

Digital Tools for Ancient Language Research

A Thesis Submitted by

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Abstract

The application of digital tools are crucial for studying ancient language texts because they help preserve the texts and provide alternative methods to study them. This project investigates the performance of digital tools commonly used in modern language research — Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and Large Language Models (LLMs) — when applied in ancient language research. The Nestorian Stele, a limestone monument inscribed in Classical Chinese, and its Latin translation by Athanathius Kircher, accessed from “China Illustrata,” are used as a case study for this project. This paper will discuss the limitations demonstrated by the tools when applied on these texts, and what the best methods to incorporate these tools in research are, supplementing the traditional methods of research.

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1 Introduction

Ancient languages, for example, Ancient Greek, Latin, and Classical Chinese, are the languages used in past civilizations, hundreds to thousands years ago. Research of ancient languages is always more challenging than research of modern languages. The restrictions come from three aspects: limited surviving texts, limited or no native speakers, and unportable materials. Since the texts were written long ago, many of them were lost or damaged through time, thus some texts are only preserved in fragments or completely lost. Secondly, most ancient languages are not in use nowadays, so the number of speakers is very limited, thus less research is done on them. Many of the ancient texts are severely understudied, and some are even untranslated. Finally, many books of ancient languages are very brittle because the papers have been decaying for a long time, so they cannot be read or scanned easily. Moreover, many of the existing ancient language texts are not in the form of books, but on stones, such as tombstones and stelae, so they cannot be accessed easily for research.

Given these obstacles, ancient language research should incorporate usage of digital tools.

Digital tools are very helpful in preserving the text and studying the understudied texts. This paper will discuss two types of digital tools: Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and Large Language Models (LLMs). OCR helps convert scans or pictures of a page into an editable file, such as a word document; LLMs, such as ChatGPT, shows great performance in translating under-sourced languages.

This research uses the Latin and Classical Chinese versions of the Nestorian Stele (or Xi'an Stele; 大秦景教流行中国碑 in Chinese) as a case study. It was erected in 781 CE during the Tang dynasty, and it recorded Alopen, the first Assyrian missionary, arriving in China in 635 CE, bringing sacred books, and building the first Christian church with other Syriac missionaries with

the consent and support of the Tang dynasty emperor. The Latin version was accessed from Athanasius Kircher's 1667 book "China Illustrata," and the Classical Chinese version accessed from Xi'an Beilin Museum in the form of a photo. [1][2]

2 Optical Character Recognition (OCR)

As stated earlier, many texts of ancient languages are written or printed on fragile pages or inscribed on unportable materials such as big pieces of stones, so it is necessary to convert the text into editable texts before conducting any research. OCR tools are essential in this process. For most of the ancient texts that are available digitally now, they are usually digitized by having people manually type down the texts. Although this method successfully preserved the texts, it missed the layout of the original writing or printing, which could provide underlying information about contemporary writing and printing culture.

For the Nestorian Stele, it is accessed from Kircher's "China Illustrata," an encyclopedia style book about East Asia and South Asia, covering topics of history, law, religion, botany, zoology and many other topics. The only digitization of this book is an online pdf, but it is not from a credible source, and it has many pages missing. This book contains many fold-out pages, and all of them are not included in the pdf scan, likely because the fold-out pages are very fragile.

However, one crucial page of the Nestorian Stele containing the transcription of the Chinese characters and Syriac from the stele is located on a fold-out page. This fold-out page is the only page in the entire entry regarding the Nestorian Stele containing a transcription, rather than a translation like the rest of the entry. Thus, the research needs to start with scanning or taking pictures of the related pages. Because this book was published in the 17th century, its pages are too fragile to go into a scanner. As for the Nestorian Stele, all the available online text

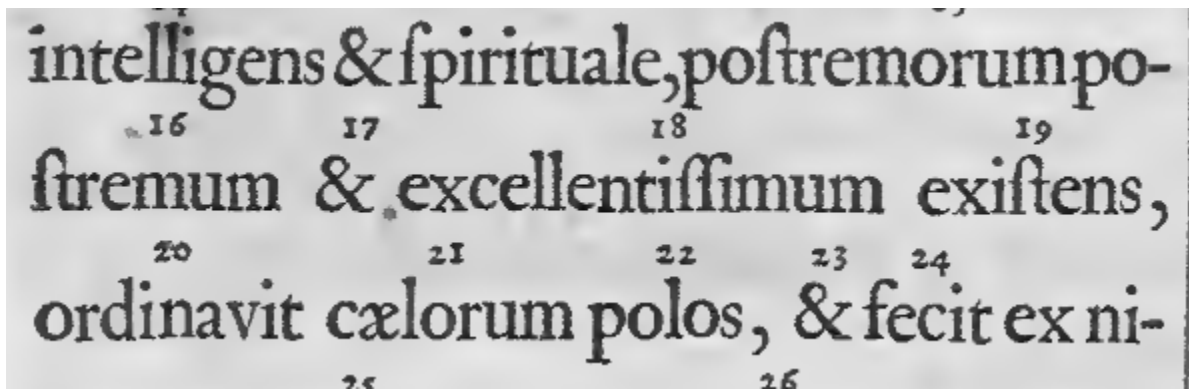
transcriptions are slightly different from each other, so the picture of the original monument from the website of the Beilin Museum (where this stele is currently exhibited at) is used as the standard version.

Besides the text itself, page layout and printing methods also include a lot of information. They demonstrate the prevailing layout and font size and style, ink choices, and spelling of words of the contemporary time. In order to preserve these as well, OCR tools are better options than manually typing into a digitized file. OCR tools convert pictures of pdf files into an editable document, preserving its original features. OCR tools can identify the text from the background in the picture, match the identified text with existing vocabulary in the detected language, and create a word document with the identified texts.

Many OCR software applications exist, and this project tested out the four most commonly used tools— Google Docs, Adobe Acrobat Pro, Google Cloud Vision API, and Tesseract. Though they are all very good at handling modern language text conversion, they showed some degrees of insufficiency and vastly varying performance when converting these ancient languages.

Classical Chinese and Latin are difficult for the OCR tools to convert in four ways. First, the Latin text used has a change in column design. On the first page of the text, the title, subtitle, and introductory paragraph were printed in one column centered in the middle. The actual body paragraph, however, is printed in two columns, separated by a divider line in the middle. This is difficult for OCR tools to handle, and it potentially causes many problems because if the tools are not able to recognize the divider, it will read across the divider line and treat two different columns as the same line. Second, the two languages are both not commonly used, thus OCR tools might not have received enough training, or even no training in these languages. As a result, the tools might not have the ability to process these languages. Third, the letters and

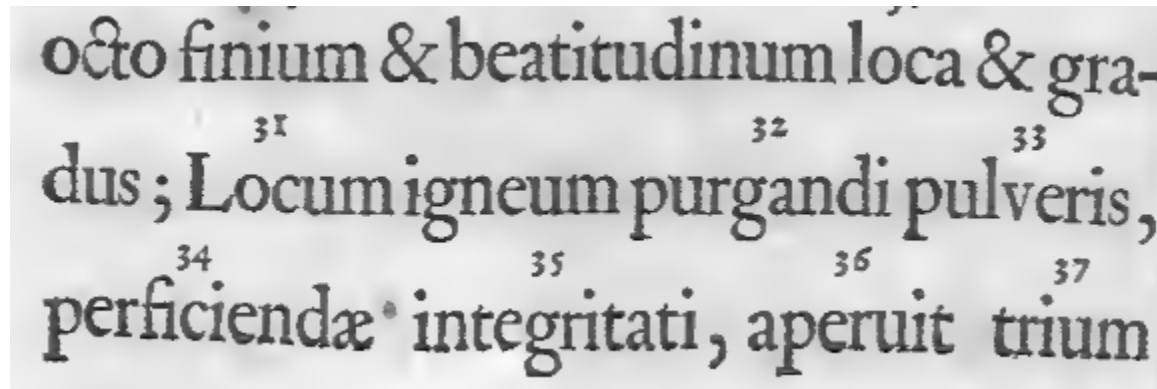
spelling used in the book are different from today. In Medieval printings, especially in English and German, long “s” (ſ) and short “s” (s) have a distinction. When “s” is at the end of the word, it is a short “s”, printed the same way as now. When “s” is at the medial or initial part of the word, it is a “ſ,” and it looks like an “f” without a bar, so it could be difficult to distinguish. [4] As shown in Figure 1 below, in the first phrase “intelligens & spirituale,” “ingelligens” uses “s” while “spirituale” uses “ſ” because of the location of the letter. Considering that “ſ” is no longer used, and it looks very similar to an “f,” it is very possible that it will be converted as an “f” instead by OCR tools.



(fig 1. Example of Medieval printing)

Aside from “ſ,” ligature will also be a problem for OCR tools. Ligature is the action of joining two letters in writing or printing, and this practice is also commonly seen in Medieval era books printed in English and German. [3][4] Although “China Illustrata” was written in Latin after the Medieval era, it still adopted this style of printing. Figure 2 is an example of Medieval ligatures from Kircher’s translation from “China Illustrata.” In the first line, “octo” has “c” and “t” connected, thus a ligature. In the last line “perficiendae” has the ligature of “a” and “e.” Besides these two, there are also many other commonly used ligatures. For consonant ligatures, there are “st,” “fi,” and “fl”; for diphthongs, there is “œ.” Since ligature is a printing style not seen in

modern day, OCR tools might not have encountered them enough to recognize them.



(fig 2. Example of Ligatures)

Finally, the OCR tools will face difficulty when handling texts in different orientations. Most modern languages are written left to right horizontally, but Classical Chinese texts inscribed on monuments are written vertically right to left, completely opposite from most common modern languages. This would become a great problem for OCR tools. If they cannot detect the language correctly and determine the correct orientation of text, the output will be a random collection of characters.

Here, this project will explain how each OCR software works and demonstrate their performances on the book in Medieval Latin and stele in Classical Chinese respectively, and it will also discuss the pros and cons of each method, and find out the best method in this scenario.

2.1 Google Docs

Google Docs is the easiest and most accessible way to convert a picture into a word document. To use it, there are only two simple steps. First, take a clear picture or a scan of the desired text. Once the picture is uploaded into Google Drive, click “open with,” and then “open with Google

Docs.” The picture will be opened as a document and thus automatically converted. Aside from the picture files (png, jpeg, ...etc.), it also accepts pdf files, so it’s a very convenient tool.

Although Google Docs OCR performs nearly perfectly with modern languages, such as English, it performed very poorly with Classical Chinese and Medieval Latin in the case study. For Classical Chinese, since Classical Chinese characters look exactly the same with modern Traditional Chinese characters, it managed to identify all the characters correctly. However, the output file was not editable as expected because the text orientation was wrong. It read Classical Chinese horizontally as modern Chinese, but it was supposed to read it vertically. Unfortunately, Google Docs OCR is probably not trained specifically to handle this special type of text and its orientation, so it defaulted the text as horizontal text. Thus, even though the characters were recognized successfully, they were organized incorrectly, so this OCR output cannot be used for future computer programming tasks. Since the characters were all correct, it is possible to manually fix the order. However, relocating characters manually is very labor-intensive, and the amount of work would be similar to retyping every character by hand, so it is not a successful utilization of digital tools.

As for the performance of Google Docs OCR in Medieval Latin, it showed even more problems. It did not recognize much from the picture, and most of it was incorrect. The only parts it got correct were the title, subtitle, and the short introductory section underneath it. The body paragraphs, on the contrary, were a total failure. The book organized the texts in two columns, with a vertical line in the middle to divide them. This OCR does not have the ability to handle text in columns, and it insists on reading line by line from left to right regardless of the divider. Similar to the output of Classical Chinese, this can be relocated manually, but it is definitely not a desired result from a functioning digital tool. For the rest of the page, it was only able to

identify the words that resemble their English counterparts correctly. For example, for the word “Latina,” its Latin and English spelling is the same, so it was recognized correctly. For the word “monumentum,” it was converted into “monument” instead. As for the rest of the words that do not have an English counterpart that are spelled similarly, Google Docs OCR cannot generate a result for it at all. Unknown words are all skipped, thus resulting in a very short and incomplete output. From this, it can be inferred that the Google Docs OCR tool was not trained on Latin, so it has to assimilate the texts to English, which it was trained with, and resulted in mistakes.

As a conclusion, although it is very easy and convenient to use, Google Docs OCR is still not a preferred tool to accomplish the task. It is likely only trained on the commonly used modern languages, so it showed very poor performance when applied on ancient languages.

2.2 Adobe Acrobat Pro

Adobe Acrobat Pro is also straightforward to use. Similar to Google Docs, the OCR conversion is automatic. It requires the user to upload a picture or pdf, and then it will convert the input file into a word document. Before converting, there is a pop-up window asking which language the text is. Adobe Acrobat Pro is very limited in accepted languages, and it only handles the most commonly used modern spoken languages. Since it does not have options for ancient languages, the best approach would be choosing the closest available option. In this way, it should use English for converting Latin texts and Chinese for converting Classical Chinese text.

Adobe Acrobat Pro showed significantly better results compared with Google Docs OCR. It not only identified the text with higher accuracy, but also preserved the layout and design of the original page. It was able to generate a result that covers every word in the text. The accuracy in word-level is still rather low, but the accuracy in character-level is decent. This results from the

lack of training in Medieval texts. The tool only had problems with the recognition of special Medieval printing styles of letters and ligatures.

