynamic, the impressions left by international trade on the archaeological record of the period encompassing the Former and Later Han dynasties of China (206 BCE–220 CE) will be examined through selected case studies.

1.2 The Research Area

Despite being born amidst the chaos of civil war, the Han Dynasty's ruling period eclipsed that of any other Chinese dynasty (Shelach-Lavi, 2015, p. 310). The four centuries it spanned are divided by the rule of usurper Wang Mang (9–23 CE) into the Western (or Former) and Eastern (or Later) phases, which corresponds to the shift in capital from Chang'an in the west to the eastern city of Luoyang (Loewe, 1986, p. 103, 106; Major & Cook, 2016, p. 197).

The years of fighting from which the Han Dynasty emerged, resulted from discontent with the centralized government of the preceding unified Qin Dynasty, which is a sharp divergence from the regionalized multi-state system that reigned before (Major & Cook, 2016 p. 198). The last phase in the decline of the Qin Dynasty revolved around the figures Xiang Yu and Liu Bang. Any trace of the initial alliance formed between these two rebel leaders in 208 BCE would be effaced by the events that followed (Major & Cook, 2016 p. 198).

Liu Bang marched his troops into the capital of Qin in 206 BCE upon which the final king of the Qin Dynasty surrendered and was put to death by Xiang Yu (Loewe, 1986, p. 115). In an attempt to return

the political landscape to pre-Qin times, Xiang Yu established a confederacy of 19 kingdoms and named himself Hegemon King of the confederacy which he ruled from one of these kingdoms (Loewe, 1986, p. 116–123; Shelach-Lavi, 2015, p. 308). During this process, Liu Bang became the ruler of a remote kingdom in the Han River region (Shelach-Lavi, 2015, p. 308). The seeming peace that was hereby established proved to be fleeting as Liu Bang subjugated three kingdoms of the confederation that same year (Loewe, 1986, p. 117). Hereafter, war between Liu Bang and Xiang Yu ensued for another four years. Conflicting visions regarding the successor of Qin was the object of their contention. Xiang Yu wanted to return to the decentralized multi-state system whereas Liu Bang sought to continue the unification process started during the Qin Dynasty (Leung, 2018, p. 163). In 202 BCE, Liu Bang emerged victorious and became the first emperor of the Han Dynasty, which owes its name to the Han River Valley he once ruled as king (Loewe, 1986, p. 119; Shelach-lavi, 2015, p. 308).

The capital Chang'an was erected in the Wei River valley which formed the center of the Former Han Empire (Feng, 2013, p. 259). During its lifetime, the dynasty encompassed the area of the Yellow and Yangtze River basins, bordered the Xiongnu Empire in the north and present-day Vietnam to the south, and stretched out in the west to the base of the Himalaya mountain range (Shelach-Lavi, 2015, p. 9; Meskill, 1973, p. 36). The empire's borders fluctuated throughout its existence, an indication of which is illustrated by Figure 1.1.

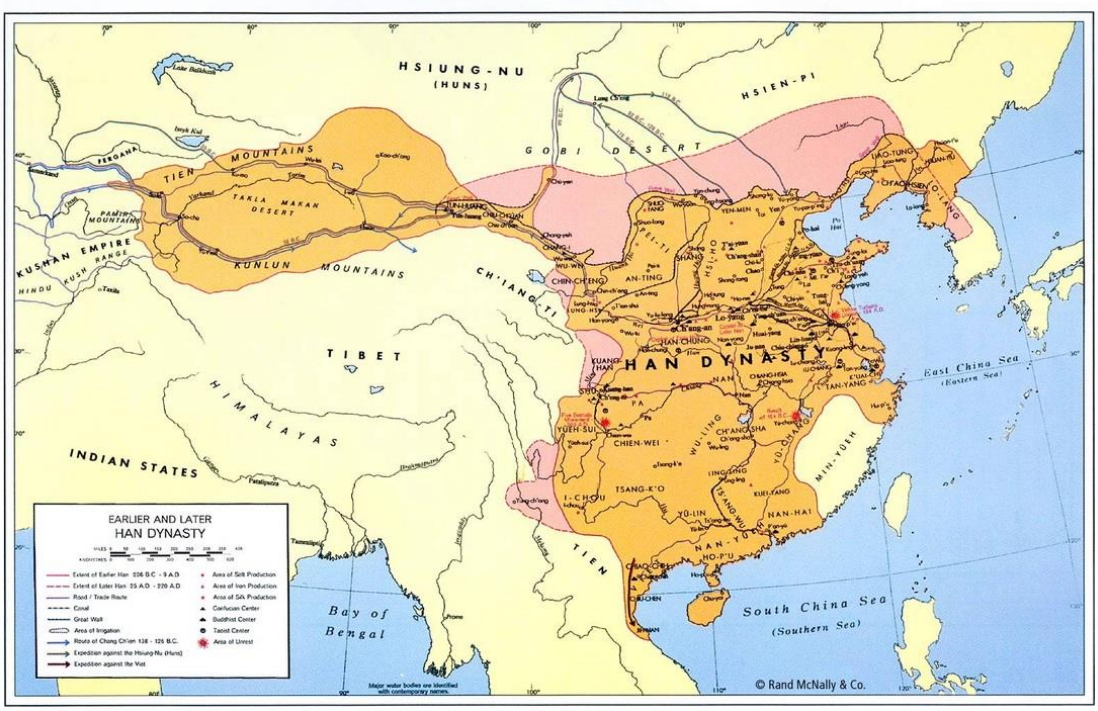


Figure 1.1 Map of the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 CE). (MacDonald, 1997, p. 9)

1.3 Research Questions

In order to examine the relationship between conflict and commerce in the Han Dynasty the following main question has been posed:

To what extent did the transnational trade engaged in by the Han Dynasty of China (206 BCE–220 CE) experience impacts from internal and external conflicts?

With the objective of constructing a nuanced view on this matter the following sub-questions are formulated:

- How can the trading relations between the Xiongnu and the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) be characterized during periods of the *heqin* (appeasement) policy in contrast to times of expansionist policy?
- What correlation exists in the archaeological record regarding traded foreign goods between the periods of Han Wudi's reign (141-87 BCE) and the later Western Han Dynasty (87–23 BCE)?
- What trends can be recognized in the archaeological record regarding traded foreign goods between the early (25–75 CE) and later (75–220 CE) Eastern Han Dynasty ?
- How does the presence of foreign objects in the archaeological record of the Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE) compare to that of the late Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 CE)?
- By comparing the archaeological record of the Western Han period (206 BCE–9 CE) to that of the late Eastern Han period (25–220 CE), how does the presence of Han Dynasty objects in foreign countries differ/concur?

1.4 Methodology

To analyze whether the periods of conflict described in historical sources are reflected within the archaeological record, this thesis will engage in a literature review. Several case studies in which foreign trade goods are found in the period of the Han Dynasty, and goods produced in the Han Empire are found past the borders of this empire, will be examined. The presence or absence of traded goods will be correlated to periods of conflict or relative peace with the aim of making inferences regarding the dynamic between war and trade. In making this correlation, the Wang Mang Interregnum (9–23 CE) will be disregarded to stay within the parameters of what is feasible to achieve within a bachelor thesis. Potential nuances that the findings of this period could bring to the study of the impact of war on trading relations are thus absent from this thesis.

For the purposes of this thesis, the term internal conflict refers to instances in which the court employed military action against its citizens and cases in which a (group of) civilian(s) start(s) a revolt against the ruling emperor.

The archaeological findings of episodes of combat and peaceful intervals will be compared in both the Former and Later Han Dynasty. In addition, the archaeological record of Western Han and Late Eastern Han will be compared (as the latter was more plagued by contest) to report on the presence of traded foreign goods. In this way, the dynamic of trade and war will be examined on multiple scales.

Next to times of internal conflict, military engagements with foreign countries are also studied in this thesis. The focus will be on Han's relationship with the Xiongnu Empire because they posed a constant threat throughout the dynasty and influenced the relations of the Han Empire with other nations.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The next chapter gives the dynastic overview of the Former and Later Han periods with a focus on internal strife. In addition, the Han Empire's relationship with foreign countries will be examined. Chapter 3 explores foreign artefacts found within Han Dynasty tombs, and Han mirrors and lacquerwares uncovered in foreign contexts. In chapter 4, I will place these traded goods within the historical framework created in chapter 2 and formulate answers to the five sub-questions. Chapter 5 will correlate the trends found within the discussion to the corresponding historical period and conclude what the case studies tell us about the relationship between war and trade, thereby answering the main question.

1.6 Research Limitations

Before embarking on the journey to explore the relation between conflict and trade, it is important to point out some of the limitations of this research.

Since the research area of this thesis concerns China, there is a large body of academic literature in Chinese which cannot be consulted by non-Chinese speaking researchers like myself. This limitation also extends to sources on the research area published in other languages than English.

Secondly, periods of instability that may be caused by struggles within the court scene are taken into consideration when drawing conclusions but will not be explored in this thesis as this thesis focuses on military confrontations.

Lastly, this thesis is unable to provide a complete overview of the relation between war and trade in the Han Dynasty. Instead, the results derived from the studied selection of case studies will be described in a wider historical context to see whether patterns within this relationship can be recognized.

Chapter 2 - Historical Background

This chapter paints a picture of the Han Dynasty by exploring the internal conflicts that emerged during both the Former and Later Han periods. As will become clear in this chapter, oftentimes the political intrigues at court and individuals were at the center of these conflicts. The finer details of how certain conflicts unfolded cannot be examined in depth, instead general developments will be described. In addition, the trends of foreign policy wielded by the Han government throughout the course of the dynasty will be elucidated.

2.1 Course of the Han Dynasties

2.1.1 Historical Overview of the Former Han Dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE)

After Liu Bang came into power, he was met by the fact that his allies had established themselves as kings of pre-unification territories during the previous warring years (Loewe, 1986, p. 124). As his newly founded empire was still grappling with the consequences that 7 years of civil war had inflicted, reconstruction was the priority which meant that Liu Bang had no choice but to recognize the self-declared kings (Loewe, 1986, p. 124; Shelach-Lavi, 2015, p. 310). This resulted in an empire that consisted of 10 kingdoms ruled by kings in the east and 14 commanderies reigned over by the emperor in the west (see Figure 2.1) (Loewe, 1986, p. 124). This combination of centralism and regionalism was not the political system that Liu Bang had fought for, but was needed to fortify the empire which Bang desperately needed to do since he lacked the endorsement from all his subjects (Shelach-Lavi, 2015, p. 310). Some citizens favored other candidates like Xiang Yu, and others who aided Liu Bang in his cause felt undercompensated for their allegiance (Sawyer, 2020, p. 959). This latter occurrence possibly stems from the emperor's wariness regarding a potential revolt. Indicative of this is the policy he pioneered which entailed that only members of the Liu family could be installed as kings (Sawyer, 2020, p. 959). Despite the presence of these seeds for potential rebellion this early on in the dynasty, it would take some years before they blossomed.

Figure 2.1 The Han Empire in 195 BCE (Feng, 2013, p. 261, Map 12.1)

The reconstructive first 60 years of the Former Han Dynasty encompassed the reign of Liu Bang's son, Emperor Hui, the regency of Liu Bang's widow, and the reigns of emperors Wen and Jing (Shelach-Lavi, 2015, p. 310). The former two's time in power is associated with instability (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 199). Emperor Hui was only 15 years when his father died and was unable to stand up against the influence other officials had in the imperial court (Loewe, 1986, p. 130). The children he left behind after his death in 188 BCE were placed under the regency of Empress Dowager Lü, his mother and widow of Liu Bang (Loewe, 1986, p. 135). In her hunger for power, Empress Lü threatened the continuation of the Liu family as the ruling clan by installing her own family members in high positions within the empire's bureaucracy, thereby violating her late husband's policy of only enfeoffing to Liu family members (Loewe, 1986, p. 136). The Lü family's scheme to overthrow the Liu family as the ruling clan that ensued, illustrates that Liu Bang's caution was not unwarranted (Loewe, 1986, p. 136). A coup was prevented and the Lü family was eradicated with military forces gathered by three of Liu Bang's descendants who were supported by relatives and officials who remained unswayed by the Lü family

(Loewe, 1986, p. 136). From these three descendants it was the King of Dai who continued the dynastic rule under the name of Emperor Wen (Loewe, 1986, p. 137).

Under his rule and that of his son, the future Emperor Jing, the empire was able to attain stability despite having to deal with revolts instigated by kings belonging to the Liu family (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 200). Blood is seemingly not thicker than water when the degree of consanguinity is higher and when one has the means to govern their own kingdom and wants to break free from loyalty and tax it owes to the empire (Loewe, 1986, p. 140–141). Such was the case in 174 BCE for the King of Huainan who plotted a rebellion but remained unsuccessful in his attempt (Leung, 2018, p. 166).

Another case of greater magnitude presented itself in 154 BCE during the reign of Emperor Jing (Loewe, 1986, p. 141). Initiated by the King of Wu and joined by other kings who wished to gain independence from the central government, The Revolt of the Seven Kingdoms commenced (Loewe, 1986, p. 141; Sawyer, 2020, p. 960). An additional cause for this campaign stems from the lack of unity that the Han Dynasty was able to cultivate throughout its empire. The regionalism that was characteristic of the kingdoms, due to its history before unification, could not be expelled by installin

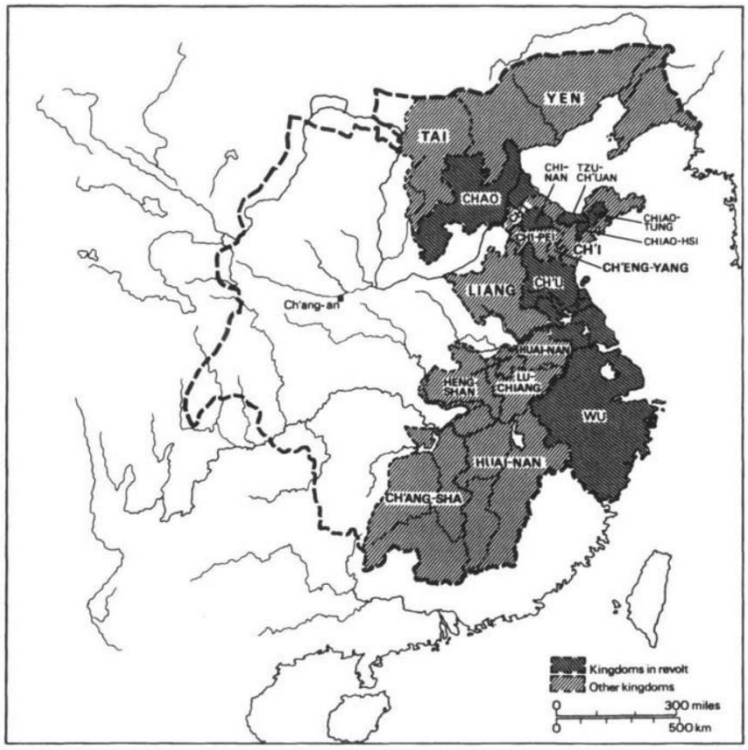


Figure 2.2 Kingdoms in revolt 154 BCE (Loewe, 1986, p. 142, Map 6)

government was only felt when it collected taxes and duties from the kingdoms (Sawyer, 2020, p. 961). Court officials realized that this climate is prone to rebellion and therefore advised both emperors Wen and Jing to initiate a process of centralization which entailed the decrease of a kingdom's territory (and thereby the king's power) either by splitting it in more kingdoms or by transforming (parts) into commanderies (Sawyer, 2020, p. 961). The advancements made within this process is what the dissenters (please refer to Figure 2.2 for the revolting kingdoms) wished to see reversed (Sawyer, 2020, p. 961). The kingdoms of Huainan, Qi (spelled as Ch'i in Figure 2.2), Jibei (spelled as Chi-Pei in Figure 2.2), and Liang fell victim to the revolt (Sawyer, 2020, p. 962–963). The latter one would be at the center of the rebellion since the rebels planned to make it their stronghold from where they would advance towards the empire's capital of Chang'an (Sawyer, 2020, p. 963, 965). The commander of the imperial forces, Zhou Yafu, planned to let the forces of Chu and Liang battle and drain each other from

resources so the imperial forces would have the upper hand against a deficient enemy (Sawyer, 2020, p. 964–965). Yafu's strategy was successful and culminated in the retreat of the rebel army and the death of the King of Wu (Sawyer, 2020, p. 966). The Revolt of the Seven Kingdoms was the biggest blow the empire had to endure during its former phase. Other conflicts that would arise in the empire were either small scaled or of political nature.

