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# The ‘Biographies of Āiláo’

*An Annotated Translation of the 《哀牢传》 in Various Texts*

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## The Yúnnán Papers

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This text is part of a series of translations of historical Chinese texts concerning Yúnnán.

This series does not aim to present any new research but to allow an English-speaking audience to better understand Yúnnán’s history and culture through original texts. The texts are heavily annotated, giving geographical, historical and cultural background information and references to contemporary academic discussions.

The texts in this series are currently in draft and undergoing revision. Those translations that have reached a certain state of maturity can be found on my website at

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## 1 Introduction

The 《哀牢传》, or ‘*Biographies of Āiláo*’, is the oldest mythological texts recorded in Hàn Chinese sources about Yúnnán. It said to have been written by Yáng Zhōng 杨终, also known as Yáng Zǐshān 杨子山, during the Hàn dynasty 汉朝 in 68 CE,<sup>(1)</sup> but the original text is long lost with only fragments of a, perhaps once much longer,<sup>(2)</sup> text surviving as quotes in other texts.

The ‘*Complete Commentary to the “Complete History”*’ 《史通通释》<sup>(3)</sup> contains the following information about the work and its author:

|                                    |   |         |
|------------------------------------|---|---------|
| 杨子山：《后汉书》杨终字子山成都人                  | Yáng Zǐshān: The ‘ <i>History of the Later Hàn Dynasty</i> ’ notes that Yáng Zhōng, style name Zǐshān, hailed from Chéngdū.   |         |
| 年十三为郡小吏                            | At the age of thirteen he was appointed as junior scribe in the <i>jùn</i> .  |         |
| 显宗徵诣兰台拜校书郎                         | Xiǎnzōng summoned him to the Orchid Platform and appointed him as editor.   | 史通通释 5  |
| 按传无哀牢。传之文论衡佚文篇子山为上计吏见三府作哀牢传不成归郡作上。 | There were no records Āiláo. According to the biographies in the lost text of the ‘ <i>Discourses Weighed in the Balance</i> ’, Zǐshān was appointed as senior accounts clerk at the capital to write the ‘ <i>Biographies of Āiláo</i> ’, but did not complete it, only after he returned to the <i>jùn</i> he submitted it. | 史通通释 10 |
| 孝明奇之徵在兰台                           | Xiàomíng praised his talent at the Orchid Platform.   |         |
| 《后汉地理志》哀牢永平中置故牢王国。按今为云南永昌府。👁       | The geographical treatise of the ‘ <i>History of the Later Hàn Dynasty</i> ’ notes that Āiláo was established during the Yǒngpíng period as the kingdom of Láo. Annotation: today this is Yúnnán’s Yǒngchāng prefecture.  | 史通通释 15 |

This account suggests that Yáng Zhōng taken up a position in Āiláo, returned to the capital, but could not complete writing the records of the new territory there, so returned to Āiláo to complete the work. That seems also be the interpretation of Rafe de Crespigny, who wrote,

[a]t the age of thirteen Yang Zhong held junior office in the commandery. [...] When the Ailao people made formal surrender in 69 Yang Zhong was sent to the capital as Reporting Officer. He found that the records of these people kept at the capital were faulty, and after his return to the southwest her presented the *Ailao zhuan* 哀牢傳, an Account of the new tributaries, to Emperor Ming. (Crespigny (2007), p. 968)

[13: 👁 ] Source text: [https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E5%8F%B2%E9%80%9A%E9%80%9A%E9%87%8B\\_\(%E5%9B%9B%E5%BA%AB%E5%85%A8%E6%9B%B8%E6%9C%AC\)/%E5%85%A8%E8%A6%BD](https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E5%8F%B2%E9%80%9A%E9%80%9A%E9%87%8B_(%E5%9B%9B%E5%BA%AB%E5%85%A8%E6%9B%B8%E6%9C%AC)/%E5%85%A8%E8%A6%BD)

r4: Xiǎnzōng ] ruled 325–342 CE.

r8: the capital ] The term ??MS 三府 MS seems to refer to the capital here, see Hucker (1985), 4854.

r11: Xiàomíng ] i.e. Eastern Hàn emperor Míng 东汉明帝

r13: Yǒngpíng period ] Yǒngpíng 永平.

(1) Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, p. 80, Yáng Zhōng 杨终’s biography is contained in the 《后汉书》.

(2) Lín Chāomín 林超民 suggests that the “*Biographies of Āiláo*” was Yúnnán’s earliest local gazetteer ‘《哀牢传》可说是云南最古的一部方志, Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, p. 83.

