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Realism and Idealism in the *Yuanshi* Chapters on Foreign Relations

INTRODUCTION

With Khubilai Qan's conquest of the Southern Song in 1279, for the first time non-Chinese ruled all of China. Furthermore, the old multistate system of relations that had prevailed for centuries in East Asia was replaced with a unified state, and several ethnic groups, not just the Chinese themselves, were given privileges among the socio-political elite.¹ The fact that northern "barbarians" now ruled all of China challenged the traditional Confucian world-view that China was the center of civilization, the sole preserve of the Han people, and that it was qualitatively different from all non-Han states and peoples. In this older worldview, all peoples and states of the four quarters surrounding China (the outer or exterior barbarians, the *waiyi* 外夷) should naturally pay tribute to China as the center, the repository of culture.² Once the Mongols controlled all of China, Chinese writers could no longer assume that the emperor was the repository of a uniquely Chinese political force, the implication being that China was no longer the center. The outer barbarians were now in control, and in the new order power, not virtue, defined social and international relations. Chinese values did not, of course, disappear. But they were sublimated to the new realities imposed by the Mongol conquest.

EARLIER DRAFTS of this paper under this title were presented at the 2003 Annual Association for Asian Studies meeting in New York, and at the conference Crossing the Borders of China: A Conference on Cross-Cultural Interactions in Honor of Professor Victor H. Mair, Center for East Asian Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Dec. 2003.

¹ See John W. Dardess, "Did the Mongols Matter? Territory, Power, and the Intelligentsia in China from the Northern Song to the Early Ming," in Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, eds., *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard U.P., 2003), p. 122.

² As Wang Gungwu points out, the ancient worldview of Han superiority over the outer barbarians (*waiyidi*) was expressed most concretely by the Han historian Ban Gu. See Wang Gungwu, "Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia: A Background Essay," in John King Fair-

One important area in which Mongol China differed from earlier Chinese dynasties was in its foreign relations. The conquest reduced China to a part of a larger imperial enterprise, and imposed new understandings of the world and civilization. Just as important, a new political elite who were invested in imperatives of conquest and expansion now formulated a new foreign policy that earlier Chinese emperors would have scarcely recognized (and one which, at least geographically, the Ming continued).³ But what, specifically, was the rhetoric of foreign policy under the Mongols who controlled China? The chapters on foreign relations contained in the standard *History of the Yuan Dynasty* (namely, “Yuanshi waiyizhuan” 元史外夷傳) provide a fascinating window onto these Mongol views. But since the *Yuanshi* 元史 was also a product of the succeeding Ming dynasty, these chapters, if read with care, should also reveal Ming attitudes towards the Mongols. This article tries to uncover both perspectives by a close reading of the three “Yuanshi waiyizhuan” chapters.

The contrast in these two perspectives can be seen even in a cursory overview of the chapter titles and contents. The specific term used by the Ming editors at the head of the chapters, literally, “Record of Foreign (or, Exterior) Barbarians” (*waiyizhuan* 外夷傳), to describe the other states with whom Mongol Yuan China had relations, “foreign (or, exterior) barbarians,” does not seem unusual until one realizes that similar chapters describing foreign relations in the Song, Liao, Jin and Ming dynastic histories all use the more value-neutral term “foreign (or, exterior) state” (*waiguo* 外國) in their titles, a subtle but important distinction.⁴ The content of these chapters, however, is also generally value-neutral, providing the term “states” (*guo*), and casting the contents in diplomatic and military terminology. This is due to the fact that the main sources for the “Yuanshi waiyizhuan” chapters were the

bank, ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1968), pp. 34–62, and Geoff Wade, “The Southern Chinese Borders in History,” in Grant Evans, Christopher Hutton, Kuah Khun Eng, eds., *Where China Meets Southeast Asia: Social and Cultural Change in the Border Regions* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2000), pp. 28–50. But according to Steve Harrell, this category of *yi* barbarians was also understood, at least in later periods in southwest China, as also being somehow “more civilized” and closer to the center of civilization than were other southwest peoples like the Miao. See Stevan Harrell, “Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them,” in Stevan Harrell, ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, Studies on Ethnic Groups in China (Seattle: U. of Washington P., 1995), p. 9.

³ See Dardess, “Did the Mongols Matter,” for this argument.

⁴ On the composition of the Song, Liao and Jin dynastic histories under the Mongols, see Hok-lam Chan, “Chinese Official Historiography at the Yuan Court: The Composition of the Liao, Chin, and Sung Histories,” in John D. Langlois, Jr., ed., *China Under Mongol Rule* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1981), pp. 56–106.

sections that described military expeditions and dispatching of envoys in the Yuan legal compendium *Jingshi dadian* 經世大典 (*Compendium for Administering the Empire*).⁵

Yuanshi is also notable for the lack of a commentary (*lunzan* 論贊) at the end of these chapters. Commentaries were traditionally used by writers as a way to critique the previous dynasty, and their omission was part of the guidelines set out for the compilers by the first Ming emperor and his advisors.⁶

It is curious that these specific *Yuanshi* chapters should be so different from earlier dynastic histories. At first glance the reader assumes there is something intrinsically different about the Mongol view of the ‘other’ as compared to Chinese or other non-Chinese dynasties. Upon closer reading of those chapters, however, we see a more nuanced picture of Mongol foreign relations emerging, one that describes Yuan relations with other countries in ways that are both similar to and quite different from the traditional Chinese view of foreign states. In fact, *Yuanshi*’s specific editorial history helps to create a unique document, one that represents both Mongol and Chinese world views. But even if one does not accept the argument that *Yuanshi* is somehow qualitatively different from other dynastic histories of the period, it is nonetheless still a source that can reveal the nexus and discontinuities between Mongol and Chinese culture that occurred during the Yuan-Ming transition period.

As was true with most of the Chinese dynastic histories, *Yuanshi* was compiled at the behest of the next dynasty (in this case that of the first Ming emperor) to legitimize the overthrow and claim the Mandate of Heaven as the new ruler. It follows the conventional makeup of Chinese dynastic histories, with the usual sections of “imperial annals” (*benji* 本紀), “essays” (*zhi* 志), “tables” (*biao* 表), and “biographies” (*liezhuan* 列傳). It was, however, compiled within two years of the founding

⁵ *Jingshi dadian* was compiled in 1330–31 by the Yuan court. It is no longer extant but the prefaces of its various sections are preserved in Su Tianjue 蘇天爵 *Yuan wenlei* 元文類 (or, *Guochao wenlei*), *Siku wenxue zongji xuankan* 109 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993) 41, pp. 23b–42b [pp. 517–27]. See Wang Shenrong 王慎榮, *Yuanshi tanyuan* 元史探源 (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1991), pp. 273–75, on the sources of the “Yuanshi waiyizhuan” chapters. I wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for providing me with this information.

