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The Last Sasanians in Chinese Literary Sources: Recently Identified Statue Head of a Sasanian Prince at the Qianling Mausoleum

Qianling Mausoleum (乾陵) which is located in the northwest of Xi'an, is the tomb of Emperor Gaozong of the Tang Dynasty (唐高宗, r. 649–83 AD) and his Empress Wu Zetian (武则天, r. 690–705 AD). In this mausoleum, there are two statues of Pērōz, son of Yazdegird III (632–51 AD), and another Persian nobleman who have been recognized by western scholars. However, scholars' attention has been limited to a general and mistaken description of the statues. This paper reassesses both statues in order to give some new insight into the head of one of the statues found at the Qianling Mausoleum.

Keywords: Sasanians; China; Qianling; Pērōz; Nanmei

Introduction

After the death of Yazdegird III (632–51 AD), his son Pērōz escaped along with a few Persian nobles and took refuge in the Chinese imperial court. Information about Yazdegird and his descendants in Central Asia or at the Tang court can be found in various works by Muslim authors, and in Middle Persian literature and Chinese sources. In addition to Chinese sources, the text of two inscriptions carved on the backs of the statues are of particular importance to studying the last claimants to the Sasanian throne in China. These inscriptions were carved on two out of the sixty-four statues (of which sixty-one are extant) of foreigners at the Qianling Mausoleum, located 85 km to the northwest of Xian on Liang Hill, 6 km to the north of Qianxian, Xianyang City, Shaanxi Province. The inscriptions were eroded long ago and their details are only traceable in Chinese historical sources.

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Western and Iranian scholars¹ have used the information about these two inscriptions to suggest that Pērōz and Nanmei (a high-ranking Persian nobleman, see below) held important positions at Tang's court. Although their efforts and their interpretations of these inscriptions are instructive and significant, their attention has largely been limited to a general and even wrong description of the two statues. For instance, they stated in their study that these two inscriptions can be read on the back of the two statues, but failed to mention that the inscriptions themselves were lost before 1958 and are only available in Chinese historical texts. Moreover, some parts of two statue heads, including one with curly hair and a Parthian moustache,² were found by local people in 1971.³ A head was discovered nearby that matched one of the statues on the right-hand side. This paper re-examines recent studies on Pērōz's and Nanmei's statues in order to clarify some misunderstandings. It also discusses one of the heads which has not been the focus of scholars' attention. We believe that this head with curly hair and a Parthian moustache can be identified as the head of Pērōz's or Nanmei's statue.

An Overview: The Last Claimants of the Sasanian Throne in Central Asia and China. Before discussing Pērōz's and Nanmei's statues at the Qianling Mausoleum, an overview of the last Sasanians in China is appropriate. According to the *Jiu Tangshu*, *Xin Tangshu*, and *Cefu yuangui*, Pērōz, whom they call 卑路斯, or Beilusi, was the king of Persia in 661.⁴ After the death of Yazdegird III (伊嗣候), Pērōz sought help from Gaozong (唐高宗) (649–83 AD), the third emperor of the Tang dynasty and Taizong's son.⁵ According to *Xin Tangshu*, when the Tang emperor rejected Pērōz's request to help him against the Arabs, Pērōz, according to the *Xin Tangshu* and *Cefu yuangui*, found refuge in Tokharistan (i.e. in the northern part of modern Afghanistan), following the Arab abandonment of the area.⁶ In 661–64, Pērōz again requested Emperor Gaozong's help. He sent envoys to the Tang court and asked the emperor to help him defend his kingdom against the Arabs.⁷ According to the *Xin Tangshu* and *Cefu yuangui*, with the support of China, he finally managed to forge an Iranian kingdom in a city called Chi-ling or Tsi-ling (疾陵城, i.e. Jiling city) in 661–63, which lasted until 674.⁸

Pērōz's reign in Chi-ling (Tokharistan) was short-lived. Unable to withstand the Arab invasion, he returned to China in 673–74, indicating his defeat by the Arabs.⁹ He went back to the west and returned to China for the last time on 17 June 675.¹⁰ Pērōz was warmly welcomed by Gaozong, who bestowed upon him the honorary title of "Awe-inspiring General of the Left (Flank) Guards" (*zuǒ wēi wèi jiāng jūn*, 左威衛將軍).¹¹ According to the *Liǎng Jīng Xīnjì* (兩京新記, i.e. new records of the two capitals by Wei Shu, 韋述), written in the eighth century, Pērōz managed to get permission from Gaozong to build a "Persian Temple" called Bosisi (波斯寺) in Chang'an.¹² Scholars believe that this temple was a Christian establishment and serves as evidence of the late Sasanian rulers' interest in Christianity.¹³ More recently, scholars have suggested that Pērōz's wife was most likely Christian.¹⁴ Also it was discovered that another Persian, a certain Aluoben (阿罗本), introduced Christianity into China and built the first church in Chang'an in 635.¹⁵