(3) 第十一卷, I found this through its mention in Mansvelt Beck (1990), p. 22.

Based on the account translated above, B.J. Mansvelt Beck wrote,

[a] certain Yang Zhong (d. 100), who was born in what is now Sichuan province, presented the emperor with an unfinished copy of his account of the Ailao tribe, who lived to the south-west of Sichuan. Emperor Ming appointed him to the Orchid Terrace and allowed him to finish his work (ST [i.e. ‘*Complete Commentary to the “Complete History”*’ 《史通通释》] 11, 310). This was not a disinterested gesture on the part of the emperor; on the contrary, the Ailao had submitted to Chinese domination in 69, much to the glory of his reign and it must have been for this reason that the need was felt for an accurate account of the history and customs of these ‘barbarians’ (HHS [i.e. ‘*History of the Later Hàn Dynasty*’ 《后汉书》] 107). Yang Zhong’s work, together with Ban Gu’s Annals and Biographies, form the kernel of what was to become DGHJ [i.e. ‘*Dōngguān Records of the Hàn*’ 《东观汉记》], although this name was then not yet applied to the collection. (Mansvelt Beck (1990), p. 22)

But in the surviving parts of the ‘*Dōngguān Records of the Hàn*’ 《东观汉记》 remains only one short mention of Āiláo 哀牢:

十二年，以益州徼外哀牢王率众慕化，地旷远，置永昌郡。👁️

In the 12th year, the king of Āiláo from beyond the borders of Yìzhōu led his people to admire China. Since the area was vast and remote, Yǒngchāng jùn was established.

The oldest existing version of the legend, unattributed, can be found in the ‘*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*’ 《华阳国志》, the earliest local history of China’s south-west. The text was also copied into the ‘*History of the Later Hàn Dynasty*’ 《后汉书》<sup>(4)</sup>, the ‘*Commentary on the Water Classic*’ 《水经注》 and many later works, such as ‘*Origins of the Bai Kingdom*’ 《白国因由》, and the ‘*Records of a Journey to Diān*’ 《滇程记》.

## 2 About the Translations

The text for this translation has been sourced from the multi-volume collection of historic material relating to Yúnnán, 《云南史料丛刊》, which also gives an introduction.<sup>(5)</sup>

## 3 Annotated Translations

### 3.1 The Āiláo Legend in the ‘*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*’ 《华阳国志》

The version of the legend contained in the ‘*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*’ 《华阳国志》, compiled in between 348 and 354, is according to Hóu Chōng 侯冲<sup>(6)</sup> the earliest surviving version.

[2: 👁️] Source text: <https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=gb&id=69142>

r1: In the 12th year ] of Eastern Hàn emperor Míng 东汉明帝, i.e. 69 CE.

<sup>(4)</sup> Lín Chāomín 林超民 in his afterword to the text (Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, pp. 81–83) surmises that while we cannot be certain that the 《后汉书》 contains the original text, the differences are perhaps not significant.

<sup>(5)</sup> Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, pp. 80–83.

<sup>(6)</sup> Hóu Chōng 侯冲 (2011), pp. 143–144

In this text Jiǔlóng 九隆 is written as Yuánlóng 元隆. The other notable difference to later texts is that Āiláo 哀牢 is here merely the name of a mountain, not of a state.<sup>(7)</sup>