Under the reign of Emperor Jing's son, further centralization and consolidation of the empire took place which enabled him to venture outside the borders of Han and expand the empire (Leung, 2018, p. 172; Loewe, 1986, p. 152). This resulted in the establishment of more commanderies (Loewe, 1986, p. 156). In line with his expansionist views, Emperor Wudi launched military campaigns against the Xiongnu Empire, something which his predecessors had avoided (Shelach-Lavi, 2015, p. 311). In 122 BCE, the Kingdom of Huainan revolted again upon which Wudi converted it into commanderies (Leung, 2018, p. 166). The prosperity he was able to foster throughout the empire was not mirrored within his family which was the scene where rivalries between his Li and Wei consorts and their families played out regarding the matter of imperial succession (Shelach-Lavi, 2015, p. 311; Loewe, 1986, p. 173, 176–178). This crisis of 91–90 BCE might not have played out on a battlefield but did account for major casualties for both clans (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 233).

The next emperor, Zhao (r. 87–74 BCE), saw two failed attempts at a coup d'état in 86 BCE and 80 BCE (Loewe, 1986, p. 181). Both were initiated by the King of Yan, who happened to be his half-brother. This again shows that the installment of family members as kings did not ensure their loyalty. From his reign and that of his successor Xuan, it became clear that most of the Han emperors only had a passive role to fulfill as figurehead of the dynasty, especially in the case of teenaged emperors like the two aforementioned were (Loewe, 1986, p. 179). Instead, it were the statesmen who initiated policies and governed the empire. The strain that had been put on the empire in favor of Emperor Wudi's expansionist policies was lifted after his death to sustain the empire (Leung, 2018, p. 174). This was done by way of retrenchment policies which included a shift from expanding the borders of Han to preserving the extensions gained during Wudi's rule (Leung, 2018, p. 175). In addition, the steps taken to centralize the empire initiated during the reigns of emperors Wen and Jing were continued during this time and extended into the reigns of the following emperors (Leung, 2018, p. 175; Loewe, 1986, p. 198). All of these were enthroned either as children or teenagers and were thus highly influenced by a regent and court officials.

Even though the next years marked the steady decline of the Former Han, the conflicts in this time took place on the political scene from which military confrontations were absent. (Loewe, 1986, p. 198, 213–220). The longer reigns of Emperors Xuan, Yuan and Chen (87–33 BCE) in the later Western

Han period were seen as relatively more stable (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 232). With the death of Emperor Ping, Grand Empress Dowager Wang named a family member, Wang Mang, as regent for the next heir (Loewe, 1986, p. 219). He became acting emperor in 6 CE which was not received well by the public as is seen from two independent uprisings which played out in the Great Plain and near Chang'an but were quickly suppressed (Loewe, 1986, p. 219; Bielenstein, 1986, p. 229–230). In 9 CE, Wang Mang enthroned himself as emperor of the Xin Dynasty, which brought an end to the Former Han Dynasty (Loewe, 1986, p. 219; Bielenstein, 1986, p. 231).

Table 2.1 The Emperors of the Former Han Dynasty. (Tse, 2018, p. xi)

Former Han (206 BCE–9 CE)		
Emperor title	*Personal name*	*Reign*
Gao	Bang	206/202–195 BCE
Hui	Ying	195–188 BCE
Empress Dowager Lü	Zhi	188–180 BCE
Wen	Heng	180–157 BCE
Jing	Qi	157–141 BCE
Wu	Che	141–87 BCE
Zhao	Fuling	87–74 BCE
Xuan	Bingyi	74–49 BCE
Yuan	Shi	49–33 BCE
Cheng	Ao	33–7 BCE
Ai	Xin	7–1 BCE
Ping	Jizi	1 BCE–6 CE
–	Ying	6–9 CE

2.1.2 Historical Overview of the Later Han Dynasty (23–220 CE)

Like its former half, the Later Han Dynasty was born amidst the ruckus of rebellion which brought an end to Wang Mang's Xin Dynasty. During his reign he was confronted by an intrusion of the Yellow River in 11 CE which submerged the empire in famine and gave rise to a growing army of peasants, known as the Red Eyebrows, who looted the empire to still their hunger (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 241–242, 244). As red was the color associated with the Han Dynasty, selecting this hue to paint their foreheads may have symbolized the peasant's loyalty towards the Han Dynasty or their wish to see it restored (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 244). Apart from the Red Eyebrows, other independent peasant insurgencies emerged including one that advanced into the Nanyang commandery (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 244). This area housed some descendants of Emperor Jing who as such were part of the Han imperial family (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 244). This included the brothers Liu Yan and Liu Xiu, and their cousin Liu Xuan, who collaborated with the rebel armies to challenge Wang Mang's reign (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 244). Although Liu Yan booked more military successes and was able to seize a large part of Nanyang, the rebel leaders and the aristocracy of Nanyang selected the less competent Liu Xuan as emperor in order to retain their own power (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 246). His enthronement on

11 March 23 CE did not conclude Wang Mang's reign which continued throughout several battles until a final one that same year in Chang'an, which culminated with Wang Mang's death (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 246–248).

Liu Xuan was unable to bring stability to the empire and the combination of his inability to appease the Red Eyebrows and the power reduction of the army leaders who were pivotal in the war against Wang Mang, resulted in another attack on Chang'an but this time to remove Liu Xuan (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 248–249). The city was attacked by forces of the Red Eyebrows, the other rebel leaders, and Liu Xiu, which resulted in the demotion of Liu Xuan to king (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 250). Subsequently, Liu Xiu acceded to the throne in 25 CE and is considered to be the founder of the Later Han Dynasty despite the fact that he was not its first emperor (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 251; Major & Cook, 2016, p. 249). The marauding of the Red Eyebrows continued after the Xin Dynasty's end and ceased following two confrontations which prompted them to surrender in 27 CE (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 254–255). Liu Xiu, also known as Emperor Guangwu, was able to quell oppositions in the northern plain and the lower Han River valley by 29 CE, integrate the southern plain and Shandong Peninsula into the empire by 30 CE, and the northwest by 34 CE (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 255). At this stage, the only task that rested upon Guangwu before he could start to settle into his role as the emperor of the Eastern Han Dynasty was to defeat Gongsun Shu, a governor under the Wang Mang interregnum who proclaimed himself emperor in 24 CE (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 254). Gongsun Shu started out as king of present-day Sichuan and held a territory that encompassed the west of China which was difficult to reach due its geographical features and the protection it enjoyed from the Yangtze River and its valleys (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 254–255). He utilized his advantageous position by building a floating bridge equipped with war towers which traversed the Yangtze and inhibited outsiders from reaching the river's gorges (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 255; Major & Cook, 2016, p. 250). The Han fleet however, was able to destroy the maritime structure in the year of 35 CE, enabling them to enter the adversary's territory and defeat them in 36 CE (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 255).

Under Guangwu's 32-year reign, he was able to bring stability to the empire (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 251). To justify the continuation of his reign under the name of the Han Dynasty, Guangwu restored the fundamentals of the Former Han Dynasty which included the reinstatement of Liu clan heirs to marquisates and kingdoms, albeit with reduced territory and authority (Tse, 2018, p. 181; Bielenstein, 1986, p. 256; Major & Cook, 2016, p. 251).

Despite these measures, the Later Han Dynasty developed into a distinct entity with a different social order (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 275). The main contribution to this disparity is the geographical relocation of the empire's capital from Chang'an to Luoyang which changed the composition of the ruling elite

(Tse, 2018, p. 182). Prominent clans of the Former Han Dynasty were absent from the political scene of the Later Dynasty which was filled with aristocracy of eastern origin whose different political views set the two dynasties apart (Tse, 2018, p. 183).

A recurrent theme throughout the reigns of the Later Han Dynasty was factional rivalry (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 277). The power that these Eastern Dynasty aristocratic families were able to garner, exceeded that of their Former Han counterparts (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 277). The factions correlate to different regions of the empire (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 277). Emperor Guangwu had to deal with the Nanyang aristocracy, the Dou clan, and the Ma clan, each of which had supported his journey to ascension (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 251). Tensions between the factions persisted and by the end of Guangwu's reign, the Nanyang and Dou factions were the most powerful.

The factional infighting gained complexity as the families of the Emperor's consorts became increasingly involved, but none of the factions were able to keep the upper hand durably (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 279–280). The political machinations of the clans was accompanied by shifting alliances and the rise and fall of factions (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 281–282). From 88–159 CE we see this happen for respectively the Dou, Teng, Yen, and Liang clans. The Empress Dowagers belonging to these families all followed the trend of selecting minors as the next emperor to let their clan's influence prevail, and whenever they died their clans would be banished or executed (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 281–287).

In 137 CE, during the reign of Emperor Shun, rebellions broke out in the south of the empire which were quelled by local officials and tribes (Loewe, 1986, p. 310–311). This was not the end of unrest however, as in 144 and 145 CE the eastern commanderies of Jiujiang, Guangling, Lujiang, and Liyang fell victim to rebel attacks which were eventually crushed by imperial forces (Loewe, 1986, p. 311). Several revolts are also recorded during the reign of Emperor Huan, including one lasting from 154–156 CE in Shandong involving around 30.000 individuals, and multiple rebellions in the commanderies of Changsha, Guiyang, and Lingling which lasted until 165 CE (Loewe, 1986, p. 315–316).

Emperor Ling's reign (r. 168–189 CE), started out with a bureaucratic crisis (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 287). Since the reign of Emperor He, the eunuchs increased both their faction and function to the extent that they were overtaking professional civil servants (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 287). Duo Wei, the Empress Dowager's father, acted as regent and contrived to arrest the leaders of the eunuchs to reverse their power (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 289). The eunuchs however, caught wind of Dou Wei's scheme and were able to turn the tables against him and eradicate his clan (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 289). This confrontation was a military one, but unexpectedly did not produce any fighting (Beck, 1986, p. 322). A vocal strife between the head eunuch and Dou Wu unfolded during which the regent found his contingents slipping away to join the enemy's faction (Beck, 1986, p. 322). The lack of actual fighting did not entail

the absence of bloodshed as Dou Wu committed suicide and many of his clan members were killed afterwards (Beck, 1986, p. 322). As a result of their victory, the eunuchs assumed major positions in ruling the empire, and were able to expand their influence (Beck, 1986, p. 327).

Emperor Ling's reign further saw three rebellions in the years 170, 186, and 187 CE which sprouted from unbearable circumstances that farmers and soldiers had to endure. Rebellions stemming from religious and political motives were considered to be more harmful to the empire's existence as they could incite sentiments of discontent for the Han Dynasty (Beck, 1986, p. 336). These so-called religious rebels argued that the Han Dynasty lost Heaven's mandate, which was required to legitimize a ruler's claim to the throne (Beck, 1986, p. 336–337). Anti-Han Dynasty sentiments were visible in the 12 rebel emperors who had established themselves between the years 145 and 188 CE (Beck, 1986, p. 337). While the court was preoccupied with quelling one of these religious rebellion which plagued southern China from 172–175 CE, the seeds which blossomed into the Yellow Turban rebellion of 184 CE were being planted in the north (Beck, 1986, p. 338). There, Zhang Jue gained followers by catering towards peoples' superstitious beliefs and by sowing ideas of a better world under a new non-Han ruler (Beck, 1986, p. 338). The epidemic that dispersed throughout the empire, natural disasters such as earthquakes and extreme weather phenomena, and the deteriorating political conditions were probably part of the reason why Zhang Jue was able to gain support (de Crespigny, 2017, p. 404; Michaud, 1958, p. 64, 74–75). In March of 184 CE, 16 commanderies felt the anti-dynastic sentiments as the Yellow Turban Rebellion overpowered the commanderies' troops, beleaguered cities, and captured its kings (Beck, 1986, p. 338–339). Figure 2.3 illustrates the main areas involved in this rebellion and shows that it was mostly centered around the eastern part of the empire. While commanderies were being reconquered by a general named Huangfu Song, another general by the name of Liu Zhi fought Zhang Jue on the battlefield and forced him to retreat back to his base of operations, the Julu commandery (Michaud, 1958, p. 50–51; de Crespigny, 2017, p. 411–412). During this siege Zhang Jue died and one of his brothers replaced him (Michaud, 1958, p. 50). The Yellow Turban Rebellion waned as both of Zhang Jue's brothers were killed by Huangfu Song (de Crespigny, 2017, p. 413). The last chapter of the rebellion played out in the capital of the Nanyang commandery (de Crespigny, 2017, p. 413). The city oscillated between the rebels and the imperial forces until the final leader of the rebellion was killed in 185 CE (de Crespigny, 2017, p. 413).

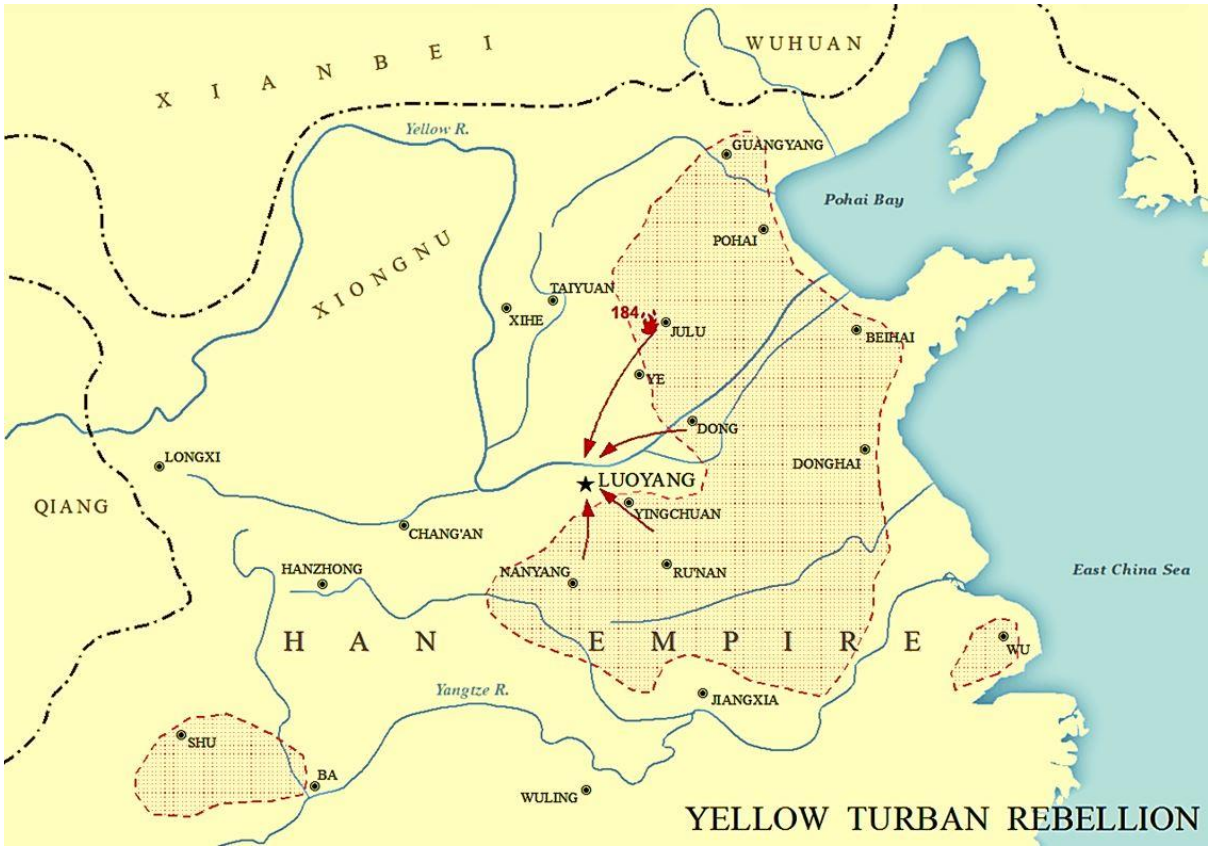


Figure 2.3 The Extent of the Yellow Turban Rebellion. (World History Encyclopedia, https://www.worldhistory.org/image/11611/yellow-turban-rebellion/)

Their annihilation however, did not ensure peace as multiple revolts, using the momentum of the Yellow Turbans, surfaced throughout the empire (Beck, 1986, p. 339). The imperial forces were not strong enough to counter these rebellions which resulted in the entitlement of some rebels as local officials (Beck, 1986, p. 339). In addition, private armies were employed by the empire to suppress the various insurgencies (Beck, 1986, p. 339). This included a rebellion in 187 CE of the nomadic Wuhuan, instigated and led by an ex Han official, and a revolt in Sichuan in 188 CE (Beck, 1986, p. 339). The empire was unable to turn the tide for the better, as the next year also felt the trample of marching troops.