After Pērōz's death in 678–79, his son Narseh tried to regain *Ērānšahr*.¹⁶ By 678 or 679, the Chinese general, Péi Xíng Jiǎn (裴行俭), who was responsible for subduing the western Turkic khan āshīnà dōuzhī (阿史那都支), and was allied with the Tibetans and Kashgarians, crowned Narseh (泥涅师, Nie-nie-che) in Tokharistan. Under the pretext of restoring the Sasanian prince to the throne of *Ērānšahr*, he surprised the Turkic khan and defeated him. The Chinese general, who had reached his goal, did not continue marching toward *Ērānšahr* and left the Iranian prince there. Left alone in Tokharistan, Narseh fought for twenty years against the Arabs until all his men and resources were exhausted; then he reluctantly returned to the Chinese court in 708/9.¹⁷ There, he received the title of “General of the Left Majestic Guard” (*zuǒ tún wèi jiāng jūn*, 左屯衛將軍).¹⁸

Although recent scholarship tends to focus on Pērōz and Narseh and their struggle to regain Persia, there were others from the Sasanian clan who also tried to retake Persia. There is information about a Persian nobleman who is identified as Pērōz's brother, Wahrām.¹⁹ This prince died at the age of ninety-five on the first day of the fourth month of Chingyün's reign (710) in his private domicile in Honan Fu.²⁰ After Wahrām, his son, whose name is given in the Chinese sources as Jū Luó (俱羅), the Chinese variant of Xosrow, continued his father's mission.²¹ Tabari also points to someone called Xosrow who fought the Arabs in 728/29, in the Turkic Qayan's army in Transoxiana.²² This was a descendant of Yazdegird, who hoped to regain the throne of his ancestors with the aid of Qayan.²³ Since there is a seventy-eight-year gap between Yazdegird's death and Xosrow, we can assume that he was the same Xosrow as in Chinese records and thus Yazdegird's grandson. He also visited China's capital in 730/31.²⁴

In *Cefu yuangui* (冊府元龜), data can be found about kings of Persia who sent embassies to the Tang court from 723 to 772.²⁵ As noted above, some scholars believe that here Persia would be considered as Tokharistan.²⁶ The *Cefu yuangui* even mentions two of these kings' names: the first is Bó Qiāng Huó (勃善活), probably the Chinese variant of Pušang, who was famous as the Persian king in 723.²⁷ Apparently, he was Narseh's son and Pērōz's grandson.²⁸ It seems that he was in Tokharistan fighting the Arabs, just as his father had done. In the same source, we also learn of another person called Mù Shānuò (穆沙諾), who is referred to as the king of Persia.²⁹ He came to the Tang court in 726 or 731, was given the rank of general (折冲, *shé chōng*), and became a guardian (留宿卫, *liú sù wèi*) of the emperor in 731.³⁰ After Mù Shānuò, there is some information about ambassadors from Persia who came to the Tang court until 772, but there is no direct mention of any Persian king. Some scholars believe that the embassies from the king of Bosi were received at the Chinese court in 747 and 751 were most probably not sent by Iranians opposing Musilim rule in Iran. On the contrary, it is likely that these two embassies were sent to China by Umayyad and Abbasid rulers respectively.³¹ It seems that after Mù Shānuò, the Persians (most likely Sasanians) in Tokharistan were completely defeated by the Arabs. Although this is an inference, it is known that after 731 the names of Sasanian claimants disappeared from the histories.³²

Sasanians at the Qianling Mausoleum

Sources. As discussed, Pērōz died in 678–79 and was succeeded by his son, Narseh.³³ There is no mention in any Chinese sources of Pērōz’s burial place, but according to his presence in the Tang court (in Chang’an) during the last year of his life, it may be assumed that he was buried there. Works by scholars such as Forte, Compareti and Daryae, which are quite significant for learning more about Iranians in China, paid attention to Pērōz’s life in China. Forte points out that the beheaded statue of Pērōz stands in front of Qianling Mausoleum, near Xi’an. He says: “The statue really represents Pērōz and is incontestably attested by the inscription that still can be read on the back.”³⁴ Then he mentions the following Chinese inscription as being on the back of the statue:

