

CHANG'AN. METROPOLE OSTASIENS UND WELTSTADT DES MITTELALTERS 583–904. TEIL 2: GESELLSCHAFT UND KULTUR. By THOMAS THILO, (opera sinologica 19). pp. x, 685. Wiesbaden, Harrasowitz, 2006. doi:10.1017/S1356186309009869

Chang'an was the largest, best-organized and yet most complicated, rigidly planned and yet most culturally diverse city in the world in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries. Thomas Thilo's most recent book is a 685-page study of the society and culture of China's greatest city during the period of the Sui (581–617) and Tang (618–907) dynasties. It follows part one of the author's magnum opus, a ward-by-ward study in 406 pages of the city published in 1997. Both volumes are similar in methodology and intention: heavily grounded in primary source research and carefully documented with several thousand footnotes. Like volume one, volume two is expected to have a long shelf life as a definitive work.

The extent of textual research is clear on every page. Behind this book is careful reading of the standard histories of the period, the extensive literature about Chang'an, particularly from Tang times or just afterward, sections of comprehensive histories and compilations relevant to the Sui and Tang, Qing-period (1644–1911) studies of all the above, and modern works on Chang'an, including excavation reports. Frequently cited are: *Suishu* (Standard history of Sui), *Jiu Tangshu* (Old standard history of Tang), and *Xin Tangshu* (New standard history of Tang); Wei Shu's Tang-period *Liangjing xinji* (New record of the two capitals [Chang'an and Luoyang]); the eleventh-century record of the city, *Chang'an zhi* (Record of Chang'an) and its fourteenth-century illustrated version, *Chang'an zhi tu* (Illustrated record of Chang'an); the seminal Song compilations, *Zizhi tongjian* (Comprehensive mirror for aid in government) and *Taiping guangji* (Broad gleanings of the Taiping era); *Yonglu* (Harmonious record), of the Song period; nineteenth-century studies based on primary sources such as Xu Song's *Tang liangjing chengfang kao* (Research on the city wards of the two Tang capitals); Japanese studies based on the same such as Hiraoka Takeo *et al.*'s, *Chōan to Rakuyō* (Chang'an and Luoyang); the extensive scholarly Chinese literature on Chinese urbanism, modern and pre-modern, such as Wang Shidian's *Jinbian* (Notes on Forbidden Cities) and Gu Yanwu's *Lidai diwang zhai jingji* (Imperial residences and capitals through the ages); the voluminous bibliography based on excavation; and a host of literature works including Tang poetry and painting manuals. Thilo does not explain his sources. He writes for an audience with some knowledge of his subject and basic sinological skills. The reader who has both immediately recognises the years of research behind this accurate, textually-focused synthesis. He also recognises that what Thilo has done will save all future researchers on Tang Chang'an an initial period of investigation, perhaps years.

The study of Chang'an is divided into six chapters. The first, named society, examines the major social groups in the city from most to least eminent. Following a brief mention of the founding of the city under Sui and an even shorter discussion of Chinese social groups and pre-Tang residents, Thilo begins with emperors, whom he calls imperial personalities so that he can discuss details about their lives, especially those pertinent to palace life in Chang'an. Next is a similar kind of discussion about empresses and palace ladies. Next come princes and princesses, followed by eunuchs, officials and aristocrats, and then officers and soldiers. Often a textual source or pertinent passage from it occurs in discussion. Thilo translates or addresses each one. Common people is the next category, followed by courtesans and prostitutes, foreigners, monks and nuns, slaves, and vagabonds, beggars, and rabble-rousers. Appropriately for such an international metropolis, foreigners receive a lot of attention. Special attention is given to people of West Asia, including Uyghurs, and Tibetans, Koreans, and Japanese. The first of many poems by Li Po found in the book is translated here. The clergy receives less attention than foreigners, perhaps because monasteries and nunneries are discussed in volume one, in the wards in which they are located. The clear, logical

organisation characterises the book, even in chapters for which a organisation according to rank is not appropriate.

Chapter Two is about city offices and government. The author begins with offices that report directly to the emperor such as the secretariat and the chancellery. He proceeds to the six ministries (*bu*) and the nine bureaus (*si*), and then to the five directorates (*jian*). Thilo explains the specific duties of each. He then moves to administrative offices (*ju*) and the palace secretary. Then come palace guards, a section on the official system, and offices of city administration, including institutions and regulations. As in the first chapter, Thilo uses poetry to support his discussion. He also relies heavily on two secondary sources to support his explication of the complicated Tang bureaucracy, Charles Hucker's, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, 1985) and Robert des Rotours, *Traité des Examens* (Leiden, 1947–48). The second is a translation of five chapters of *Xin Tangshu*.

The book then moves to the Tang economy. Thilo tells the reader at the outset that the city is the imperial political centre, a cultural centre, a source of human power, and a place of opportunity for ambitious officials. All these forces worked together and fed from the economy of Chang'an. The explanation of the economy begins with taxes and other sources of income for the city. This leads to a discussion of monopolies and then the transportation system, including the Grand Canal as it relates to the city's economy. Also covered in the first part of this chapter are warehouses and granaries and the amount of money generated by them. The chapter then turns to uses of the revenue, both for the imperial household and for public works. It explains how service to the throne was rewarded, how much money was spent on imperial banquets and feasts, and the amount of money awarded to officials of each rank. Also explained is the amount of revenue given to temples and monasteries in the capital. Thilo then turns to private sources of income for aristocrats and officials.