⁶ See Lien-Sheng Yang, “The Organization of Chinese Official Historiography: Principles and Methods of the Standard Histories from the T’ang Through the Ming Dynasty,” in W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank, eds., *Historians of China and Japan* (London: Oxford U.P., 1961), pp. 44–59. He credits this change in the composition of dynastic histories to the climate of conservative Neo-Confucian thought that came to dominate the early-Ming court and society. Both *Liaoshi* and *Jinshi* included commentaries.

of the Ming, with apparently little editorial oversight or interdiction, judging by comments made by some of the compilers and criticisms laid on the editors by later writers.⁷ But precisely because of its quick production and lack of thorough editing, *Yuanshi* provides us with what appears to be a relatively unvarnished view of Chinese history and society from the Mongol perspective. This is because major sections were apparently taken verbatim from Mongol court documents and pasted into the dynastic history. This is not to imply that Ming Taizu's 太祖 (r. 1368–98) Chinese compilers did not put their stamp on the final product. But the product reflects, I think, a curious melding of Mongol and Chinese viewpoints that would have been edited out had the *Yuanshi* text been subject to the kind of lengthy study and comment that was done regarding *Mingshi* 明史. This is certainly true of the chapters under review here; even a preliminary glance at the titles and content of the chapters on Yuan foreign relations reveals a conflicted ethnographic view that reflects, I argue, a clash of Mongol “realism” and Confucian “idealism.”

To what extent do the chapter titles represent, respectively, Mongol and Ming Chinese views of the “other”? How does the content of the chapters mesh with the titles and what might that comparison reveal about each party? Finally, how do views represented in the chapters mesh with ethnographic writings found in other parts of *Yuanshi*? Borrowing terminology from U.S. foreign relations scholars, I argue that the “Yuanshi waiyizhuan” chapters reflect both Mongol “realist” and Confucian “idealist” perspectives on foreign states and peoples. The authors of the Mongol court records understood and described China’s foreign relations in terms of specific goals that could be achieved by wielding power over others, while an idealist spin on those records was provided by the editors and compilers who were gathered together by the first Ming emperor to write the *Yuanshi* as a whole.

REALISM AND IDEALISM

Before we analyze the *Yuanshi* chapters, a few words on the categories “idealism” and “realism” are in order. These terms are by now well known as the two poles of U.S. foreign policy. “Realism” describes a foreign policy that is based on one’s own national interests and the use of power to achieve those interests. A realist foreign policy eschews

⁷ I use the punctuated 15-vol. Beijing edn. of *Yuanshi*, and all page numbers refer to that edition. See Song Lian 宋濂 et al., *Yuanshi* 208–10, “Waiyi” 1–3 (rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), pp. 4607–71.

ideological constraints in favor of achieving results by deploying any means necessary. Realism is contrasted with an idealist foreign policy where the idealist holds “higher values” equal to or more important than the raw use of power to achieve results. Idealist foreign policy thus tries to take into account issues such as a) the form of domestic government, b) degree of economic interdependence, c) benefits of international institutions, and d) the sway of national and transnational beliefs.⁸

These categories become theoretical devices that are useful in understanding and describing Mongol-Yuan foreign relations. Not only do the “Yuanshi waiyizhuan” chapters deal specifically with foreign relations, more important, the categories catch the essence of Mongol and Chinese views of the foreigner and how each group saw China’s interactions with them. I argue that the Mongols were essentially realists since their primary concern was with their ability to sustain the momentum of world conquest and to hold on to power over their new subjects. It is true that the conquest was framed as a heavenly ordained mandate to Chinggis Qan, but how and when a state or tribe submitted to the Mongols was ultimately of much more importance than anything else.

This realist position is contrasted with the idealist, Confucian view of the world, where the Han center was civilized, and the periphery less so. Here, both education and ethnicity underlay all other categories since all non-Han were, by definition, outside the center and less civilized. It is true that barbarians could, by means of learning, become part of the civilized center. But it was essentially a foreign policy that was based on moral categories such as righteousness and filial piety that were the preserve of a specific ethnic group.⁹

YUANSHI'S CHAPTERS ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The chapters of the *Yuanshi* with which we are concerned, chapters 208–210 (*liezhuan* chapters 95–97), describe the foreign relations

⁸ The history of these terms and their application to U.S. foreign policy is beyond the scope of this paper. For the classic definition of realism see Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: Knopf, 1960, 1967). On idealism, which traces its intellectual heritage to Immanuel Kant, see Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power* (Boulder: Westview P., 1989). On the divisions between these two positions in current international relations scholarship, see John H. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism: A Study in Theories and Realities* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1951), and James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*, 2d edn. (New York: Harper & Row, 1981).

⁹ This seemingly sharp dichotomy between Mongol and Chinese views is used here for heuristic purposes only, and should not be read to mean that there were no hard-headed pragmatic

of Yuan China.¹⁰ They cover, in order, first Korea and Japan, foreign states closest to the Yuan court in political and ethnic terms, then those states that were further from the Mongol court in their formal relations. Those states included Annam in northern Vietnam, then Champa in southern Vietnam, Burma, Siam, Java, and finally and most distant from China, Ma'bar on the southeast coast of India. The treatment of foreign relations thus includes political and geographic considerations. Ethnic descriptions, where they occur, are included in discussions of states that were far from the Mongol court and that chose to resist the Mongols.

Chapter 208: Korea and Japan

This chapter (*liezhuan* 95: “Waiyi One”) is devoted to describing the relationship of the Yuan court to Korea and Japan. Roughly three-quarters of it deals with Yuan relations with Korea (Chin.: *Gaoli*, Kor.: *Koryō* 高麗). The account opens with a brief description of ancient Korea, including the name of the original inhabitants of the area, the geographic boundaries and name of the capital city of the Koryō state in the Yuan era, the ancient name of the state, and a very brief outline of the history of Koryō up to the Mongol conquest. The only ethnographic detail that is included in this description is the rather ambiguous statement that “the Fuyu and other races lived there.”¹¹ The reference to Fuyu is a repetition of traditional Chinese accounts of early Korea, and reads as if this first paragraph is intended by the Ming compilers as a kind of preface to the data on Yuan period Koryō relations that begins in the next paragraph.