Since “f” and “f” look very similar to each other, it is understandable that the OCR would mix them up sometimes when the picture quality is not good. However, “f” is still an independent letter with its own unicode just like the rest of the alphabet, and it should not be a problem to recognize it if given a clear high-resolution picture. Unfortunately, in the output of Adobe Acrobat Pro OCR, it failed to recognize every single “f,” which suggests that this tool does not acknowledge the existence of a “f,” and it further confirms that it was not trained with ancient language data sets.

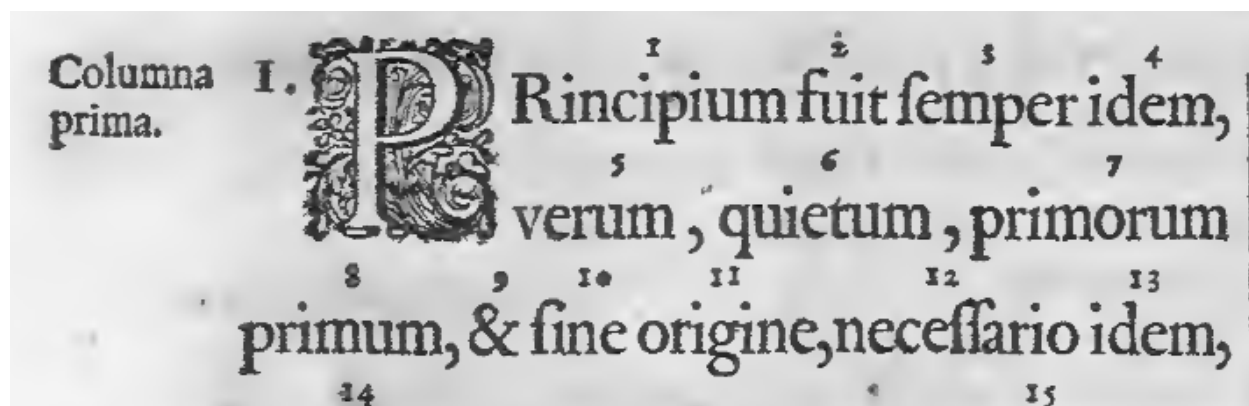
The accuracy of Adobe Acrobat Pro OCR converting these ligatures varies. The ligature “ae” is used commonly even until now, so this OCR tool has been exposed to more data containing it, thus it was able to recognize “ae” correctly every time (both “ae” and “æ” appeared in the output, and they are both considered correct for this research). For the ligatures that are less commonly used in modern day, those more straightforward still showed high accuracy, while those that look significantly different from modern printing demonstrated much lower accuracy. For example, “st” still showed consistent and high accuracy, but “ct” had more mistakes because it was recognized as “et” and “st” in some cases.

In character-level, the accuracy of this OCR conversion is high because it was able to recognize every letter correctly other than “f” and occasionally ligatures of “ct.” In word-level, the accuracy of this OCR conversion is low because many of the words were converted incorrectly because of those.

Adobe Acrobat Pro is especially good at capturing the design and layout of the original text.

“China Illustrata” organized its texts in two columns, and Adobe Acrobat Pro was able to identify the two columns, and it preserved this layout in the output word document.

Additionally, “China Illustrata” had a special design for word-to-word translation. It labels the translation with column and word number, indicating the location of the word it refers to in the original Classical Chinese text. As shown in Figure 3, at the beginning of each column, there is a column number on the left before the paragraph, which in this case is “Columna Prima (column 1),” and there are numbers labeling the sequence of the corresponding character on top of the word or phrase in translation. For example, “principium” is labeled column 1 word 1, corresponding to the Chinese character in that location.



(fig. 3 Column and Word Labels)

This is a very unique and helpful design for translational research, so it should be preserved in the digitized version. Adobe Acrobat Pro was able to achieve this. It kept all the numbers along with the text.

In short, the performance of Adobe Acrobat Pro is decent yet far from perfect. It demonstrated its ability in converting most letters correctly, and it preserved the column layout and the numbered page design, but its overall accuracy is still too low. However, since the only problems with the

output were the “f” and ligatures, it is doable to manually correct those. Though it would be a tedious process, it will result in a pre-processed data set available for future research.

2.3 Google Cloud Vision API

Google Cloud Vision API is also widely used for accomplishing OCR tasks. To use it, one needs to connect to Google Cloud, and program in a coding language, preferably Python, to load the picture of texts to Google API so that it can process it with built-in OCR function and return the result. [5]

The output of Google Cloud Vision API is still not ideal. Its performance on recognizing letters and words is similar to Adobe Acrobat Pro, which means it was not trained in texts of Medieval printing and ligatures, but every letter or character other than those was handled perfectly. The most vital problem it has is still caused by being unable to read in columns. As demonstrated in Figure 4, the output did not realize the texts were in two columns, and it removed the divider line and read across it. The last word on the left column and the first word on the right column were simply connected with a space, treating them as if they were continuous in a sentence. This output cannot be used for future research steps such as translation, because all the sentences are broken in half and mixed with another completely unrelated sentence. Furthermore, this problem is not something that can be fixed easily without extensive manual effort because the output of the texts are generated continuously and printed all in one string. The amount of work to correct it is nearly the same as relocating half of the text.

Similar issues regarding the organization of sentences occurred when processing Classical Chinese text. It read the text in the orientation of left to right, then up to down, which completely

contradicts the correct orientation of up to down, then right to left. Thus, the characters are basically organized in a completely random order, and there is no way to fix it.

Given these problems, Google Cloud Vision API is not a preferred method to process ancient languages.

```

: text[0]
: '\r\nLis\nTab.-\nATHANASI KIRCHERI\nPREFATIO.\nExpofitis in præcedenti Tabula terminis Sinicis, feu quod idem es
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voces in prece-\ndenti expofitas, pari numerorum corre\lponfu, exponemus. Ita ah-\ntem res fe habet.\nColama 1.\npr
ima\n3\nINTERPRETATIO II.\nVerbalis Latina Mononenti Sino-Chaldaici.\nDe magna G (Judza videlicet) clariffime Legis
promulgata in Canike\n(ideft, Sinarum Imperio) Monumentum.\no. Clariffinz Legis promulgatz in Sina Lapis æternæ lau
dis & prologus.\nTaon (id eft, Judæ) Ecclefice Sacerdos, Kimoms, retulit.\nRincipium fuit femper idem, tifex opera
tus univerfas res. idem erige-\nverum, quictum, primorum re voluit hominem, ornato donavit ama-\nprimum, & fine ori
gine,neceffario idem, biliffimam pacifice unionis fubordina-\nintelligens & fpirituale,poftremorumumpo- tionem (id ef
t,juftitiam originale) præ-\nftremum & excellentiffimum exiftens, cipiebat quietem fluctibus maris, integra\nordin
avit cælorum polos, & fecit ex ni- originis natura vacua humilifque & non\nhilo excellentiffimè; perfecti omnium pl
ena fuperbaque, fequi appetituum\nSanctorum, pro origine adorant, quem fluctuationem corde,de fe, neque leviffi\nil
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nam tendentes texere regularum retia, aliqui\ncircumvolvunt, & diem noctem fecit, Ar- monftrabant res creatas pro
cedendo\n16\n"nprinci-
```

(fig.4 OCR Output with Google Cloud Vision API)

2.4 Tesseract

Among all available OCR tools, Tesseract was probably trained by data with the greatest variety of languages. On its Github repository, it has a folder including all data sets that it has been trained on, which covers a lot of languages, even some under-sourced ones. More importantly, it has been trained on data of Latin and vertical Chinese, and both are crucial for this project.

The steps to implement Tesseract are to download the python package of the target language, upload the image of the text, and then call the Tesseract build-in method.

`pytesseract.image_to_string()`. For this project specifically, since Tesseract does not have a Classical Chinese package nor a Medieval Latin package, it used packages that are the closest to

those, which are the vertical Traditional Chinese package (chi-tra-vert) and the Latin package (lat). [6]

However, the result was still not satisfying. Although it was trained to read Chinese in vertical lines and even developed a separate python package for this purpose, the output still showed incorrect reading orientation. It read the vertical columns left to right instead of right to left. Moreover, as for the recognition of characters, it performed the worst among all tools. The majority of the characters are recognized wrong. Considering that it might be caused by lack of training because there exists less texts written in vertical in the first place, the Traditional Chinese package (chi-tra), Simplified Chinese package (chi-sim) are also downloaded and tested on the text. Regardless of the text orientation, they do show a better performance in recognizing characters, with the Simplified Chinese package performing a little better, yet still demonstrating low accuracy. This is surprising since the texts on the stele were Traditional Chinese instead of Simplified Chinese, so it would be expected to perform better with the Traditional Chinese package. This result further proved the conjecture that Tesseract is under trained in Traditional Chinese in vertical.

The Latin package performed better than the Chinese packages, yet was still unsatisfying. The output showed that the tool cannot deal with columns as well. For the first page of the text in “China Illustrata,” it has the introductory section aligned in the center in one column, and split the texts into two columns beneath it. The Latin package only converted the texts in the introductory paragraph, and didn’t attempt to read the body paragraphs in column at all. As for the introductory section that got converted, its accuracy is similar yet a little lower compared to Google Cloud Vision API OCR. Likewise, it suffers from difficulty of handling Medieval printing and ligatures. As shown in Figure 5, the common mistake of “P” recognized as “f” is still

present extensively throughout the output. Again, this indicates that this tool is under-trained. It has the ability to process Latin but not Medieval Latin.

Considering that Tesseract works very well in English, it is disappointing to see its performance in these two ancient languages. Judging from the quality of the output, and given that the output showed that it was severely under-trained, Tesseract is not suitable for OCR tasks in ancient languages.

```

--- Text from Word-to-word.jpg ---
a ATHAWASI; KinCHERY

PasaraTiro0. ,
Expofitis in pracedeni T sbula terminis iniit, en quodidem eit,
Clarallerer Sii in Lapi ; Lain

qm
nociavd fet jm in eqeei » tuer nprea.
i expofitas, pari numerorum. fi, exponemur. Ha an-
erf ddn-
IwrzarasraTé0 Il.
erba Latinae SMromenti Sim Chald
vano Demign Qe (Jodra vidcics) dass Legs promlpcxin Gad
wt ^ (df, Sinarum Imperio) Monumentum.
ollis deni lai eie
) Ecckefir Sacerdos, reni.

```

(fig. 5 OCR Output of Tesseract)

2.5 High-Performance Computing (HPC) Cluster with Tufts Artificial Intelligence (AI)

From the results of the four most commonly used OCR tools shown above, it can be concluded that none of the common OCR tools can process ancient languages and result in an output with acceptable accuracy. Some of them, such as Adobe Acrobat Pro, have decent output and can be adopted after some manual correction, but it would be overwhelming if applied to longer texts, considering the amount of manual correction involved.

Nevertheless, these failed OCR tools helped generalize the difficulty caused by the discrepancy between the features of the ancient languages and the ability of common OCR tools. For the

Classical Chinese texts the only major problem is the inability to recognize the orientation of the texts. For Medieval Latin, the problems can be summarized into two: inability to read column layout and inability to recognize Medieval printing and ligatures.

Hence, it leads to the alternative method of running Tufts AI with HPC Cluster. HPC Cluster is a group of computers that run together to work on the same task, so it would run faster than a single machine. AI is generally exposed to much more data than traditional OCR tools, so it is more likely that it has been trained with similar types of texts, thus it would perform better with these less common problems. Moreover, compared with traditional OCR tools that are more task-based and only focus on identifying characters and words, AI makes better judgement from the context because it processes the texts with a broader approach. When facing ambiguity such as “f” and “f”, it would consider the context of the letter, word, and the whole sentence, and make the best judgement of the letter. Finally, since the problems have been generalized from the previous tests, they can be added into the prompt when AI is called to run the task. The output did become better with further emphasis. In the first attempt, AI is told to run the OCR task with no further instruction, and it showed the same issue as previous tests — OCR tools ignored the divider and the column. However, on the second attempt, a prompt including the summarization of all previous problems was added, and the output was nearly perfect, with only some minor mistakes of letter recognition where the page is blurry.

3 Large Language Models (LLMs)

From previous research, it is found that LLMs can perform really well when given translation tasks. When prompted without further instruction, the generated responses of translation usually would choose not to cover the meaning of every word to compensate for polished sentences in a

more artistic way. Since this project is investigating how to use digital tools to preserve and prepare data for research, it is important that the translations stay true to the meaning and it matters much less for how smooth the sentences are. Thus, LLMs are introduced and are prompted to give the most literal translation, desirably word to word.

3.1 Methods

For this research, ChatGPT 4.0 is used for the translation task. The Nestorian stele in Classical Chinese is written in vertical columns with no punctuation. Since ChatGPT 4.0 does not do as well when handling texts that are too long, it is better to break texts into a few smaller sections. Thus, in this research, the Nestorian stele was broken into 4 sections, with each section containing 6-8 columns of texts (roughly 80-100 characters), and the breakpoints are the end of sentences instead of the end of columns. The Latin translation from “China Illustrata” was organized in columns originally, in which Kircher treats each vertical column as one full sentence. The Latin texts were also broken into 4 sections, each containing 6 columns, kept around the same size with the Chinese texts.