右驍衛大將軍兼波斯都督波斯王卑路斯

Yòu xiāowèi dà jiàngūn jiān bōsī dūdū bōsī wáng bēilùsī

“Pērōz, king of Persia, Grand general of the right courageous guard and commander in chief of Persia.”³⁵

Compareti and Daryae agreed with Forte that the statue of Pērōz is beheaded, but recognizable by a Chinese inscription on its back.³⁶ Furthermore, Forte and Compareti discuss the statue of another Persian at the same site. They believe that Pērōz is not the only Persian who is represented among the sixty-four statues, mentioning that on the back of another statue can be read:

波斯大首領南昧

Bosi da Shouling Nanmei

“Nanmei, the Grand Head of Persia.”³⁷

In addition to this, Compareti believes that the statue of Nanmei is headless, like Pērōz’s statue.³⁸ All these scholars report that there are two statues of Sasanian noblemen standing with the statues of other foreigners at the entrance to Qianling Mausoleum of Emperor Gaozong and his Empress Wu Zetian. Their reasoning is based on the inscriptions on the backs of these statues. Although Forte had deeply studied the last Sasanians in China, it seems that in this case he made a mistake and did not notice that the two inscriptions had been eroded before 1958 (see below). Nowadays, these statues do not have any inscription with the names and titles of Pērōz or Nanmei. Forte’s “On the So-Called Abraham from Persia, A Case of Mistaken Identity,” published in 1996, mostly used information from Chen Guocan. In his work “唐乾陵石人像及其銜名的研究” (Tang Qianling shirenxiang jiqi xianming de yanjiu), written in 1980, Chen Guocan (陈国灿) studied the statues of foreigners in Qianling Mau-

soleum.³⁹ This article became the main source of information about Pērōz in China. Chen's article is based on numerous materials such as ancient books from different Chinese dynasties and some contemporary reports.

Chen Guocan stated that in 1958 the Shaanxi Cultural Relics Management Committee conducted a comprehensive examination in Qianling and found that the inscriptions on only six statues could be recognized.⁴⁰ During their visit, they provided rubbings of these six inscriptions. Those for Pērōz and Nanmei are not included, which implies that they had been eroded before 1958. In spite of this, Forte has wrongly stated that the Pērōz and Nanmei inscriptions could still be read on the backs of the statues.⁴¹ During a visit to Qianling Mausoleum in May 2016,⁴² it was found that there are only seven inscriptions, of which six can still be recognized. The fact that currently there are no inscriptions on these statues containing the names of Pērōz and Nanmei poses an interesting challenge. If the Pērōz and Nanmei inscriptions are not among them, how can it be proven that Pērōz's and Nanmei's statues are among those of other foreigners at the entrance of Qianling Mausoleum? It is easy to answer this question. Although the inscriptions themselves have not survived, their contents are available in the Chinese literary sources. Chen Guocan obtained details of the inscriptions, including the names and titles of Pērōz and Nanmei, from Chinese historical texts such as Li Haowen's book: *Chang'an Zhitu* (长安志图), but not from the inscriptions on the statues. So, his remarks about the statues of Pērōz and Nanmei were made on the basis of historical texts.

According to Chen Guocan, the statues were built around 705 AD.⁴³ As the ancient Chinese always tried to build symmetrical buildings and mausoleums, it seems that at first there were sixty-four statues (thirty-two on the left and thirty-two on the right).⁴⁴ We do not know if all of the inscriptions on these statues were recorded during the Tang dynasty because such materials from the period have not been found. As we know, during North Song dynasty, an official named You Shixiong (游狮雄) visited the statues in about 1086–94 AD and came to the conclusion that some of the inscriptions were difficult to understand. So he asked for rubbings and materials containing the inscriptions on these statues from local families nearby and inscribed the names and titles of the statues on four steles. Later, the four steles were put beside the statues (two on the left and two on the right).⁴⁵

Another person, Zhao Kai (赵楷) from the Song dynasty (maybe after You Shixiong), visited the statues and realized that only sixty-one of them had survived. During Zhizheng Year (1341–68 AD) of the Yuan dynasty, a person named Li Haowen (李好文) visited the statues and steles and noted that there were only three steles left beside the statues.⁴⁶ As he also indicated that there were sixteen names on each stele there might have been a total of sixty-four names on all four steles.⁴⁷ In his book *Chang'an Zhitu* (长安志图), Li Haowen also drew pictures of the statues. He noted that there were twenty-nine statues on the left side and thirty-two on the right side of the gates.⁴⁸ However, Li Haowen only mentioned thirty-nine inscriptions, including those on the statues of Pērōz and Nanmei.⁴⁹ The text of these thirty-nine inscriptions are recorded in his book. It seems that the rest of them were missing in his period. Later, according to books from the Ming dynasty, many

statues had fallen over and most of them were headless. In the Qing dynasty and in the 1950s, some Chinese scholars tried to discover the identities of the statues on the basis of information given by Li Haowen.