The remainder of the text reads like a court chronicle, as befits the fact that it was copied directly from official descriptions of mili-

Chinese officials who saw the world in terms of power relations, or that all persons employed by the Mongols agreed with the Mongol view of the world. Examples of individuals who disprove this stereotype can be found in Igor de Rachewiltz, Hok-lam Chan, Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing, and Peter W. Geier, eds., *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yuan Period (1200-1300)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993).

¹⁰ The compiler of the “Yuanshi waiyizhuan” chapters was a certain Song Xi 宋禧, a district teacher in the late-Yuan era who presumably had no working knowledge of the court’s foreign relations; see *Mingshi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) 285, pp. 7317-18. The compilers of *Yuanshi* were all recluses who had no governmental experience under the Mongols, and they were recruited for this task specifically to ensure impartiality. After he compiled these chapters, Song Xi wrote an apology to the chief compiler, Song Lian, for their poor quality. See Qian Daxin 錢大昕 and Chen Wenhe 陳文和, *Jiading Qian Daxin quanji* 嘉定錢大昕全集, vol. 7, “Shijia zhaiyang xinlu” 十駕齋養新錄, p. 258. I wish to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for bringing this to my attention.

¹¹ 扶餘別種嘗居之; *Yuanshi* 208, p. 4607.

tary expeditions, as noted above. It is arranged as a series of entries in chronological order, starting in the year 1217 (eleventh year of Yuan emperor Taizu's, or Chinggis Qan's, reign) through 1312 (the fourth month of the first year of Yuan emperor Renzong's reign, r. 1312–20). Those entries provide almost a year-by-year account of the relationship of the Koryŏ court to the Mongols, and the content is focused almost entirely on mutually displayed diplomatic and military flourishes, emphasizing the submission of the Koreans to the Mongols, and the terms and descriptions of tribute payments, using standard Chinese terminology to describe these features of relations between the Mongols and the Koreans.

The centerpiece of this section is the submission of Koryŏ to the Mongols in 1259, and Khubilai Qan's long edict, reprinted verbatim here, welcoming Koryŏ into the Mongol empire as a "son-in-law" nation. This is an interesting revelation of the degree to which Khubilai Qan had adopted Chinese diplomatic terminology in his dealings with foreign states. Virtually the entire part of the chapter that deals with Korea is quite value-neutral in ethnographic description, and reveals nothing about Mongol views of Korea or its people. The military and diplomatic issues are stressed throughout, and it is rich in details such as the names and dates of the various Mongol officials who served in Korea, and for information on the Korean court. This is not surprising since it took the Mongols a long time to subjugate all of Korea, and it was seen as strategically important for the Mongol conquests, both in its own right and also as a staging ground for future operations against Japan.

The strategic importance of Korea to the Mongols is further reflected in the following section, a three-paragraph description of T'amna Island (*Danluo* 耽羅), an island off the south coast of Korea.¹² The paragraphs allotted to T'amna make clear that it was seen as a key military area for Mongol control of Korea, and that considerable attention was given to its pacification by the Yuan court in Khubilai Qan's time. It was so important that T'amna Island was one of three commanderies in Korea administered directly by the Yuan court, as a military circuit

¹² For information on T'amna Island, also known as Cheju Island, as well as on the Mongol relationship to Koryŏ generally, see Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1984), pp. 147–51. See also Michael J. Pettid, "Vengeful Gods and Shrewd Men: Responses to the Loss of Sovereignty on Cheju Island," *East Asian History* 22 (2001), pp. 171–86. While remnants of the Koryŏ court actually fled to Kanghai Island, and not necessarily to Cheju Island, it is clear that Cheju was of utmost importance to the integrity of that group in their opposition to Mongol rule.

(*Danluo zongguang fu* 耽羅總管府).¹³ This was the case because it was on T'amna that Koryŏ loyalists known as the Sambyŏlch'ŏ 三別抄 (Three Elite Patrols) made their last stand against the Mongol army. It is also treated separately in this text because the Mongols undoubtedly saw it as a strategic area from which to launch attacks against Japan and the Southern Song.¹⁴ There is a great deal of information in this section of the chapter on the Mongol conquest of the island, including the various personnel involved. However, as in the part of the chapter describing Korea, this text contains no ethnographic views or data whatsoever.

The fact that Koryŏ is listed here as one of the foreign states with whom the Mongols enjoyed foreign relations tells us something about Ming views of this period. Although Koryŏ was able to preserve its dynastic existence by submitting to the Mongols and sending an imperial son to the Yuan court as a hostage, it had certainly been subsumed into the larger Mongol empire. There was considerable coming and going of Korean officials and scholars to China, marriage between Korean and Mongol aristocratic families, and Mongol representatives or agents (*darughuachi*) were stationed at the Koryŏ court. Moreover, the Mongols generally saw their empire in unitary terms, and would not have cast their relationship with Koryŏ in terms of foreign relations.¹⁵

One reason for Korea's inclusion here is that the "Yuanshi waiyizhuan" chapters copied the official descriptions of military expeditions and envoys given in *Jingshi dadian*, which included states that became independent of China at the beginning of the Ming.¹⁶ We know that the Ming court sent several envoys to Korea very early in an attempt to establish friendly tributary relations that would be useful in international trade and as a potential ally against any Mongol force that might arise to threaten Ming power in China. The fact that the Ming compilers chose to include Korea here as one of the foreign states with whom Yuan China had relations, is thus not only a reflection of the way that *Yuanshi* was compiled, but also of Ming *Realpolitik*.

¹³ On the Yuan bureaucracy and official titles see David M. Farquhar, *The Government of China under Mongolian Rule: A Reference Guide*, Münchener Ostasiatische Studien 53 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990).

¹⁴ T'amna, once an independent kingdom, had submitted to the Paekche kingdom in 476. Yet, its relationship to the Korean mainland was always complicated, and while the Koryŏ court made efforts to incorporate it more firmly into the rest of the kingdom, it was always treated as a de facto autonomous state. See Pettid, "Vengeful Gods and Shrewd Men," pp. 172–73.