From previous testing, it is found that ChatGPT 4.0 generated translations with the highest accuracy when prompted to translate as literally as possible. When not specifically prompted to translate in the most literal way, the translations would compensate for generating smoother and archaic-sounding languages and result with translation lower in coverage and accuracy. For example, when translating a sentence which did not have a subject specified, instead of using terms such as “the man” showing an inferred subject, it would make guesses to put in a proper noun for the subject, and oftentimes it is not correct. This would also severely harm the accuracy of the translation because having an incorrect subject would generate a sentence that is wrong

and very different from the actual meaning. Thus, when using LLMs for translation, the prompt needs to specify the translation has to be as literal as possible. For this research, ChatGPT 4.0 was prompted with the prompt “translate the following Classical Chinese/Latin into English, be as literal as possible, and make sure every word is covered.” The Classical Chinese and the Latin translations are done separately in different chats, but the 4 sections of the same language have to stay in the same chat so that ChatGPT 4.0 can have more context and thus have continuity of style in the translation.

3.2 Evaluation

The two important aspects these LLM generated translations need to possess are full coverage and correct choice of semantic meaning. When conducting research on ancient language texts, it is crucial to have a translation of the text as reference because it is very challenging to work with the language directly. For evaluating the ChatGPT 4.0 generated translations, English translation of the Nestorian Stele in Classical Chinese and the translation of Kircher’s translation in Latin were created by Tufts students in the Classics Department as the standard (see Appendix II and Appendix III). [7][8]

For full coverage, the task is to see if every word/character in the original language had a corresponding translation in the ChatGPT 4.0 generated text. This comparison was done manually. The LLM managed to accomplish this task perfectly, and all word/characters had a corresponding translation.

For correct semantics in translation, the task is to compare between the ChatGPT 4.0 generated translation and the standard translation created above. This task was also done manually. As a result, the overall accuracy was very satisfactory. There are multiple places where the ChatGPT

4.0 translation and the standard translation are different, but not all of them should be considered a mistake. Classical Chinese and Latin are both languages that have many ambiguous expressions that can be understood in multiple ways. For this research, the ambiguous expressions are not marked as wrong but treated as an alternative way for translation instead. For example, the word “法”(fǎ) has very abstract and various meanings. The closest translation to it would be “dharma,” which consists of the meaning of human law, heavenly law, religion, teaching, and righteousness. For the line “法(fǎ)非(fēi)景(jǐng)不(bù)行(xíng), ” the translation generated by chatGPT 4.0 is “the law could not proceed without illumination (the religion).” Besides this way of translation, it can also be understood as “religion that is not the illustrious (religion) is not accepted,” or “righteousness does not exist unless (under) the illustrious (religion).” These translations are different in what they are expressing, but they all should not be considered incorrect because they are all correct grammatically and syntactically. The mistakes this task is trying to spot are those sentences that translate the characters/words wrong semantically. For example, the sentence “有(yǒu)若(ruò)僧(sēng)首(shǒu)羅(luó)含(hán)。大(dà)德(dé)及(jí)烈(liè)。”The correct translation is, “there is the head of monks Luohan (Abraham), and Jilie (Gabriel) who has great virtues.” ChatGPT4.0’s translation was “There were such as the monks Shouluohan, Dade, and Lie.” This is considered an incorrect translation. For the noun 首(head), it is treated as a part of the proper noun; noun/prepositional phrase 大德(great virtues) was treated as a proper noun; and 及, which is actually part of a proper noun (Jilie - Gabriel) here, was translated as a conjunction “and.” Mistakes like these can indicate what was potentially under-trained for the model, and for the future use of it in translation, people need to bear in mind what the deficiencies of the LLMs are and pay special attention to it. For this example, the transliteration of names is very uncommon and rarely seen in other biblical texts, so

ChatGPT 4.0 did not successfully identify them as proper nouns. If it simply translated the transliterated names as another name yet still managed to detect it as a proper noun, it would not be a problem. In this case, it treated the proper nouns as a different part of speech, so this is indicating that ChatGPT 4.0 is under-trained in more archaic texts, especially the archaic biblical texts.

3.3 Inefficiency of LLMs

In general, LLM generated translations are high quality with near-perfect accuracy when prompted to give literal translations. However, there are still some features LLMs fail to capture. Besides the uncommon transliteration names mentioned earlier, LLMs mostly have trouble translating abstract expressions and the rhetorical devices that involve more obscure expressions, specifically allusion and metonymy.

3.3.1 Abstract Expressions

There are many characters in Classical Chinese that have very abstract meanings. Since the Nestorian Stele is a religious text, and more importantly, an adaptation of the western religion into the Eastern Daoism and Buddhism understanding, it used many abstract eastern religion terms that do not have a direct English translation. For example, in the text, Christianity is constantly referred to as a religion of 景(jǐng). This character could mean the sun as a noun, bright or illustrious as an adjective, auspicious as an adjective, view or scenery as a noun. However, in the actual usage of this case, its meaning is something that includes all these possible understandings. It is something that is a beautiful view, bright, warm, and shiny as

sunlight. Similar issues exist in Latin as well. For example, words such as “pietas” are always hard to translate. In most cases, it is translated into piety, the direct English counterpart of “pietas.” Nevertheless, this translation is not accurate because “pietas” emphasizes more on the virtue of being loyal and dutiful to family, country, and religion, but piety is only about being reverent for the religion. Moreover, considering the context of the usage, even though both refer to the dedication to religion, the “pietas” is used in the context of Roman religion, and “piety” is used more with Christianity since it is the most prevailing religion in the western world. The attitude toward the divine in these two cultures are also very different, so it is inappropriate to use “piety” for “pietas.” Unfortunately, the concepts behind both examples cannot be explained in one word, but when translating, it is also not possible to use a long expression to illustrate one single word because it would ruin the structure for the rest of the sentence.

These problems are not easy to solve in LLM translation, and in fact it is difficult for human translators as well. The best result to expect from LLM translations is that they will choose the meaning that is grammatically appropriate or they will add a note to explain the concept outside of the translation. For example, if a single English word has to be chosen for translating “景,” it would be “illustrious” because it is better grammatically for the noun religion to take an adjective modifying it than taking another noun. The alternative method is to choose whichever meaning from the various possible translations, but add an additional note on what exactly the concept is.

3.3.2 Allusion and Metonymy

Allusion and metonymy are very difficult to work with for LLMs. For allusion, it requires outside knowledge of a certain event or character. It is similar to metonymy, which is a rhetorical

device that uses another noun to substitute and refer to another noun, so it also requires the translator to have outside knowledge to find out what the unmentioned noun is. For example, in the translation of Nestorian Stele, ChatGPT 4.0 failed to deliver the expression of the line “宗(zōng)周(zhōu)德(dé)喪(sàng)。青(qīng)駕(jià)西(xī)昇(shēng)。” The literal way to translate it would be —ancestors, zhou, virtues, lost. green/blue, ride, west, rise. For Classical Chinese, syntax contributes minimally to the understanding of the sentence, and the translation process is more like piecing together meanings of given characters and making it a meaningful sentence. Given the translation of the words, it is obvious that this sentence is very difficult to translate, because it has many implied meanings. The phrase 青(blue/green)駕(ride/chariot) is the complicated part. For 青, it is a color that is in between blue and green, and also a shade of gray. It is also always used to describe the color of a bull. For 駕, it means “ride” or “chariot” as a verb, or it can mean a “carriage” or “chariot” as a noun. Thus, there are several possible ways to translate it: it can mean a green/blue chariot; green/blue (bull) leading chariot; (somebody) chariot a green/blue (carriage or other similar thing); or (somebody) ride a blue/green (bull). Grammatically speaking, all these possible translations are correct, so it depends on the outside knowledge on this expression of the translator to find out the best translation. For this line, Kircher translated this line as “Cun cheu (est cuiusdam antiqui viri nomen) virtute extincta, in nigro curru ad Occidentem recessit. (which means, cun cheu (this is the name of an ancient man), with his virtue having been extinguished, he recessed to the west in a black chariot.)” As for ChatGPT 4.0, the translation provided was “the virtue of the Zhou dynasty has been lost, The Azure Chariot ascends to the west.” Unfortunately, both translations are not correct. This phrase should be translated as (the man) who rides a green/blue (bull), because this phrase is actually a metonymy making reference to Lao-zi, thus it is translated as a noun phrase describing a person.

Lao-zi, the founder of Daoism, is always portrayed as an old man with white beard riding on a green/blue bull, symbolically, he is the symbol of Chinese religion. The term “rising to the west” is always used to describe a permanent departure, usually death, so the symbolism here means the original Chinese religion has left and Christianity will replace it. [9] From this background information, it can be concluded that the subject of this sentence is Lao-zi. It would be great if ChatGPT 4.0 could actually capture the underlying “Lao-zi,” but at least it should aim at detecting the existence of a metonymy reference and make it clear that there is an implied subject (i.e. translate with an implied “the man”). Currently, ChatGPT 4.0 cannot handle these types of rhetorical devices, and most of them are lost in the generated translation, so people should pay special attention to look for rhetorical devices in the texts.

4 Conclusion

With many ancient language texts still under-studied, there is definitely an urgent need to preserve and study them, and digital tools are very helpful in this process. This paper discussed how ancient language texts are under-studied, why they are difficult to study, and how digital tools can help to cope with these difficulties. There are also two specific digital tools — OCR and LLM — introduced, and this paper explained how to use them with the case study of the Nestorian Stele.

5 Future Directions

For this paper, the two languages used as the case study are Classical Chinese and Latin, and since they are both languages whose letters/characters are still in use today, they showed little

difficulty in character recognition. In this way, some other ancient languages whose letters/characters are no longer in use today might face more difficulties with the digital tools, so their performance and how to “fine-tune” the digital tools should be investigated as well. In the future, there should be other ancient languages texts, such as cuneiform, and they should be used as case studies to make a more complete evaluation of these tools.

Besides the two digital tools discussed in detail in this paper, there are many other digital tools useful for digitizing and researching ancient languages. OCR and ChatGPT 4.0 translations are tools helpful in the curating and pre-processing stage of an ancient language research project, but there are also other digital tools helpful in future steps. For example, when researching the linguistic and literature aspect of the text, Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools can look at texts in a statistical and holistic way. While the traditional method of studying ancient literature is “close reading,” NLP methods can provide a visual representation with statistics, reading the texts as “distant reading.” As for presenting the result after the research, Omeka can be a platform to present data and research as an online exhibition. If the texts and research focus heavily on spatial information, ArcGIS Pro and many other mapping tools should be included. Finally, as it is shown in this paper, ancient languages face many more challenges in using digital tools compared to modern spoken languages, so the common digital tools should develop new features to improve their performance in processing ancient languages. Future research should investigate how to build new tools and how to fine-tune the current existing tools to improve their performance.

Appendix II

Kircher's Translation of the Nestorian Stele

Translated by Jiayang Tu and Lecia Sun

Interpretatio II.

Verbalis Latina Monumenti Sino-Chaldaici

Latin words of the Sino-Chaldean monument

De magna Cyn (Judaea videlicet) clarissimae Legis promulgatae in Cium Kuě (id est, Sinarum Imperio) Monumentum

About the great Cyn (evidently Judaea), the monument of the most bright law having been published in Cium kue (i.e., the empire of China)

Columna 0:

Clarissimae Legis promulgatae in Sina Lapis aeternae laudis & prologus. Ta cyn (id est, Judaeae) Ecclesiae Sacerdos, Kim cym, retulit.

A stone of the most bright laws having been published in China, of eternal praise and prologue. Ta cyn (i.e. Judaea) the saint of the church, Kim cym, brought back.

Columna 1:

Principium fuit semper idem, verum, quietum, primorum primum, & sine origine, necessario idem, intelligens & spirituale, postreorum postremum & excellentissimum existens, ordinavit caelorum polos, & fecit ex nihilo excellentissime; perfecti omnium Sanctorum, pro origine

adorant, quem ille solus perfonarum trium unica perfectissima substantia non habens principium, veritas Dominus holooy statuit Crucem per pacificare quatuor partes Mundi, commovit origins spiritum & produxit.

It was always the same beginning, true, quiet, the first of the first and without an origin, necessarily the same, intelligent and spiritual, the last of the last and the most excellent existing, he arranged the poles of the sky, and he made (everything) out of nothing most excellently; of all perfect saints, they worship him on account of origin, whom he alone is of three persons in one, (he is) the most perfect substance, not having a beginning, the truth Lord Holooy established the cross by means of making peace in four parts of the world, he wakened the spirit of the origin and he brought forth ...