The statues of Pērōz and Nanmei at the Qianling Mausoleum. Details about the thirty-nine inscriptions are only available in Li Haowen's book *Chang'an Zhitu* and other Chinese texts. This is the only information on the statues of Pērōz and Nanmei in Qianling Mausoleum. Since the inscriptions have eroded over time, it is not possible to know exactly which statue represents Pērōz or Nanmei. Only sixty-one of the original sixty-four statues statues survived the Song and Yuan dynasties:⁵⁰ thirty-two on the right (Figure 1) and twenty-nine on the left (Figure 2) of the gate. Many scholars have stated that these sixty-one statues are represented wearing the same long garment, typical of Chinese high officials.⁵¹ During our visit to Qianling Mausoleum we found that at least one statue is represented with a different garment (Figure 5). Furthermore, some parts of two statues' heads (Figures 3 and 4) had been found and matched with the two statues on the right-hand side. The exact date of their discovery is not clear; however, it is reported that the head with curly hair and a Parthian moustache was discovered in 1971.⁵² It is not certain which statue the head fits, though we do know that since the 1980s scholars have noted that all sixty-one statues are headless. Chen Guocan also reported that the heads of the statues

Figure 1. Thirty-two stone statues on the right side of the scarlet bird gate of Qianling Mausoleum Qianxian, Shaanxi, China (photographed by Hamidreza Pasha Zanous, 10 May 2016).



Figure 2. Twenty-nine stone statues on the left side of the scarlet bird gate of Qianling Mausoleum Qianxian, Shaanxi, China (photographed by Hamidreza Pasha Zanous, 10 May 2016).



were not in their rightful place.⁵³ His statement implies that the statues lost their heads, and these were scattered around the site. It is not exactly clear when and why the heads were separated from the statues.

However, one of these two heads is significant for studying the last Sasanians in China. Although some parts of the head are still missing (Figure 3), it allows us to make a comparison with ancient Iranian rock reliefs. The hair was depicted as curly (Figure 6), similar to the traditional style of the Sasanian kings.⁵⁴ However, the upper part of the head is broken and therefore it is difficult to determine the depiction of the damaged parts of the face and hair. Moreover, on the face there is a heavy moustache in the Parthian fashion (Figure 7). This unique depiction is not completely similar to the faces of Sasanian kings represented on rock-cut reliefs and coins. It is also possible to imagine that this head may belong to a Sasanian prince who was deeply influenced by Parthian fashion and was a ruler in the eastern parts of Sasanian territory.

Moreover, this head has similarities to that of a prince depicted on a gilded silver plate found in Lugovka (Perm region) in 1909.⁵⁵ This plate also features a depiction of a banqueting prince with short hair and a heavy moustache (Figure 8). Boris I. Marshak suggested that the Lugovka plate was manufactured in the Turkic territories of eastern Iran or, more precisely, in Narseh in Tokharistan.⁵⁶ In 2016, Agostini and Stark also confirmed Marshak's suggestion and attempted to connect the Lugovka plate with a Sasanian court-in-exile.⁵⁷ It seems that both the head in Qianling Mausoleum and the Lugovka plate were the result of a combination of iconographic and compositional elements from Sasanian dynastic art, khorāsān, and contemporary art in

Figure 3. A statue with a head on the right side of the scarlet bird gate of Qianling Mausoleum Qianxian, Shaanxi, China (photographed by Hamidreza Pasha Zanous, 10 May 2016).



the southeastern regions of Iran in the sixth to seventh centuries.⁵⁸ The features of the head with curly hair and a Parthian moustache in Qianling Mausoleum are very close to the facial type of the banqueting prince on the Lugovka plate, and could in fact be a clue confirming that this head also belongs to a Sasanian prince in China and Tokharistan. If we return to the text of the Pērōz and Nanmei inscriptions, which were preserved in Chinese sources, we might be able to ascertain the owner of this head.