¹⁵ Gari Ledyard makes this point in his article "Yin and Yang in the China-Manchuria-Korea Triangle," in Morris Rossabi, ed., *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1983), pp. 313–53.

¹⁶ I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the fact that these *Jingshi dadian* chapters included descriptions of states that became independent of China in the early-Ming period.

The last quarter of the chapter is given over to describing Mongol relations with and intentions toward Japan. As with the sections on Korea, this passage begins with a short history of Japan up to the Mongol period, including a citation to a description of Japan in the *Song Dynastic History* (*Songshi* 宋史). Thereafter, the chapter follows the chronicle-style system of entries, starting in 1265 and ending in 1299. As we might expect, the vast majority of this text describes the two military campaigns to conquer Japan undertaken by Khubilai Qan, including his long proclamation in 1281 after the failure of the campaign. Again, this narrative is similar in style to descriptions of military expeditions found in the Yuan-derived *Jingshi dadian* compendium; Japan is referred to as a state, not as a foreign barbarian, and the language is very much that of state-to-state relations, with nothing that implies pejorative ethnic assumptions by the Mongols.

Chapter 209: Annam

The second chapter of foreign relations (*liezhuan* 96: “Waiyi Two”) is devoted mainly to describing Mongol relations with northern Vietnam (*Annam* 安南) from 1253 to 1326, and with Yunnan 雲南, which was only brought under China’s control after its conquest by Khubilai in the mid-1250s. In typical format, the narrative begins with a thumbnail description of the history of Vietnam up to the Mongol era, including details of the Annamese ruling family. The rest of this long chapter consists of annalist-style chronological entries ranging from 1253 to 1326 that describe Mongol relations with Vietnam.¹⁷ Most of the narrative focuses on Uriyangqadai’s first military campaigns into Annam in 1257, and subsequent Mongol attempts to control the area.

There are a few scattered ethnographic descriptions. For example, in the second paragraph we see an order from Khubilai Qan to Uriyangqadai “to attack all the barbarians (*yi*) who had not yet submitted” after the first campaign in the area in 1253.¹⁸ The term *yi* here is probably a general reference to all of the inhabitants of the area, and seems to be very much in line with traditional Chinese descriptions of people in the southeast.

There are also descriptions of ethnic groups (those tending toward distinct places) in this chapter. One example is the use of the old place-

¹⁷ For information on Mongol campaigns in southeast Asia, including a detailed map, see Thomas Allsen, “The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China,” in Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368*, vol. 6 of *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1994), pp. 407–13.

¹⁸ The text reads: 攻諸夷之未附者; *Yuanshi* 209, p. 4633.

name for Northern Annam, Jiaozhi 交趾, where the writers state that “the state of Annam was [known as] Jiaozhi in ancient times.” Jiaozhi is the old prefectural name of that place, with a history that goes back to the Han-dynasty period.¹⁹ The Mongols continued to use this old name in their descriptions of military expeditions into the area; for example, there are several references to the conquest of the “people of Jiao[zhi]” (*Fiaoren* 交人).²⁰ There are also references in this chapter to “Muslim merchants” (*Huihu shangren* 回鶻商人) in the area, and how Mongol administrators of the region such as the son of the famous Governor of Yunnan under the Mongols, Nasir al-Din, dealt with them.²¹

Even if these were ethnic descriptions rather than simple place names, they do not carry the implied pejorative description embedded in terms such as *yi*. They are simply the commonly accepted terms used to describe peoples in the area. The overall focus of this passage remains the attempt by the Mongols to consolidate their power in the region and secure tribute relations to the Mongol empire by all of the neighboring states, and they present a fairly value-neutral description of the different groups involved in that struggle in Annam.²² This sense is consistent throughout the chapter when the states in the region are referred to as geo-political bodies or states, such as *Dali guo* 大理國 for the ancient Dali kingdom in present-day Yunnan conquered by

¹⁹ 安南國, 古交趾也; *Yuanshi* 209, p. 4633. According to the text, Jiaozhi was a prefecture created originally in the Han period. See also *Zhongwen da cidian* 中文大辭典 (Taipei: Zhongguo Wenhua Daxue chubanshe, 1990) 1, p. 713.

²⁰ This example raises the interesting question of when a place name becomes an ethnic marker, and if “ethnicity” was even a category of identity in the premodern world. One could argue that “Jiaoren” here is a typical example of place as the primary locus of identity for premodern peoples. There is no overall agreement on the existence or use of “ethnicity” in the premodern world, and convincing arguments on both sides. I follow Smith and others in arguing that a type of ethnicity was important in the premodern world, but that it was also substantially different from our modern understandings of that term, which is really the product of the nation-state process. See Anthony D. Smith, “The Problem of National Identity: Ancient, Medieval and Modern?” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17.3 (1995), pp. 375–99. This question is well beyond the scope of this paper.

²¹ Nasir al-Din was the son of Sayyid ‘Ajall Shams al-Din, the Mongol governor of Yunnan. For information on this important family in Yuan-era Yunnan and Annam, see Jacqueline Armijo-Hussein, “Sayyid ‘Ajall Shams al-Din: A Muslim from Central Asia, Serving the Mongols in China, and Bringing ‘Civilization’ to Yunnan,” Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1997), and Na Weixin, *Saidianchi Shansiding shijia* 塞典赤瞻思丁世家 [*The Family of Sayyid ‘Ajall Shams al-Din*] (Kunming: Jinri Zhongguo chubanshe, 1992). The term *huihu* was both a place (ethnic) and religious term in the Yuan period, being used as a term to describe a Muslim from Western or Central Asia. In earlier periods it was also commonly used by Chinese writers to describe Uyghurs. By the Yuan period *Huihu* had come to mean Muslims and not Uyghurs, usually referred to as *Weiwu*, even in some Yuan sources there are still cases where the various terms are used interchangeably.

²² This can be seen, for instance, in the passage in which Khubilai Qan lays out six requirements for Annam to fulfill as a tribute state of the Mongol empire; see *Yuanshi* 209, p. 4635.

Khubilai Qan in the 1250s, and *Annam guo* 安南國 for the kingdom in northern Vietnam.