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>永昌郡<br/>古哀牢国。哀牢山名也。<br/>其先有一妇人名曰依哀牢山下居，以捕鱼自给。忽于水中触一沉木遂感而有娠。度十月产子男十人。</p> <p>后沉木化为龙出谓沙壹曰：君为我生子今在乎。而九子惊走。惟一小子不能去陪龙坐龙就而舐之。沙壹与言语以龙与陪坐因名曰元隆，犹汉言陪坐也。</p> <p>沙壹将元隆居龙山下。元隆长大才武。后九兄曰：元隆能与龙言而黠有智天所贵也。共推以为王。</p> <p>时哀牢山下复有一夫一妇产十女元隆兄弟妻之。由是始有人民。皆象之：衣后著十尾臂胫刻文。</p> <p>元隆死世世相继；分置小王，徃徃邑居，散在溪谷，絶域荒外，山川阻深，生民以来，未尝通中国也。</p> <p>南中昆明祖之故诸葛为其国谱也。</p> | <p>Yǒngchāng commandery<br/>It is the former kingdom of Āiláo. Āiláo is a mountain name.<br/>In the beginning there was a woman called Shākǔn, who lived below Āiláo Shān, she went fishing to sustain herself. One day, she touched a log submerged in the water, which suddenly seemed alive and she was with child. After ten months, she gave birth to ten boys.<br/>Later, the submerged log turned into a dragon, emerging [from the waters] he said to Shākǔn: you have given birth to my sons, where are they? Nine of the children were frightened and ran away, only the youngest could not run, he accompanied the dragon sitting with him, and so he licked him. Shākǔn spoke with the dragon in his language and because accompanied him and sat with him he was called Yuánlóng, as it means 'keeping company' in the Hàn language. Shākǔn then lived with Yuánlóng below the dragon mountain.<br/>When Yuánlóng grew up, he had military talents. His nine brothers said: Yuánlóng can talk to the dragon, he is clever and wise, he is tresasured by heaven. They all nominated him as king.<br/>At the time, below Āiláo Shān lived a man with his wife who had ten daughters. Yuánlóng and his brothers took them as wives. That was the beginning of the people. They all looked like this: the back of their clothes had ten tails, on their arms and legs they had a mark.<br/>When Yuánlóng passed away, many generations followed him. They divided and established small kingdoms, spread over the villages, scattered in the mountains and valleys, isolated from the other lands, mountains high and rivers deep, after the first people there was no contact with China again.<br/>The ancestors of Nánzhōng's Kūnmíng are because of this also in Zhūgé Liàng's genealogy of his state.</p> | <p>东观汉记 5</p> <p>东观汉记 10</p> <p>东观汉记 15</p> <p>东观汉记 20</p> <p>东观汉记 25</p> |
|--|---|---|

### 3.2 The Āiláo Legend in the 'History of the Later Hàn Dynasty' 《后汉书》

The text for this translation has been sourced from the multi-volume collection of historic material relating to Yúnnán, 《云南史料丛刊》, which also gives an introduction.<sup>(8)</sup>

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>哀牢夷者，其先有妇人名沙壹，居于牢山。<br/>尝捕鱼水中，触沈木若有感，因怀妊，十月，产子男十人。</p> | <p>The ancestor of the Yí of Āiláo was a woman called Shāyī, she lived in the Āiláo Mountains.<br/>She frequently went fishing in the waters, she touched a submerged log that seemed to be alive, she became pregnant, after ten months</p> |
|---|--|

<sup>(7)</sup> Hóu Chōng 侯冲 (2011), p. 144.

<sup>(8)</sup> Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, pp. 80–83.

|         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
|         | 后沈木化为龙，出水上。   | gave birth to ten sons.<br>Later, the submerged log turned into a dragon and emerged from the waters.  |
|         | 沙壹忽闻龙语曰：若为我生子，今悉何在？   | Shāyī suddenly heard the voice of the dragon saying: You gave birth to my sons, where are they now?  |
| 东观汉记 10 | 九子见龙惊走，独小子不能去，背龙而坐，龙因舐之。                                      | Nine sons, seeing the dragon, were frightened and ran away, only the youngest could not run away, he sat with his back to the dragon, so the dragon licked his back.   |
|         | 其母鸟语，谓背为九，谓坐为隆，因名子曰九隆。  | In his mother's bird language, the back is called <i>jiǔ</i> , sitting is called <i>lóng</i> , so his name became Jiǔlóng.   |
| 东观汉记 15 | 及后长大，诸兄以九隆能为父所舐而黠，遂共推以为王。                                     | And after he grew up, his brothers considered Jiǔlóng as smart as he had been licked by his father, so they all nominated him as king.   |
|         | 后牢山下有一夫一妇，复生十女子，九隆兄弟皆娶以为妻，后渐相滋长。                              | Later, below the Āiláo Shān lived a man with his wife who had ten daughters, Jiǔlóng and his brothers took them as wives, they prospered and multiplied.   |
| 东观汉记 20 | 种人皆刻画其身，象龙文，衣皆著尾。   | They all had marks drawn on their bodies, resembling a dragon, and their clothes all had a tail.   |
|         | 九隆死，世世相继。   | Jiǔlóng passed away, his descendants continued over the generations.   |
|         | 乃分置小王，往往邑居，散在溪谷。  | They divided and established small kingdoms, often living in villages dispersed over the streams and valleys.  |
|         | 绝域荒外，山川阻深，生人以来，未尝交通中国。  | Their faraway lands in the desolate exterior, with mountains high and rivers deep, from the earliest people on they were not in contact with China.  |
|         | 九隆代代相传，名号不可得而数，至于禁高，乃可记知。                                     | Jiǔlóng[’s descendants] passed from generation to generation, their names are not known and cannot be counted, up to Jìngāo, [only] then there are records to know.  |
| 东观汉记 30 | 禁高死，子吸代；吸死，子建非代；建非死，子哀牢代；哀牢死，子桑藕代；桑藕死，子柳承代；柳承死，子柳貌代；柳貌死，子扈栗代。 | When Jìngāo passed away, his son Xī succeeded; when Xī passed away, his son Jiàn fēi succeeded; when Jiàn fēi passed away, his son Āiláo succeeded; when Āiláo passed away, his son Sāngǒu succeeded; when Sāngǒu passed away, his son Liǔchéng succeeded; when Liǔchéng passed away, his son Liǔmào succeeded; when Liǔmào passed away, his son Hùlì succeeded. |