As mentioned above, it is not possible to recognize the statue of Pērōz by its inscription, which has been lost; its text is only available in Chinese sources. Although the inscription on Pērōz's statue has been eroded, we know from the Chinese texts that his name was the eighth one on the first stele on the right. The statue of Pērōz might therefore be among the first eight statues on the right side of the gate.⁵⁹ The content of Pērōz's inscription, which was preserved by Chinese historical texts, holds great importance for understanding his relations with the Tang court. If we take the titles in his inscription as merely honorary and see in the word "Persia" an equivalent for Ērānšahr, then it would be meaningless to call someone "king of Persia" and "commander in chief of Persia." On the other hand, we may assume that "king of Persia" indicates a kingdom lost (i.e. Ērānšahr), while "commander in

Figure 4. Another statue with a head on the right side of the scarlet bird gate of Qianling Mausoleum Qianxian, Shaanxi, China (photographed by Hamidreza Pasha Zanos, 10 May 2016).



chief of Persia” indicates that Chi-ling was given to Pērōz by the Tang emperor as a fiefdom. This is confirmed by the seventh word in the inscription: the Chinese title *dūdū* (都督), literally military commander who was in charge of a *dūdūfū* (都督府, i.e. area commands).⁶⁰ This title was bestowed by the Tang court on Chinese generals in border areas or vassal kings established in the conquered lands.⁶¹ It seems that Pērōz was the *dūdū* (military commander) of a *dūdūfū* which was most likely Chi-ling. After all, these titles were intended for client kings providing the Tang a legitimate kingship.⁶²

Again, we cannot recognize Nanmei by his inscription, because it has also been lost over time and we can only find information about it in Chinese historical texts. According to the Chinese texts, his name was the third one on the second stele on the right-hand side (右二碑第三人).⁶³ Daryae believes that Nanmei could be Narseh.⁶⁴ As was discussed before, Pērōz and his son Narseh stayed in Tokharistan to try to regain Ērānšahr. In fact, following the death of Yazdgerd and until 731 or even until the end of the eighth century, Tokharistan served as a bastion for Sasanian refugees who still clung to the hope of taking Ērānšahr away from the Arabs one day.⁶⁵ The fact that Pērōz and Narseh had been in Tokharistan for a long time would incline us to think that Nanmei could be Narseh.

In addition, a Chinese scholar suggested that the statue of Nanmei is in fact a statue of Aluohan, probably the Chinese variant of Wahrām. He reasons that Nanmei (南昧), whose name is written with two Chinese characters, was mistakenly given instead of *you tunwei* (右屯衛), the honorary title of Aluohan.⁶⁶ A funerary stele recovered near Luoyang reveals important information regarding the career of Aluohan, prob-

Figure 5. Among the ninety-nine stone statues is one with a different garment, on the left side of the scarlet bird gate of Qianling Mausoleum Qianxian, Shaanxi (photographed by Hamidreza Pasha Zanous, 10 May 2016).



ably the Chinese variant of Wahrām, described as a Persian who was contemporary with Pērōz and highly esteemed by Gaozong.⁶⁷ He was famous for two important actions: firstly, he was sent to Byzantium as a Chinese envoy (probably to conclude an alliance between the Tang and Byzantine empires); secondly, he constructed an important building in China.⁶⁸ In 656–61 he was charged by the Tang with retaking Iran from the Arabs.⁶⁹ The following inscription stored in the Imperial Museum of Uyeno in Japan reveals something about his life at the Tang court:

The inscription on the Stone-tablet set up in memory of the late Great Persian Chieftain, the General and Commander of the Right Wings of the Imperial Army of Tang [i.e. China] with the title of Grand Duke of Chin-ch'êng-chün [in Kan-su] and the Rank of Shang-chu-kuo [上柱國,⁷⁰ i.e. lit. the first-class cornerstone of the Empire]: This is the Stone-tablet erected in memory of A-lo-han (阿羅喊) a Persian prince by birth and the most illustrious of the whole tribe. During the period of Hsien-ching [656–61], the subsequent emperor, Kao-

Figure 6. A statue with curly hair on the right side of the scarlet bird gate of Qianling Mausoleum Qianxian, Shaanxi, China (photographed by Hamidreza Pasha Zanous, 10 May 2016).



Figure 7. Statue with a moustache in Parthian fashion on the right side of the scarlet bird gate of Qianling Mausoleum Qianxian, Shaanxi, China (photographed by Hamidreza Pasha Zanous, 10 May 2016).