It is also easy to understand why Annam and Yunnan were discussed in the same chapter; some of the key personnel involved in the conquest of Yunnan, such as Uriangqadai, were also the same ones sent by the Mongol court to conquer Annam, and the campaign in Annam was, for all intents and purposes, an extension of the Yunnan campaign.²³ Even though Yunnan was successfully incorporated into Yuan China while Annam remained outside of that sphere, they were conceptually one in terms of Yuan foreign relations. The Ming editors recognized this by placing both Annam and Yunnan in the same chapter. The same cannot be said of states farther from China, and this distinction is made clear by the fact that all of the more distant Southeast Asian states were lumped into the next and last chapter.

Chapter 210: Southeast Asia

Descriptions applied to some of the states and peoples in Southeast Asia portrayed in *Yuanshi*, chapter 210 (*liezhuan* 97: “*Waiyi Three*”) are more ethnographic in content than in any of the previous chapters. The kingdoms described include Burma (*Mian* 緬), Champa (*Zhancheng* 占城), Siam (*Xian* 暹), Java (*Zhaowa* 爪哇), the Ryukyu Islands (Liuqiu 琉求, present-day Okinawa) and the Ma’bar kingdom on the Coromandel coast of India and other areas (*Mabaer dengguo* 馬八兒等國). Extending Mongol rule to these areas proved more problematic than it was to places closer to China (with the obvious exception of Japan), and the points where explicit ethnographic descriptions occur seem to correlate with states that gave the Mongols the most trouble. Thus, it may be possible to read these descriptions as a way to essentialize (and hence dismiss?) those states in order to provide an implicit excuse for the failure to extend Mongol rule there.²⁴

1. Burma

The first part of the chapter includes a fascinating description of the state, people, and customs of Burma, and the Yuan court’s re-

²³ For more information on this entire southern region under the Mongols, see Ritsuko Oshima, “Mongol Rule over Hu-kuang Province during the Yuan Dynasty: Control over the Hsi-tung People,” *MTB* 43 (1985), pp. 19–43. Oshima demonstrates a mixed usage of the term *yi* in the *Yuanshi*, being used both as a general term for barbarians and also as a specific term for a distinct tribal group in southwest China.

²⁴ For information on and a map of Khubilai Qan’s southwest campaigns, see Morris Rossabi, “The Reign of Khubilai Khan,” in Franke and Twitchett, eds., *Alien Regimes and Border States*, 907–1368, pp. 484–87.

lations with that state. Some of these statements appear to be purely ethnographic in character. For example, the chapter begins straightaway by stating that very little is known about either the place or its people. The first line reads: “The State of Burma consists of southwest barbarians of an unknown kind or type,” and then, after stating that the Dali kingdom is connected to Burma, again professes ignorance of the place, with the claim that “we do not know the area contained in their [Burma’s] state.”²⁵

Following this brief description of Burmese territory is an interesting description of local customs.

The people live in cities and rural areas, in houses and crude huts; they ride on elephants and horses, and they cross rivers in boats and on bamboo rafts. Those who write memorials do so in gold leaf, and they write both on paper and palm leaves, sealed and sent for translation and then distributed.²⁶

The rest of the description of Burma follows the same chronicle-style format of chronological entries from 1271 to 1301. As with the other chapters, these are rather straightforward descriptions of events that relate to Mongol activities in Burma and Yunnan. There are references to various Southeast Asian ethnic groups, as with the eponymous “various southern barbarian peoples” (*zhu manyi* 諸蠻夷), a traditional Chinese reference to the various non-Chinese groups that lived in the southwest. On the whole, however, the bulk of the passage reads like a typical court document, whose interest is in reporting the important details of the court’s relationship with that state and people. It is obvious from the content that those relations involved, for the most part, invasion and assignment of Mongol functionaries in the local area, and these passages are rich with this kind of detail.

2. Champa (Zhancheng)

There were two separate campaigns by Mongols against Champa, in present-day southern Vietnam. The brief passage in this chapter documenting Mongol intentions and activities toward Champa is, like

²⁵ The text reads: 緬國爲西南夷, 不知何種 and 又不知其方幾里也, respectively; *Yuanshi* 210, p. 4655. In 1284 the Mongols established a province in upper Burma named Chiang-Mian, with the city of Tagaung as the provincial capital. It is this province that is the subject of this passage, although later brief Mongol campaigns into central Burma against Pagan are also described here. For a brief history of these campaigns, see Maung Htin Aung, *A History of Burma* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1967). Also see Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1988), pp. 213–16.

²⁶ The text reads: 其人有城郭 屋廬以居, 有象馬 以乘, 舟筏以濟 其文字進上者, 用金葉寫之, 次用紙, 又次用檳榔葉, 蓋騰譯而後通也; *Yuanshi* 210, p. 4665.

previous passages in this and other chapters, structured as a chronological account in annalist style running from 1276 to 1281. Unlike the other passages in this chapter, however, this text is devoid of ethnographic descriptions of the local peoples. Instead, we are presented with a straightforward account of political and military actors on both sides. Moreover, the various states in the region are always referred to as “states” (*guo*) and never as “barbarians” (*yi*). For example, there are references to the “state of Champa” (*Zhancheng guo*), the “state of Siam” (*Xian guo*), and in such cases these appear to be purely political terms, indicating the Mongols’ understanding of the area in geo-political terms and not in terms of ethnic categories or distinctions. This is curious, since the Mongols never effected control over Champa. The fact that the kings of Annam and Champa eventually offered tribute payments to the Yuan court, in spite of the failure of the various Mongol military missions to penetrate into Champa, may have prevented a harsher summation in the official court documents, which eventually made their way into this text.

3. Siam (Xian)

The description of Mongol relations with Siam is quite short, consisting of two brief paragraphs noting the exchange of diplomatic correspondence between the Siam court and Yuan China between 1295 and 1299, including the sending of tribute of white horses and gold cloth. We know that Khubilai Qan was interested in establishing commercial relationships with the various states in the region, including Siam. The cursory treatment of Siam here probably reflects the low level of importance the Mongols attached to that state, as well as to the fact that it did not cause trouble for the Mongols. Clearly, Annam and Burma were the big players in the region.