### 3.3 The Āiláo Legend in the ‘*Commentary on the Water Classic*’ 《水经注》

The ‘*Commentary on the Water Classic*’ 《水经注》 is – as the name implies – a commentary on the ‘*Water Classic*’ 《水经》. While the now lost original work was written during the Three Kingdoms 三国 period, the commentary was written during the northern Wèi 北魏 period, 386–535 CE, by the geographer Lì Dàoyuán 酈道元, †527.

Its 37th *juàn* contains a description of the Yèyú River 叶榆河, i.e. the wider region of Lake Ērhǎi 洱海, with its version of the origin story. The writing form, see illustration 1, suggests that the legend was



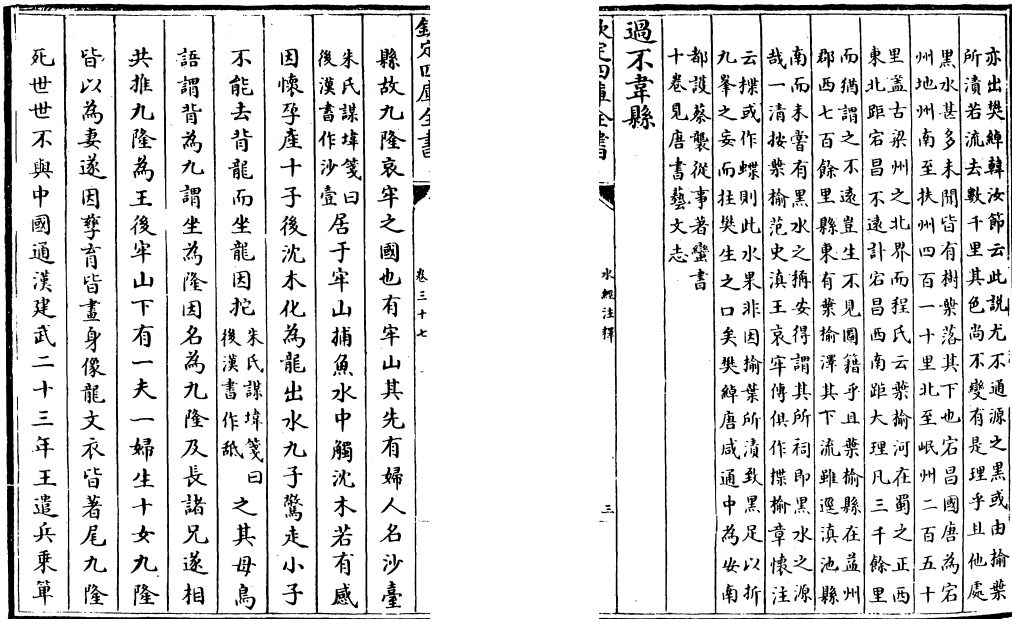


Illustration 1:  
The 《哀牢传》 in the 《水经注》

Source: <https://archive.org/embed/06042797.cn>.

not part of the original work, but was added in the commentary, i.e. during the 6th century. The Yèyú River then flows through Bùwéi county, called so after Lǚ Bùwéi 吕不韦 who during the Warring States 战国 period was transferred into the Yǒngchāng 永昌 region to serve as hereditary administrator.

过不韦县，

It passes through Bùwéi county,

县，故九隆哀牢之国也。

The county was formerly the state of Jiǔlóng's Āiláo.

有牢山，其先有妇人名沙壹，居于牢山，捕鱼水中，触沈木若有感，因怀孕，产十子。

There is Láo mountain, where in the beginning there was a woman called Shāyī, she lived on Láo mountain, she went fishing on the waters, there was a submerged log floating that was as if it was alive, and she became pregnant and gave birth to ten boys.