Tsung the Great, hearing of the meritorious service and illustrious deeds of this Persian prince, sent a special messenger to invite him to his own palace [here are two illegible characters]. As soon as the Prince arrived at the capital, the Emperor appointed him Generalissimo, and charged him with the responsibility

Figure 8. Gilded silver plate. Found in Lugovka (Perm region), now kept in St. Petersburg, State Hermitage.



Source: Agostini and Stark, "Zāvulistān," 33.

of defending the Northern Gate [i.e. the northern region of China] [here is one illegible character] and sent him as the imperial envoy to the tribes of Tibet, Ephraim, and other countries.⁷¹

This inscription continues by describing Wahrām's sagacious acts, and his death, followed by a requiem. The importance of this inscription is its information about Wahrām's attempts to take Ērānšahr. It seems that Wahrām, alongside his brother Pērōz, had tried to restore the Sasanian kingdom, and his role in this attempt was more diplomatic than military. He was a Tang envoy to "Tibet, Ephraim, and other countries."⁷² This assumption is confirmed by a Middle Persian text called *Zand-Ī Vohūman Yasn*. In this book, there is the story of someone called "Wahrām-ī Warjāwand" who ultimately put an end to the atrocities of the Iranian people and expelled the Arabs. Some scholars believe that he might have been Wahrām the son of Yazdegird.⁷³ This is well illustrated by looking at the text of *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*: "And he was born in a religion called Wahrām-ī Warjāwand ... and when that king was thirty years old ... having gathered innumerable soldiers and banners, of China and India holding banners ... the kingdom is entrusted to him."⁷⁴ In his article "The Sons and Grandsons of Yazdegird in China," Daryae suggests that the

Pahlavi poetry of “the resurgence of king Wahrām ī Varjāvand,” available in Pahlavi texts, also points to Wahrām.⁷⁵

Considering their titles in the Tang court, it seems that both Aluohan and Narseh were considered to be on a par with Persian kings in the Chinese court and their significance in China convinced the Tang court to build statues for them, as they built one for Pērōz. Thus, it can be assumed that one of these two princes could be Nanmei. Nevertheless, it is not easy to conclude which of these three princes (Pērōz, Aluohan and Nanmei) is the owner of the head with curly hair and a Parthian moustache. According to Chinese historical texts both Pērōz and Nanmei were among the thirty-two statues on the right-hand side. It is an interesting coincidence that the head with curly hair and a Parthian moustache has been matched to a statue on the same side of the gate.

Conclusion

This study attempts to show that during the last three decades, despite the claims of scholars who believe that two of the statues at Qianling Mausoleum can be identified as Pērōz and Nanmei through inscriptions which can currently be read on the backs of the statues, the available facts prove that these two inscriptions eroded before 1958 and they are only available in some Chinese historical sources. Secondly, some scholars reported that all sixty-one statues were headless, but some parts of two statues' heads (Figures 3 and 4), which was not the focus for the studies carried out by the scholars at that time, were found in 1971 and matched to the two statues on the right side. As discussed before, one of these two heads (Figures 6 and 7) with curly hair and Parthian moustache could be identified as belonging to Pērōz or Nanmei, who were among the sixty-one statues of Qianling Mausoleum, and there is some supporting evidence. Special features of this head depict a prince who was influenced by Sasanian and Parthian traditions. This mixture of Sasanian and Parthian traditions could only be found in eastern parts of the Sasanian Empire where Arsacid or Parthian culture had always had a major presence. Apart from this, another idea that was discussed is that the head in Qianling Mausoleum is the result of a combination of various elements from sixth to seventh century Sasanian dynastic art, khorāsān and contemporary art in the southeastern regions of Iran, such as Tokharistan. We know that following the death of Yazdegird, until 731, Tokharistan served as a haven for Pērōz, Narseh and other Sasanian refugees who still clung to the hope of taking Ērānšahr away from the Arabs. Therefore, it might be safe to assume that this head belongs to the statue of Pērōz or Nanmei who ruled over Tokharistan.

Notes

1. See Harmatta, “Sino-Iranica,” 140–41; Daryaei, “The Sons and Grandsons of Yazdegird,” 542; Daryaei, “Yazdegerd's Last Year,” 25–6; Compareti, “The Last Sasanians in China,” 206; Compareti, “Chinese–Iranian Relations.”