Columna 2:

Duas mutationum causas (Sinice dicuntur ym & yam, hoc est, materia & forma) obscurum vacuum mutavit, & coelum, terram aperuit, Solem, Lunam circumvolvitur, & diem noctem fecit, Artifex operatus universas res. Idem erigere voluit hominem, ornato donavit amabilissimam pacificae unionis subordinationem (id est, justitiam originalem) praecipiebat quietem fluctibus maris, intergra originis natura vacua humilisque & non plena superbaque, sequi appetituum fluctuationem corde, de se, neque levissime desiderabat, promanavit a Sotan (id est, Diabolo) extensus dolum, clam ornavit naturam puram & simplicem otiosapace magnisicam in

... two reasons of the change (they are called ym and yam by Chinese, that is, material and form)

He changed the dark abyss, and he opened the sky and the earth, he revolved the sun and the moon, and he made day and night, artisans worked on the whole thing. Also he wished to raise man, ornamented, he gave him amiable subordination of peaceful union as a gift (i.e., the original justice) he ordered silence to the waves of the sea, the entire nature of origin empty and humble, and not full and arrogant, to follow the fluctuation of the appetite with heart, from himself, neither he desired lightly, he spread by Sotan (i.e., evil), an extended trick, secretly he ornamented the nature pure and simple with an idle peace magnificent in

Columna 3:

Illius permanentiae medio odium occultavit simul per laudem malitiae ad intra, istud causavit tercentum sexies decem quinque sectas, humeri hominum sequebantur ordinem vestigiorum contententes texere regularum retia, aliqui monstrabant res creatas pro credendo principio, aliqui vacuum habebant pro origine duarum causarum, aliqui praestabant sacrificium ad accersendam fortunam, aliqui conquirebant falsa bona ut deciperent homines, prudentiae cogitationum inventiones dolosae, amoris passione, gaudentes laborant sic.

Of his permanence in the middle of hatred, at the same time he concealed through praise of malicious within, he caused that three hundred and sixty five sects, of men's shoulders followed order of steps, fighting to weave the nets of ruler, some demonstrated things having been created for believing the beginning, some considered for the origin of two causes, some supplied sacrifice to summon fortune, some sought false goods that deceive men, the deceitful inventions of prudence thinking, with passion of lovers, rejoicing, thus they worked.

Columna 4:

Absque eo, quod possent consequi, torrebantur arctissime revolutique cremabantur; aggregantes tenebras sine via; a multo tempore deperdentes excellentem beatitudinem; in hoc tempore personarum trium una communicavit seipsam clarissimo venerabilissimoque Mi Xio; operiendo abscondendoque veram majestatem; simul homo prodiit in saeculum; Spiritus de coelis, significavit laetitiam, Virgo foemina peperit Sanctum in Tacyn (hoc est, Judaea) clarissima constellatio annuntiavit felicitatem; Po su (Reges ex illa terra Orientali) viderunt claritatem, & venerunt offerre munera subjectionis completa bis decem quatuor sanctorum.

Without him, who was able to seek, they were burned closely and they were cremated having been turned around; collecting darkness without road; destroy excellent happiness for many times; in this time one of the three personalities communicate himself to the brightest and most venerable Mi Xio; hiding the true majesty with cover; at the same time the man proceeded in age; spirit from the heave, signified happiness, the virgin woman gave birth to the saint in Tacyn (that is, Judaea), the brightest constellation announced felicity; Po su (kings out of the eastern lands) saw the clarity, and he came to offer service of subjection having been completed of twenty four saints.

Columna 5:

Est prophetiarum antiqua Lex; gubernavit familias, regna (id est, omnes) cum magna doctrina, locutus trinae unitatis puram, spiritualem sine verborum strepitu, novam Legem; perfecit bonos mores cum direct fide; ordinavit octo finium & beatitudinum loca & gradus; Locum igneum purgandi pulveris, perficiendae integritati, aperuit trium virtutum scholam; referavit vitam,

extinxit mortem; appensus claro die, ut destrueret inferi tenebrosi civitates, & regionem; diaboli dolos cum hoc totaliter destruxit, directo

There is an ancient law of the prophets; he ruled families, kingdoms (i.e., all) with great doctrine, he spoke about the new law, pure of the triple unity, spiritual without noise of the words. He completed the good morals with direct faith; he ordered eight locations and position of the boundaries and happiness; a burning place of cleansing dust for perfecting integrity, he opened three school of virtue; he unsealed life, he extinguished death; having been hanged in a clear day that he destroy the citizens and the region of the dark inferno; he destroyed the tricks of evil with this altogether, having been arranged

Columna 6:

Pietatis navigio, ut subirent illustrissimas mansiones, animabus spiritualibus in illo tempore cum jam succurrisset; potentiae negotia hic consummasset; seipso elevatus medio die ascendit in coelum; Scripturarum remanserunt bis decem septem tomi; aperta est originalis conversio, ut possent homines rationales ingredi; Lex lavacri aquae spiritus abluendo supersiciem exornat, & purificando, spiritum interius dealbat; signaculo "cross" Crucis dispersi in quatuor partes Mundi, ad congregandos & pacificandos sine labore pulsant ligna, timoris, pietatis, gratitudinisque voces personando.

With the vessel of piety, they went to the brightest mansions, when now he had helped the souls and the spirits in this time; here he had ended the works of power; he himself having been elevated in the middle of the day, he ascended into the heavy; he continued twenty seven

volumes of writings; it is the original conversion having been opened, that the rational men were able to advance; the law of bath water of the spirit adorns by washing off the surface, and by purifying, and whitened the spirit within; with the sign “cross” of the cross having been scattered into four parts of the world, to congregating and making peace without labor, they beat the wood, making sound of fear, pietas, gratitude.

Column 7:

Oriente sacrificando, respiciunt vitae gloriosae iter, nutriunt barbas, quia habent extra conversari cum aliis; circumradunt summitatem verticis capitis, quia carent ad intra affectibus passionum; non fovent satellitia servorum, aequales nobilibus ignobilibus cum hominibus; non coacervant divitias, etiam pauperibus erogant, cum, nobis; jejunant, ut subjiciant intellectui scientiam, & perficiant; vel ut quietent timoris passiones propter fortitudinem; septem vicibus offerunt laudis orationes mango adjutorio vivorum & mortuorum, septem dierum primo

By sacrificing in the east, they look back to the path of a glorious life, they grow beard, because they have conversation with the other outside; they shave around the top of the head, because they are absent from affections of passion within. They do not favor escorts of slaves, they are equal with the nobles and the ignobles with men, they do not collect wealth, yet they spend for the poor men, with us; They fast, in order to subject intellect and to execute out knowledge; just as they quiet the fear of suffering by means of fortitude; They offer speech of praise in seven change, with great assistance of the living and the dead, the first of the seven days

Column 8:

Sacrificant, purificant corda, aversiones peccatorum absolvendo; vera virtutum Lex excellit & difficillime nominari potest; operibus actionibusque illuminat tenebras umbrasque, cogimur vocare illam claram Legem; sola Lex sine Imperatoribus non magnificatur, Imperatores sine Lege non ingrandescunt; Legem Imperatores edictis dilatando Mundum exornant claritate; Tay cum-uen Imperatoris clarissimi Sinarum Regni, temporibus ad illustrissimum sapientissimum Imperatorem venit homo de Tacyn (id est, Judaea) regno, habens supremam virtutem, nuncupatus

They sacrifice, they purify hearts, by absolving aversions of sins; the true law of power excels and it can be the most difficult to name; It illuminates darkness and shadows with works and actions, we are compelled to call it the bright law; The law alone, is not magnified by emperors, and without the law, the emperors cannot become great; the emperors adorn the world with clarity by spreading the law with edicts; Tay cum-uen of the emperors, of the brightest country of China, in times the most illustrious and wisest emperor, a man from Ta cyn (i.e., Judaea) country came, with supreme virtues, having been called

Column 9:

Lo-puen, directus a caeruleis nubibus & deferens verae doctrinae scripturas, contemplando ventorum regulam ad decurrenda laborum pericula; Chen quon Kien su (est nomen Sinici anni cadentis in Christi annum 636) pervenit in aulam Imperator, praecepit Colao Vasallo, Fam cum yuen lim (est nomen Colai) mittere regios scipiones (isti sunt rubri, & cum Imperator aliquid mandat, semper deferuntur) ad Occidentis suburbana hospiti obviam recipiendo, ingredientem intra palatium fecit transferri doctrinae Legis libros, in palatio inquisivit de Lege diligentissime,

in penetralibus profundissimae doctrinae, rectaeque veritatis, de proposito mandavit illam promulgari dilatarique, Chen quon (anni sic dicti) decimus erat secundus annus, (hoc est, Christi 639)

Lo-puen, he was directed by blue clouds, carrying scripts of the true doctrine, by contemplating the rule of the winds for hurrying the danger of labor; Chen quon kien su (This is the Chinese name of the year falling in the year of Christ 636) the emperor came to the hall, he ordered Colao vassal, Fam cum yuen lim (It is the name of Colao) to send the royal rods (these are red, and when the emperor command anything, they are always carried) to the suburb of the west to the guest who was to be received, he advanced in the court to bring over the books of the doctrine of the law, and he inquired about the law the most diligently in the court, in the inmost of the most profound doctrine, and of the straight truth, he ordered it to be promulgated and spread with the intention, chen quon (of this year having been called) the tenth, it was the second year (that is, 639 of Christ)

Column 10:

Autumni septima Luna edictum Regis positum inquit Lex non habet ordinarium nomen, sancti non habent semper eundem locum, decurrunt Mundum proponendo Legem, creberrime succurrentes multitudini populorum Tacyn (Judaea) Regni magnae virtutis, Lo puen de longe portans Legis scripturas imaginesque, venit illas offerre in supremam Regiam, inquirendo sigillatim illius Legis intentum reconditum, excellens sine superficie; vidimus suae originis radicalis principium, a mortalium creatione statutam necessitatem, verborum sine superfluitate doctrinam, rationem habentem oblivionis sustentaculum proficuum

The seventh moon of the autumn, the proclaim of the king was posted, and it said that the law does not have an ordinary name, and the saints do not always have the same location, they hurry to teach the law around the world, and they run to help most frequently for multitude of people of Tacyn (Judaea) country of the great virtues, Lo puen, from afar, carrying the scripts and the images of the law, came to offer them in this supreme country, by inquiring the hidden intent of their law one by one, excellent without superficiality; we saw the radical beginning of their origin, by the creation of mortal, they set up necessity, the doctrine without superfluity of words, having the reason of oblivion, and beneficial support

Column II:

Rebus, utilissimam hominibus extendente opera in Mundo, ideo praecipio Magistratibus, ut in Regia, ynym fam aedificent Tacyn (Judaea) Regni Ecclesiae unum locum, ponant Sacerdotes bis decem & unum homines. Cun cheu (est cuijdam antiqui viri nomen) virtute extincta, in nigro curru ad Occidentem recessit, verum Regiae familiae Tam doctrinae claritas clarissimo spiritu Orientem perflavit, vulgata edicta sunt a Magistratibus, reposuerunt Imperatorum pictas vera effigies, in templi parietibus Imperatorum figurae exuperantes, quinque coloribus cumulata luce illustrabant portas.

By things, the most useful to men, extending works in the world, therefore, I order the magistrates, in the royal court, ynym fam they build Tacyn (Judaeae) country of the church in one location, they put twenty priests and one man. Cun cheu (it is the name of a certain ancient man) with extinct virtues, in a black chariot, he went back to the west, truly, the brightness of the

doctrine of the royal family Tam blew over the east with the most clear spirit, the edicts have been spreaded by the magistrates, they restored the true images of the emperors having been painted, the figures of the emperors excel on the walls of the temple, and they illuminate the gates with five color lights accumulated.

Column 12:

Sanctis exemplis advenit felicitas, aeternum splendentis Legis terminus, examinando Occidentis terrarum descriptionum monumenta, & Han guey familiarum Regiarum Historiographos, Tacyn Regnum ab Austro unitur coralli rubri maribus (id est Rubro Mari) a Septentrionali polo omnium pretiosorum lapidum montibus; ab Occidente immortalium hominum loco floridissimarum aborum, ab Oriente unitur loco Cham fum mortuaeque aquae; ex illius terra prodit igne lavanda tela, balsamum odoriferum, lucidae Lunae gemmae, noctu lucentes lapides pretiosi, consuetudinem non habent.

From the sacred examples came felicity, the eternal end of the splendid laws, by examining the monuments of the scripts of the western land, and the Historiographers of the Han and Guey royal families, the country Tacyn is bordered by the coral red seas on the south (i.e., the Red Sea) by the northern pole, bordered by mountains of all expensive stones; on the west by the location of the most blooming trees of the immortal human, and on the east borders the place Cham fum and the dead waters. Out of this land, it produces weapons having been washed in fire, balsam fragrance, clear gems of the moon, the expensive stones shining in the night, and they do not have custom.

Column 13:

Ratiocinandi populi, habent laetitiam pacificiam, legem praeterquam charitatis nullam aliam sequuntur; Reges sine virtutibus non constituunt; terrae mundus largus amplus, moribus florent illustrissimis; Cao cun magnus Imperator scivit reverenter imitari majores suos; expressit factis suum parentem, & in omnibus Regnis ubilibet ordinavit fieri clarae Doctrinae Ecclesias, & sicut antea venerabatur Olo puen, sic fecit illum custodem Regni magnae Legis dominum; Lex dilatata per decem tao, (id est, per omnia Regna) felicitatis radice cumulatissima;

With the thinking people, they have peaceful joy, and they follow no other except the law of charity, the kings do not stay without virtues. The world of earth is large and ample, they flourish in the most illustrious manners; Cao cun, the great emperor knew to imitate his ancestors reverently; he expressed his parents with deeds, and he ordered to build churches of the bright doctrine wherever in the whole country, and just as Olo puen, who was venerated previously, so he make him the guardian of the country and the lord of the great law; the law was spread through ten tao (i.e., through the whole country) increasing by the root of felicity.