东观汉记 5

后沈木化为龙，出水，九子惊走，小子不能去，背龙而坐，龙因舐之。

Later the submerged log turned into a dragon, emerged from the waters, nine of the boys ran way frightened, only the youngest could not run, he sat on the back of the dragon and so the dragon licked him.

东观汉记 10

其母鸟语，谓背为九，谓坐为隆，因

His mother spoke the bird language, it says *jiǔ* for back and *lóng* for

|         |   |   |
|---------|---|---|
| 东观汉记 15 | 名为九隆。<br>及长，诸兄遂相共推九隆为王。<br>后牢山下有一夫一妇，生十女，九隆皆以为妻，遂因孳育，皆画身像龙文，衣皆著尾。<br><br>九隆死，世世不与中国通。 | sit, so he was called Jiǔlóng.<br>When he grew up, all his brothers agreed to choose Jiǔlóng as king.<br>Later below Láo mountain there were a husband and a wife, they gave birth to ten daughters, Jiǔlóng and the others took them as wives, and they multiplied, on their body they all had a mark resembling a dragon, and their clothes all had a tail.<br>Jiǔlóng passed away and over many generations there was no contact with China. |
|---------|---|---|

### 3.4 The Āiláo Legend in the 'Collected Stories from the Annals of Ancient Diān' 《纪古滇说原集》

The 'Collected Stories from the Annals of Ancient Diān' 《纪古滇说原集》 is a history work compiled by the Yúnnán native Zhāng Dào zōng 张道宗 at the end of the Sòng, beginning of the Yuán dynasty. The contents of the 《纪古滇说原集》 is a highly derivative narration of the history of Yúnnán from the earliest times with stories copied from the standard histories and contains the legend.

|         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| 东观汉记 5  | 哀牢国，永昌郡也，其先有郡人蒙迦独，妻摩梨羌，名沙一，居于牢山。<br><br>蒙迦独尝捕鱼为生，后死牢山水中，不获其尸。<br>妻沙一往哭于此，忽见一木浮触而来，旁边漂沉，离水面少许，妇坐其上，平稳不动。 | In the kingdom of Āiláo, i.e. the district of Yǒngchāng, there was once a local man called Méng Jiādú, his wife was Mólíqiāng, also called Shāyī, they lived on Āiláo Shān.<br>Méng Jiādú often went fishing for a living, but he later died in the waters of the Āiláo Mountains, his body was never found.<br>His wife Shāyī went there to mourn him, and suddenly saw a log floating in the water and she touched it, next to her it submerged, emerging over the water surface only a little, she sat on it, it was stable and did not move. |
| 东观汉记 10 | 明日视之，见水沉触如旧，遂尝浣絮其上，若有感，因怀妊，十月孕，生九子，复产一子，共男十人。   | She went to see it the next day, she saw it submerged in the water and touched it as before, then washed her clothes on top of it, it was as if it was alive, and she was pregnant, after ten months she gave birth to nine sons, and later another one, in total ten sons.  |
| 东观汉记 15 | 同母一日行往池边，询问其父。母指曰：「死此池中矣。」语未毕，见沉木化为龙，出水上。   | They all went to the water's edge, and enquired about their father. The mother told them: 'He died in this pond.'<br>When she had not yet finished speaking, they saw the floating log turn into a dragon emerging from the water.   |
| 东观汉记 20 | 沙一与子忽闻龙语曰：「若为我生子，今俱何在？」九子见龙惊走，独一小子不能去，母固留之，此子背龙而坐。龙因舐之，就唤其名曰：「习农乐。」                                     | Shāyī and her sons suddenly heard the dragon say: 'Since you are all my sons, where do you live now?' The nine sons were startled seeing the dragon and ran away, only the youngest one could not run, so he stayed behind, and sat on the back of the dragon.<br>So the dragon licked him and gave him a name, saying 'Xínónglè.'   |

r2: Mólíqiāng ] 茉莉婁 is a variation of Mòlìqiāng 茉莉婁.

r3: Shāyī ] Shāyī 沙壹 is the writing in the 'Biographies of Āiláo' 《哀牢传》.

r18: heard ] understand?

r22: Xínónglè ] Obviously a different writing of Xínúluó 细奴逻, the founder of Nánzhào.

母因见子背龙而坐，乃鸟语谓背为九，谓坐为隆，因其名池曰九隆。

When his mother saw him sitting on the dragon's back, and in the bird language the back is called *jiǔ*, and sitting is called *lóng*, so she called him Jiǔlóng.