2. Parthian moustache is a term used to refer to the type of moustache depicted in Parthian art. This type of moustache can be observed in most representations of Parthian noblemen in Parthian art. The Statue of Parthian Noble Man (National Museum of Iran 2401) is one of the main surviving works of Parthian art which bears a heavy moustache in the Parthian fashion.
3. Fan et al., *Qianling*, 145.
4. Ou Yangxiu, "Western Regions," 6258–60; Wang, *Cefu yuangui*, 11365; Liu, "Western Barbarians," 5311–13; Zhang, *Tārīkh-i Ravābit*, 73, 76, 77.
5. Chavannes, *Documents*, 257.
6. Ou Yangxiu, "Western Regions," 6258; Zhang, *Tārīkh-i Ravābit*, 76–7.
7. Ou Yangxiu, "Western Regions," 6258.
8. Harmatta, "Sino-Iranica," 140–41; Ou Yangxiu, "Western Regions," 6258–60; Wang, *Cefu yuangui*, 11365. Although some scholars, such as Touraj Daryae and János Harmatta, believe that this kingdom was in Sīstān and identify Chi-ling as the city of Zarang (seat of Sīstān) in 661 (Harmatta, "Sino-Iranica," 140; Daryae, "Yazdegerd's Last Year," 25–6), it is our contention that Chi-ling was located in Tokharistan and the Pamir mountains, not in Sīstān. We can therefore assume that these kings, who most likely were from the Sasanian dynasty, like Pērōz and Narseh, attempted to retake Persia from Tokharistan (Pashazanous and Afkandeh, "The Last Sasanians," 144–6). Some scholars suggest that the last Sasanians established their court in the southern Hindukush (Agostini and Stark, "Zāwulistān," 32).
9. Ou Yangxiu, "Western Regions," 6258; Chavannes, *Documents*, 257.
10. Chinese sources recorded different dates for Pērōz's arrival in Chang'an. For more details see also Agostini and Stark, "Zāwulistān," 18–19.
11. Liu, "Western Barbarians," 5313.
12. Drake, "Mohammedanism," 6.
13. Forte, "Iranians in China," 282; Compareti, "Chinese–Iranian Relations"; Leslie, "Persian Temples," 290.
14. Scarcia, "La 'sposa bizantina'," 121; Compareti, "Chinese–Iranian Relations."
15. Forte, "The Edict of 638," 349–74; Tajadod, *À l'est du Christ*, 43–5; Compareti, "Chinese–Iranian Relations."
16. Chavannes, *Documents*, 258.
17. *Ibid.*, 258.
18. Forte, "On the So-Called Abraham," 406.
19. Forte, "On the Identity of Aluohan," 193–4.
20. Saeiki, *The Nestorian Monument*, 258; Zhang, *Tārīkh-i Ravābit*, 90.
21. Zhang, *Tārīkh-i Ravābit*, 90.
22. Tabari, *Annales*, 1518.
23. Harmatta, "Sino-Iranica," 140–41; Marquart, *Eranshahr*, 69.
24. Zhang, *Tārīkh-i Ravābit*, 79.
25. Wang, *Cefu yuangui*, 11723; Zhang, *Tārīkh-i Ravābit*, 78–80.
26. Chavannes, *Documents*, 257; Compareti, "Chinese–Iranian Relations"; Daffinà, "La Persia Sasaniane," 135; Pashazanous and Afkandeh, "The Last Sasanians," 144–6.
27. Wang, *Cefu yuangui*, 11723.
28. Shahmardān, *The History of Zoroastrians*, 49.
29. Wang, *Cefu yuangui*, 11450.
30. *Ibid.*, 11450; Zhang, *Tārīkh-i Ravābit*, 78.
31. Agostini and Stark, "Zāwulistān," 24.
32. Although there is no mention of the names of Sasanian claimants in the histories after 731, we know that several Persian nobles lived in the Far East. Supported by the first Tang emperors, some of these nobles lived in China, but their situation changed after the rebellion of the Sogdian-Turkish General Ruhsan-An Lushan (755–56), especially with the edicts issued by the minister Li Mi (722–89), who wanted to stop the monetary support granted to the Iranian nobles living at Chang'an (Compareti, "The Last Sasanians in China," 211; Dulby, "Court Politics," 593). There is also information about the first Persians who came to Japan. In the *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicles of Japan), one of the earliest