4. Java (Zhaowa)

The description of Mongol relations with Java is one of the more interesting because of its explicit ethnographic description, and because the writers explicitly contrast it with China. Mongol relations with the king of Java began in 1279 with requests from the Mongol court that a member of the Javanese royal family be sent to the court.²⁷ The Mongols were unsuccessful in their attempts to control this relationship, culminating in the mistreatment of Khubilai Qan’s envoy to Java in 1289.

²⁷ Mongol relations with Java are summarized by George Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, trans. Susan Brown Cowing (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, East-West Center, 1968), pp. 198–201. See also Slamet Muljana, *A Story of Majapahit* (Singapore: Singapore U.P., 1976), in which portions of the *Yuanshi* passage in question are also translated.

The *Yuanshi* text seems to be a good example of Mongol court writers' explicitly setting out the case that Java and its peoples were somehow quite foreign, "other," and distant from the Yuan court, both in terms of geography and culture. Essentialized in that way, it may have been easier for the Mongol court to explain away the utter failures of its military missions there.

The text begins by providing what appears to be a rather neutral description of Java's distance from China, telling the reader that Java is well beyond Champa, and that if you wish to go there, you must first go by boat to Champa and then on to Java. Rendering Java's relations with Champa thus may also have been a reflection of the realpolitik of the period insofar as Champa appears to have been on friendly terms with Java since Champa prevented the Mongol invasion force from landing there on their way to Java in early 1293. Thus, Java is already set up as a far away, exoticized place. The next passage extends this picture of Java as far off and exotic in terms of culture.

Their customs and local products are unknown, [since] for the most part the various foreign countries abroad [only] send the most rare, precious and expensive items to China, but their people are ugly and strange, their temperament and their speech cannot be understood in China. [When] Khubilai Qan subjugated all the barbarians, of all those who were sent out as his envoys to the various states, only those sent to Java became great.²⁸

The rest, covering the crucial years 1293 and 1294, provides the details of Mongol attempts to assert control over Java. As we know, after the Mongol ambassador to Java was branded by the Javanese King Kri-tanagara in 1289, Khubilai Qan sent a large naval force to punish him for his insolence. That expedition was headed by a typical multi-ethnic force headed by a Mongol (Shibi 史弼), a Uyghur (Yighmiš 亦黑迷失), and a Chinese (Gaoxing 高興), who landed in Java in 1293 and were used by rebel elements to establish a new kingdom known as Majapahit. The Mongol force was, however, eventually driven out of Java.²⁹

The fact that this passage begins by describing in obviously pejorative terms the Javanese people and their customs, while describing in relatively neutral language the activities of the Mongol officials and

²⁸ The text reads: 其風俗土產 不可考, 大率海外諸蕃國多出奇寶, 取貴於中國, 而其人則醜怪, 情性語言與中國不能相通。世祖撫有四夷, 其出師海外諸蕃者, 惟爪哇之役爲大; *Yuanshi* 210, p. 4664.

²⁹ For information on this campaign, see Rossabi, "Reign of Khubilai Khan"; also see biogs. of Shi Bi and Gao Xing at *Yuanshi* 162, pp. 3799–3806.

military forces sent to Java is obviously related to the fate of the Mongol mission to Java. It was one thing to resist the Mongols, but quite another to deliberately harm one of their envoys and then to continue to resist them. It is also another example of the deliberate casting of Java and its peoples as “other” and far away, essentializing them to explain away the loss of control over them.

5. Ryukyu Islands, Luzon, Ma’bar (*Liuqiu, Sansu, Mabaer*)

The last three sections of this chapter deal with Mongol foreign relations with three states ranging from the northeast to the eastern coast of India. In all three cases, very short descriptions of events surrounding Mongol attempts to establish formal relations with those states are provided, with little to no ethnographic content. The closest we get to any ethnographic description is in the case of Ma’bar and other states on the Coromandel coast of India, where we are told that it was a Muslim state and that the prince of Ma’bar submitted a memorial to the Yuan court in Arabic writing (*Huihui* 回回字) in 1277.³⁰ Later in that same passage we are provided with a list of ten kingdoms in south and south-east Asia that sent tribute to the Yuan court in 1286.³¹ Ma’bar leads the list, and while the narrative is couched in the traditional terms of tribute relations that all Chinese dynasties used to describe their relationships with foreign kingdoms, it is clear that the Mongols were interested in establishing commercial relations with those kingdoms as well as receiving acknowledgement from them that the Mongol world empire was to be treated with due deference.³² In the case of the Ryukyu Islands,

³⁰ See *Yuanshi* 210, p. 4669. Part of this *Yuanshi* passage has been translated by William W. Rockhill, “Notes on the Relations and Trade of China with the Eastern Archipelago and the Coast of the Indian Ocean during the Fourteenth Century, Part I,” *TP* 15 (1914), pp. 419–47. Both Ma’bar, on the Coromandel coast in the southeast, and Kollam, on the Malabar coast in the southwest, are mentioned here. The memorial in question was actually submitted to the Yuan court by the king of Kollam (Tansen Sen, personal communication). For discussion of these kingdoms and their relationship to the Yuan court, see Sen’s paper in this same volume. For a description of Ma’bar, see André Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, Volume I, *Early Medieval India and the Expansion of Islam, 7th–11th Centuries* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), pp. 309–34.

³¹ See *Yuanshi* 210, p. 4670. Rockhill, “Notes,” pp. 440–41, provides a rendering of the names of these kingdoms. This same list also appears in the *Yuanshi* annals section under the ninth month, *yichou* (乙丑) day of year 1286; *Yuanshi* 14, p. 292. I thank Tansen Sen for this information.

³² Ma’bar and Kollam were both part of an important trade zone that the Mongols would surely have desired to control in whatever fashion was available to them. See Rockhill, “Notes,” for discussion of Mongol commercial interests in the area. For some sense of the kinds of items that came from or passed through Ma’bar and the Coromandel coast of India, see Moira Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West: An Archaeological Study of the Ceramics from Siraf (Persian Gulf), 8th to 15th Centuries A.D.*, BAR International Series 555 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1989). See also Tansen Sen’s article in this volume.

even though they are much closer to China than the southeast coast of India, their small size apparently relegated them to lesser importance in Mongol eyes. It would appear that they figure in this chapter only because the Ryukyu king sent tribute to the Yuan court.³³

THE COMPILATION OF *YUANSHI*

As historiography, the *Yuanshi* chapters under discussion here reflect the concerns of several parties that included the original authors of the Yuan court records, the first Ming emperor, the Chinese chief editors of the *Yuanshi* project, and the compilers who actually wrote the chapters. Ming Taizu was first and foremost concerned with establishing his legitimacy as the founder of a new dynasty, and compiling a sympathetic or neutral history of the preceding dynasty was an important and necessary means to that end. Whether he actually viewed his Mongol predecessors and their Central Asian administrators as typical “barbarians” or in more favorable terms, he did impose his own stamp on their dynastic history by his choice of editors for the project.