东观汉记 25

习农乐后长成，有神异，每有天乐奏于其家，凤凰栖于树，有五色花开，四时常有神人卫护相随。

**When Xínónglè grew up, there were strange magic happenings, wherever he went all the time music from heaven accompanied his home, a phoenix was perching on the tree, many-coloured flowers bloomed, all the time defended and accompanied by divine beings.**

东观汉记 30

诸兄见有此异，又能为父所舐而与名，遂共推以为王，主哀牢山下。

When his brothers saw these omens, they understood that he had these abilities because his father had licked him and given him his name, so they all proposed him to be their king to rule everything below the Āiláo Mountains.

哀牢山又有一人唤奴波息者夫妇，复生十女子，因与习农乐兄弟皆娶以为妻。

In the Āiláo Mountains there was also someone called Nú Bōxī and his wife, who gave birth to ten girls, so they were all given as wives in marriage to the brothers of Xínónglè.

东观汉记 35

奴波息见习农乐有神异，遂重爱之，而家大旺。

When Nú Bōxī saw that Xínónglè had unnatural abilities, he cherished and loved him, and their house prospered greatly.

邻有禾和者，嫉欲害之，习农乐奉母夜奔巍山之野，躬亲稼穡，修德惟勤，教民耕种。

In the neighbourhood there was a man called Hé Hé, he was jealous and wanted to harm him, Xínónglè took his mother and in the night fled to the wilderness of mount Wēi, and farmed himself, eagerly cultivated virtue, and taught the people to till and cultivate.

东观汉记 40

其九弟兄有妻，后渐相滋长，种人皆刻画其身，象龙文，衣著尾。

His nine brothers had wives, over time they all grew in number. These people all carve pictures in the shape of a dragon into their bodies and their clothes have a tail

东观汉记 45

### 3.5 The Āiláo Legend in the 'Historical Records of Diān' 《滇载记》

The 'Historical Records of Diān' 《滇载记》 by the exiled scholar Yáng Shèn 杨慎 is the earliest of the Míng dynasty period 'unofficial histories', i.e. private reconstructions of Yúnnán's local history, completed in 1525 CE. It contains a shortened version of the history, that appears in identical form also in the same authors 'Records of a Journey to Diān' 《滇程记》.

滇域未通中国之先，有低牟直者，居永昌哀牢之山麓 [今金齿地]。

When Diān was not yet in contact with China, there was Dīmóujū, who lived in Yǒngchāng at the foot of the Āiláo Mountains [today's Jīnchǐ region].

有妇曰沙壹，浣絮水中，触沈木，若

There was a women called Shāyī. When she was washing clothes in

r 26–30: When Xínónglè grew up, there were strange magic happenings, wherever he went all the time music from heaven accompanied his home, a phoenix was perching on the tree, many-coloured flowers bloomed, all the time defended and accompanied by divine beings. ] Hóu Chōng 侯冲 (2011), p. 146 notes how similar this descriptions to the 'Illustrated History of Nánzhào' 《南诏图传》.

r 40: Hé Hé ] This is the person called Sān Hé in the 'Origins of the Bai Kingdom' 《白国因由》.

r 46: tail ] The myth of state of Jiǎopú 爨濮国 recorded in the 'Extensive Records of Tàipíng' 《太平广记》 notes people from the west of Yǒngchāng 永昌 as having tails, this myth is also referred to earlier in the 'Collected Stories from the Annals of Ancient Diān' 《纪古滇说原集》.

东观汉记 5 有感，是生九男，曰九隆族。

种类滋长，支裔蔓衍，窃据土地，散居溪谷，分为九十九部。

the water, she touched a sunken log which seemed to be alive. Later she gave birth to nine boys, who were called the Jiǔlóng tribe.

When they had all grown up, their descendants spread out, occupying the lands, living scattered in the mountain valleys, and split into ninety-nine tribes.