- Japanese historical sources, completed in 720, we read that in 654 several people arrived in Japan from Tokhārā (Aston, *Nihongi*, 246, 251, 259). Tokhara has to be a shortened version of Tokharistan (Itō, *Perushia bunka toraikō*, 5–10). Elsewhere in Nihon Shoki, it is mentioned that in 660, when a Persian called Dārā returned to his country, he left his wife in Japan and promised the emperor to come back and work for him again (Aston, *Nihongi*, 266; Imoto, “Asuka no Perushiajin,” 58–60; Morita, “Japan iv. Iranians in Japan”).
33. Chavannes, *Documents*, 258.
 34. Forte, “On the So-Called Abraham,” 404.
 35. *Ibid.*, 404.
 36. Compareti, “The Last Sasanians in China,” 203; Compareti, “Chinese–Iranian Relations”; Daryaei, “The Sons and Grandsons of Yazdgird,” 542.
 37. Forte, “On the So-Called Abraham,” 404; Compareti, “The Last Sasanians in China,” 203.
 38. Compareti, “The Last Sasanians in China,” 203; Compareti, “Chinese–Iranian Relations.”
 39. Chen “Tang Qianling,” 189–202.
 40. *Ibid.*, 190. The six statues’ inscriptions in Chinese are the following:
 - (1) 吐火羅葉護咄咄十姓大首領鹽泊都督阿史那忠節 (*ibid.*, 193–4).
 - (2) 朱俱半國王斯托勒 (*ibid.*, 197).
 - (3) 于闐王尉遲瓊 (*ibid.*, 197).
 - (4) 播仙城主何伏帝延 (*ibid.*, 197).
 - (5) 吐火羅王子特勤羯達健 (*ibid.*, 198).
 - (6) 默啜使移力貪汗達干 (*ibid.*, 200).
 41. Forte, “On the So-Called Abraham,” 404.
 42. This visit was made by Hamidreza Pasha Zanous and Minghui Li. Together we were able to read the inscriptions.
 43. Chen “Tang Qianling,” 190.
 44. *Ibid.*, 190.
 45. *Ibid.*, 190.
 46. Li, *Chang’an Zhitu*, 9.
 47. *Ibid.*, 9.
 48. *Ibid.*, 5.
 49. *Ibid.*, 9.
 50. Chen “Tang Qianling,” 190.
 51. Compareti, “The Last Sasanians in China,” 203.
 52. Fan et al., *Qianling*, 145; Zhou, *The Mausoleum of Emperor Tang*, 233.
 53. Chen, “Tang Qianling,” 190.
 54. Hinz, *Alt-iranische Funde*, 51 ff.; Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics*, 1–15.
 55. Agostini and Stark, “Zāwulistān,” 32–3.
 56. Marshak, *Silberschätze des Orients*, 276–8.
 57. Agostini and Stark, “Zāwulistān,” 32.
 58. *Ibid.*, 32.
 59. Li, *Chang’an Zhitu*, 5 and 9.
 60. Agostini and Stark, “Zāwulistān,” 18.
 61. For Tang Administration in border areas and conquered lands, see Skaff, *Sui-Tang China*, 248–9.
 62. Canepa, “Distant Displays of Power,” 140.
 63. Chen “Tang Qianling,” 198; Li, *Chang’an Zhitu*, 5 and 9.
 64. Daryaei, “The Sons and Grandsons of Yazdgird,” 543–4.
 65. Pashazanous and Afkandeh, “The Last Sasanians,” 144–6.
 66. Lin, “The Unearthed Luoyang Tomb,” 296–7; Forte, “On the So-Called Abraham,” 411.
 67. Forte, “On the So-Called Abraham,” 411; Zhang, *Tārikh-i Ravābit*, 89.
 68. Zhang, *Tārikh-i Ravābit*, 89.

69. Ibid., 89.
70. Shang-chu-kuo (上柱國, py: shang zhu guo), an honorary office granted to either civil or military officials. The office was established by Northern Zhou Dynasty (557–81) and abolished during Qing Dynasty before 1912 AD.
71. Sacki, *The Nestorian Monument*, 257.
72. It seems the country of Ephraim refers to a place near the Eastern Roman Empire on the coast of Mediterranean Sea (Zhang, *Tārīkh-i Ravābit*, 89).
73. Cereti, “Again on Wahram i Warzawand,” 636; Sprengling, “From Persian to Arabic,” 175–6; Compareti, “Chinese–Iranian Relations.”
74. Anklesaria, *Zand-Ī Vohūman Yasn*, 7/5 and 6.
75. Daryae, “The Sons and Grandsons of Yazdgird,” 546.

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