While the eunuchs wanted to carry their power and control over into the next reign, others saw an opportunity in the new Emperor Shao, who was yet uninfluenced by the eunuchs, to diminish their power (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 256). The main opposition that the eunuchs faced consisted of two generals, Yuan Shao and Dong Zhuo, and the Empress Dowager's half-brother, He Jin (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 256). Their clash seemed like a repetition of the crisis at the start of Emperor Ling's rule but it would end very differently for the eunuchs. The eunuchs discovered that their execution had been requested and this time they retaliated by assassinating the petitioner He Jin (Beck, 1986, p. 344). This prompted Yuan Shao and other troops to storm the imperial palace where the various contingents

besieged the different palace complexes and left them pillaged and ruined (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 256; de Crespigny, 2017, p. 446). They fought until the eunuchs were exterminated and their hold over the empire was released (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 256). Amidst the chaos of the invasion, a few eunuchs fled from the palace with the emperor and his younger half-brother, Liu Xie (Beck, 1986, p. 345). They were chased and cornered by soldiers, leaving them no other way out but to take their own lives (de Crespigny, 2017, p. 447). When this news reached General Dong Zhou, he proceeded to scour Luoyang for the Emperor and his brother and brought them back to the palace (Beck, 1986, p. 346). He made the Empress Dowager dethrone Emperor Shao and replace him with the younger Liu Xie over whom he would presumably be able to exert more influence (Beck, 1986, p. 346; de Crespigny, 2017, p. 457).

His actions gave rise to a growing group of dissenters in the eastern part of the empire of which the main actors were Yuan Shao, Yuan Shu, and warlord Cao Cao (de Crespigny, 2017, p. 459). Each proceeded to gather military forces to free the empire from Dong Zhuo who had meddled with the imperial succession and was thus labeled as a usurper among his opposition who united themselves in the eastern ensemble (de Crespigny, 2017, p. 459–460). After a few failed campaigns against Dong Zhuo, the eastern coalition was able to defeat Zhuo's troops in Luoyang, driving him westward to take refuge in Chang'an (de Crespigny, 2017, p. 464; Beck, 1986, p. 349). When Dong Zhou was eventually killed in 192 CE, the members of the coalition turned against one another (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 257).

Each member had his stronghold in a different part of the empire (see Figure 2.4) and tried to expand it which led to multiple military confrontations in the following years (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 257). By 200 CE, Cao Cao had defeated several warlords, including Yuan Shao, in the northeastern part of the empire, thereby extending his territory (Beck, 1986, p. 351; de Crespigny, 2017, p. 471). He was hampered in his southward expansion and experienced defeat at the hand of Liu Bei in the Battle of the Red Cliffs in 208 CE (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 257). The borders established by Liu Bei and Sun Quan after expanding their territories in battles fought in 219 CE, indicate the boundaries of the Three Kingdoms Period that succeeded the Han Dynasty (de Crespigny, 2017, p. 473). After his death in 220 CE, Cao Cao's son inherited his titles and was able to make Emperor Xian abdicate in his favor (Beck, 1986, p. 354, 356). This marked the end of four centuries worth of Han rule. In similar fashion as Cao Cao's son, the remaining two warlords named themselves emperor of their own dynasty, ushering in the Three Kingdoms Period (Major & Cook, 2016, p. 257).

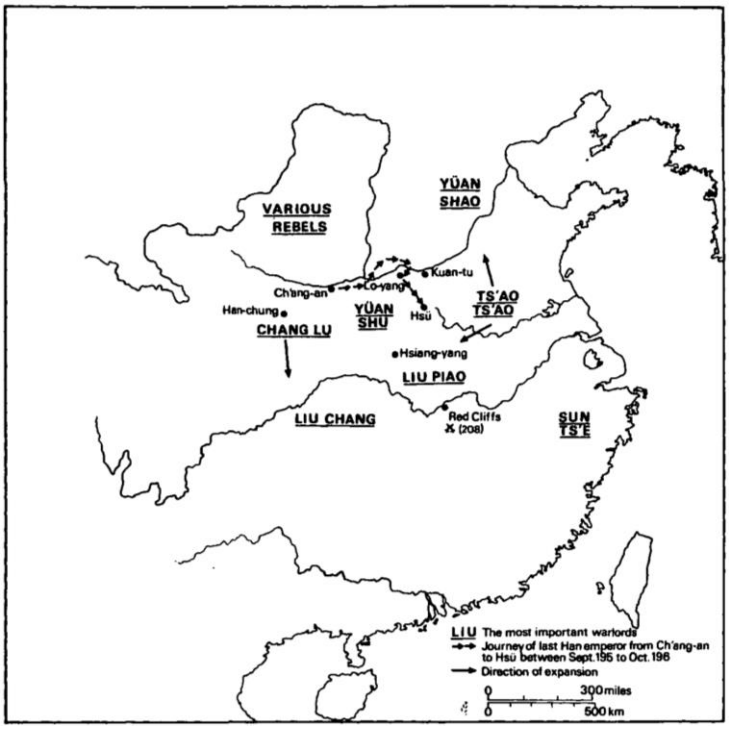


Figure 2.4 The contending warlords in ca. 200 CE (Beck, 1986, p. 342, Map 14)

Table 2.2 The Emperors of the Later Han Dynasty. (Tse, 2018, p. xi)

Later Han (25–220 CE)		
Emperor title	*Personal name*	*Reign*
Guangwu	Xiu	25–57 CE
Ming	Zhuang	57–75 CE
Zhang	Da	75–88 CE
He	Zhao	88–106 CE
Shang	Long	106 CE
An	You	106–125 CE
Shun	Bao	125–144 CE
Chong	Bing	144–145 CE
Zhi	Zuan	145–146 CE
Huan	Zhi	146–168 CE
Ling	Hong	168–189 CE
Shao	Bian	189 CE
Xian	Xie	189–220 CE

2.2 Han Foreign Relations

In the following section we will venture across the Han borders to explore the relationship that the empire had with foreign nations.

2.2.1 Foreign Policy

The political course that the Han Empire sailed was dependent on the views of the statesmen in charge of the Han ship. The main stances that the empire alternated between during its existence were that of modernism and reformism (Loewe, 1986, p. 104). Both views accede on governing Han as a unified empire rather than pre-Qin multi-states, but differ on which conduct the empire should adopt (Loewe, 1986, p. 106). Modernist policies are characterized by a desire to fortify the empire in service of which its followers were willing to look beyond the Han borders to increase the empire's wealth and influence. Correspondingly, modernist foreign policy was oriented towards expansion. In terms of the economy, this policy translated to government control seen in state monopolies, and using excess Han agricultural products to engage in trade (Loewe, 1986, p. 104). Reformist policies, however, were less inclined to expand the empire or showcase its prosperity to outsiders (Loewe, 1986, p. 105–106). Instead, the reformist gaze was directed inward, aimed at using the empire's resources to improve the condition of its subjects rather than importing foreign goods which reformists regarded as frivolous (Loewe, 1986, p. 105–106).

The Former Han's first 70 years were preoccupied with solidifying the empire and thus lacked the capacity and resources for expansionism, despite upholding modernist policies in terms of cultivating prosperity within the empire (Loewe, 1986, p. 128). This is exemplified by the appeasement policy it adhered to regarding the Xiongnu (further details follow in paragraph 2.2.2) and other foreign powers which entailed the acknowledgement of monarchs who established themselves along the borders of the empire. Liu Bang recognized Zhao Tuo who established himself as King of Nanyue (modern-day Vietnam) and his successor, Emperor Hui, did the same with the king of Tunghai (Loewe, 1986, p. 128, 135). This passive policy was maintained throughout the following reigns while the empire gained strength and stability, and started to shift course under Emperor Jing around 135 BCE (Loewe, 1986, p. 138–139). From that moment onwards, the modernist policies could be more actively pursued and reached their pinnacle under the next ruler, Emperor Wudi. Under this sovereign, the empire booked military successes against the Xiongnu, and established commanderies to the north, south, and in Korea, as a result of its imperial expansionist policy which was aimed at defending itself against the Xiongnu rather than fulfilling a desire to increase Han territory (Loewe, 1986, p. 152, 164–165; Schottenhammer, 2023, p. 81–82). Within the framework of this defensive expansionism, the official Zhang Qian was send as an envoy to build a coalition against the Xiongnu (Schottenhammer, 2023, p.

76). On his journey, Zhang Qiang was unsuccessful in finding allies to help combat the Xiongnu, but he was able to bring news to the Han court about the trade that had been established between the empire and other regions, and about the riches that the Western Regions and Central Asia had to offer (Schottenhammer, 2023, p. 77, 79; Loewe, 1986, p. 165). With this information the direction of Han expansion was decided and the military presence along the Great Wall zone was extended westward to ensure peaceful trading relations in addition to barring Xiongnu invasions (Liu, 2022, p. 207). The intensified modernist attitudes were also visible in the state monopolies on salt and iron which increased state revenues necessary for financing the expansionist endeavors (Loewe, 1986, p. 162). At the end of Wudi's reign it became clear that the empire had overexerted itself in pursuit of his policies (Loewe, 1986, p. 168). This necessitated reformist policies which characterized the political landscape of the later Western Han (Loewe, 1986, p. 110, 199). A process of retrenchment was initiated which meant exchanging colonial expansion for border maintenance, and in some cases newly won territory had to be relinquished for the greater good of the empire (Leung, 2018, p. 175).

The reformist policies prevailed and intensified under Wang Mang (Loewe, 1986, p. 199). State monopolies of the Former Han however were maintained throughout the interregnum and the Later Han Dynasty when possible (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 234). This illustrates that the prevalence of either reformism or modernism within an individual('s reign) could vary depending on the subject matter at hand (Bielenstein, 1986, p. 239). Furthermore, a study by Meng (2023) has shown that the dominant school of thought within the Han Empire is not necessarily reflected in its interactions with foreign regimes (p. 471). Alternatively, a pattern is visible between the status of Han's power (relative to its foreign counterparts) and external conflicts, which is illustrated in Tables 2.3 and 2.4.

The main consideration when determining the empire's foreign policy was the protection of its borders against, most notably, the neighboring Xiongnu along the northern and northwestern edges (Yu, 1967, p. 2). Engagement with the Western Regions was secondary, and often part of the empire's strategy to secure itself rather than an independent ambition (Yu, 1967, p. 2). Therefore, paragraph 2.2.2 is dedicated to exploring the relationship between the Xiongnu and Han empires, whereas the interactions of the Han empire with other regions will only receive a concise overview in paragraph 2.2.3.

Table 2.3 Frequency of offensive wars and all wars between the Han Empire and small neighboring states. The higher the status of Han's power, the higher the frequency of wars is. (Adapted from Meng, 2023, p. 467, Table 1)

Successive unified dynasties of imperial China	Different stages of each dynasty	Status of China's power during this stage	China's population or average annual growth rate	Beginning and ending dates	The frequency of OWs between China and SNSs (times/year)	The frequency of AWs between China and SNSs (times/year)
The Qin	The Qin	Powerful	20 million or more	221–207 BC	0.28	0.21
The Western Han Dynasty	Emperor Gaozu to Emperor Jingdi	Increasing power	10–12%, growth from 15 to 36 million	202 to 141 BCE	0	0.03
	Emperor Wudi	Zenith of power	Before 133 BCE, 10–12%; but zero growth after 133 BCE, falling from 36 to 32 million	140 to 87 BCE	0.19	0.20
	Huo Guang as the regent	Sustained power	7%, 40 million or so	86–68 BCE	0.21	0.32
	Post-Huo Guang	Decline	6% decrease to negative growth	67 BCE-8 CE	0	0.11
The Eastern Han Dynasty	Emperors Guangwu and Mingdi	Increasing power	7–10%	25–88	0.08	0.25
	Emperor Hedi to Emperor Shundi	Powerful	6–7%	89–146	0.45	0.91
	Emperors Huandi and Lingdi	Decline	No reliable data	147–189	0.62	0.21
	After the Yellow Turbans Uprising	Divided	No reliable data	189–220	0	0

Table 2.4 Frequency of the attacks between the Han Empire and the northern nomadic empires. The more powerful the Han Empire is, the higher the frequency of attacks against the nomadic empires is. (Meng, 2023, p. 469, Table 2)

Four dynasties of imperial China	Different stages of each dynasty	Whether or not China was more powerful than the nomadic empires during this stage	Beginning and ending dates	The frequency of China's attacks against the nomadic empires (times/year)	The frequency of the nomadic empires' attacks against China (times/year)
The Western Han–Xiongnu relations	Emperor Gaozu to Emperor Jingdi	Evenly matched in strength	202 to 141 BCE	0	0.18
	Emperor Wudi	More powerful	140 to 87 BCE	0.22	0.13
	Post-Emperor Wudi era	Unipolar system	87–51 BCE	0.05	0.08
The Eastern Han–North Xiongnu relations	Early period of the Eastern Han	Evenly matched in strength	25–72	0.04	0.02
	Middle period of the Eastern Han	More powerful	73–125	0.19	0.09
	Later period of the Eastern Han	Unipolar system	125–184	0	0

2.2.2 The Xiongnu Empire

Among the numerous nomad groups that adorned the landscape of Inner Asia, the Xiongnu tribes became increasingly united under Modun who was able to extend the borders of the empire in nearly all directions after adopting the title of *chanyu* in 209 BCE (Yu, 1986, p. 384, 1990, p. 120).

The expansionist activities of the Xiongnu had not gone unnoticed by the recently enthroned Liu Bang who dispatched Xin, the king of Han, in 201 BCE to the frontiers to fend off Xiongnu incursions (Yu, 1990, p. 121). King Xin was unsuccessful and surrendered to the Xiongnu upon being captured (Miller, 2023, p. 61). Emperor Liu Bang commanded the military campaign against the *chanyu* by himself (Yu, 1986, p. 385). In 200 BCE, he fell victim to a Xiongnu siege in Pingcheng, located in modern-day Shanxi province, where he spent 7 days in destitution (Yu, 1986, p. 385; Miller, 2023, p. 61). Despite his escape and the Xiongnu's retreat back to their territory, Liu Bang's defeat echoed in the *heqin* policy that characterized the subsequent reigns (Miller, 2023, p. 61; Yu, 1967, p. 10–11).

The foreign policy that the first emperors of the Former Han implemented in relation to the Xiongnu was defined as 'harmonious kinship' or *heqin* (Yu, 1986, p. 386). This policy was initiated in 198 BCE when both parties assented that: their empires match in status, they would respect the border demarcated by the Great Wall, a predetermined amount of goods would travel from the Han to enrich the Xiongnu, and a Han princess had to bid farewell to her home country and greet the *chanyu* as her husband (Yu, 1986, p. 386). We see a breach of the *heqin* contract by the Xiongnu on several occasions among which in 182 BCE with the intrusion of Longxi, in 177 BCE as a result of Xiongnu incursions into the Ordos region, in 166 BCE when Anding was attacked, in 158 BCE with the invasions of the Yunzhong and Shang commanderies, and in 142 BCE when Yanmen was invaded (Loewe, 1986, p. 136, 152; Yu, 1986, p. 389, 1990, p. 124–125).

In the meantime, the Xiongnu continued their expansionist policies and assimilated more Inner Asian tribes into their empire, elevating its imposing presence (Yu, 1986, p. 388, 1990, p. 123). This enabled them to pressure Emperor Wen (r. 180–157 BCE) into engaging in border trade with the Xiongnu by setting up markets along the border, parallel to the tributary trade that was already established between the two parties (Yu, 1967, p. 1, 1990, p. 124). It was clear that the Xiongnu Empire was the main profiteer of these two arrangements and that despite financially bleeding to appease the Xiongnu, the Han borders were still violated (Yu, 1986, p. 389).