### 3.6 The Āiláo Legend in the “

东观汉记 5 哀牢 [今永昌府]。夷传：哀牢蛮蒙伽独捕鱼易罗池 [在永昌府城南] 溺死。其妻沙壹 [一作壺]。往哭之水边，触一浮木，有感而妊，产十子。后携子至池上，木化为龙，人言曰：「我子安在？」九子惊走，独季子背龙而坐，龙舐其背。蛮语谓背为九，坐为隆，故名之曰九隆氏。

东观汉记 15 哀牢山 [一名天井山，在永昌府] 下有妇名奴波息，生十女，九隆弟兄娶之，立为十姓：董、洪、段、施、何、王、张、杨、李、赵，皆刻画其身象龙文，于衣后著尾。

子孙繁衍，居九龙山 [山在永昌府城南] 溪谷间，分九十九部，而南诏出焉。

'Biographies of the Āiláo Yí' [today Yǒngchāng superior prefecture]: the Āiláo Mán Méng Jiādú was fishing at Yīlúochí [south of the walled town of Yǒngchāng superior prefecture] and drowned. His wife Shāyī [Also written as *hú*] went crying to the water's edge and touched a log floating upstream, there was a feeling and she became pregnant, gave birth to ten sons. Later she took her sons to the water, the log turned into a dragon and said with a human voice: 'Where are my sons?' Nine sons ran away in fear, only the youngest son sat down on the back of the dragon, and the dragon licked his back. The *Mán* say *jiǔ* for back and *lóng* for sit, so this name was used for the Jiǔlóng clan.

Below the Āiláo Mountains [also called Tiānjǐng mountains, in Yǒngchāng superior prefecture] there was a woman called Núbōxī, she gave birth to ten girls, the Jiǔlóng brothers married them, and established the ten names: Dǒng, Hóng, Duàn, Shī, Hé, Wáng, Zhāng, Yáng, Lǐ, Zhào, they all had dragon patterns on their bodies, and behind their clothes a tail.

Their children and grandchildren multiplied, living in the valleys of the Jiǔlóng Mountains [the mountains are south of the walled town of Yǒngchāng superior prefecture], divided into ninety-nine regions, Nánzhào originated there.

There is also a variation of this story, giving the founder of the Dàlǐ kingdom 大理国 Duàn Sīpíng 段思平 a magic ancestor.

### 3.7 The Āiláo Legend in the 'Origins of the Bai Kingdom' 《白国因由》

细孛罗，父名蒙迦，乃龙泉黄龙，因奉上帝敕旨化作人形，娶茉莉媿为妻，竟生九子，其八子奉上帝命为八

Xīnúlúo, his father was called Méng Jiā, he was the yellow dragon from the dragon well. He received the lord's order to take on the shape of a human, took Mòlìqiǎng as wife, and begat nine sons, eight

[1: ◦] This circle is present in the text and marks a break.

[2: lord's] unclear

r16: dragon patterns] Pelliot (1904), p. 1105 interprets this as 'naga' patterns.

部龙王，其第九子与母茉莉婁同处。

sons were presented to the emperor who appointed them as the dragon kings of the eight realms, the ninth son lived with his mother Mòlìqiǎng.

东观汉记 5

## 4 Glossary

- Āiláo** 哀牢: legendary state in western Yúnnán during the Hàn dynasty. It is thought that a graveside discovered in 2012 in Chāngníng 昌宁 is related to it, see Hú Chángchéng 胡长城, Wáng Lírui 王黎锐 and Yáng Fān 杨帆 (2016), Hú Chángchéng 胡长城 (2014) – see pages 5–9, 12
- Āiláo guó** 哀牢国: kingdom of Āiláo, – see pages 7, 10, 14
- Āiláo Shān** 哀牢山: Āiláo Mountains, – see pages 7, 8, 10–12, 14
- Āiláo yí Chuán** 哀牢夷传: *‘Biographies of the Āiláo Yí’*, earliest extant local history of Yúnnán – see page 12, 14
- Āiláo Zhuān** 《哀牢传》: *‘Biographies of Āiláo’*, one of the oldest texts about Yúnnán, describing the mythology of the ancient land of Āiláo – see pages 5, 10, 14
- Báiguó Yīnyóu** 《白国因由》: *‘Origins of the Bai Kingdom’*, Qīng collection of Guānyīn legends related to Nánzhào – see pages 6, 11, 14
- Bǎoshān** 保山: present-day important city, the historic Yǒngchāng 永昌 – see page see 永昌
- Běi Wèi** 北魏: northern Wèi, Chinese dynasty, 386–535 – see page 8, 14
- Bùwéi** 不韦: county in Yǒngchāng 永昌, named after Lǚ Bùwéi 吕不韦 – see page 9
- Chāngníng** 昌宁: present-day a county belonging to Bǎoshān 保山 –
- Chéngdū** 成都: capital of Shǔ 蜀, during the Táng dynasty center of administration for Jiànnán 剑南 – see page 5
- Dàlǐ Guó** 大理国: Dàlǐ kingdom, successor state to Nánzhào, ruled by the Duàn 段 clan, 937–1253 – see page 12, 14
- Dīmóujū** 低牟苴: mythological ancestor – see page 11
- Diān** 滇: one of the earliest polities known to China in present-day Yúnnán, later also a geographical term for the region – see page 11, see 滇国
- Diān Chéngjì** 《滇程记》: *‘Records of a Journey to Diān’*, Míng 明 period travelogue by Yáng Shèn 杨慎 – see pages 6, 11, 14
- Diān Guó** 滇国: kingdom of Diān, historic polity in Yunnan, centered around Diānchí, flourishing at the time of the Hàn dynasty – see page 14
- Diānzàijì** 《滇载记》: *‘Historical Records of Diān’*, Míng 明 period historical work by Yáng Shèn 杨慎, completed 1525 – see page 11, 14
- Dōngguān Hànjì** 《东观汉记》: *‘Dōngguān Records of the Hàn’*, early history of the Dōng Hàn 东汉, see Loewe (1993), pp. 471–472 – see page 6, 14
- Dōng Hàn** 东汉: Eastern Hàn, Chinese dynasty, 25–220 – see page 14
- Dōnghànmíngdì** 东汉明帝: Eastern Hàn emperor Míng, Dōng Hàn 东汉 emperor, 58–75 – see pages 5, 6, 14
- Dǒng** 董: clan name – see page 12
- Duàn Sīpíng** 段思平: founder of the Dàlǐ kingdom, ruled 937–944 CE – see page 12
- Ěrhǎi** 洱海: Lake Ěrhǎi, highland lake in western Yúnnán with the center of Nánzhào on