Column 14:

Ecclesiae implebant centum civitates (id est, omnes) familiae Regiae fulgebant felicitate; Xim lie anno Bonzii usi viribus erexerunt ora (id est, Legem vituperaverunt) in tiam Cheu (est Civitas in Honan Provincia) Sien tien (anno Christi 713) finiente. Vulgares viri valde etiam illam irriserunt, calumniatique sunt in Sy Kao (antiqua est Regis Uen uam aula in Sen sy Provincia) erat Gio (Joannis est Sinico more vocabulum) Sacerdos. Caput Lo han magnae virtutis Kie lie, &

Kim terrarum nobiles discipuli, rebus exterioribus superior ille Sacerdos una cum aliis, pietatis coelestis retia & fila dirupta resarcivit Iuen cum-chi-

The churches filled up ten states (i.e., everywhere), the royal families shine with felicity; in the year Xim lie, the Bonzes use strength to raise their faces (i.e., they blamed the law) in tiam Cheu (it is a state in the Honan province), in the end of Sien tien (year of Christ) 713). The vulgar men also greatly ridiculed and accused them in Sy Kao (it is the ancient hall of the king Uen uam in the Sen sy province) Gio (the name of John in the Chinese way) was the priest. Lo han, the head of great virtues, Kie lie and Kim, the noble disciples of the land, in exterior things, the superior priest, along with the others, renewed the nets of and the threads of heavenly piety that have been broken. Iuen cum-chi-

Column 15:

Tao Imperator mandavit Nym Regni aliorumque quinque Reges personaliter descendere ad felicitatis mansionem (id est in Ecclesiam) erigere altaria, aulasque Legis, trabes columnasque concisas solidavit, & magis radicavit; Legis petra tunc inclinata etiam iterum rectificata fuit. Tien pao (anno Christi 747) anno inchoato mandavit magnum Generalem Kao lie su (Eunuchus fuit) deferre quinque Imperatorum effigies veras, Ecclesias intra reponendas, dedit serici centum telas offerendas festi laetitiae augendae gratia, Draconis barbae licet longae sint

The emperor Tao ordered Nym of the country and five other kings personally, to descend to the mansion of felicity (i.e., the church) to build altars, the hall of laws, and to consolidate the beams and columns that having been cut off, and to root them deeply. Then the rock of law were

brought down and rectified again. At the start of the year Tien pao (year of Christ 747), he ordered the great general Kao lie su (who was a eunuch) to carry away the true portraits of the five emperors, put them back inside the churches, and he gave one hundred cloths of silk, offering and increasing joy of the festival with gratitude. It was granted that the beard of a dragon is long.

Column 16:

Arcus armaque ex illo pendentes possumus attingere tamen manu (hoc est, absens quamvisfit Imperator, tamen sui memoriam in dictis rebus reliquit) Solis cornua dilatabantur clarissime, coelorum color vicinus exaequabat omnia; Tertio anno Tacyn Regi erat Sacerdos Kie ho, qui iter dirigens per stellas pervenit in Sinas respiciens Solem, Imperatorem reveritus est ex illius mandato Sacerdos Lo han, Sacerdos Pu bum atque alii septem viri cum magnae virtutis Kie ho in Nim kim Palatio exercuerunt opera virtutum; in illo tempore Regia edicta in templorum tabulis (seu portis) in ipso frontispicio deferebant draconum Imperialium picturas.

Nevertheless, we are able to touch the bows and arms that are hanging from this with hand (this is, although the emperor was absent, yet he still leaves memory of him in these things having been said) The horns of the sun expanded most brightly, the neighboring color of the heaven equalized everything; in the third year, it was the priest Kie ho of the country Tacyn, who directed his journey through the stars, he arrived in China, gazing at the sun, he revered the emperor for his order, priest Lo han, priest Pu lum and other seven men with great virtues, Kie ho exercised works of virtues in the Nim Kim Palace; In this time, the royal edicts are on the tablets (or the doors) of the temples, they carry pictures of the imperial dragon in the front.

Column 17:

Pretioso ornatu splendore petrarum fulgentes illustrissimae minii rusbicantis, nubes, scripturam conspicuam reddebant, in vacuo ascendebat claritas irrigando diem, Amor beneficiaque Boreae Austrique montibus exaequabantur altissimis, exundantiaque cum Orientis maris comparari poterat profundo; Lex non nisi consentanea rationi est, quod est autem tale convenit nomen optimum & famam habere, Imperatores absque illa non operantur, quod autem illi operantur, consentaneum est promulgari; So cuon uen min Imperator in Lim uu & aliis quinque civitatibus multas erexit clarae Doctrinae

With expensive ornaments shining with the splendor of the rocks, the most illustrious cloud of red wheel, the clarity ascended into void, irrigating the day, love and benefits of the north and the south are equalized to the highest mountains, and the abundance was able to be compared with the Eastern sea in depth; the law is only concurrent with reason, however it is such that it is appropriate to have the best name and fame. Emperors worked without this, what they do is appropriate to be promulgated. Emperor So cum uen min raised many (churches) of the bright Doctrine in Lim uu and in other five states.

Column 18:

Ecclesias, Antiquam bonitatem adjuvit & felicitatem coepit aperire maximum festum laetitiae descendit & Imperatorum opera suscitata sunt, Taycun uen uu Imperator laetitiae reseravit sanctum circuitum, prosecutus negotia non rustranea, quolibet in Dei incarnati Natalis diei tempore mandabat incendendum Imperialem odorem per hoc admonens alios operari meritoria

opera, mittebatque convivia ad illustrandum clarissimae Legis populos, nempe coelorum habuit pulcherrima lucra, ideoque pouit dilatare mortales, Imperatorium habuit locum & dignitatem

Churches, he helped the ancient goodness and felicity, started to open the great festival of joy, and descended and awakened the works of the emperors, Emperor Taycyn uen uu of happiness opened up the holy circuit, following business not in vain, by whatever time of the day on the birthday of the incarnate god he ordered to burn the imperial incense through this, warning others to do meritorious works, and he sent banquets to enlighten the people of the brightest law; Truly, he had the most beautiful profit of the heaven, and so he is able to spread the mortals, and he had the imperial location and dignity...

Column 19:

Originariam, ideo noverat superare venena noster Kien chum xim xin uen uu Imperator, instituit octo modos regiminis ad renovandam substituendamque tenebris lucem, aperuit novem ordines ut solum renovaret clarae Doctrinae mandatum dirigendae penetrandaeque illius excellentissimae rationi, orat sine verecundia cordis, pervenit ad Mundi supremum, & humilis est, promulgat pacem & veniam dat aliis, illustrissimae est clementiae & auxilio est omnibus afflictis, bona elargitu multitudini populorum, & nostrorum componendorum operum

... original, therefore, he knew to defeat the poison. Our emperor Kien chum xim xin uen uu, he established eight methods of reign to restore and substitute light for darkness, he opened nine orders only in order to restore the mandate of the bright doctrine, and he directed and penetrated his most excellent reason, he prays without shame of heart, and he arrived at the greatness of the

world, he is humble, and he promulgated peace and he gave kindness to others, he is of the most illustrious clemency, and is a help for everyone afflicted, goodness is distributed to a multitude of people, and composing our work.

Column 20:

Maxime studiosus, profudit directionis gradus decurrendos, obsequi fecit ventorum pluviarumque tempora, Mundum pacificavit, homines sciunt se regere, res possunt disponere, vivi noverunt florere, mortui possunt laetari, operibus mortalium bona fama respondet, Natura profudit ex se perfectionem, quia nostrae clarissimae Doctrinae Lex potest negotiorum opera perficere, magnos largitus (titulos) Dominus; Kin su Kuam lo ta fu (est titulus Officii intra aulam) & simul So fam cye tu fo su (Officii extra aulam est titulus)

Especially studious, he pours out running steps of directions, he make the times of winds and rains to yield, he pacified the world, men know him to rule, they are able to dispose things, the living learn to flourish, the dead are able to rejoice, good fame of mortals responds in works, nature poured perfection out of it, because the law of our brightest doctrine is able to accomplish works of business, the lord is called (title) great; Kin su Kuam lo ta fu (this is the title of an officer inside the palace) & also So fam cye tu fo su (this is the title of an officer outside of the palace)

Column 21:

Xi tien chun Kien (alius titulus Officii in aula) donavit purpuream vestem Sacerdoti Y su pacificatori, aliisque desideranti benefacere, bonum nomen & famam Legis promulganti de

longe in Van xe chi chin venienti medio vere, virtutibus superabat tres generationes, scientias dilatabat decem perfectissime, a principio servierat in palatio Regis, posteaque scriptum fuit nomen illius in Regio libro ex Xu lim de fuen yan Regulum cum cu y in principio.

Xi tien chun Kien (another title of an officer in the palace) gave a purple garment to Priest Y su the pacifier, desiring to benefit others, promulgating the good name and fame of law, from afar in Van xe chi chin, coming in the middle of spring, he surpassed three generations in virtues, he spread ten perfect knowledges, in the beginning he served in the palace of the king, and afterwards his name was written down in the royal book by Prince Xu lim de fuen yan with cu y in the beginning.

Column 22:

Adjuverat armigerantem in So fam, So cun (Imperator) miserat illum, ut sequeretur praecuntem, etiamsi videretur sua persona cum dormientibus intra, nunquam se mutavit in operibus exterioribus, fuit Rex Reipublicae pro unguibus dentibusque, fuit Exercitui pro auribus oculisque, sciebat repartiri redditus beneficiaque, nunquam aggregabat pro sua domo, obtulit Lim ngen ex Poli (vitrum pretiosum) dedit Cu Ki, ex, aureos tapetes, interdum restaurabat antiquas Ecclesias, interdum multiplicabat amplissimas Legis

He helped the arm-bearing man in So fam, So cun (the emperor) sent him, in order to follow the preceding one, although his own person is seen with the sleeping men inside, he never changed himself in the exterior works, he was the king of the republic as nails and teeth, he was as ears and eyes to the army, and he knew to repay returns and benefits, he never collected for his house,

he presented Lim ngen from the pole (precious woad), he gave Cu Ki, from, golden tapestry, from time to time he restored the ancient churches, and from time to time he multiplied the ampleness of law

Column 23:

Aulas, honorando exornandoque domiciliis Mundum, sicut volatiliis quibusdam alis, diligenter exercuit opera; clarissimae Legis discipulus obsequens caritati, distribuebat lucra; quolibet anno convocabat quatuor Ecclesiarum Sacerdotes, inserviebat affectuose & reverenter ad minimum omnibus quadraginta diebus, famelici qui veniebant, etiam pascebat illos, frigore algebant qui venientes vestiebat illos, aegrotabant qui, curabat & erigebat illos, moriebantur qui, sepeliebat & quiescere faciebat illos, temporibus Ta-so non audiebatur

The royal court, honoring and adorning the world with houses, just as certain wings of the flying (creatures), he exercised works diligently; the disciple of the most bright law yielding to the charity, he distributed wealth; On any year he bring together four priests of churches, he served affectionately and reverently at least for all forty days, the hungry men who came, he also fed them, the man chilling in called who came, he clothes them, who were sick, he cared and raised them, who are died, he buried and made them rest, it was not heard in the time of Ta-so.

Column 24:

Ista pulchritudo (solebat hic suscipere hospites & peregrinos lautissime) albis vestiebantur clarae Doctrinae viri, & modo videntur isti homines volui sculpere universis perennis memoriae Lapidem, ut divulgentur felicitis opera, Sermo inquit, versus Dominus sine principio, purissima

quies semperque eadem, omnipotens totius Mundi artifex Creator statuit terram, erexit coelum, communicando seipsum, prodit in mundum salutem instituit infinitam, ut Sol resplendens ascendit, tenebras extinxit, totam verificavit veritatis excellentem profunditatem, Serenissimus Ven Imperator legis diadema tulit ante alios Reges

This beauty (he was accustomed to receive the guests and the pilgrims with the most praise) the men of the bright doctrine are dressed in white and these men are seen in this manner. I wish to sculpt the stone of eternal memory for everyone, as the blessed works are spread. The speech said the true lord without a beginning, the most pure silence and always the same, omnipotent of the whole world, the skilled creator that established the land, raised the sky, by communicating himself, he brought forth salvation in the world, he established infinity, as the sun ascend shining, extinguishing shadows, verified the whole excellent depth of truth, the most serene Ven emperor brought the diadem of the law before other kings.