This led Emperor Wudi (r. 141–87 BCE) to distance himself from the appeasement policy (Yu, 1986, p. 390). After an initial failed ambush against the Xiongnu in 134 BCE, a series of military campaigns followed during which the Han were able to redress the power disparity (Yu, 1986, p. 389–390). The year 127 BCE saw the Han forces reclaim the Ordos region and establish the Shuofang and Wuyuan

commanderies (Yu, 1986, p. 390). More advancements followed in 121 and 119 BCE which led to the retreat of the Xiongnu and enabled the establishment of the Wuwei, Zhangye, Jiuquan, and Dunhuang commanderies (Yu, 1986, p. 390–391). These military confrontations weakened both parties, but while the Xiongnu were forced to retreat, the Han Empire had created the possibility to venture to the Western Regions which was previously exclusive to the Xiongnu (Yu, 1986, p. 391, 1990, p. 129–131). Both empires attempted to gain control over the Western Regions, which was eventually accomplished by the Han Empire (Yu, 1986, p. 391–392).

In the years 115–60 BCE, the once expanding Xiongnu Empire was crumbling on the inside as a result of a weakened leadership under brief reigns, in addition to an increased sense of regionalism which was visible in the self-declared *chanyu's* that surfaced throughout the empire (Yu, 1986, p. 392–393). During this time various *chanyu's* tried to establish peace with their southern Han neighbors but failed to do so as the parties could not agree on the terms (Yu, 1986, p. 394). The Han Empire was only willing to consider the Xiongnu's appeal for peace under tributary terms, which required the *chanyu* or his delegation to express their respect by visiting the Han court (Yu, 1986, p. 394–395). Additionally, the Xiongnu would need to send tribute in the form of gifts and provide a prince who would remain at the Han court as a hostage (Yu, 1986, p. 395). Considering the current height of Han power, the *chanyu* agreed to the tributary conditions and became a vassal state of the Han Empire by sending his son to become a hostage in 53 BCE (Yu, 1986, p. 395). Two years later he would personally demonstrate his respect at the Han court (Yu, 1986, p. 396). Ironically, the tributary system put a greater financial strain on the Han Empire than the previous marriage alliance as the *chanyu* was handsomely rewarded each time he paid homage to the Han emperor (Yu, 1986, p. 396–397). The increasing rewards demonstrate the importance that the Han Empire attached to the higher political status they enjoyed compared to the Xiongnu, to whom they would never send a Han princess again (Yu, 1986, p. 397–398).

The Han lost this high political status, and the tributary relations with the Xiongnu which ensured it, under Wang Mang's usurpation (Yu, 1986, p. 399). In service of reestablishing the Han Empire, Emperor Guangwu (r. 25–57 CE) maintained a policy of appeasement toward the Xiongnu (Yu, 1986, p. 399). The Xiongnu were able to profit from the Han Empire's internal strife and reclaimed the Western Regions (Yu, 1986, p. 399). But they too would experience internal struggles and eventually see their empire diverge into a northern and southern Xiongnu in 48 CE (Yu, 1986, p. 400). The southern half reentered the tributary system with the Han to profit from the rewards given in exchange for paying homage (Yu, 1986, p. 400). Changes were made under the reestablished tributary system which increased Han's political control over the southern Xiongnu, among other things by adopting them into the Han Empire's territory (Yu, 1986, p. 401). This encouraged Han and southern Xiongnu relations to deepen, which can be seen in their concerted attack on the northern Xiongnu in 73 and 89 CE (Yu,

1986, p. 402; Bielenstein, 1986, p. 268). Their strengthened bond could not completely eliminate conflicts between them which is illustrated by a rebellion against the Han that the southern Xiongnu engaged in with their northern counterparts around 94 CE, and another rebellion initiated by the southern *chanyu* in 109 CE (Yu, 1986, p. 402). The northern Xiongnu did not have a place within this settling policy as a result of another policy that the Han wielded under the name of 'divide and rule', which was aimed at keeping the two Xiongnu factions separated (Yu, 1986, p. 403). War and trade is what characterized the relationship with the northern Xiongnu during the Later Han period (Yu, 1986, p. 404). Trade occurred in the form of the exchange of imperial gifts between the two parties, and in the form of private trade that unfolded along the frontiers (Yu, 1986, p. 404). Although less intense than during the Western Han, wars still entered the Later Han scene, for instance in 79 and 89 CE which saw the victory of the Han Empire (Yu, 1986, p. 404). The northern Xiongnu faced internal struggles and were weakened by large-scale desertions which invited surrounding neighbors to invade their territory (Yu, 1986, p. 404). A fatal defeat was suffered by the Xiongnu in 87 CE which resulted in more desertions to the Han Empire, and the retreat of the prevailing Xiongnu westward, away from the center from where they once controlled extensive territories (Yu, 1986, p. 404).

2.2.3 Relations between Han and other Nations

Upon his return to the Han court in 126 BCE, Zhang Qiang had to disappoint Emperor Wudi with the news that the Yuezhi, whom he met in 129 BCE at their camp in Bactria (present-day Afghanistan), were unwilling to join the Han forces against the Xiongnu (Schottenhammer, 2023, p. 77; Liu, 2022, p. 206, 210). However, they were open to maintain contact with the Han Empire through trade (Liu, 2022, p. 206). It was during Zhang Qiang's second trip westward, in 119 BCE, that he could initiate trade along the roads he paved the way for during his previous voyage, and connect the Han Empire to the west (Rong, 2020, p. 3). During this time, Zhang Qiang and his entourage travelled, amongst other places, to the West Asian empire of Parthia, India, and Dayuan (in modern Uzbekistan) (Rong, 2020, p. 4).

While visiting Bactria, Zhang Qiang encountered Han goods from Sichuan and heard from the locals that they arrived there from a country named Shendu, which is interpreted as India (Yang, 2013, p. 82). This indicates that, even before Zhang Qiang's travels, there was a route in place that stretched from the southwestern part of the Han Empire, along India to Bactria, along which trade occurred (Yang, 2013, p. 82). During the course of the Former Han period, the empire forged relationships with ancient India and surrounding countries which resulted in the construction of the Southern Silk Road (Yang, 2013, p. 83–84). In this trade network India served as a hub that connected east to west (Yang, 2013, p. 86).

In its latter half, the Han Dynasty had to deal with the growing Kushan Empire (30 BCE–226 CE) that was extending its territory to include parts of Parthia, Bactria, and northwestern India (Yang, 2013, p. 85; Rong, 2020, p. 1). In 88 CE, the Kushans extended a marriage proposal to the Han, which the latter party declined, causing the Kushans to retaliate by invading Han territories in the Tarim Basin (Yang, 2013, p. 85). The Kushan envoys sent to ask support from neighboring regions were killed by a Han contingent (Yang, 2013, p. 85). Humbled by this Han maneuver, the Kushans took on a more submissive role within the relationship and annually presented the Han court with gifts (Yang, 2013, p. 85). In addition, they acted as middlemen for Han goods and contributed to their conveyance further westward (Benjamin, 2018, p. 106).

While Han goods arrived in the Roman Empire and vice versa, relations between these empires were indirect, partly due to the Parthians' interference as they wanted to remain the bridge between these two entities to further their own economic benefits (Rong, 2020, p. 5). The first direct contact between the empires is found in 166 CE, when Roman envoys are said to have been sent by Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius to present gifts to the Han court (Yu, 1986, p. 460–461). In reality, the Roman envoys were most likely regular Roman merchants whose visit to the Han Empire did not initiate diplomatic relations between the empires (Schottenhammer, 2023, p. 103).

The Parthians, whose empire stretched out west of Bactria, were probably introduced to Han silk in 106 BCE when the first diplomatic Han caravan loaded with tributary commodities entered its borders (Benjamin, 2018, p. 169–170). The Han-Parthian relationship was a diplomatic and commercial one which started in the middle Former Han and continued throughout the Later Han period (Benjamin, 2018, p. 171).

Together with the Kushan, Parthian, and Roman empires, the Han Empire formed one of the pillars of the Silk Roads network that connected these empires and neighboring regions (Rong, 2020, p. 2–3). The Han goods that generally left the empire's borders to find their way into the corners of Central Asia were lacquerwares, bronze mirrors, and silk (von Glahn, 2016, p. 154). The goods that entered the Han borders were mainly luxury goods including aromatics, corals, gemstones, and pearls, which indicate that during this time the Silk Roads trade goods were limited to the Han elites (von Glahn, 2016, p. 154; Liu, 2022, p. 208). During the Han Dynasty, the trade along the Silk Roads was less commercially oriented and more centered around tributary and gift exchanges (von Glahn, 2016, p. 154).

Another commodity that the Han were keen to acquire from international trade were the 'heavenly horses' from Dayuan, which brings us back from this detour along the Silk Roads to the root of Han's western gaze, namely to find support against the Xiongnu (Liu, 2022, p. 209–210; Schottenhammer,

2023, p. 79). In order to obtain these horses that would elevate Han's military arsenal, Emperor Wudi launched two campaigns against Dayuan between 104–102 BCE (Benjamin, 2018, p. 85). Apart from attaining the horses, these campaigns had intimidated the other states of the Western Regions to the extent that they offered gifts and submitted themselves as vassal states to the Han court (Benjamin, 2018, p. 85). This created a very different situation than some 70 years ago in 177 BCE when the Western Regions were still under Xiongnu control (Yu, 1986, p. 405, 407). Only with the advancements that the Han made against the Xiongnu around 121 BCE could they start to reach out to states in the Western Regions whose reciprocation was seen in the envoys they sent to the Han court (Yu, 1986, p. 408). Struggles between the Han and Xiongnu regarding hegemony over the Western Regions ensued (Yu, 1986, p. 409). The Han Empire's military incursions into the Western Regions commenced in 108 BCE through which they were able to gain control over states including Dayuan, Loulan, and Turfan (Yu, 1986, p. 409–411). Around 60 BCE, the office of Protector General of the Western Regions was founded which enabled the Han to efficiently exert their influence over the Western Regions, regulate matters regarding the various states, and introduce the states into the tributary system (Yu, 1986, p. 411–412). This office was discontinued during Wang Mang's rule, and until the Han got involved in the area again in 73 CE, the area was subject to internal struggles between the various states and the Xiongnu reassumed their control over the region, again posing a threat to Han's western borders (Schottenhammer, 2023, p. 84; Yu, 1986, p. 413–414). In 73 CE, Han launched a campaign against the Xiongnu and reestablished control over the states Turfan and Hami, enabling the post of Protector-General to be resurrected and tributary relations to continue (Yu, 1986, p. 415). Other offensives between the Han and Xiongnu to gain control over the Western Regions transpired in 77 and 89 CE and resulted in Han's victory which enabled a period (91-101 CE) of stable Han control over the area during which they received tribute from various states (Yu, 1986, p. 415). The conditions of tribute were similar to the ones that used to bind the Xiongnu: Han sent gold and silk in return for a hostage prince and commodities native to the western states such as jade, horses, and wine (Yu, 1986, p. 416). The tributary system financially burdened the Han Empire, causing it to retreat from the Western Regions during 107–122 CE (Yu, 1986, p. 421). After this period the office of Protector-General of the Western Regions continued in diminished form, signifying the wane of Han control over the Western Regions (Yu, 1986, p. 421).

Along the western and southwestern borders of its empire, the Han had to deal with the Qiang peoples who lived in various tribes (Yu, 1986, p. 422). The Han launched an attack on the Qiang in 94 CE who often allied themselves with the Xiongnu during attacks on the Han (Yu, 1986, p. 423–424). From the reign of Emperor Jing (r. 157–141 BCE) until well into the 2nd century of the Later Han period, Qiang tribes settled themselves in Han territory with the endorsement of the Han government who wanted

to sever the ties between the Qiang and Xiongnu (Yu, 1986, p. 426, 429). This would not ensure peace however, as several Qiang revolts followed, including in 111 BCE, 87, 141, and 144 CE (Yu, 1986, p. 427–428). Two larger-scale rebellions would plague the Han Empire during 107–118 CE, and from 184 CE to the end of the Han dynasty, and played out in the Liang province (de Crespigny, 2016, p. 178–188; Yu, 1986, p. 432).

To the east, the Han Empire bordered the nomadic groups of the Wuhuan and Xianbi. The interactions with these groups oscillated between being raided by them or including them within the tributary system as Han tried to prevent a coalition between them and the Xiongnu (Yu, 1986, p. 436–438, 443). Han forces reciprocated raids by the Wuhuan by attacking them in 78 BCE, and had to endure Xianbi invasions from 91–180 CE (Yu, 1986, p. 438, 443, 445).

Under Emperor Wudi the Han Empire extended its borders to include parts of northern Vietnam (Schottenhammer, 2023, p. 80). One of the self-proclaimed kings that Liu Bang was confronted with at the start of his reign, was situated in the southern part of the Han Empire and included parts of this area (Yu, 1986, p. 451–452). This Kingdom of Nanyue went from regarding itself as Han's equal, to becoming a vassal state that paid its respects to the Han court, and wanting to be absorbed into the Han Empire in 113 BCE (Yu, 1986, p. 452). Not all voices of Nanyue agreed with the latter, but these were silenced by Han forces in 111 BCE which enabled the founding of nine commanderies (Yu, 1986, p. 453). In addition, Nanyue's coastal location facilitated the growth of Han's maritime trade with Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean (Schottenhammer, 2023, p. 91). It was only during Emperor Guangwu's reign (r. 25–57 CE) in the Later Han that Han cultural elements began to be adopted in Nanyue; contrastingly this was also the period in which a rebellion against the Han emerged in Nanyue (Yu, 1986, p. 454). The revolt started in 40 CE and took the Han forces 3 years to quell (Schottenhammer, 2023, p. 93). Hereafter, Nanyue's behaviour towards the Han oscillated between loyalty and rebellion, with the latter occurring seven times in the period of 100–184 CE (Yu, 1986, p. 454).

Chapter 3 – Case Studies

3.1 Case Studies China

3.1.1 Hepu Han Tombs

During Emperor Wudi's conquest of Nanyue in 111 BCE, the Hepu County in Guangxi province became a Commandery of the Han Empire (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 2–3). The commandery is true to its name – the translation of Hepu being 'intersection of rivers and sea' – since it houses the Nanliu River Delta which is connected to the Nandong River and discharges into the Tonkin Gulf of the South China Sea (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. v, 1). This feature enabled Hepu to become an important economic and cultural center as it was the place from where ships embarked on their journey along the Maritime Silk Road which would take them around the Malay Peninsula to Myanmar before arriving in India (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. v; Xiong, 2015, p. 1231). This route is mapped out in Figure 3.1 and was travelled by Han officials and merchants alike to export and import goods in a peaceful manner (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 157).

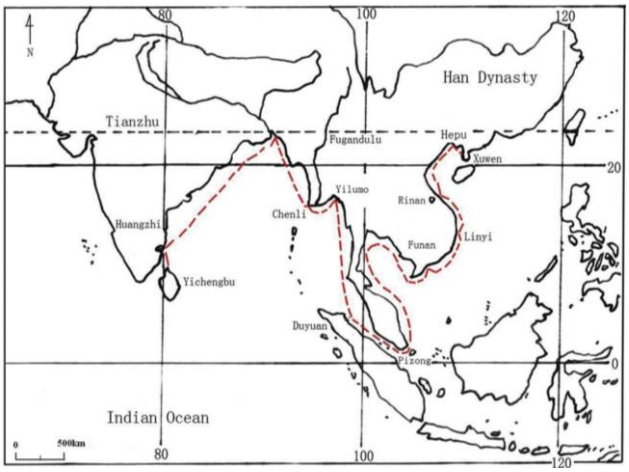


Figure 3.1 Map of the Maritime Silk Road during the Han Dynasty (Xiong, 2015, p. 1232)

Hints of Han's international trading relations are buried within the Hepu tombs which are spread over an area of 68 km^2 (delineated in Figure 3.2), and of which 1200 were excavated from the 1950s to 2013 (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. v–vi, 9). Osteological remains are effaced from the archaeological record as a result of humid climate and the soil's acidity which were able to preserve other artefacts (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 79). A variety of artefacts of foreign origins found their way into the Hepu tombs through the Maritime Silk Road. Among these were ornaments of glass, gold, and stones including amber, beryl, (etched) carnelian, garnet, and turquoise (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 166). Glass was uncovered in approximately 100 of the Hepu tombs dating to the middle Western to late Eastern Han period (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 161). Analysis of its chemical composition allows the glass objects to be located back to its source (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 162). Based on analysis performed on 80 samples, potash glass is found

to be the majority of all glass that is found in the tombs and originates to India, Southeast Asia, and the south and southwestern areas of China (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 162). Soda-calcium and soda calcium lead glass are other types found at the Hepu tombs which can be traced back to the Mediterranean (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 162). During the Han period, glass was higher valued than gold, hence its presence can indicate the elite-lifestyle of the tomb's owners (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 166). Agate and (etched) carnelian are chalcedony minerals and were both probably imported from coastal South Asia or Southeast Asia (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 169–170). Amber came from Myanmar while the turquoise found in the Hepu Han tombs originate from West Asia (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 177, 181). Crystal and gold ornaments originate from India and Southeast Asia, and beryl ornaments were imported from India and Sri Lanka (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 174–176, 180). Twelve Hepu tombs contained garnet which can be traced back to India, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 168–169). Apart from the chemical composition of the raw materials, the techniques and decorations used to work the materials can also aid in determining the provenance of the artefacts.

