

Project figures prominently in this section, laying bare the competing visions of and interests in ecological conservation among global academic and conservation interests, and national, regional and local actors. A key theme in this section is the *disunity* within the ecological state, reflected also in the disunity between academics and practitioners of conservation.

The third section focuses on contests over state projects of a “harmonious society” as a strategy for reinforcing China’s territorial sovereignty in the borderlands. Chapters by Chris Coggins and Zesang Zeren, and by Charlene Makley, both look at the revival of Tibetan cults of *zhidak* – mountain-dwelling territorial deities – in the context of neoliberal development, while Emily Yeh’s chapter examines the construction of the “green Tibetan” as an indigenous environmental steward, a construction that Tibetans have themselves encouraged as a means of promoting Tibetan culture.

This is a fine collection. It will be of great interest to anyone who has been keeping up with borderland and frontier studies in China, but also those interested in nation-building, tourism, ethnic relations, environmentalism and conservation, and the political economy of regional development in China more generally.

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*The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History*

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This valuable addition to our knowledge of the history of the region now known as Xinjiang (the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China) brings an original perspective to the field, and a striking contrast with the existing histories which draw primarily on Chinese sources. *Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* is a study of Uyghur historical practice during the Qing period, a practice that centered on pilgrimage to shrines, and stories about the saints who were believed to be buried there. Thum argues that these practices were central to the formation of a shared “Altishahri” identity, a term sometimes used to refer to the inhabitants of the “Six Cities” which bordered the Taklimakan desert, and a precursor of the 20th-century ethnonym Uyghur. The book further claims that these practices have strongly influenced contemporary nationalist constructions of Uyghur identity. It will be of interest in the field of Chinese and Central Asian history and religion, the history of Islam, especially Sufism, and its core contribution is to the burgeoning field of Uyghur studies. It is clearly argued, often elegantly written, and well sign-posted, marred only by a few typos, notably references to absent “Figures” in the text – evidence of its transition from PhD to book – and the surprising and frustrating absence of a bibliography, for which the notes are not a satisfactory substitute.

The book’s greatest debt is to the pioneering work of the anthropologist Ildikó Bellér-Hann (*Community Matters in Xinjiang 1880–1949: Towards a Historical Anthropology of the Uyghur*, Brill, 2008), for this is a work of historical anthropology that draws equally on textual sources and ethnographic fieldwork. Thum is a fine storyteller, and provides some evocative accounts of his encounters with the shaykhs who are guardians of the shrines, summoning up the buzzing of insects and hum of

motorbikes as he sits in the dust listening to their tales of the saint. He is also an enterprising fieldworker who tracked down half-forgotten desert shrines with the aid of Aurel Stein's 1904 map of the region. However, it is the way that these anthropological skills are brought to bear on the textual sources that provides the most original and valuable aspect of the book. The texts are drawn from a rich, global archive of the Altishahri manuscript tradition, which the author has sourced from the collections of missionaries and travellers, Chinese state archives, and a thriving underground book market in Uyghur bazaars. The great majority of these surviving manuscripts belong to a genre called *tazkirah*.

Chapter one introduces the *tazkirah*: texts that served as local histories, biographies of saints, and stories to be read aloud at shrines. Textually they are diverse, some deriving from the Sufi tradition of West Turkestan, others – like the *Tazkirah* of Sultan Bughra Khan, a tale of holy war against Buddhist Yarkand and Khotan – developed out of the Turkic oral epic with its formulaic style and heroic martyrs. What unites them is the way that they function within the tradition of shrine veneration.

Chapter two lays out the author's core argument concerning the technologies of manuscript use in this tradition, arguing that these texts served as sites of debate through the practices of copying, marginal notation, editing, and binding. Thum depicts the *tazkirah* as Wikipedia-style history: manuscripts embedded in social relations and the context of shrine worship. He argues that the textual drift through practices of copying and editing, leading to diverse versions of the stories amounted to a type of "community authorship." This participatory approach produced a body of texts that were extremely flexible, but at the same time seen as immutable, accurately transmitted and authoritative.

