

“China and Mediterranean World” Project Annual Chinese Report

As a result of the 78th Session of UAI, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences launched the research project “China and the Mediterranean World until the 10th Century AD: Archaeological Materials and Documentary Resources (I)”. Prof. Bai Yunxiang was appointed as the project director, Dr. Jiang Bo acted as research assistant and Dr. Wang Fang acted as secretary. Team Members include:

Jiang Bo (Institute of Archaeology, CASS)
Guo Wu (Institute of Archaeology, CASS)
Sun Li (China Science Publish House)
Wang Yue (Shanghai Museum)

1/ Content of proposed research

The proposed research project is based on archaeological objects found in China and mainly consists of three subsidiary projects: (1) Objects from Western Asia and Central Asia found in China (until the 3rd century A.D); (2) Sassanian Coins found in China; (3) Byzantine Coins found in China.

The first subsidiary project is directed by Professor Bai Yunxiang. This project is designed to collect and study external objects which were found in China but originally came from western and central Asia. Such objects include glassware, silverware, gold plates, etc. The distribution of this archaeological material covers western and southern China.

The second subsidiary project is directed by Professor Sun Li and is designed to collect and study Sassanian silver coins found in China. Since the beginning of the 20th Century, more than 1,900 Sassanian coins have been found in China, including mimic coins minted in China. These coins cover the period from Shapur II(309-379 A.D) to Yazdeerd III (632-

661 A.D), and most coins belong to Choseroes II (590-628 A.D) and Peroz (459-484 A.D). It is confirmed that most of these coins were found in sites located along the Silk Road, or in port cities along the Maritime Silk Road.

The last subsidiary project is directed by Professor Jiang Bo and is designed to collect and study Byzantine coins found in China, including 53 gold coins, 2 silver coins and 1 copper coin. Like the Sassanian coins, most Byzantine coins were found in sites or tombs distributed along the Silk Road.

2/Progression of the project

On Nov 28, 2008, Prof. Bai Yunxiang presided over the first meeting of this project team to discuss the methodology, theory, and the framework of the project.

From Jan 15 to 19, 2009, Prof. Bai Yunxiang and Dr. Jiang Bo were invited by Prof. Lise Hannestad, the vice-chairman of UAI, to attend the “China and Mediterranean World Workshop” in Copenhagen, Denmark.

On August 22, 2009, Prof. Bai Yunxiang presided over the project meeting in Yinchuan City to discuss the advancement of the program and plan the related fieldwork.

From May to September of 2009, Project team members including Bai Yunxiang, Jiang Bo, Guo Wu, Wang Yue went to Ningxia, Fujian, Guangdong and Qinghai to carry out field work.

Up till now, team members have finished the first step of collecting archaeological materials and began to do some indoors analysis and research.

3/ Research Program in 2010

We plan to organize a workshop on Marh 5, 2010, to discuss the progression of this project. Additionally, we plan to invite

Prof. Michael Alram, the director of Coin Cabinet of Austria Kunsthistorisches Museum, to give a lecture on ancient coins. We also invite professors from Beijing University to attend this workshop.

Team members will during 2010 carry out field investigations in Xinjiang, Jiangsu, Guangxi, Henan, and Shanxi provinces.

Team members will accomplish the drafts of research paper of each subsidiary projects and then translate them into English in the second half of this year.

“China and Mediterranean World (I)” Project Team
Feb 21, 2010