Figure 3.2 Map indicating the Hepu tomb locations mentioned in the text (Xiong, 2014, p. 1230)

During the early Western Han period, Hepu was still part of the Nanyue Kingdom which was not yet incorporated into the Han Empire by Emperor Wudi (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 146). Hence, the tombs at Hepu corresponding to this period are of less interest to this thesis.

From the middle Western Han period, which starts in 111 BCE with annexation of Nanyue and ends in 32 BCE, the Hepu tombs become relevant to this study (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 147). Mounted tombs which were common in the previous period decreased in favor of vertical pit burials which developed from narrow to wide (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 148). Examples of middle Western period tombs include Fengmengling M27 and the Wengchangta tombs whereof 31 are dated to the second half of the middle Western period and are wide pit burials (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 148). During this time agate, crystal, etched carnelian, and glass ornaments were introduced into the burial assemblages (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 148). Although the Maritime Silk Road was only established in this period and goods acquired through this overseas trade network were not yet commonly found in the Hepu Han tombs, we do know from the lion-shaped amber beads found in Fengmengling M27 that the Han Empire already reached Myanmar (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 145, 148, 176–177).

The next 50 years, up until 25 CE, make up the late Western Han period which is characterized by one-chamber wooden coffin tombs (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 149). Garnet, gold, and turquoise ornaments were included in approximately half of the tombs of this period, a couple of which being Fengmengling M26, Beichajiang Yandui M1, and Wangniuling M1 (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 149–150). Fengmengling M26 contained a pigeon-shaped turquoise bead and Beichajiang Yandui M1 a sheep-shaped one with a height of 1 cm and length of 1.3 cm (see Figure 3.3a) (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 181). These polished beads are azure-green colored which determined its provenance to the Persian Empire instead of to local Han turquoise mines (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 181). Beichajiang Yandui M1 also contained eight polyhedral golden beads and a golden belt buckle from India or Southeast Asia (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 178–180). In Wangniuling M1, agate ornaments and several crystal ornaments were found including a cicada-shaped one of 7.3 cm by 3.3 cm which is the largest crystal ornament unearthed in Guangxi (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 172). For a more extensive account of the foreign artefacts in these tombs, please refer to the Appendix.

(a) Sheep-shaped turquoise beads

(b) Golden belt buckle

Figure 3.3 Grave artefacts from Beichajiang Yandui M1 (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 179, 181)

			
(a) Agate ornaments	*(b) Cicada-shaped crystal*	*(c) Hexagonal column-shaped crystal*	*(d) Crystal beads*
Figure 3.4 Grave artefacts from Wangniuling M1 (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 171, 175)			

Early Eastern Han tomb architecture blended the use of wooden coffins with novel ways of brick-chamber construction which led to the creation of, amongst others, Huangnigang M1 and Jiuzhiling M5 (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 150). These tombs also testify to the trend that various foreign ornaments remained in fashion as grave artefacts (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 151). Jiuzhiling M5 housed several objects from various origins among which green glass beads, an amber seal, polyhedral round golden beads, and a copper bead covered within golden foil whose origin can be traced back to West Asia and the Middle East (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 178, 181–182). The glass beads are traced back to India and the Mediterranean, the former being a local production of imported glass and the latter measuring to a diameter of 0.3 mm (see Figure 3.5) (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 163–166). The amber seal is of semicircular shape and is inscribed with Chinese characters suggesting that raw amber was imported and subsequently processed within the Han Empire (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 178). Huangnigang M1 contained a lake-blue colored glass cup from Southeast Asia, a purple colored crystal necklace from India with different sized beads with a diameter ranging from 2.5 cm to 1.2 cm, and another necklace comprised of various stones including crystal, carnelian, and beryl, and golden beads (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 172–173, 175, 178).

Figure 3.5 Seven green glass beads from the Mediterranean uncovered in Jiuzhiling M5 (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 165)

			
(a) Glass cup	*(b) Necklace of 163 crystal beads*	*(c) Necklace consisting of 23 beads which are comprised of nine crystal beads, one carnelian bead, and beryl beads*	*(d) Golden beads*
Figure 3.6 Grave artefacts from Huangnigang M1 (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 164, 175–176, 179)			

The late Eastern Han period starts in 75 CE and terminates with the end of the dynasty (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 151). While pit-burials remained, the Hepu landscape was dominated by brick-chamber tombs whose blueprint encompassed multiple tomb chambers and intersecting vault roofs and dome-shaped roofs (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 151). Burial goods became less elaborate and decreased in size and quality, and also the amount of ornaments reduced according to Xiong & Fu (2022, p. 152). Contrastingly, several tombs dating to this period still contain a variety of ornaments. Glass beads from India and Southeast Asia are found in Erpaochang M8 and M18, Fengmengling M10 houses garnet and golden beads in addition to a beryl necklace, and 20 dark blue Mediterranean beads were found in Liaowei M17 (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 165, 168, 175, 178). The most unique finds of this period were buried in tomb Liaowei M13B as the Persian pot and cymbal that were unearthed here are non-trade goods (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 183). The intricate tomb structure of Liaowei M13B was unusual for an Eastern Han tomb and suggests that the ones laid to rest here were officials or rich traders (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 183). The green-glazed 34.4 cm high ceramic pot was produced in the Parthian Empire, probably in modern south Iraq or Iran (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 183). A similar pot was excavated from a stratigraphic layer in Seleucia dated from 43 to 200 CE, placing the vessel found in Hepu within the latter half of the same timeframe (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 184). The bronze cymbal is 0.2 cm thick and has a diameter of 18.6 cm (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 185). The musical instrument's backside is decorated with an intricate pattern of persimmons and depictions of a dragon, toad, and feathered figures which are common decorations in West Asia (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 186–187). The cymbal's placement in the tomb near the Persian pot and its decoration suggests a West Asian origin (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 188).

Figure 3.7 Beryl necklace from Fengmengling M10 (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 176)

Figure 3.8 Deep blue Mediterranean glass beads from Liaowei M17 (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 165)

(a) Green-glazed Persian pot

(b) Bronze cymbal

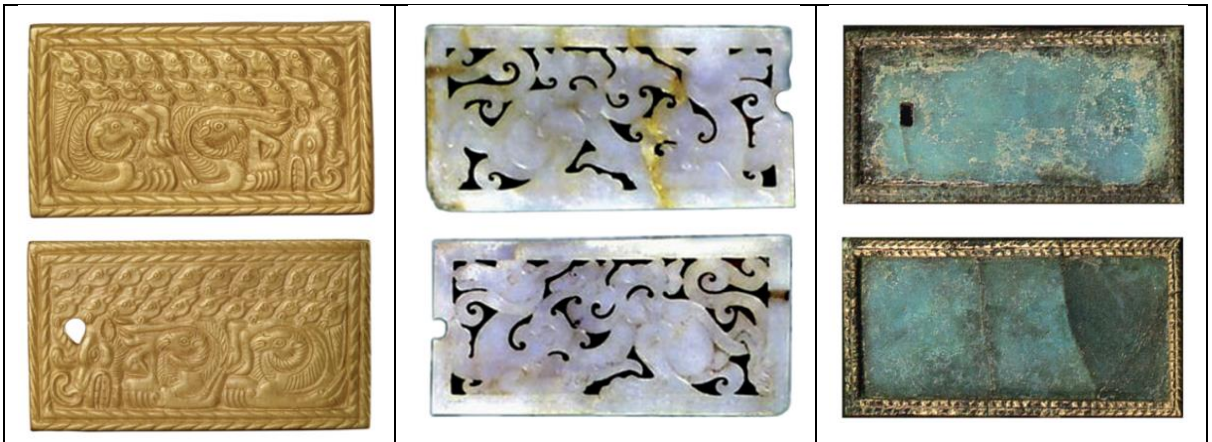
Figure 3.9 Grave artefacts from Liaowei M13B (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 184; Xiong, 2014, p. 1239)

3.1.2 Xiongnu Elements within Western Han Royal Tombs

Relations between the Xiongnu and the Han Empire become evident when looking at the itinerary of, amongst others, royal tombs which possess both objects made by these steppe peoples as well as Han produced artefacts with steppe elements (Kost, 2017, p. 349–350). For the purpose of this thesis we will focus on the objects made by Han's northern neighbors which amounts to belt plaques for the graves of this case study.

This type of steppe object features most often in the Former Han royal tombs (Kost, 2011, p. 367). The belt plaques, which have a history dating back to the 8th century BCE, were made in a variety of shapes and decorated with zoomorphic images, and found themselves accessorizing the pastoralists roving the northern Chinese Steppe (Kost, 2011, p. 367–368).

All of the belt plaques found within the Han tombs are rectangular, and most were found in pairs but without its corresponding belt as this was made of perishable organic material (Kost, 2011, p. 368). Signs that the belt plaques were worn, by presumably the tomb owner, are found in the sites of Dayunshan and Shizishan where needles, possibly used to secure the belt plaques, are uncovered in association with these items (Kost, 2011, p. 368). The plaques were manufactured using jade, gilt bronze, gold, and combinations of materials (see Figure 3.10). The combination of blue glass, gilt bronze, and iron is found in the tomb of a King of Nanyue, which technically does not belong to the Western Han royal tombs but does show the extent to which these Xiongnu goods reached (see Figure 3.11).



(a) Golden belt plaque of Bojishan M3	*(b) Jade belt plaque from Changsha*	*(c) Iron-gilt bronze-glass belt plaque from the tomb of the King of Nanyue*

Figure 3.10 Belt plaques unearthed from royal tombs (Kost, 2017, p. 366-367)

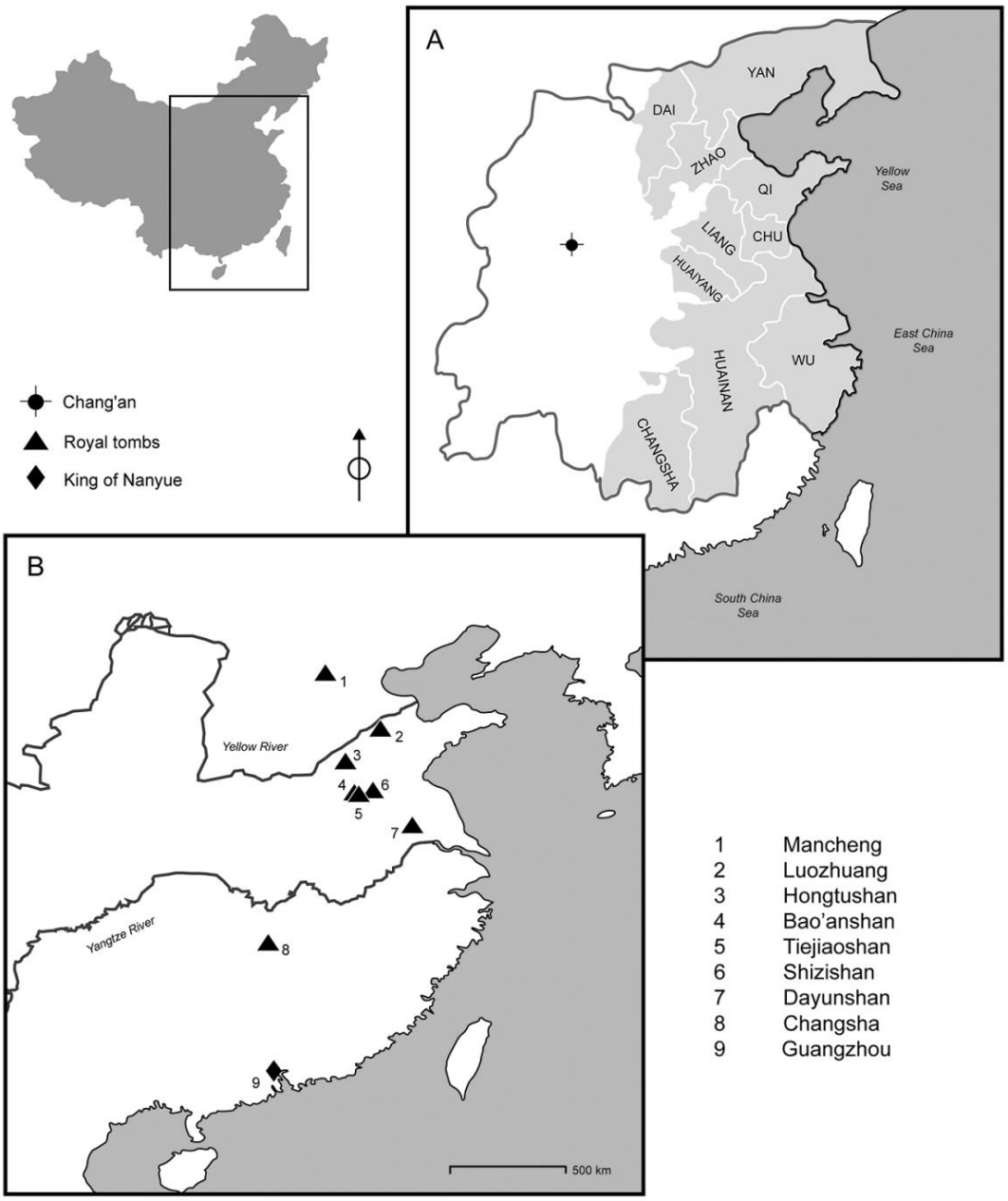


Figure 3.11 (A) Location of the kingdoms by 195 BCE. (B) Location of tomb sites mentioned in Table 3.1 (Kost, 2011, p. 352)

As is visible from Table 3.1, the steppe belt plaques are present in graves dated between 144–113 BCE which falls in the middle Western Han period, indicating trade relations between the Han and their northern neighbors. Belt plaques found at Changsha and Dayunshan M1 are decorated with Han-style depictions suggesting their local production (Kost, 2017, p. 369).