Column 25:

Usus bene tempore, abolevit turbas, coelos dilatavit, terras extendit, clarissimae illustrissimae doctrinae Legis verbis reducit nonstrum Sinarum Imperium Tam, traduxit Scripturas, erexit Ecclesias, vivis mortuis fuit instar navis centum felicitatem gradus fecit decem millium Regnorum pacem, Cao cun imitatus majores, etiam aedificiis perfecit Mundum, Pacis palatia humili luce impleverunt Sinarum terras; veram Legem extendit clarissime, contulit titulos Legis domino, mortales habebant laetitiam, pacem, res

Use the time well, he destroyed turmoils, he broadened the sky, he extended the land, and he led back our Chinese dynasty Tam with words of the most bright and illustrious doctrine. He translated scriptures, he erected churches, to the living and the dead he was like a ship of a hundred degree of felicities, and he made peace of ten thousand kingdoms, Cao cun imitated his ancestors, he even perfected the world with buildings, the humble place of peace filled the Chinese lands with light; he extended the true law brightly, he brought forth the titles of the law to the lord, the mortals had happiness, peace, thing

Column 26:

Carebant infortuniis calamitatibusque, Yuen cun Ki Imperator scivit se componere ad veritatem rectitudinemque, mandavit tabulas erigere lucidissimas Regiis scripturis florentissime fulgentes, Imperatorum imaginibus clarissimorum resplendentes, illas omnia Regna valde venerabantur, populi omnes renovabantur, homines gestiebant illa felicitate So, Cum, rediit iterum Imperatorium Majestatis dirigere cursum Imperialis Sol pepulit tenebras, felicitatis aura eliminavit noctem, fecit illam redire Imperiali domui, felicitatisque odore aeternum extinxit stititque impetus furentium

They destroyed misfortune and calamity, emperor Yuen cun Ki knew to construct himself to the truth and rectitude, he ordered to build the most bright tablets, shining flourishingly with the royal scriptures, shining with pictures of the most bright emperors, these all kingdoms are venerated deeply, all people are renovated, men are dressed in this felicity. So, cu, returned again to direct the course of imperial majesty, the imperial sun banished shadows, the breeze of felicity

eliminated light, he made it to return to the imperial house, he extinguished the eternal with odor of happiness and stopped raging attacks

Column 27:

Pacificavitque pulverem rebellantium, fecit nonstrum magnum Hia (ita etiam Sina vocatur) Imperium, Tay cum hiao y virtutibus univit coelos & terram, aperuit beneficiis vitae opera rebus auxiliatus pulcherrimo incremento, odores dedit in gratiarum actionem piissimus ad faciendas eleemosynas beneficentia faciebat descendere Majestatem, Luna, Sol perfectissime conjunctae in illo (id est omnia subjecta habuit) Kien chun gubernavit polos (id est Mundum) perfecit composuitque intellectus virtutem, robore pacificavit quatuor maria, exornavit adunavitque decem millium terminos, candelae instar descendere in hominum secreta, ut speculum repraesentans rerum colorem

And he pacified dust of rebels, he built our great Hia empire (thus, it is also called China), tay cum hiao y united the sky and the land with virtues, and he opened the works of life with benefits for things and he helped with the most beautiful increase, he, the most pious one, gave fragrances in action of gratitude to make alms with beneficence, he made the majesty, the moon and the sun to descend perfectly, joining him (i.e. he had all subjects) Kien chun governed the poles (i.e. the world), he perfected and he composed virtue of intellect, he pacified the four seas with strength, and he adorned and united ten thousand boundaries, like a candle he descended the secrets of men, as a mirror representing the color of things.

Column 28:

Mundum illuminavit resuscitavitque, centum barbaris dedit leges, Lex sola amplissime respondet unice perfectioni, coacti nomen illius dicemus, Lex est Trinitatis unius, Imperatores sciebant operari, Vasallus debuit referre. Erigo florentissimum Lapidem monumentum aeternae laudis originalem felicitatem magni Imperii Sinarum familiae Regiae Tam Imperatoris Kien chun secundo anno, cum esset principium Autumni mensis septimo die magni luminis florentissimi ornatus die, (hoc est, Dominico) erectus Lapis.

He illuminated and reawakened the world, he gave a hundred laws to the barbarians, the law itself responds greatly and uniquely for perfection, we are forced to call his name, the law is one of Trinity, the emperors know to work, the vassal has to report. I erected the most flourishing stone monument of eternal praise, the original felicity of the great empire of China, in the second year of Tam emperor Kien chun of the royal family, when it was the beginning of autumn, on the seventh day of the month, on the day of the great light and of the most flourishing adornment, (that is, Sunday), the stone was erected.

Column 29:

Illo tempore Legis Dominus (Episcopus) Sacerdos Nym Xu regebat Orientalium terrarum clarissimae Legis populos. Chao y lam, qui antea fuerat Tay chen su su can Kim. Vocatus Officialis Liu fieu propria manu scripsit.

At this time the lord of law (bishop) Priest Nym Xu ruled the people of the brightest law in the eastern lands. Chao y lam, who was previously Tay chen su su can Kim. He was called Official Liu sieu, he wrote with his own hand.

Appendix III

The Nestorian Stele

Translated by Jiayang Tu

[1] 粵若。常然真寂。先先而无元。窅(yǎo)然靈虛。後後而妙有。摠(zǒng)玄樞(koū)而造化。妙眾(zhòng)聖以元尊者。其唯 我三一妙身无元真主阿羅訶敷。判十字以定四方。鼓元風而生 [2] 二氣。

[1] Thus. There is the constant and true silence. (He) existed before everything but does not have an origin. Deeply in the spiritual vacancy, (he) existed after everything but his marvel does not have an end. He compelled the mysterious axis for creation. Wise among all saints he is acknowledged as the primal majesty. That is only, our true lord Aluohe, without an origin, he is three, but in one an excellent existence. He appointed the cross to determine the four directions. He blows the primal wind and the [2] two forces are born.

暗空易而天地開。日月運而晝(zhòu)夜作。匠成万物然立初人。別賜良和令鎮化海。渾元之性虛而不盈。素蕩之心本无希嗜。洎(jì)乎娑殫施妄。鈿飾純精。閒(jiān)平大於 [3] 此是之中。

[2] Chaos has changed, and the sky and earth are separated. The sun and the moon started to revolve, thus, day and night were created. After he crafted everything he made the first man. He gave him peaceful manners, and made him the ruler of everything created. The original nature of him was empty and not full. The simple and righteous heart has no desires in the beginning.

After that, Suodan (Satan) introduced malice. As an accessory it adorned the purity. The outside demonstrates the goodness.

隙冥同於彼非之內。是以三百六十五種。肩隨結轍。競織法羅。或指物以託宗。或空有以淪二。或禱(dǎo)祀以邀福。或伐善以矯人。智慮營營。恩情役役。茫然 [4] 无得。

But the crack of darkness inside contains evil. [3]Thus, three hundred and sixty five sects appeared, following and intertwining with each other, competing in weaving a net of laws. Some worship physical objects, some think about the annihilation of the two concepts of existence and non-existence. Some pray and sacrifice to ask for happiness in return. Some brag about their goodness to deceive others. Their intellects and thoughts continue to fluctuate, and their minds and affections are continuously changing. They obtained nothing (from this).

煎迫轉燒。積昧亡途。久迷復。於是我三一分身景尊彌施訶。戢(jì)隱真威。同人出代。神天宣慶。室女誕聖於大秦。景宿告祥。波斯睹耀以來貢。

But they (feel like) they were tortured in flames. [4]The accumulated ignorance leads them to the wrong path, and having been lost for long, they are not able to return (to the right path). There, our radiant lord, one of the three, Mishihe (Messiah), concealed his true majesty, and appeared as a man. Heaven spread news with joy, a virgin has borne a saint at daqin (Roman Empire and Near East countries). An illuminous star announced the auspicious (event). Bosi (Persia) saw the brightness and arrived with offerings.

圓廿四聖[5]有說之舊(jiù)法。理家國於大猷(yóu)。設三一淨風无言之新教。陶良用於正信。制八境之度。鍊塵(chén)成真。啟三常之門。開生滅死。懸(xuán)景日以破暗府。魔妄於是乎悉摧。

This fulfilled the old law told by the twenty four sages. [5] He ruled his family and country with his great plan. He established a wordless religion of the holy spirit of the trinity. He formed good practice to direct the belief. He established the measure of eight territories, and he refined dust into truth. He opened the gate of the three constants. He started life and eliminated death. He hanged a radiant sun to destroy the chamber of darkness. Therefore, the demon and malice are all defeated.

棹慈[6]航以登明宮。含靈(líng)於是乎既濟(jǐ)。能(néng)事斯畢(bì)。亭午昇(shēng)真。經留廿七部。張元化以發靈關(guān)。法浴水風。滌浮華而潔(jié)虛白。印持十字。融四照以合无拘。擊木震仁惠之音。

[6] He steered the vessel of compassion to arrive at the palace of light. Thus, all souls are saved. When all deeds that he was capable of were done, he ascended to his true realm at noon. He left behind twenty seven scrolls of sutras (books), to spread the original principle of transformation for people to pass the gate of intelligence. The law is to bathe in water. It washes away vanity and purifies the souls. As his seal, the cross is held. It lights up four directions to unify those who don't believe. Striking the wood to resound benevolence.

東[7]礼趣生榮之路。存鬚所以有外行。削頂所以无內情。不畜臧(zāng)獲(huò)。均貴賤於人。不聚貨財示罄(qìng)遺於我。齋(zhāi)以伏識(shí)而成。戒以靜慎為固。七時礼讚。大庇存亡。七日一薦(jiàn)。

[7] Pray to the east and quickly walk on the path of life and glory. They preserve their beard as an external trait. They shave their head so there is no internal desire. They do not keep slaves. Noble and the ignoble men are equal. They do not collect goods and wealth, but they give out everything left. They fast in order to subdue the desires. They restrain with peace and prudence to strengthen themselves. The ceremony of praying happens at the seventh hour of the day. It protects the living and the dead. They sacrifice every seven days.

[8]洗心反素。真常之道。妙而難名。功用昭彰。強稱景教。惟道非聖不弘。聖非道不大。道聖符契。天下文明。太宗文皇帝。光華啟運。明聖臨人。大秦國有上德。

[8] They cleanse their heart and make it return to purity. The way of true constant is marvelous but difficult to be given with a name. Its merits are obvious, so we are compelled to call it Jingjiao (Nestorian Christianity, literally meaning the radiant religion). If it is the only teaching and it's not holy, then it's not magnificent. If it is holy but not the teaching, then it's not great. When the teaching and the holiness are matching, the world will be civilized and enlightened. Tai zong wen huang di (name of Emperor), illustrious and magnificent, started a new fate (of dynasty). He was wise when interacting with people. Daqin has a man of the greatest virtues.

曰阿[9]羅本。占青雲而載真經。望風律以馳艱險。貞觀九祀至於長安。帝使宰臣房公玄齡摠(zǒng)仗西郊賓迎入內。翻經書殿。問道禁闈(wéi)。深知正真。特令傳授。

[9]His name was A Luo Ben (Alopen). He divined the blue clouds and carried the real scriptures. He observed the patterns of the wind to ride through the difficulties and dangers. In the ninth year of Zhenguan (year name of emperor), he arrived at Chang'an (name of the capital). The emperor sent his minister Duke Fang Xuan Ling, holding the staff to the western outskirts to welcome the guest. The scriptures were translated in the imperial library. The emperor studied the doctrines in his private palace, and he reached a profound understanding of the truth and the religion. He especially ordered it to be promulgated and taught.

貞觀十有二[10]年秋七月。詔曰。道无常名。聖无常體。隨方設教。密濟群生。大秦國大德阿羅本。遠(yuǎn)將經像來獻上京。詳其教旨。玄妙无為。觀其元宗。生成立要。詞无繁說。理有忘筌(quán)。

In the seventh month of the autumn in the twelfth year [10] of Zhenguan, the emperor announced. The teaching does not have a constant name, and the holy does not have a constant form. Teachings are established depending on the location, constantly helping everyone. Alopen, the man of great virtues from Daqin, has brought the scriptures and the images to the capital from afar. He has taught every part of his teaching, and it was mysterious and marvelous. Looking at its origin, it was established from the important things. There are no extra words nor redundant sayings, the principle will stay after forgetting what was learned (literally, forget the trap after getting the fish).

[11] 濟物利人。宜行天下。所司即於京義寧(yi)坊造大秦寺。一所度僧廿一人。宗周德喪。青駕西昇。巨唐道光。景風東扇。旋令有司將帝寫真轉摸寺壁。天姿汎彩。

[11] It is beneficial for things and for humans, and it should be spread throughout the world. The appropriate authority will build a temple of Daqin in the capital at Yining (district name) immediately, the temple has twenty one monks. When the Zhou dynasty declined in virtue, (Laozi) ride on a blue cow and ascended to the west (This is a Taoism allusion). The brightness of the principle of the magnificent Tang Dynasty, and the wind of Jingjiao was blown to the east. Then the order required the authority to make a portrait of the emperor and copied onto the wall of the temple. His celestial image glimmered with colors, the heroic figure radiated on the luminous gate.

英朗[12]景門。聖迹騰祥。永輝法界。案西域圖記及漢魏史策。大秦國南統珊瑚之海。北極眾(zhòng)寶之山。西望仙境花林。東接長風弱水。其土出火統布。返魂香。明月珠。夜光璧。

His sacred portrait [12] brought (dragon-like) glory and prosperity, shining on the religion forever. According to the drawings and records of the western countries and the history books from Wei and Han. Daqin borders the sea of coral in the south, the northeast point is at the mountain of various treasures, the west is gazing at the immortal realm and flower forest, the east it meets non-stopping wind and weak water. The land produces fire-proof fabric (asbestos), fragrance that can revive lives, moon pearls, and jade that glows at night.