The *Yuanshi* compilation project was headed by two prominent Chinese literati from south China, Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–1381) and Wang Wei 王禕 (1323–1374).³⁴ In addition to being former officials of the Yuan, both men were also members of an important circle of Confucian scholars that was centered in their home prefecture of Jinhua 金華 in Zhejiang province.³⁵ They brought to the project their own reservations regarding the overthrow of the Yuan dynasty, the prospects for peace, and an overriding sense of duty to their Confucian world view. Ming Taizu had roped these men into his service very early in his fledgling Ming government after his conquest of Jinhua prefecture, and that savvy move garnered him a great deal of respect from other

³³ On the Ryukyu Islands in Chinese history, see Shunzō Sakamaki, “Ryukyu and Southeast Asia,” *JAS* 23.3 (1964), pp. 383–89; Robert K. Sakai, “The Ryukyu (Liu-Ch’iu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma,” in Fairbank, ed., *Chinese World Order*, pp. 112–34.

³⁴ For information on the compilers, see Francis W. Cleaves, “Memorial for Presenting the Yuan shih,” *AM* 3d ser. 1.1 (1988), pp. 59–69, and “The ‘Postscript to the Table of Contents of the *Yuan Shih*,’” *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 23 (1993), pp. 1–18; also, Lee Cheuk Yin, “Early Ming Historiography on the Mongol Yuan Dynasty,” *Xuecong* (National University of Singapore) 1 (1989), pp. 267–90, and biogs. of Song Lian and Wang Wei in L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography 1368–1644* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1976), pp. 1225–31 and 1444–47, respectively.

³⁵ On the role of the Jinhua literati in Yuan and Ming politics, and the Jinhua school of Confucianism, see John D. Langlois, Jr., “Political Thought in Chin-hua under Mongol Rule,” in Langlois, ed., *China Under Mongol Rule*, pp. 137–85; and John W. Dardess, *Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites in the Founding of the Ming Dynasty* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1983).

southern Chinese literati and helped to construct the framework for his new dynastic administration.

According to Wang Gungwu, the Confucian scholar officials who were assigned the task of writing *Yuanshi* were “reluctant to discuss the nature of foreign relations” because the Mongol imperial project did not fit into the Confucian world view of foreign relations conducted on the basis of China’s broad monopoly on political “virtue” (*de* 德).³⁶ In fact, since China was, at least in theory, only part of a larger world empire as long as the Mongols held power, Confucian theories about the origins and validity of state power would have been meaningless. Another reason for the reluctance of the *Yuanshi* editors to comment may have been due to the reluctance of most of those men to wholeheartedly endorse the new thrust of affairs in the Ming. There is ample evidence that suggests that Ming Taizu was more favorably inclined towards his military officers than to the Chinese literati in general, giving the relatively unlearned generals the highest honorific titles, and that many of the writers who were drafted for this project had reservations about his ability to restore peace and order to Chinese society.³⁷ Far from being rabidly anti-Mongol, many of these men were not kindly disposed to the rebellions that wracked China at the end of the Yuan, and they looked to the new order to reestablish peace and order.

CONCLUSION

The “*Yuanshi waiyizhuan*” chapters on Yuan foreign relations reveal a nexus of Chinese and Mongol values regarding foreigners that was the inevitable outcome of the Yuan-Ming transition and the way in which the Ming successors chose to portray their Mongol predecessors in the *Yuanshi*. A close reading of these chapters reveals a relatively thin overlay of Chinese Confucian idealism onto the dominant Mongol realist perspective regarding foreign states and peoples.

The Yuan was a time when Chinese Confucian idealism had to make room for a more realist wielding of power (in the sense of wielding “material power” or *wei* 威). Ming rule in theory reasserted Confucian values as the basis of its power, and with it came a renaissance

³⁶ Wang, “Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia.” Wang has argued that the early-Ming historians preferred not to comment on any aspect of Yuan foreign relations out of deference to the Ming emperor and because they had been influenced by conservative Neo-Confucian doctrine. China’s possession of *de* made possible good relations with foreign countries. When China’s *de* was strong, then foreign missions would come to China to seek out civilization.

³⁷ See Romeyn Taylor, “Social Origins of the Ming Dynasty 1351–1360,” *MS* 22.1 (1963), pp. 1–78.

of Confucian idealism. But Ming Taizu was a complicated individual who did not share the southern Chinese literati concerns about Confucian propriety and social order, and we know that he was very much a “realist” in his own understanding and deployment of power as a tool of state policy. In fact, the Mongols may have had a much more profound impact on Ming culture and patterns of rule than is commonly recognized.

It does seem clear that Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, the future Ming Taizu, changed his mind about his views towards the Mongols and other barbarians from his early days as a local warlord in south China. By the time he was ready to establish his dynasty, he espoused a far more neutral, even positive view of foreigners than was earlier the case. One of the best examples of his early views of foreigners can be seen in Zhu’s proclamation in 1367 that “[s]ince ancient times, emperors and kings reigned over the world, Chinese stayed in the *inner realm* to restrain the barbarians and the barbarians stayed in the *outer realm* and served the Chinese.” That is contrasted with a prayer he offered in a sacrifice to Heaven in 1368, where he declared “[w]ith the end of the Song, God (*di* 帝) ordered the *true man in the steppes* to enter China and serve as ruler of the empire.”³⁸

While Zhu may have changed his rhetoric regarding the Mongols as barbarians, yet this discourse of “inner” civilized peoples versus “outer” barbarians remained a part of the lexicon used to describe Yuan China’s relationship with foreigners, as seen in *Yuanshi*. The titles of the chapters on foreign relations make this abundantly clear. The *Yuanshi* editors specifically chose to use the traditional vocabulary of “foreign (exterior) barbarian” in their titles for these chapters, and that choice cannot have been accidental. The term *waiyi* conveys to the reader a sense that Yuan foreign relations were characterized by a sense of ethnic difference between Yuan China and outsiders, and implies that a Chinese-style sense of civilization pervaded Mongol foreign relations. In other words, looking only at the title of these chapters would have given the contemporaneous reader the idea that the Mongols had largely adopted Chinese views of the foreigner as outside the realm of civilization.