Table 3.1 Former Han royal Tombs containing steppe (style) artefacts (Adapted from Kost, 2011, p. 356)

(RPT = rectangular pit tomb; SPT = stone pit tomb; RCT = rock-cut tomb)

Site	Province	Kingdom	Type of tomb	Date	Tomb owner	Title/Status	Decorative plaques	Round ornaments	Repoussé ornamental plaques	Phalerae	Belt plaques	Other objects
Bao'anshan (accompanying burial pit)	Henan	Liang	RCT	144 B.C.E.	?	Wife of the Xiao king of Liang		X		X	X	
Changsha	Hunan	Changsha	SPT	Mid-Western Han	Cao Zhuan	Concubine of one of the kings of Changsha					X	
Dayunshan M1	Jiangsu	Jiangdu	SPT	128 B.C.E.	Liu Fei	King of Jiangdu (r. 153–128 B.C.E.)	X	X	X		X	
Dayunshan M9	Jiangsu	Jiangdu	SPT	128 B.C.E.	Lady Nao	Concubine of Liu Fei					X	
Guangzhou	Guangdong	Nanyue	RCT	122–120 B.C.E.	Zhao Mo	King of Nanyue (r. 137–122 B.C.E.)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hongtushan	Shandong	Changyi	RPT	86 B.C.E.	Liu Bo?	King of Changyi (r. 97–86 B.C.E.)	X	X				
Luozhuang (accompanying burial pit 9)	Shandong	Lü	RPT	186–180 B.C.E.	Lü Tai?	King of Lü (r. 187–186 B.C.E.)		X		X		
Mancheng M1	Hebei	Zhongshan	RCT	113 B.C.E.	Liu Sheng	King of Zhongshan (r. 154–113)	X		X		X	
Mancheng M2	Hebei	Zhongshan	RCT	113 B.C.E.	Dou Wan	Wife of Liu Sheng		X		X		X
Shizishan	Jiangsu	Chu	RCT	175 or 154 B.C.E.	Liu Yingke or Liu Wu	2nd (r. 178–174 B.C.E.) / 3rd king of Chu (174–154 B.C.E.)		X	X		X	
Tiejiaoshan (accompanying burial pit of M2)	Henan	Liang	RCT	144 B.C.E.	Liu Wu	Xiao king of Liang (r. 168–144 B.C.E.)		X		X		

3.2 Case Study Foreign Countries

3.2.1 Han Mirrors in Xiongnu Burials

(fragments of) Han bronze mirrors have been uncovered from several Xiongnu graves of varying sizes throughout Mongolia (Törbat, 2011, p. 321). The main mirror classes that are present within these graves are Qingbai, Riguang, Siru, TLV, and Zhaoming. The general date ascribed to them within the literature is illustrated in Figure 3.12. Of these types, the TLV mirror appears most frequently within the graves that make up the dataset (see Table 3.2) as it features within nine graves. The second most found type is Siru (7), followed by Zhaoming (5), Riguang (3), and Qingbai (2). The date of the mirrors is concentrated around the 1st century BCE to the 1st century CE which roughly corresponds to the second half of the Former Han and the first half of the Later Han. Four mirrors have been dated to a timeframe that starts as early as the late 2nd century BCE (Törbat, 2011, p. 320, 322). Three of these belong to the Siru type and are found in Burkhan Tolgoi in tombs 1, 19, and 93, and one is found in tomb 6 of Ulaan Khoshuu and is a Riguang type mirror (Törbat, 2011, p. 320, 322). The relative dating of these mirrors are not always a reflection of the absolute date of the tombs they are found in. This becomes clear from tomb 71 of Burkhan Tolgoi which is radiocarbon-dated to 1–133 CE but the Riguang mirror unearthed inside of it is dated to the 1st century BCE (Törbat, 2011, p. 322–323). This discrepancy might be attributed to the practice of 'heirlooming' the bronze mirrors as this Han feature became increasingly incorporated within the Xiongnu realm along with the symbolic connotations given to the mirrors by the Han peoples (Törbat, 2011, p. 315, 324). Tombs 19 and 33a of Burkhan Tolgoi have also been radiocarbon-dated and their dates do fit within the timespan of their mirrors (Törbat, 2011, p. 323).

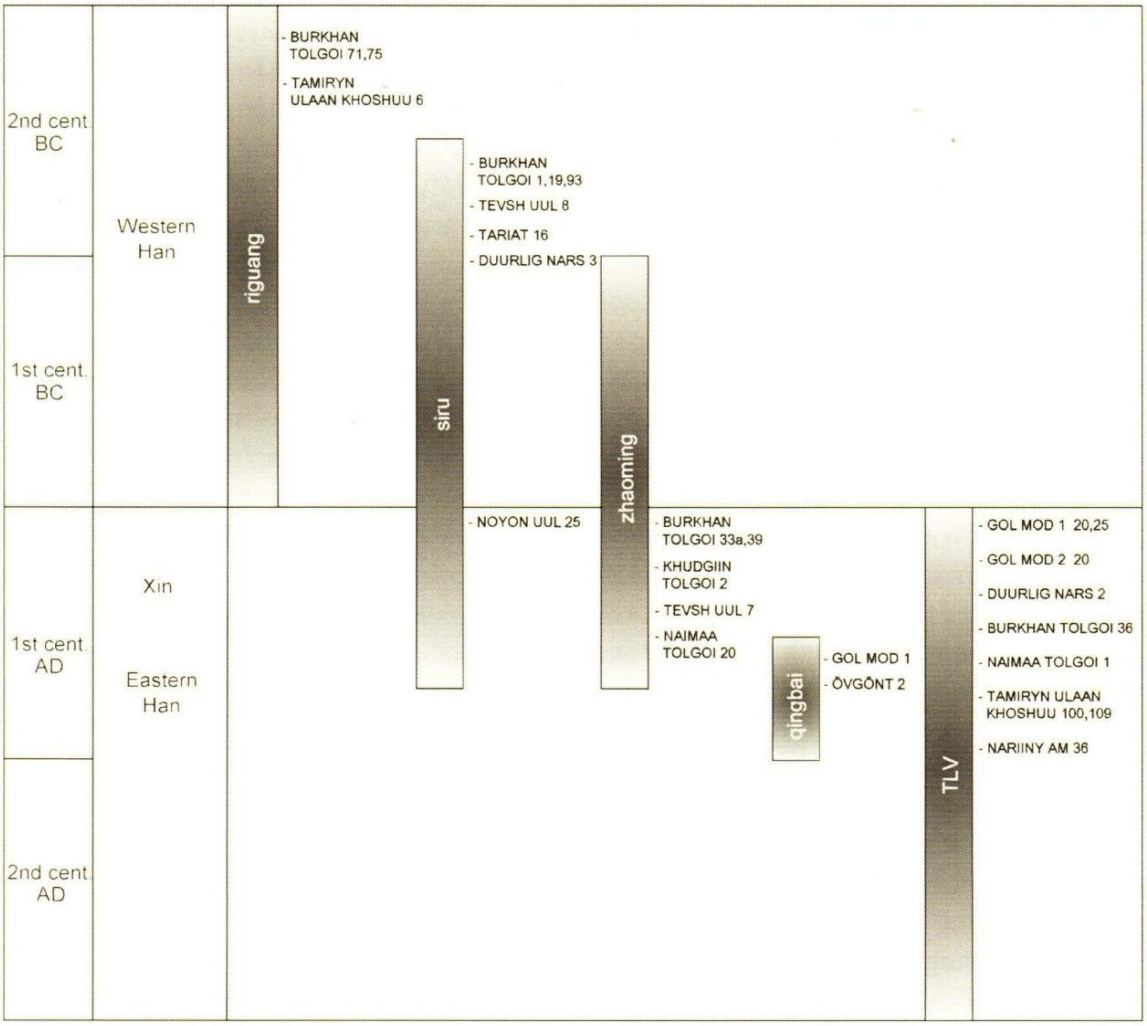


Figure 3.12 Date of the Han bronze mirror classes based on the literature (Törbat, 2011, p. 321)

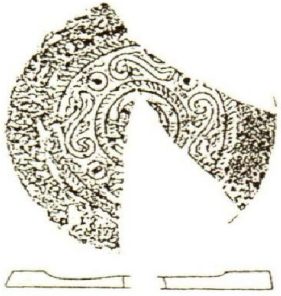
Table 3.2 Bronze mirrors unearthed from Mongolian tombs during the Xiongnu period (Table by author after Törbat, 2011)

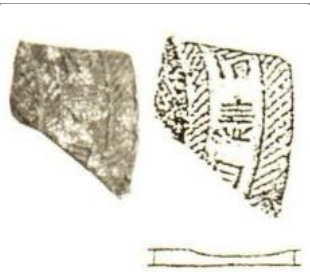
Site	Tomb nr.	Mirror type	Drawing/photograph	Date mirror	Comments	Reference
Burkhan Tolgoi	1	Siru		Late 2nd century BCE–1st century CE	Similar mirror found at, Tariat 16 and Burkhan Tolgoi 19 and 93	(Törbat, 2011, p. 322)
	19	Siru		Late 2nd century BCE–1st century CE	- Radiocarbon dating of tomb 25 BCE–147 CE - Similar mirror found at, Tariat 16 and Burkhan Tolgoi 1 and 93	(Törbat, 2011, p. 317, 322–323)
	33a	Zhaoming			- Radiocarbon dating of tomb 113–112 BC - Duplicate mirrors found at Khudgiin Tolgoi 2, Naimaa Tolgoi 20, Tvesh Uul 7	
	36	TLV			- Similar mirrors found in Tamiryn Ulaan Khoshuu 100 and Ulaan Khoshuu 109 - Similar mirror unearthed from a middle Eastern Han tomb	(Törbat, 2011, p. 319, 322)
	39	Zhaoming				(Törbat, 2011, p. 317, 322)

	71	Riguang		1st century BCE (Western Han)	Radiocarbon dating of tomb 1–133 CE	(Törbat, 2011, p. 317, 322–323)
	75					
	93	Siru		Late 2nd century BCE–1st century CE	Similar mirror found at, Tariat 16 and Burkhan Tolgoi 1 and 33a	(Törbat, 2011, p. 317, 322
Duurlig Nars	2	TLV			Aristocrat tomb	(Törbat, 2011, p. 317, 319–320)
	3	Siru		Western Han	Common tomb	
Enkhor	1	TLV/Siru (?)			Törbat states that this mirror is similar to that of Burkhan Tolgoi 36 etc. and would thus be a TLV specimen, but the photograph is listed under Siru type mirrors	(Törbat, 2011, p. 322)

Gol Mod 1	1		Qingbai/Mingguang				(Törbat, 2011, p. 318)
	20		TLV		Early 1st century CE		(Törbat, 2011, p. 318–320)
	25		TLV		1st century BCE–1st century CE		(Törbat, 2011, p. 316)
Gol Mod 2	1	20	TLV		Wang Mang Interregnum or early Eastern Han		(Törbat, 2011, p. 319–320)
		21				Non-Han production	(Törbat, 2011, p. 320)
		22					
Khudgiin Tolgoi	2		Zhaoming			Duplicate	(Törbat, 2011, p. 316–317)

Morin Tolgoi	Unspecified	TLV		25–220 CE		(Törbat, 2011, p. 318–319)
Naimaa Tolgoi	1	TLV		1st century CE	Radiocarbon dating of cemetery 165±100 CE	(Törbat, 2011, p. 316, 319)
	20	Zhaoming				(Törbat, 2011, p. 316–317)
Noyol Uul	20	Metallic mirror			- Excavation report unpublished - Aristocrat tomb	(Törbat, 2011, p. 320)

	25	Siru		Eastern Han		(Törbat, 2011, p. 316–317)
Övgönt	2	Qingbai/Mingguang		Mid-1st century CE		(Törbat, 2011, p. 317–318)
Tamiryn Ulaan Khoshuu	100	Riguang		1st century BCE	Similar to mirror found in Burkhan Tolgoi 36 and Ulaan Khoshu 6 and 109	(Törbat, 2011, p. 317, 322)
Tariat	16	Siru				(Törbat, 2011, p. 317–318)

Tevsh Uul	7	Zhaoming				(Törbat, 2011, p. 316–317)
	8	Siru				(Törbat, 2011, p. 317–318)
Ulaan Khoshuu	6	Riguang		2nd century BCE–1st century CE	Similar to mirror found in Burkhan Tolgoi 36, Tamiryn Ulaan Khoshuu 100 and Ulaan Khoshu 109	(Törbat, 2011, p. 317, 320)

	100	TLV		Wang Mang Interregnum – early Eastern Han		(Törbat, 2011, p. 319–320)
	109	TLV			Similar mirrors found in Burkhan Tolgoi 36 and Tamiryn Ulaan Khoshuu 100	
	160				Local imitation of Han mirror	(Törbat, 2011, p. 320)

3.2.2 Han Lacquerwares in Begram

South of Bactria, which Zhang Qiang had visited, lies the Afghan site of Begram. Once part of the Kushan Empire, the site captures the Kushan role as intermediary as it lies at the crossroads of two trade routes – one connecting India in the east to the western Mediterranean Sea, and the other linking Pakistan to China (Zhang, 2011, p. 1–2). Begrams bridging quality is reflected in the artefacts that are uncovered from two rooms in the residential area of a town that was discovered at the site (Zhang, 2011, p. 1). Excavations in this part of Begram, named Site II, commenced in 1937 (Morris, 2017, p. 50). Most finds were uncovered from rooms 10 and 13 (see Figure 3.14), the latter being of interest to this thesis as amidst Roman bronze sculptures and glass wares, Indian ivory, and other vessels from various materials, traces of Han lacquerwares were found (Morris, 2017, p. 50–51, 61; Zhang, 2011, p. 1). Excavations in room 13 were conducted in 1939 (Morris, 2017, p. 61). The early date at which this research is conducted warrants a note on the obsoleteness of the archaeological methods that were used and the limitations it produced in the generated data (Morris, 2017, p. 7). Additionally, the data record is fragmentary as a result of the Second World War which hampered the completion of the excavation, and of the deaths of the main archaeologists in 1941 (Morris, 2017, p. 7). This however, does not render the data invaluable, and re-examinations of the data have led to new insights. This thesis depends on the review by Zhang (2011).

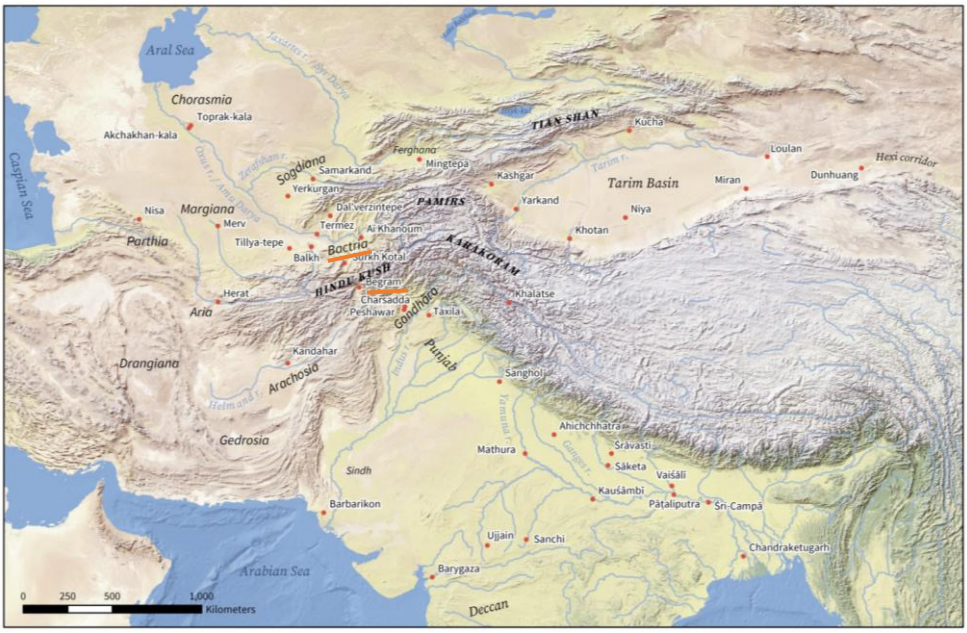


Figure 3.13 Location of Bactria and Begram in Central Asia (Adapted from Morris, 2017, p. Pl.2)

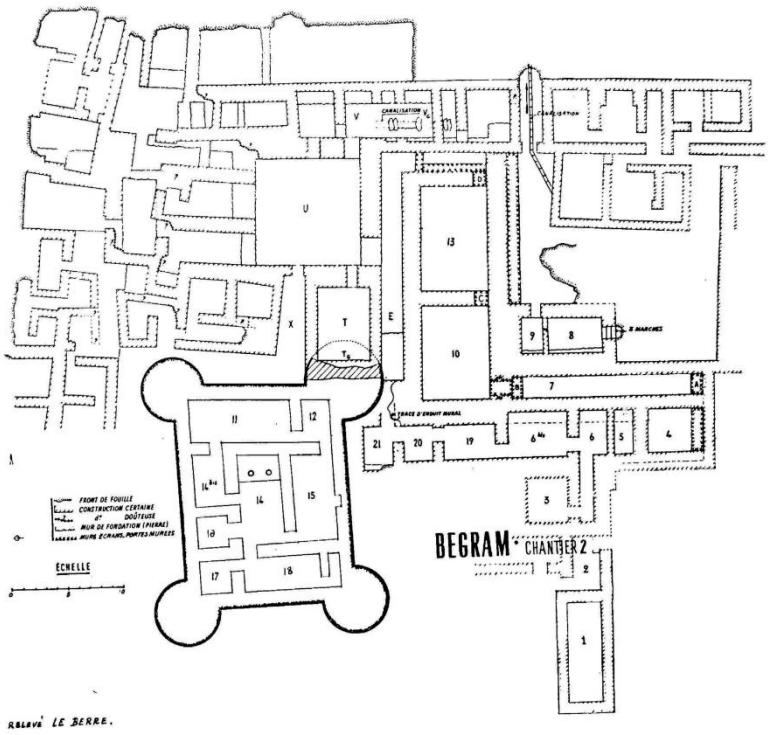
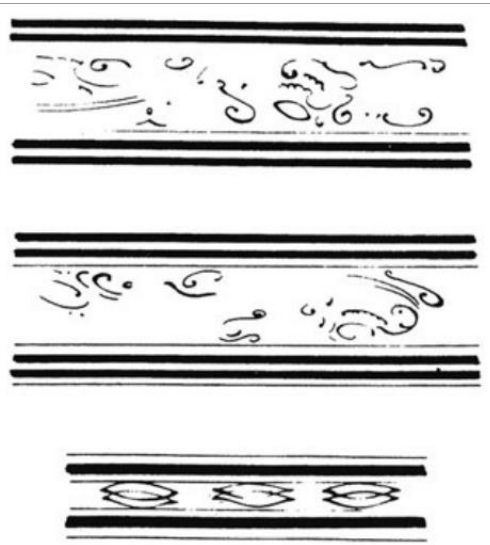