[13] 俗无寇盜。人有樂康。法非景不行。主非德不立。土宇廣闊。文物昌明。高宗大帝。克恭
 纘 (zuǎn)祖。潤色真宗。而於諸州各置景寺。仍崇阿羅本為鎮國大法主。

[13] There is no robbery and thievery in the custom. People have happiness and peace. The law cannot be promulgated unless it is Jing. A ruler is not appointed unless virtuous. The land is broad and vast, the culture and affairs are prosperous and enlightened. The great emperor Gao-zong was able to succeed his ancestors reverently, beneficent toward the institution of the truth. He built Jing churches in every state, and still respect Aluoben as the great master of the religion for the protection of the country.

法流十 [14]道。國富元休。寺滿百城。家殷景福。聖曆年。釋子用壯。騰口於東周。先天末。
 下士大笑。訕謗於西鎬。有若僧首羅含。大德及烈。並金方貴緒。物外高僧。共振玄綱。

The religion spread through ten [14] provinces, and the country became wealthy and enjoyed peace. Temples (monasteries) are seen everywhere throughout one hundred cities, and families flourished in the blessing of Jing. In the year Shengli (698-699 A.D.), the Buddhists (literal: children of Sakyamuni) used their strength, and raised their voices in Eastern Zhou. At the end of Xiantian (712 A.D.), the inferior officers derided and slandered (Jing) at Western Hao. But there is the head of the monks (Abraham), Jilie (Gabriel) of great virtues, both noble offspring from the golden region, high monks without worldly interests. They, together, restored the mysterious principle.

俱維[15]絕紐。玄宗至道皇帝。令寧國等五王親臨福宇建立壇場。法棟暫橈(náo)而更崇。道
 石時傾而復正。天寶初。令大將軍高力士送五聖寫真寺內安置。

Rebind [15] the broken ties. Xuanzong, the emperor of the way, ordered the prince of Ning and other princes, in total five princes, to visit the blessed shrine in person and build the altar and sanctuary. The religious timbers were casted down but now it is higher, the cornerstones of the religion used to be tilting but now it is re-erected. In the beginning of Tianbao (742 A.D.), the great general Gao Lishi was ordered to send and place a portrait of the five saints inside the temple.

賜絹百[16]匹。奉慶睿圖。龍髯雖遠。弓劍可攀。日角舒光。天顏咫尺。三載大秦國有僧佶和。瞻星向化。望日朝尊。詔僧羅含僧普論等一七人。與大德佶和。於興慶宮修功德。

One hundred [16] sheets of silk was gifted along with the portrait of wisdom. Although the dragon's (the emperor's) beard is far, their bows and swords can still be held. The solar horns diffuse light, and the celestial visage is close within a foot. In the third year, the great Qin empire had a monk Jihe, who gazed at the stars and decided to transform, and gazed at the sun to pay homage to the honorable (emperor). The imperial order was issued for monk Luohan and monk Puluo (Paul) and others, in total seventeen people, with Jihe of great virtues, to practice a service of merit in the Xingqing Palace.

於[17]是天題寺榜(bǎng)。額戴龍書。寶裝璀璨。灼爍丹霞。睿扎宏空。騰凌激日。寵(chǒng)賚(lài)比南山峻極。沛澤與東海齊深。道无不可。所可可名。聖无不作。所作可述。

Then, [17] the emperor composed and wrote the name of the temple, and the tablet bears the writing of dragon (emperor). The precious ornament was like the shining feather of a kingfisher,

burned and flashed like sunset. The writings of the wise filled up the air, leaping and rising, provoking the sun. The gift of favor is higher than the southern mountain, and the generous flood is as deep as the eastern sea. The way does not have a limit, and whatever its effects can be named. There is nothing a saint cannot achieve, and whatever he does can be recorded.

肅宗文明皇[18]帝。於靈武等五郡。重立景寺。元善資而福祚(zuò)開。大慶臨而皇業建。代宗文武皇帝。恢張聖運。從事无為。每於降誕之辰。錫天香以告成功。頒御饌(zuǎn)以光景眾。

The polished and enlightened emperor Suzong [18] rebuilt the Jing temples at Lingwu and other counties, in total five counties. This kind behavior assisted him and happiness began, great felicity came and the royal estate was built. The polished and martial emperor Daizong greatly increased the royal fortune and conducted his affairs without effort. In the morning of every birthday, he offers incense to pray for success, and he distributes royal food to enlighten the Jing believers.

且[19] 乾以美利故能(néng)廣生。聖以體(tǐ)元故能亭毒。我建中聖神文武皇帝。披八政以黜陟幽明。闡九疇(chóu)以惟新景命。化通玄理。祝无愧心。至於方大而虛。專靜而恕。

Moreover, [19] heaven with the beautiful merits can extend life, and the saint embodies the original virtue to cease toxic influences. In our Jianzhong Period (780-783 A.D.), the sacred polished and martial emperor established eight governments to dismiss the unworthy, and he clarified nine types to issue new illustrious fates. His transforming influence connects the

mysterious principles, and he prays without a guilty conscience. He is elevated but still humble, and he stays silent and lenient.

廣[20]慈救眾苦。善貸被群生者。我修行之大猷(yóu)。汲引之階漸也。若使風雨時。天下靜。人能理。物能清。存能昌。歿(mò)能樂。念生響(xiǎng)應。情發目誠者。我景力能事之功用也。

He is greatly [20] merciful and he saves people from misery, and he gives blessings to all people. The goal of our cultivation of the doctrine. The gradual steps to lead men. When the winds and rains come at the right time, the world is quiet. Men act reasonably, and things remain to be pure, the alive can flourish, and the dead can be happy. Every thought has its own echo, emotions will be free and eyes will be sincere. This is what our illustrious power is capable of achieving.

大施[23]主金紫光祿大夫。同朔方節度副使。試殿中監。賜紫袈裟僧伊斯。和而好惠。聞道勤行。遠自王舍之城。聿來中夏。術高三代。藝博十全。始效節於丹庭。乃策名於王[24]帳。
The big patron, [23]the Guangludafu (name of an official position) of gold and purple. Along with the secondary jiedushi (name of an official position) of Suofang (name of a location), and the zhongjian (name of an official position) of the examination hall. (They) gave purple gown to monk Yisi (Yazdbozid). (He who is) peaceful and loves giving. He heard the doctrine and he worked hard to practice it. Far from the city of the royal palace, then, he came to the center of China. His abilities are better than those of three generations, and his skills cover everything in ten (categories). He started to serve at the red hall, but then had his name inscribed on the king's [24]tent.

中書令汾陽郡王郭公子儀。初搃戎於朔方也。肅宗俾之從邁(mai)。雖見親於臥內。不自異於行間。為公爪牙。作軍耳目。能散祿賜。不積於家。獻臨恩之頗黎。

Zhongshuling (name of an official position), the prince of Fanyang (name of location), duke Guo Ziyi. (He) first put on armour at Suofang. Suzong (the emperor) made him follow as an attendant. Although he was met in the bedroom, he did not have different privileges during the trip, to be the duke's claw and fang, to be the army's ears and eyes. He dispensed fortune and gave out wealth, not accumulating (fortune) in the house. When he received imperial gifts of bolts and fine cloth,

布[25]辭憩之金闕。或仍其舊寺。或重廣法堂。崇飾廊宇。如翬斯飛。更效景門。依仁施利。每歲集四寺僧徒。虔事精供。備諸五旬。餒者來而飯之。寒者來而衣之。病者療而[26]起之。

[25] he did not keep them at home. He spent them on the old temple, and he enlarged the hall of religion greatly. He decorated the room and the chambers, so that they are like they can fly with wings, and he re-positioned himself at the gate of the luminous, and he aided with wealth based on good manners. Every year he gathers the monks of the four temples, performing religious activities and dedicating offerings, providing food for all fifty days. The hungry came and they were fed. The cold came and they were clothed.

死者葬而安之。清節達娑。未聞斯美。白衣景士。今見其人。願刻洪碑。以揚休烈。詞曰。
真主无元。湛寂常然。權(quán)輿匠化。起地立天。分身出代。救度无邊。

The sick ones [26]came and they were cured and able to get up. The dead were buried and left in peace. During the dasuo (Sakya, a Buddhism sect) have never heard such goodness. The white robed man from the Jing religion was seen (by us) today, and (we are) desiring to engrave a grand monument (for him), to praise the deeds of the past greatness. The words say: the true lord does not have a beginning, calm, silent, and permanent. He started the construction of creation, he initiated the land and he lifted the sky. He divided his body to enter the world, and he saved and preached without an end.

日昇暗[27]滅。咸證真玄赫赫文皇。道冠前王。乘時撥亂。乾廓坤張。明明景教。言歸我唐。翻經建寺。存歿舟航。百福偕作。万邦之康。高宗纂祖。更築精宇。和宮敞朗。

The sun rises and the darkness diminishes [27], and (it) bears witness to the true principle. The established cultured emperor, his achievements surpassing the previous emperors. While in the time of chaos, he expanded the sky and the earth. The bright Jing religion, it claimed to return to Tang (means China here). (It) translated the sutras and established temples, the living and the dead sailed in the boat together. Hundreds of happiness are all created, ten thousands of cities are bountiful. When Gaozong succeeded his ancestors he rebuilt the delicate building. Peaceful palaces were open and bright,

遍[28]滿中土。真道宣明。式封法主。人有樂康。物无災苦。玄宗啟聖。克修真正。御榜揚輝。天書蔚映。皇圖璀璨。率土高敬。庶績咸熙。人賴其慶。肅宗來復。天威引[29]駕。

(they are) everywhere in middle earth (means China here) [28]. The true teaching was announced openly, and the leader of the religion was appointed. People had wealth and happiness, things had no disaster and sadness. When Xuanzong started his reign, he practiced the true and rightful doctrine. The royal announcements praised the greatness, and the celestial writing flourishing and shining. The royal portraits were magnificent and glittering, and the entire earth revered him. His achievements were successful, and people thus relied on his blessings. Suzong returned, and the might of the sky [29]led his chariot.

聖日舒晶。祥風掃夜。祚歸皇室。祆氛永謝。止沸定塵。造我區夏。代宗孝義。德合天地。
開貸生成。物資美利。香以報功。仁以作施。暘谷來威。月窟畢萃。

The sacred sun is relaxing and crystal-like, auspicious wind brushes the nightfall. The good fortune belongs to the royal, and the evil atmosphere is forever repelled. Turmoil was stilled and dust was settled, my Huaxia (China) is established, Daizong, filial and harmonic, his virtues are as big as sky and earth. The living are satisfied by his generosity, the materials are good quality and profitable. Incenses were offered for rewarding the deeds, and benevolence was practiced for the donation. The valley of the sunrise rose with might, and the cave of the moon is elaborately decorated.

建[30]中統極。聿修明德。武肅四溟。文清万域。燭臨人隱。鏡觀物色。六合昭蘇。百蠻取則。道惟廣兮。應惟密。強名言兮演三一。

When Jianzong [30] came to power, he remade the books for shining bright virtues. He pacified the four seas with martial power, and he cleared ten thousands of cities with his literary power. Like a torch facing what people are hiding, looking and judging things with a mirror. He revived the world through six doctrines, and hundreds of illiterates accepting the rules. The teaching is vast. We tried to name it but were told to honor the three in one.

Appendix III

The Nestorian Stele

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[1]

Yue ru: “Ever thus, truly silent.

Foremost before the foremost, yet without origin.

Darkly remote, numinously empty.

Last after the last, yet wondrously existent.

Collecting the mysterious and grasping (it), and thus producing transformation.

Subtle among the multitude of sages, by origin is honored and revered.

Is it not I—the Three-One Wondrous Body, the Originless True Lord, Aloha?

He marks the Cross to determine the four directions.

He stirs the Prime Wind to produce

[2]

the Two Breaths (qi).

The dark void changes, and Heaven and Earth open.

Sun and Moon revolve, and day and night come into being.

He crafts and completes the ten thousand things, and thus establishes the First Man.

Separately He bestows good harmony, ordering (him) to govern the Transformative Sea.

The nature of the Primal Origin is empty and not full.

The mind of pure detachment is originally without craving or desire.

But when Mara deludes and spreads falsehood,

decorating and adorning pure essence,
 (in) the space between flatness and greatness,

[3]

this is within the realm of "this is."

The crevice of darkness is the same as the interior of "that is not."

Therefore, the 365 types (of beings),
 shoulder to shoulder, follow the ruts (of the wheel),
 compete in weaving Law-Nets.

Some point to things to entrust them with a doctrine.

Some, by emptiness and existence, fall into dualism.

Some pray and sacrifice to seek blessings.

Some boast of virtue to deceive others.

Wisdom and thought bustle incessantly;

Affection and emotion toil exhaustingly—

[4]

but in the end, attain nothing.

Boiled and pressed, ever burning.

Accumulated delusion, perishing path.

Long-lost, again bewildered.