This may not have been an entirely misleading impression, since the Mongols do appear to have absorbed some of the ways that China usually employed in dealing with foreign states, especially the rheto-

³⁸ Lee, “Early Ming,” p. 277, citing *Ming shilu* 明實錄 26, pp. 10a–11b; and 29, pp. 1a–b, respectively (emphasis mine). This study, along with Wang Gungwu’s earlier work, cited above, is one of the few works that focuses specifically on the ethnographic views seen in *Yuanshi*.

ric of tribute relations in descriptions of Mongol dealings with foreign states. These “Yuanshi waiyizhuan” chapters are replete with detailed descriptions of the success or failure of the Mongols to obtain submission as tributaries from states, along with the kinds of tribute paid or expected and the frequency of payment. It is quite likely that the Mongols adopted the tributary system as a way to conceptualize and order those states that had not yet been brought under their domination, especially in the decades after Khubilai Qan’s rule. Yet this is still a long way from claiming that the Mongols had thoroughly adopted the Chinese view of the foreigner as a “foreign (exterior) barbarian.”

We also know that the Mongols, like the Chinese, had a clear sense of themselves at the center of “civilization” and that they categorized other peoples according to ethnographic terms. The nomadic Mongols certainly thought of themselves as superior to the sedentary peoples they conquered, and they always made sure to keep themselves separate from those other people. The four-tiered administrative classification system that they erected and imposed in China is an excellent example of this mindset. It is also interesting to see in these “Yuanshi waiyizhuan” chapters the explicit ethnographic (and usually pejorative) descriptions of the peoples and states that the Mongols failed to conquer and assimilate into their empire. As I have pointed out above, this treatment was reserved for the states and peoples that were farther from China and that caused the Mongols extraordinary trouble, such as Burma and Java. Since Chinggis Qan and his successors believed they had been ordained by Heaven to conquer the world, they really were not that different from their Chinese contemporaries, since civilization for them was located within the bounds of the Mongol empire, and was not defined according to one’s appropriation of Chinese Confucian culture.

Mongol rule of all of China was a mind-boggling setback to many Chinese, especially in the south. Yet by the end of the period of Mongol rule, the categories of “civilized” and “barbarian” ended up being more permeable and open to interpretation than probably most Chinese or Mongols would have been willing to admit at the start of the process. Lots of Chinese elites adopted a pragmatic position of accommodation and served the Mongol court with distinction. The legal injunctions against Chinese adopting Mongol names, dress, and language attest to that crossover. Likewise, many Mongols and Central Asians migrated into the Chinese community, becoming accepted members of the literati and participating in all manner of Chinese culture and community life.

Yuan China was an immensely complex and nuanced society precisely because of this mixing, and the literature (in its broadest sense) that came out of that period is similarly rich in ethnographic descriptions and views. These views span the range of legal injunctions that tried to guarantee the separation of ethnic groups to grumblings about the permissive nature of the non-Chinese population in China.³⁹ The present paper has focused on the “Yuanshi waiyizhuan” chapters of the *Yuanshi* specifically because they have not previously been seen as a type of ethnographic literature. Yet, close reading provides hints of how the Mongols and their Ming Chinese successors viewed and worked with foreigners, and in this sense these chapters can be read for their ethnographic content.

In our brief examination of the rhetoric employed in the *Yuanshi* chapters on foreign relations, several things become clear. First, the Ming editors and compilers were able to comment on Mongol foreign relations simply through the chapter titles. Was this a comment on Mongol views of the “other” or was it, at heart, their own view of the Mongols? Even assuming that the Mongols adopted the Chinese tributary system, it is doubtful that the Mongols would have employed the traditional Confucian categories of “inner” and “outer” to describe foreign peoples and states outside of Yuan China. First, Yuan China was but one part of a larger imperial project (at least during Khubilai’s lifetime). Moreover, anyone who was not Mongol either submitted to or resisted Mongol advances. There was no in-between zone, and no opportunity for joining the empire other than submission or conquest. No subjects of the Mongols would be deemed somehow closer to the center by virtue of their learning or acceptance of Mongol cultural norms.

Khubilai Qan pressed the expansion of his empire for several reasons, including his need to continue to satisfy booty-hungry Mongol princes, to solidify his position as Grand Qan over an empire of which China was but a part, and to garner valuable trade relations with other states. Perhaps describing those foreign states that Yuan China dealt with as “Foreign (Exterior) Barbarians” was an accurate representation of Mongol views since he failed to push that expansion either east or south.

It is clear that there is a disjuncture between the titles and contents of the chapters on Yuan foreign relations, and that the narrative

³⁹ There is a vast corpus of official and private literature produced during the Yuan period that one could survey for ethnographic content, ranging from local gazetteers and the Yuan legal code, to poems, essays and other miscellanea.

of the chapters is much more value-neutral in ethnographic perspective than the titles would have us believe. Certainly neither Korea nor Yunnan could have ever been seen by the Mongols as *waiyi*. At the same time Japan, which was surely one of the *waiyi* states in Mongol views, is treated with utmost fairness in the descriptions of the military campaigns waged against it. What message did the Ming editors mean to convey to the people who would have read these chapters of *Yuanshi*? Do they accurately reflect Mongol views on ethnicity and foreigners or other ethnic groups? Or was this a way for Ming to establish its own dominant position over what would become tributary states? Were these chapters meant as a subtle criticism of Mongol China's relations with other states, or to make the Mongols appear more Confucian than they really were, or to recast the history of certain states that became independent in early Ming?

This brief paper cannot hope to answer such questions. What we can conclude, however, is that Yuan foreign relations were largely "realist" in the sense that military power was used when diplomacy failed to achieve the desired results. This same aspect of Yuan statecraft was, however, cast in traditional Chinese Confucian idealist terminology by the compilers and editors of *Yuanshi*. The result is a text that makes both Mongols and Chinese appear more static and monolithic in their views of, and interactions with, foreigners than they were in reality.