The second half of the chapter deals with cultural aspects of Chang'an's economy, beginning with handicrafts and horticulture. The handicrafts addressed are porcelain, bronze, glass, and other luxury goods; and the craftsmen, weavers, tailors, and dyers. Thilo goes into the number of years necessary to learn the various crafts, and then the various imperial departments of manufacture of goods. One learns that Yang Guifei had 700 craftsmen working for her. Wine- and liquor-making are the next subjects in the chapter, the section ending with Thilo's translation of Wei Yingwu (b. 737)'s poem, "The Way of the Wine Shop". Also quoted in the section on handicrafts are Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan, and Dou Yi and poetry by Liu Yan and Bo Juyi. Thilo then moves to pawn brokers and loans. The section on shops and trades also deals with licensing, weights, measure, and the various businesses of the west market, populated mainly with foreign merchants. One learns that the sons of merchants also usually were merchants in Chang'an. The last topic in this chapter on the economy is the relation between merchants and the government.

The subject of chapter four is religion in the capital. As an international city, every Asian religion was practiced. Thilo begins with what he calls the state cult. This is his opportunity to talk about rituals and ritual architecture. Included are ceremonies of each moon. Following are Buddhism and Daoism in the capital, a city of 64 monasteries, 27 nunneries, 10 Daoist monasteries, six Daoist nunneries, and four temples of foreign religions, according to Wei Shu's *Chang'an zhi*. Thilo continues his discussion with official, private, and popular religious establishments. He then gives a brief history of Buddhism, emperor by emperor, and includes in it eminent monks such as Xuanzong, Shandao, and Yixing who were influential in the capital. The persecution of Buddhism in the 840s is part of this history. The author lists the monasteries and nunneries on each side of the city that survived. The last subject before turning to Daoism is Buddhist festivals. Daoism, similarly, is discussed emperor by emperor. Then come Zoroastrianism, Nestorianism, and Manichaeism, again including major religious leaders in the capital such as the Nestorian, Aluoban. As Thilo points out, the presence of all three in the capital was terminated by the religious persecutions of 845. The chapter ends with a short section on popular religious beliefs.

Thilo calls chapter five scholarly learning, literature, and art. His purpose is to talk about scholar-officials and their contributions to the court through essay writing and poetry, and then to end with a look at art in Chang'an. Although he does not use the word *wenren*, or literatus, the author begins with a look at scholarly education and literati culture more. He then moves to calligraphy, and then to literary collections. Included here are libraries and brief biographical material about a few officials who compiled or edited important literary works. The reader is introduced to schools for instruction in state ideology and Confucianism. He reads about the decisions behind commentaries on the Confucian classics. Han Yu and Li Ao figure prominently in the discussion. Next is the subject of compiling and writings the dynastic histories, a complicated project because of the many kingdoms and states in the centuries before Han. Legal and geographic writings, including maps, follow and then astronomy including the Chang'an observatory, the calendar, and Tang mathematics are covered. A long section on Chinese medicine is followed by discussion of more philosophical science, such as interpretation of *yin-yang*.

The second half of chapter five covers literature and art. It begins with a discussion of poetry. The author offers his own translations of poems that include descriptions of the capital, some by well-known poets such as Li Bai or Li Deyu, but most by men of less fame. Following is a discussion of narrative literature set in Chang'an. Thilo provides examples of the genre such as the story of General Pan or the story of Wei Yin and his wife that takes place in the year 750. The discussion of pictorial art begins with wall painting in tombs and temples. It then turns to painters, both of walls and for the court. After a short section on sculpture, the chapter concludes with discussion of music, dance, and theater, including performances in temples and puppetry. As for every other aspect of Tang culture, the examples are selected because they were performed or take place in Chang'an.

The last chapter is about daily life and customs. Thilo begins with the strong statement that everyday life in Chang'an was impossible because only those of high social status and wealth could really survive. Every aspect of daily life, he writes, from work to family life, at any stage of life, especially when it came to matters of old age and health, was determined by social status. He makes this statement to remind the reader that all that follows was enjoyed only by the wealthy. The first aspect of daily life is the house and its furnishings, from curtains to beds. The next subject is clothing, particularly that of emperors and official, studied from texts and as it can be known from sculpture and painting. Information on food and drink follows, including information about delicacies and tea. Then comes a section on transportation, horse, donkey, carriage, and sedan chair. An interesting section on entertainment and games comes next, with poetry to support the descriptions, as has been the case in the rest of the book. This section includes polo and soccer, acrobatics, board games and card games. The discussion of festivals takes the reader through the year, and then life events such as weddings and funerals. The final subject, rituals, brings those of Tang China into the thousand-year history that preceded it.

The conclusion is brief for a book of this length, emphasizing that the emperor was at the center of Chang'an and the Chinese universe, and that aspects of this great city were exported beyond China's borders, particularly to Japan. This kind of conclusion is appropriate for the book. Thomas Thilo's purpose is not to revolutionize thinking about the Sui-Tang capital, nor to convince the reader to consider Chinese urbanism in new, unexpected ways. Rather, this book is an unparalleled resource in which discussion and documentation about major aspects of life and society in the Chinese capital are provided. It will become standard reading for graduate students and others who want to study the city as Chinese texts have recorded it.

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