Then I, the Three-One (in) divided form, the Glorious Honored Miśiha,
 withdrew and concealed true majesty,

appearing among men in a new era.
 Heavenly spirits proclaimed the joy:
 A virgin bore the sage in Great Qin.
 Starry constellations announced the auspice.
 Persia beheld the brilliance and came with tribute.
 Twenty-four sages of the Circle

[5]

had teachings of the old Law.
 They ordered family and nation by the Great Pattern.
 Then was established the Three-One Pure Wind, the wordless new teaching.
 It shaped the good for use in right faith.
 He set measures for the Eight Realms.
 Refined the dust to make the true.
 Opened the gate of the Three Constants.
 Unveiled life, extinction, and death.
 He hung the image of the sun to break the dark palace.
 Delusions and demons—then—were utterly destroyed.
 He rowed the Boat of Compassion

[6]

to ascend the Palace of Radiance.
 All sentient spirits—then—were delivered.

Capable of accomplishing this work to completion.

At midday, He ascended to the Truth.

The scriptures remained in twenty-seven sections.

He unfolded the Prime Transformation to open the Spirit Gate.

The Dharma bathes in water and wind,

washing away floating ornamentation and purifying emptiness and whiteness.

He sealed with the Cross,

merging the Four Illuminations to unite the unbound.

He struck wood, resounding the sound of benevolence and grace.

[7]

In the East, rites tend toward the path of life's flourishing.

To preserve a beard is thus to have external conduct.

To shave the crown (of the head) is thus to have no internal attachment.

Not keeping stores of treasure and gain;

equalizing noble and base among people.

Not amassing goods and wealth, showing complete abandonment and leaving (them) to me.

Fasting is to subdue knowledge and thus accomplish it.

Precepts are to make quiet carefulness firm.

At the seven times (of day) perform rites and praises,

greatly sheltering the living and the dead.

Every seven days make one offering.

[8]

Wash the heart and return to purity.

The way of True Constancy—

wondrous and hard to name.

Its功用 (efficacy and function) shines forth manifestly.

It is forcefully called the "Luminous Teaching" (景教, i.e., "Jingjiao" / "the Religion of Light").

Only through the Way can the sage expand;

Without the sage, the Way does not grow great.

Way and sage correspond and meet;

the world thereby becomes enlightened.

Taizong, the Cultured Emperor,

radiantly initiated fortune;

his sagely brilliance reached the people.

In the land of Great Qin (the Roman Empire or Byzantine Empire), there was a supreme virtue,
named Aluoben (阿羅本),

who occupied the azure clouds and carried true scripture.

He gazed upon the winds and (thus) sped through dangers and hardships,

and in the ninth year of Zhenguan (貞觀, 635 CE) arrived at Chang'an.

The Emperor commanded the Prime Minister Duke Fang Xuanling

to personally lead the escort at the western suburbs and welcome (Aluoben) into the palace.

In the Hall of Scripture Translation, the (Christian) books were translated;

within the Imperial Enclosure, the Way was questioned.

The Emperor deeply comprehended the True and Correct (Teaching),

and specially ordered its transmission.

[9]

In the twelfth year of Zhenguan, in autumn, the seventh month,

a decree was issued, saying:

"The Way has no constant name;

the Sage has no constant form.

Teachings are established according to the region;

secretly aid all living beings.

The Great Virtue of the Great Qin, Aluoben,

has brought from afar scriptures and images, offering them to the Capital.

Examining his religious aims, they are profound, subtle, and of non-action.

Observing his original tradition, it generates and establishes essentials.

Its words have no excessive speech;

its principle forgets the net once the fish is caught.

[10]

Benefiting beings and profiting men,

it is fitting to spread it across the world.

Therefore, the proper authorities are commanded to build the Daqin Temple (大秦寺, "Temple of the Great Qin")

in Yining Ward (義寧坊) of the Capital.

One monastery is constructed,

and twenty-one monks are ordained.

When the virtue of the Zhou dynasty decayed,
 the Azure Carriage (the heavenly vehicle) ascended westward;
 when the Great Tang's Dao shone forth,
 the Bright Winds fanned eastward.

Thereupon the authorities were commanded to have the Emperor's true likeness
 copied and transferred onto the temple wall.

His natural bearing emitted colorful radiance,
 bright and heroic, illuminating the Gate of Light.
 The holy traces soared and proclaimed auspices,
 eternally shining over the Dharma Realm.

[11-12]

According to the records of Western Regions maps
 and the chronicles of the Han and Wei dynasties,
 the land of Great Qin
 in the south connects to the Coral Sea,
 in the north reaches the Mountain of Many Treasures;
 to the west looks toward the Immortal Land and Flower Forest;
 to the east adjoins the Long Winds and Weak Waters (mythical rivers).
 Its land produces fire-woven cloth,
 returning-soul incense,
 bright-moon pearls,

and night-glowing jade disks.

[13-14]

Among the people, there were no bandits or thieves;

the people had joy and peace.

The Law could not proceed without illumination (景, i.e., the Luminous Teaching).

A ruler could not be established without virtue.

The land and territory were vast and broad;

culture and goods flourished and were bright.

The Great Emperor Gaozong

was able to respectfully continue the ancestors,

and he adorned and refined the True Tradition.

Moreover, in each of the provinces, he established Luminous (景) temples.

He still honored Aluoben as the Grand Dharma Master Who Pacifies the Nation.

The Law flowed through the ten circuits;

the country prospered in primal tranquility.

The temples filled a hundred cities;

households were enriched by the blessings of the Luminous (Teaching).

In the Shengli reign (698–700 CE),

monastics grew vigorous,

spreading their words in Eastern Zhou.

At the end of the Xiantian period,

lower scholars laughed greatly,

mocking and slandering at Western Hao (i.e., in Chang'an).

There were such as the monks Shouluoan, Dade, and Lie,
 all descendants of noble families of Jin;
 exalted monks from beyond worldly matters,
 who together raised the mysterious net,
 and jointly upheld the severed bond (meaning: preserved the pure faith).

[15-16]

The Emperor Xuanzong, the Enlightened Emperor,
 ordered the Five Kings, such as the Prince of Ningguo,
 to personally come to the blessed grounds and establish altar sites.
 Though the pillar of the Law had briefly bent, it was exalted anew;
 though the Stone of the Way had momentarily tilted, it was restored upright.
 At the beginning of the Tianbao reign,
 he ordered the Grand General Gao Lishi
 to deliver portraits of the Five Saints,
 which were placed and installed within the temple.
 One hundred bolts of silk were bestowed;
 the imperial portrait of sagely fortune was revered.
 Although the Dragon Beard (the Emperor) was far away,
 bow and sword could yet ascend to him.
 The Sun-Crest expanded its radiance;
 the imperial countenance was as near as within arm's reach.
 In the third year (third cyclical year),
 there was a monk from the Great Qin named Jihe,

who gazed upon the stars and turned toward transformation,
 who looked upon the sun and honored the exalted.

An imperial edict commanded monks Luohan, Pulun, and others—seven in all—
 together with the Great Virtue Jihe,
 to cultivate merits in Xingqing Palace.

[17-18]

Then, the Heavenly Inscription of the temple plaque was made;
 the title carried Dragon Script,
 the treasures adorned with glistening emeralds,
 shining bright like rosy clouds.

The imperial power spread through the vast void,
 soaring and surging, piercing the sun.

Imperial favor and gifts rivaled the towering heights of Mount Nan;
 the vast grace was as deep as the Eastern Sea.

The Way—there is nothing it cannot do,
 what it can do, it can be named.

The Sage—there is nothing he cannot accomplish,
 what he accomplishes, it can be recorded.

The Emperor Suzong, the Cultured and Luminous Emperor,
 in Lingwu and four other prefectures,
 reestablished the Luminous temples.

The primal goodness accumulated, and blessings and longevity opened wide.

Great fortune arrived, and the imperial enterprise was built.

The Emperor Daizong, the Civil and Martial Emperor,
 expanded and extended the sagely destiny,
 acting always in accordance with non-action.
 On each birthday of the (Divine) Descent and Birth,
 he bestowed heavenly incense to proclaim the successful work,
 and distributed imperial banquets to honor and brighten the Luminous crowds.

[19]

Moreover, Heaven is able to bring about wide generation because of its beautiful benefits;
 the Sage is able to nurture and harmonize because he embodies the Origin.
 Our Sage and Divine Civil and Martial Emperor of the Jianzhong reign,
 opened the Eight Administrations, elevating and suppressing (correctly) the hidden and
 manifest;
 expanded the Nine Fields (Nine Divisions of Government), ever renewing the mandate of the
 Luminous (Teaching).
 His transformation permeated the profound principles;
 his blessings left no guilty heart.
 Thus it was that he enlarged and made void,
 focused on calmness and forgiveness,
 widened compassion to save the sufferings of the masses,
 generously bestowed mercy upon all living beings.
 This is the great way of our cultivation and practice,
 the gradual ladder by which one draws upward.
 If it were that the wind and rain come at their seasons,

the world would be at peace,
 people would be able to be governed,
 things would be able to become pure,
 the living would be able to thrive,
 and the dead would be able to rejoice.
 When thought is sent forth, sound will respond;
 when emotion stirs, visible sincerity appears—
 this is the efficacy and function of our Luminous Power.

[20]

The Great Patron, Grand Master for Glorious Happiness (金紫光祿大夫),
 also Deputy Military Commissioner of Shuofang Circuit,
 Acting Supervisor of the Palace,
 granted the purple kasaya to the monk Yisi.
 Harmonious and fond of benevolence,
 he heard of the Way and diligently practiced it.
 From the city of Rajagrha (王舍城, in India),
 he came directly to the Central Kingdom (China).
 His skill surpassed the Three Ages,
 his arts were vast and complete in all ten perfections.
 He first offered loyalty at the Scarlet Court (the Tang imperial court),
 then inscribed his name among the King's banners (military service).

[21]

When the Grand Chancellor and Duke of Fenyang, Guo Ziyi,
 first commanded the army at Shuofang,
 the Emperor Suzong ordered Yisi to accompany the expedition.
 Although he was favored and kept close in the sleeping quarters,
 he did not distinguish himself from the soldiers on campaign.
 He served as the Duke's claw and tooth (a helper) and the army's eyes and ears.
 Though he was given rewards and salaries, he did not hoard them at home.
 When he received imperial gifts of bolts of fine cloth,
 he used them either to restore old temples
 or to expand the Dharma halls,
 decorating the cloisters and pavilions like flying birds.
 He further promoted the Luminous Teaching (景門).
 Following benevolence and bestowing benefits,
 each year he gathered monks from four temples,
 devoutly performing pure offerings,
 providing food through all the fifty days (perhaps a liturgical season).
 Those who were hungry came and were fed;
 those who were cold came and were clothed;
 the sick were healed and raised up;
 the dead were buried and given rest.
 Even the eminent monks of Śākya (達婆) had never heard of such goodness.

[22]

Today, white-robed laymen of the Luminous Teaching,
 seeing such a man,
 wish to carve a grand stele
 to exalt and proclaim his noble deeds.

[23]

Thus the inscription says:
 The True Lord is without origin;
 deep and silent, constant and enduring.
 He initiated the construction of creation,
 raising earth and establishing heaven.
 He divided his body to enter into the world,
 saving and ferrying without limit.
 When the sun rises, darkness is extinguished;
 thus all verify the True Mystery.

[24]

Glorious indeed was the Civil Emperor (Tang Taizong),
 whose Way crowned those of past kings.
 Seizing the opportunity, he dispelled chaos;
 he broadened Heaven and expanded Earth.
 Bright and brilliant was the Luminous Teaching,

which proclaimed: "We return to Tang!"

Scriptures were translated and temples built,

ferrying both the living and the dead.

Hundred blessings arose together;

all nations were thereby made well.

[25]

Emperor Gaozong continued the ancestral work,

further building refined temples;

harmonious palaces opened wide,

filling all the Central Land.

The True Way was widely proclaimed,

and the Dharma Master was formally honored.

People rejoiced in peace;

creatures suffered no calamities.

The Sage Emperor Xuanzong began his sacred endeavors,

perfecting the True and Correct Path.

The inscribed plaques shone forth;

the heavenly script (imperial calligraphy) was brilliant and radiant.

The imperial domain was resplendent;

all under heaven reverently honored it.

The multitudes prospered together;

the people relied upon its blessings.

[26]

Emperor Suzong restored the order,
 his heavenly power drawing the chariot forth.
 The sacred sun unfurled its crystalline light;
 auspicious winds swept away the night.
 Blessings returned to the imperial house;
 demonic vapors forever vanished.
 The boiling ceased, the dust was stilled—
 thus was our realm of China created anew.

[27]

Emperor Daizong, filial and righteous,
 united his virtue with Heaven and Earth.
 He opened wide his generosity,
 supporting the growth and preservation of all living things.
 Fragrant offerings were made to repay merits;
 benevolence was practiced as a means of charity.
 From the Valley of the Sun came his awe;
 from the Cavern of the Moon, all spirits gathered.

[28]

In the Jianzhong reign, the governance reached its height.

He diligently cultivated luminous virtue;
in martial spirit, he pacified the Four Seas;
in civil grace, he purified the ten thousand realms.

His light shone upon the hidden;
his mirror observed the colors of all things.

Throughout the Six Directions, all was brightened and awakened;
the myriad tribes followed his example.

[29]

The Way is vast—

its responses are profound and secret.

The strong and eminent proclaim the doctrine of the Three-in-One.

The Lord can act, and ministers can record.

Thus was erected the towering stele,

in praise of the Primal Fortune.

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