Chapter three expands on the sensory experience of pilgrimage, arguing that the texts were only one element in an elaborate communion with the past, and that historical practice was firmly tied to particular points on the landscape. Shrines are ubiquitous in the Altishahri landscape; even small villages have their own holy graves, and they host a range of practices from private prayer to large-scale festivals. Some of the most significant shrines, which lie deep in the desert, are said to be built where martyrs fell in battle but are actually built on ancient Buddhist sites, constructed when the place was fertile. These shrines have lasted for centuries, many of them marked only by a few flagpoles in the sand, displaying the remarkable strength and tenacity of community memory.

Chapter four argues that the pilgrimage tradition maintained a shared Altishari historical identity through its network of pilgrim routes. Graffiti still visible on shrine walls shows that pilgrims crossed the region to visit the shrines and listen to the stories of the saints, inscribing their names and villages on shrine walls. It is striking that the Qing and Manchu are virtually unmentioned in the *tazkirah*, but even so, Thum suggests, this regional identity was shaped by Qing rule, formed within the geographical boundaries of the Qing empire, the historical practice of a Muslim people under infidel rule, lacking their own dynasties to chronicle.

Chapter five moves into new territory, with the proposition that the *tazkirah* tradition was reshaped into Uyghur nationalism in the 20th century, with the creation of a new pantheon of national saints, new technologies and new contexts. In particular, Thum suggests that the *tazkirah* tradition continued in the shape of the historical novels that became so popular amongst Uyghurs in the 1980s, with their heroic, larger than life characters, often directly borrowed from the *tazkirah* tradition. This view of a merging of local tradition with imported nationalist practices offers a challenge to Gardner Bovingdon's influential (2004) analysis of the competing but "strikingly

similar” Chinese and Uyghur nationalisms which lays greater emphasis on the external influences on Uyghur nationalism (“Contested histories” [with Nabijan Tursun], in *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Frontier*, edited by S. Frederick Starr [M.E. Sharpe, 2004, 353–74]).

Chapter six turns its attention to the role of the state, adding to the already significant body of English-language literature on the 17th-century Sufi leader Afaq Khoja and his tomb in the present day. This tomb, once visited by thousands of pilgrims, is now abhorred by Uyghurs but very popular with Han tourists. A series of academics have pondered this problem; Thum provides a useful summary of the debate, highlighting the shift in perspective between the *tazkirah* and the nationalist tradition, but this section of the book provides less original and insightful material than the earlier sections that relate directly to the *tazkirah* tradition.

PRC rule in this region saw significant disruption to the shrine system, through land reform and religious reform of the 1950s. Shrine veneration and festivals were revived in the 1980s, but the *tazkirah* tradition was largely cut off from its original contexts. Thum’s main fieldwork was conducted in 2007–08: a relatively good time for the shrines, predating the major anti-religion campaigns which began in 2009. Since then, the majority of the shrines have been closed to pilgrims while the more accessible and attractive sites have been reconfigured as tourist destinations whose new meanings promote secularism and ethnic unity. Thus, Thum argues, state policies serve to weaken links between shrines and popular historical memory, enlisting Uyghur forms of historical practice to promote state aims while simultaneously destroying key nodes of those traditions.

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*Beijing’s Economic Statecraft during the Cold War, 1949–1991*

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The study of economic statecraft, the “use [of] economic instruments to pursue foreign policy goals” has been dominated by the study of economic sanctions and foreign aid from the perspective of the sender country, and the most commonly studied sender country in the Cold War period has been the United States. Shu Guang Zhang of Macau University of Science and Technology has written a detailed history of China’s economic statecraft during the Cold War, notably its use of aid, trade and sanctions to achieve its goals. What makes this book particularly noteworthy is Zhang’s use of relatively newly available archival materials from Chinese sources including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs covering the period 1949–65, as well as provincial-level archives.

The book begins with a study of China’s efforts to evade the consequences of the US economic embargo on the new Communist government in 1949 which was then tightened further during the Korean War. Chapters two to five then cover China’s aid relations during the Cold War, both as a recipient of Soviet aid and as a dispenser of modest but influential amounts of aid to developing countries, neighbours, and after the Sino-Soviet split in 1960–63 to other communist governments such as North Korea and Albania, trying to counter Soviet influence. Chapter six deals with