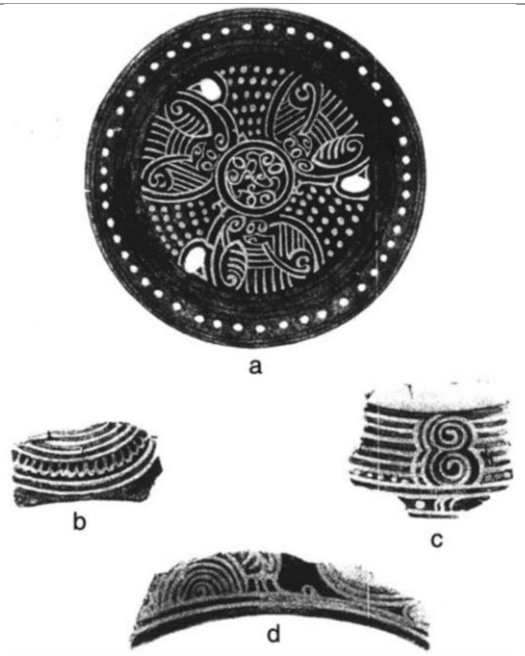
Figure 3.14 Plan of Site II by Le Berre (Morris, 2017, p. Pl.16)

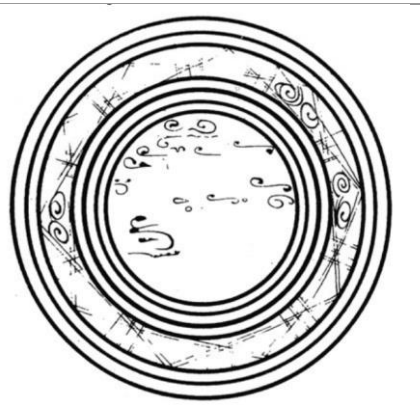
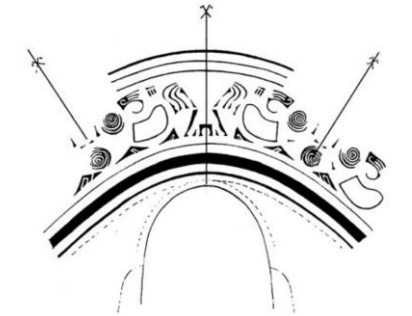
Scholars have proposed multiple theories regarding the function of the rooms. One theory deems it to be the treasury of a Kushan royal residence, whereas another interprets the rooms as merchant storehouses (Zhang, 2011, p. 2). With respect to the occupation and abandonment of the rooms there are also several proposals. The settlement into the eastern residential area, where the rooms are constructed, is correlated to the Kushan Empire (Zhang, 2011, p. 2). The sudden abandonment of the site was initially correlated to the invasion of Begram by the Sassanian King Shapur I during 241–250 CE (Zhang, 2011, p. 2). Reassessment of one of the finds however indicates that the storage rooms were in use until around 356 CE when Afghanistan was conquered by another Sassanian king (Zhang, 2011, p. 2). In any case, most theories point to desertion of the storerooms after the Han Dynasty.

The 9 x 6 m room 13 accommodated 18 lacquerwares whereof only fragments of the lacquer coating withstood the sands of time as the humid soil caused the organic casing of the lacquerwares to decompose (Zhang, 2011, p. 3; Morris, 2017, p. 61). Of the 18 wares, only six were published in the final archaeological report which Zhang has dated by analyzing the decorations on the lacquer coatings and comparing it to the known trends of lacquerware production throughout the Han Dynasty, and to Han lacquerwares uncovered in other foreign sites (Zhang, 2011, p. 3–5). A summary of his findings are compiled in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Lacquerware fragments unearthed from room 13 in Begram (table by author after Zhang, 2011)

Artefact nr.	Type	Description	Drawing	Dating	Manufacture workshop	Reference
92	Bowl	Red interior and three-register composition on the black-brown exterior with undiscernible motifs in red		Late Western Han		(Zhang, 2011, p. 7)
186	Small box	Three-register composition - Top and middle: composition of coiling clouds - Bottom: three double ovals			Local	(Zhang, 2011, p. 7, 11, 24)

215	Platter	Four fragments (a) Bottom fragment, has stylized three bears motif with grouped dots between the bears and dots contouring the fragment's border (b) Parallel curved lines (c) Parallel lines disconnected by two coils on top of each other resembling the figure '8' (d) coil and cloud depiction		16 BCE-14 CE	State	(Zhang, 2011, p. 7–8, 20)
216	Ear cup or oval-shaped toilet-box	Two-register composition, outer one filled with intersecting wavy lines and inner one filled with intersecting straight lines and coils. Bottom depicts worm-like curves		Late Western Han	Local	(Zhang, 2011, p. 9, 12, 22)

219	Toilet-box	Intersecting pentagonal lines and coils. Bottom depicts worm-like curves		Late Western Han	Local	(Zhang, 2011, p. 9, 12, 22)
229	Ear cup (oval drinking vessel with handles)	Depictions of coils, triangles and opposing phoenixes		2 BCE–13 CE	State	(Zhang, 2011, p. 8–9, 21)

Based on Zhang's analysis we can place the Begram lacquerwares in the timeframe of the late Western Han period and Wang Mang's dynasty (Zhang, 2011, p. 11). Morris, however, proposes an alternative date for lacquerware nr. 92. Zhang placed this piece in the Western Han range based on its decorations whereas Morris looked at the form of the vessel and observed its resemblance to a straight-sided *yu* bowl of the Eastern Han period (Morris, 2017, p. 287). She therefore proposes a timeframe of the Begram lacquerwares between the mid-1st century BCE and the mid-1st century CE (Morris, 2017, p. 288).

The remaining 12 lacquerwares have not been published and thus not been studied by other scholars. Hence, it might be argued that the unstudied lacquerwares could hold information for a different dating. This is possible since most of the other major artefact classes that have been uncovered in rooms 10 and 13 date to the 1st and 2nd century CE, including glass wares on which lacquerware nr. 92 was stacked (Morris, 2017, p. 247, 288, 384–385). Artefact groups that date to the mid and late 1st century BCE, like most of the analyzed lacquerwares, include vessels made from various stones and plaster casts (Morris, 2017, p. 384–385).

Chapter 4 – Discussion

In this chapter the previously discussed case studies will be placed within the historical framework explicated in chapter 2. This discussion will approach the sub-questions posed in the introduction by using the selected cases in an attempt to formulate provisionary 'answers'. The observed trends will then be related back to the historical framework to gauge whether the archaeological findings reflect the established history.

4.1 Han-Xiongnu trading Relations during *heqin* and expansionist Policy

The Han Empire's *heqin* stance commenced in 198 BCE and revolutionized around 134 BCE with expansionist initiatives being taken against the Xiongnu which ended with Emperor Wudi's death in 87 BCE, after which Han entered a period of retrenchment (Yu, 1986, p. 386, 390; Leung, 2018, p. 175).

The Western Han royal tombs dating from 144 BCE to 113 BCE contain belt plaques coming from the Xiongnu (Kost, 2011, p. 356). This corresponds to the reign of Emperor Wudi (141–87 BCE). The Xiongnu objects might have reached the Han royals through the border trade that was established at the behest of the Xiongnu during Emperor Wen's reign (180–157 BCE) as the '*heqin* trade' between the two powers only saw a one-way flow of goods spilling into the Xiongnu Empire (Yu, 1986, p. 386–387, 1990, p. 124). Despite Han's conquests into Xiongnu territory during this time, for instance during 127, 121, and 119 BCE, Xiongnu objects continued to fill the Han royal burials hinting at the continued trade during this period (Yu, 1986, p. 390–391). One could argue that the artefacts in the royal tombs entered the Han borders before Wudi's reign, but it seems unlikely that the belt plaques would be treated as heirlooms and passed down the royal generations (which would substantiate a gap between the period of trade and the period of deposition in the burials) as the needle found in concert with the belt plaques at Dayunshan and Shizishan indicate that the items were worn (Kost, 2011, p. 368). Furthermore, the grave dated to 186–180 BCE (so before the establishment of official border trade) does not contain any Xiongnu-manufactured goods (see Table 3.1). This could suggest that these belt plaques did not enter the Han empire through trade at an earlier date. The younger grave of 86 BCE also missed Xiongnu plaques which could be a reflection of the retrenchment policies that were upheld, but more graves constructed after Wudi's reign would have to be studied to corroborate this possible connection.

Among the foreign goods unearthed from the Hepu Han tombs, no Xiongnu artefacts were found. This might be attributed to the distance of Hepu from the northern Han borders which says something about internal trading relations of the Han Empire and thus falls outside the scope of this thesis. However, the tomb of a Nanyue king dating to 122–120 BCE did contain Xiongnu belt plaques (Kost,

2011, p. 356). This shows that distance was not an obstacle, as Hepu belonged to the Nanyue Kingdom prior to 111 BCE, but that there was something else at play (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 2).

The Han bronze mirrors unearthed from Xiongnu burials are dated to larger timeframes and the date of the tomb they were found in is unreliable to accurately narrow down this date due to the practice of 'heirlooming'. Nonetheless they can contribute to our understanding of Han-Xiongnu relations. Among the 26 mirrors, 15 could fall within the Western Han period (see Table 3.2). Most of these fall within the range of the 1st century BCE of the Former Han period, corresponding to the middle of Emperor Wudi's reign and subsequent reigns, which equals the period of expansionism (and later retrenchment). From this it seems that while the *heqin* policy was in place, these items were not exported to the Xiongnu by the Han. As this observation can only be made for the bronze mirrors, it would be premature to project this onto the general Han-Xiongnu trading relations. What can be said however, is that the bronze mirror production reached its pinnacle under the Han Dynasty and was established long before this empire came into being (Zhangsun et al., 2017, p. 686). This indicates that the absence of 2nd century BCE Han mirrors in the Xiongnu archaeological record was not due to lack of production, but due to other circumstances of which lack of trade might be one. Han's *heqin* policy ensured that gifts were send into the *chanyu's* direction, but this did not reach the common Xiongnu (Yu, 1986, p. 389). The focus of Han on providing the Xiongnu court with imperial gifts to conform to the terms between them could be the reason why no commercial trading relations were established. This would explain the absence of 2nd century BCE mirrors within the graves (which belonged to both commoners and aristocrats) (Törbat, 2011, p. 320). The border trade established under Wen supposedly benefitted the average Xiongnu but the bronze mirrors of the studied case do not attest to that (Yu, 1986, p. 389).

4.2 Foreign Goods within the Han Empire's archaeological Record

As the Nanyue Kingdom was incorporated into the Han Empire, the latter was able to capitalize on the Hepu port from 111 BCE onwards by participating in overseas trade (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. v). From the selected Han tombs of Hepu studied in chapter 3, Fengmengling M27 belongs to the middle Western Han period and points to trading relations with Myanmar (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 145, 148, 176–177). The trade which was established in this period continued into the later Western Han period. Xiong and Fu (2022) use a different categorization of the periods in which the middle Western Han dates from 111 BCE–32 BCE, and the later Western Han from 32 BCE–25 CE (p. 147, 149). Looking at the tomb selection we can see that the later Western Han accommodated more foreign goods indicating an increase in finds after Wudi's reign. Furthermore, the archaeological record of the later Western Han is more diverse as ornaments of garnet, gold, and turquoise are included within the tombs (Xiong &

Fu, 2022, p. 150). The turquoise found in Hepu originated from the Persian Empire and could have entered Hepu through the Overland Silk Road or perhaps via India which acted as a hub (Yang, 2013, p. 86; Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 181).

The Eastern Han tombs are characterized as less luxurious, and see a simplification in their overall material record throughout the early and later period, which entails amongst others a decrease of foreign ornaments compared to Western predecessors (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 150–152). This development that took place between the two periods does not seem to be reflected in the tombs of the Eastern Han period described in the previous chapter, as the burials of both the early and later period contained an array of foreign objects. One thing that stands out in the archaeological record of the Eastern Han is that tomb Jiuzhiling M5 contained a locally produced glass bead and amber seal of which the raw material does have foreign origins (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 163–164, 178). This feature however, does not indicate a change within Han's foreign trading relations. Although the Hepu tombs analyzed in chapter 3 do not show a decline in foreign ornaments, the observation by Xiong & Fu cannot be ignored. They mention that of the various tomb types, pit burials and wooden-coffin tombs have remained mostly intact and unlooted whereas over 90 % of brick-chamber tombs have been disturbed and were plundered of artefacts (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 9). Brick-style tombs emerged during the Eastern Han period which can explain the decrease in (foreign) objects found within Later Han tombs as this became the main tomb style (Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 150–151).

4.3 Han Goods in foreign Contexts

The published Han lacquerwares found at the Kushan site of Begram are all dated to the late Western Han period, excluding nr. 92 which could be a mid-1st century CE piece (Zhang, 2011, p. 11; Morris, 2017, p. 288). The storeroom in which the artefacts were stocked was abandoned either around 241–250 CE or 356 CE which postdate the (Eastern) Han Dynasty (Zhang, 2011, p. 2). From this it seems that the Han exports during the Eastern Han period decreased or halted as this context, which encompasses both the Former and Later Han, predominantly stored Western Han artefacts. Zhang notes the general decrease of lacquerwares in the Eastern Han Dynasty but does not mention that the although the quantity reduced, the lacquerwares were in fact more widespread throughout the Han Empire (Ebrey, 1986, p. 612; Zhang, 2011, p. 7). This diffusion within the Eastern Han Empire is not reflected in the Begram lacquerwares and might point to a decrease in Han's exports during this period. Attributing this to the withdrawal in 105 CE of the imperial court in state controlled workshops does not seem likely as both state and local workshop produced lacquerwares make-up the Begram dataset (see Table 3.3) (Zhang, 2011, p. 7). It cannot be excluded that the absence of Eastern Han lacquerwares is specifically related to the Begram site. The Kushan Empire only emerged around 30 BCE, which corresponds to the late Western Han period and explains why the Begram lacquerwares do not predate

the late Western Han period. From the historical framework created in chapter 2 we know that the Kushans took on a more submissive role in the diplomatic relations with the Han Empire from around 88 CE onwards, and that it acted as a re-export country for Han goods (Yang, 2013, p. 85; Benjamin, 2018, p. 106). From this it seems likelier that the rooms were royal treasuries and that the lacquerwares might have been part of gifts sent during diplomatic missions as during the Later Han the changed nature of their relationship could mean that Han sent less gifts but received more from the Kushans in this period. If the rooms were merchant storerooms, more Eastern Han lacquerwares would be expected. In addition, it is peculiar that by the time of the site's abandonment, century-old goods like the Han lacquerwares, but also Indian ivories, were not exported yet (Morris, 2017, p. 16). It is not impossible however, that there is another reason behind the absence of Eastern Han lacquerwares. During the reign of the Later Han Emperor Guangwu (r. 25–57 CE), which was characterized by internal struggles, we see the Xiongnu taking control of the Western Regions again (Yu, 1986, p. 399).

The Han bronze mirrors found in Xiongnu tombs showcase a more even distribution between the Former and Later Han Dynasties than the lacquerwares. The timeframe in which the majority of mirrors fall is the 1st century BCE–1st century CE. The absolute amount of Western and Eastern artefacts cannot be determined as the Siru and Zhaoming style mirrors span both periods (see Figure 3.12). Like the lacquerwares, the bronze mirrors start to feature more from the second half of the Former Han period. From the second half of the Later Han period however, no mirrors are unearthed. If we consider the dating of lacquerware nr. 92 to the 1st century CE as latest date of the Han lacquer at Begram, then the two case studies provide us with roughly the same timeframe for the Han objects found at the site.

The disparity between the lacquerwares and bronze mirrors can have multiple causes such as the shorter distance from the Han Empire to Mongolia than Afghanistan, site specific reasons, and the fact that bronze mirrors preserve better than lacquerwares do.

4.4 Conclusions

Based on the case studies analyzed within this thesis we can make the following generalizations. Trading relations between the Han and Xiongnu, outside of the imperial gifts owed to the Xiongnu court, started to gain momentum after the *heqin* policy was converted into expansionism under Emperor Wudi. From this period within the Western Han onwards, we see Xiongnu belt plaques in royal Han tombs, and Han bronze mirrors within Xiongnu graves. In case of foreign goods within the Han archaeological record however, we see an increase after the end of Wudi's reign which makes sense as Hepu was only included into the empire by 111 BCE. Both the amount of graves in which foreign goods were found, and the types of materials increased. Contrary to general burial trends and

observations by Xiong & Fu, the Eastern Han tombs discussed within the text contain foreign goods and do not differ much from Former Han tombs in terms of foreign ornaments. The difference between the Western and Eastern Han's archaeological record is more visible in the storeroom of Begram which contains more Former than Later Han lacquerwares. This gap between the two periods is reduced in Xiongnu's archaeological record in which there are several Eastern Han artefacts. From this it seems that Han's foreign imports were more stable during the Former and Later Han Dynasties while exports might have experienced a decrease during the Eastern Han period.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

5.1 Research Question

This thesis aimed to study the effects war has on international trade and attempted to do so by looking at case studies of Han Dynasty objects found abroad, and foreign goods unearthed from the Han Empire. The previous chapter discussed the trends seen within the archaeological record of the Western and Eastern Han Dynasties. To understand the dynamic between war and trade within the Han Empire, the results from the discussion will be analyzed within the historical framework created in chapter 2 to see whether any correlations with periods of internal and/or external conflicts can be recognized, thereby addressing this thesis' main question:

To what extent did the transnational trade, engaged in by the Han Dynasty of China (206 BCE–220 CE), experience impacts from internal and external conflicts?

The sub-questions compared both the early and later periods within each of the Han halves, as well as juxtaposing the Western and Eastern Han periods against each other. The Former Han was less engaged in internal and external conflicts than the Later Han. Therefore, in order to answer the main question, these periods are compared. The Former Han however, was not without its struggles which is why periods within this dynasty are also compared to nuance the results from the Western-Eastern comparison.

The first half of the Western Han period up until Wudi's reign saw limited to no imports and exports judging from the Xiongnu belt plaques, Han bronze mirrors, and lacquerwares. This corresponds to the years of solidification necessitated by the civil warring years that brought forth the Han Dynasty, and this period encompasses several Xiongnu raids and The Revolt of the Seven Kingdoms. It can be said that trade lacked due to both internal and external conflicts. Emperor Wudi's reign however, included several conquests against the Xiongnu, Dayuan, Western Regions, and had to quell rebellions of Nanyue and the Qiang, but was the period in which the Han Empire started to engage in international trade. This is for instance seen in the Hepu tombs that started to house foreign ornaments, and the Han bronze mirrors that reside in Xiongnu burials. Interestingly, there were no internal conflicts that necessitated military intervention during Wudi's reign. Internal and external conflicts were also absent from the Later Western Han period until the uprisings against Wang Mang at the start of the Common Era.

The foreign archaeological records studied in this thesis which date to the Eastern Han period, show that the Han goods are concentrated within the 1st century CE. This is exemplified by the Han bronze

mirrors and the lacquerware fragment that possibly dates to this period. Until around 36 CE, Emperor Guangwu was still embroiled in internal conflicts, but the remaining years of the 1st century only saw a few external conflicts in the form of the Nanyue revolt and Xiongnu attacks. From the 2nd century CE onwards, no Eastern Han objects are accounted for in the studied cases. This is also the period in which several internal insurgencies arise, including the battles fought between Dong Zhuo and the eastern ensemble and among the members of this latter coalition (which eventually culminated in the end of the Han Dynasty), and in which we see revolts by Nanyue and the Qiang. The foreign ornaments uncovered from the Hepu tombs continue to be excavated in early and later Eastern Han tombs, but in lesser quantities according to Xiong & Fu (2022).

The general trend we can recognize from these case studies is that official international trade commenced under Emperor Wudi and developed throughout the Later Western Han despite retrenchment policies, and gradually declined throughout the Eastern Han period. Within the international trade we can make a distinction between Han goods, which ceased to feature in the studied foreign contexts from the 2nd century CE onwards, and foreign goods whose presence in Han contexts continued throughout the entire Later Han period but did see a decrease. This implies that foreign imports were less affected by conflict than Han exports. Another correlation that can be found is between the type of conflict and the continuation of trade. From the aforementioned we could therefore interpret that international trade during the Han Dynasty was more susceptible to internal conflict than external conflicts. To validate and extend this proposition, larger datasets are required, but the trend observed within the currently studied cases definitely stimulate further research.

5.2 Limitations and further Research

To stay within the parameters of a bachelor thesis, a limited amount of cases could be studied. This thesis recognizes the incomplete picture that this fragmentary dataset paints, but nonetheless wanted to take a first step into coming to an understanding of the substantial question regarding the relation between war and trade. When interpreting the findings of the main question, one should keep in mind the varying natures of the case studies: the Hepu Han artefacts were unearthed from multiple tombs in one region, the Begram lacquerwares were unearthed from one context, and Han mirrors in Xiongnu context were found in multiple tombs spread over Mongolia. To substantiate this thesis' findings, the dataset should be expanded with more case studies both within the Han Empire's borders as outside of it. In this way, circumstances specific to a certain site that might bias the results can be diminished and general patterns might be observed over multiple sites. To create a general understanding of the impacts war has on trade, this type of research would have to be conducted on multiple countries over

different timescales. This thesis initiated the research into the effects of war on trade and in doing so has found several interesting openings for further research such as studying the effects that war with a certain country has on the private trading relations with that same country, and studying the internal trading relations (of the Han Empire) in times of internal and external conflict.

Abstract

The Han Empire's (206 BCE–220 CE) duration eclipsed that of any other 'Chinese' dynasty. It shared its northern borders with the Xiongnu Empire and became one of the pillars of the Silk Roads. This thesis studies the international trading relations of the Han Empire and whether this was impacted by the internal and/or external conflicts that the Han Empire engaged in. Cases of foreign goods unearthed from Han contexts include foreign ornaments made from various materials that reached Han tombs at Hepu through the Maritime Silk Road, and Xiongnu belt plaques uncovered from Western Han royal tombs. These are studied alongside Han bronze mirrors and Han lacquerwares found in respectively Xiongnu burials in Mongolia, and a Kushan site in Afghanistan. Trends that emerge from these case studies show that international trade gained momentum during the reign of Emperor Wudi (r. 141–87 BCE), which was characterized by expansionist policies, and continued throughout the later Western Han period into the 1st century CE. In the Eastern Han period (23–220 CE), which was more plagued by conflict than the earlier Western Han period, foreign goods in Han contexts see a decline while Han goods in foreign contexts cease to occur in the 2nd century CE. By placing these trends in the historical framework of the Han Dynasty, this thesis finds that the Han Empire's foreign trading relations were more affected by the internal conflicts of the Han Dynasty, than by the external conflicts that the Han Empire engaged in.

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Appendix – Foreign objects within the Hepu Han tombs (table by author after Xiong & Fu, 2022)

Location	Tomb nr.	Date tomb	Tomb type	Finds	Date finds	Provenance	Photograph	Comments	Reference
Beichajiang	M4			Flat-round-, dome-, olive-, flatten ball-, gourd- , and carved melon-shaped amber beads		Myanmar			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 176)
	M5			Flat-round-, dome-, olive-, flatten ball-, gourd- , and carved melon-shaped amber beads		Myanmar			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 176)
Beichajiang Yandui	M1	Late Western Han		Lion-shaped amber beads		Myanmar			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 173–182)
				17 round, turtle-shaped, ear-plug-shaped, and other irregular-shaped amber beads		Myanmar			
				8 polyhedral spheroidal, hollow golden beads		Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region		Similar beads found in Jiangsu, Changsha, Guangzhou , east coast of India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Thailand	

				Golden belt buckle		Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region			
				Crystal beads		India			
				Sheep-shaped turquoise beads		Persian Empire (Uzbekistan/Afghanistan/Iran)			
				Necklace of beryl and crystal beads		India and Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia			
	M4			Amber ornaments		Myanmar			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170, 177–180)
				14 polyhedral spheroidal, hollow golden beads		Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region		Similar beads found in Jiangsu, Changsha, Guangzhou, east coast of India, Pakistan,	

								Vietnam, Thailand	
				Golden belt buckle		Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region			
				Carnelian ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			
	M5			Amber ornaments		Myanmar			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 177)
	M10			Faceted olive-shaped glass beads		India/Southeast Asia		Glass imported, but beads locally produced	(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 165, 170)

				Carnelian ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			
Danfeichang	M1			Garnet collar beads		India/Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 168–169)
Di'er Fangchang	M4			Faceted olive-, round, oblate and collar-shaped garnet beads,		India/Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 168–169)
Di'er Mafangchang	M4			Etched carnelian beads		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170, 172)
	M9			Agate ornament		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170–171)
	M23			Garnet round beads purple-red colored		India/Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 168–169)
	M27			Gold ornaments		Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 179–180)

Erpaochang	M8	Late Eastern Han	Pit-burial	Green glass beads		India/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 151, 165)
	M14A			Garnet round beads purple-red colored		India/Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 168–169)
	M18	Late Eastern Han		Blue glass beads		India/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 165)
Fengmengling	M10	Late Eastern Han	Brick chamber tomb with dome-shaped roof, longitudinal vault, and double back chamber	Garnet round beads purple-red colored		India/Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 19, 39, 168–169, 175–176, 178, 180)
				A necklace comprised of 24 pure beryl beads of which 3 are aquamarine colored and 21 are transparent		India and Sri Lanka			
				2 polyhedral spheroidal, hollow golden beads		Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region		Similar beads found in Jiangsu, Changsha, Guangzhou, east coast of India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Thailand	

	M23B		Joint burial (with tomb M23A) in different pits which are divided by an earthen wall	Lion-shaped amber beads		Myanmar			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 40, 42, 44, 176–177)
	M26	Late Western Han	Single-chamber wooden coffin tomb with passage	Copper-red glass beads		India			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 33–34, 149, 163, 170, 181)
				Hexagonal column-shaped glass beads					
				Carnelian ornament		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			
				Pigeon-shaped turquoise beads		Persian Empire (Uzbekistan/Afghanistan/Iran)			
	M27	Middle Western Han	Single-chamber wooden coffin tomb with passage	Lion-shaped amber beads		Myanmar			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 148, 176–177)
Fengmenling Erpaochang	M12			Green, lake-blue and deep-blue glass beads	Late Western Han Period	Mediterranean			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 165)

Honglingtou	M3			Agate ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170–171, 173–175)
				Crystal beads		India/Southeast Asia			
Huancheng Zhuanchang	M1			A gold foil piece with fused golden beads		Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 178, 180)
Huangnigang	M1	Early Eastern Han	Multiple-chamber wooden coffin tomb with passage	Lake-blue glass cup		Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 35, 150, 164, 170, 172–176, 179–180)
				A necklace of 163 dark and light purple coloured, different sized crystal beads		India			

				A necklace consisting of 23 beads which are comprised of 9 crystal beads, 1 carnelian bead, and beryl beads		India and Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia/Coastal South Asia			
				Golden beads	Early Eastern Han	Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region			
Jiuzhiling	M5	Early Eastern Han	Multiple-chamber wooden coffin tomb with passage	High-transparent flat kettle-shaped green glass beads		India		Glass imported from, but beads locally produced	(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 35, 150, 163–165, 177–178, 180–182)
				7 green oblate glass beads		Mediterranean			
				A semicircular amber seal		Myanmar		Amber imported, seals locally produced	
				2 polyhedral spheroidal, hollow golden beads		Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region		Similar beads found in Jiangsu, Changsha, Guangzhou, east coast of India,	

								Pakistan, Vietnam, Thailand	
				A copper bead covered in gold foil		West Asia/Middle East			
	M6A	Eastern Han		High-transparent flat kettle-shaped green glass beads		India			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 13–14, 163–164, 168–169, 178–180)
				Garnet round beads purple-red colored		India/Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia			
				5 polyhedral spheroidal, hollow golden beads		Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region			
				Golden ornaments					
Jixiechang	M1			High-transparent flat kettle-shaped green glass beads		India/Southeast Asia		Glass imported, but beads locally produced	(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 163–165)

Liaowei	M13B	Late Eastern Han	Brick chamber tomb with brick walls and wooden ceiling and a passage	Green-glazed Persian pot	Eastern Han (43–200 CE)	Parthian Empire (present-day southwestern Iran or southern Iraq)		Non-trade goods	(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 35, 152, 183–185; Huang et al., 2014, p. 182, 186–187)
				A bronze cymbal		West Asia			
	M14	Eastern Han	Brick chamber tomb with 3 se rooms and dome-shaped ceiling	A gold foil piece with fused golden beads, formerly embedded into a sword's wooden handle					(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 37, 178–179)
	M17	Late Eastern Han	Brick chamber tomb with a corridor, pathway and a back and front chamber	20 deep-blue glass beads of which 11 oval-shaped and 9 oblate-shaped		Mediterranean			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 38–39, 165–166)
Pingtiancun Gongsuo	M9			Olive-shaped golden beads		Southeast Asia/ South Asia/the Mediterranean region			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 179–180)

Qichichang	M7	Late Western Han		Red glass beads		India/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 165)
Tangpai	M1			A square amber seal with a snake-shaped knob		Myanmar		Amber imported, seal locally produced	(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 177–178)
	M2	Late Western Han		5 geese shaped and 6 tiger shaped agate and carnelian beads		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 12, 169–170)
	Unspecified			Agate ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170–171)
				Carnelian ornaments					
Tuguiling Chilunchang	M6			Garnet ornaments		India/Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 169)

Tuguiling Qichichang	M6			Garnet lion-shaped beads		India/Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia Southern		Artifact resembles beads uncovered in Pakistan	(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 168–169, 173–175)
				Crystal beads		India/Southeast Asia			
	M16A			Carnelian ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170)
	M17			Combinations of crystal and beryl beads		India and Sri Lanka/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 175–176, 181)
				Pigeon-shaped turquoise beads		Persian Empire (Uzbekistan/Afghanistan/Iran)			
	M22			Pigeon-shaped amber beads		Myanmar			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 176–177)
	M25			A semicircular amber seal		Myanmar		Amber imported,	(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 177–178)

								seals locally produced	
	M30A			Crystal beads		India/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 173–175)
	M30B			Carnelian ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170, 176–177)
				9 round, turtle-shaped, ear-plug-shaped, and other irregular-shaped amber beads		Myanmar			
Tuguiling Siliaochang	M1			Agate ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170–171, 176–177)
				Carnelian ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			
				Flat-round-, dome-, olive-, flatten ball-, gourd- , and carved melon-shaped amber beads		Myanmar			
	M17			Agate ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170–171)

	M22			Agate ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170–171)
	M202			Faceted olive-shaped glass beads		India/Southeast Asia		Glass imported, but beads locally produced	(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 164–165)
Wangniuling	M1	Late Western Han	Wooden coffin tomb with a paved path passage	Agate ornaments		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 33, 35, 149, 170–175)
				1 cicada-shaped crystal ornament		India/Southeast Asia			
				1 hexagonal column-shaped crystal					
				Crystal beads					
	Unspeci fied			Beryl beads		India and Sri Lanka			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 175–176)

Wengchangta	M1	Eastern Han	Brick chamber tomb with brick walls and wooden ceiling	Glass ring with budlike knobs		South Vietnam			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 35, 164)
	M70			Cyan Cup		India			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 163)
	M77			Hexagonal column shaped glass ornament		India			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 163)
	M153			Etched carnelian beads		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170, 172)
	Unspecified			Glass bowl	2nd century BC–1st century CE	Mediterranean			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 166–167)
Wengchangta Zishengcang	M1			Etched carnelian beads		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170, 172, 181)
				Pigeon-shaped turquoise beads		Persian Empire (Uzbekistan/Afghanistan/Iran)			

Yuye Ziliaozhan	Unspecified			Etched carnelian beads		Coastal South Asia/Southeast Asia			(Xiong & Fu, 2022, p. 170, 172)