- its western side. It was also called Xīěr 西洱, Xīěr Hé – see page 8, 14
- fǔ** 府: prefecture, administrative unit during the Yuán Cháo 元朝 – see page 5, 15
- Guānyīn** 观音: Avalokiteśvara, one of the bodhisattvas, in Chinese also written as Guānshìyīn 观世音, which is a literal translation of the Sanskrit अवलोकितेश्वर. Guānyīn plays a key role in Nánzhào mythology, particularly in the 《南诏图传》 and the 《白国因由》 – see page 15
- Guìzhōu** 贵州: province in south-west China –
- Hàn Cháo** 汉朝: Hàn dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 202 BCE–220 – see page 5, 15
- Hàn** 汉: Hàn, main ethnic group of China, also name of early dynasty – see pages 5–7, 14, 15
- Hàn Wǔdì** 汉武帝: Hàn emperor Wǔ, Hàn dynasty emperor Wǔ, 140–87 BCE – see page 15
- Hào** 号: *sobriquet*, assumed literary name – see page 15
- Hòu Hàn** 后汉: later Hàn dynasty, second period of the Hàn dynasty – see page 15
- Hòuhàn Shū** 《后汉书》: ‘*History of the Later Hàn Dynasty*’, classic historical text, one of the twenty-four official histories of China – see pages 5, 6, 15
- Hùli** 扈栗: mythological ancestor of Āiláo, mentioned in the 《哀牢传》 – see page 8
- Huáyáng Guó Zhì** 《华阳国志》: ‘*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*’, – see page 6, 15
- Huáng Lóng** 黄龙: yellow dragon, mythological figure – see page 12, 15
- Jìgǔdiānshuō Yuánjí** 《纪古滇说原集》: ‘*Collected Stories from the Annals of Ancient Diān*’, 1265 compendium by Yúnnán scholar Zhāng Dào zōng 张道宗 – see pages 10, 11, 15
- Jìli** 计吏: accounts clerk, ‘sent annually to the capital from each Commandery (chūn) as companion for an Accounts Assistant (chìyüan) delegated to report on local events and fiscal affairs’, see Hucker (1985), 566 – see page 5, 15
- Jiādú** 伽独: – see page 12
- Jiānfēi** 建非: mythological ancestor of Āiláo, mentioned in the 《哀牢传》 – see page 8
- Jiǎopú Guó** 缴濮国: state of Jiǎopú, legendary lands to the south of Yǒngchāng 永昌, where people have tails, mentioned in the ?? – see page 11, 15
- Jiàoshūláng** 校书郎: editor, ‘document-processing duty assignment for men’, see Hucker (1985), 742 – see page 5, 15
- Jīnchǐ** 金齿: Golden Teeth, name given to the area of present-day Bǎoshān, because it was the tribal area of the Jīnchǐmán 金齿蛮 – see page 11, 15, see 金齿蛮
- Jīnchǐ Mán** 金齿蛮: Golden Teeth, tribal group, the name translates as ‘golden teeth’ – see page 15
- Jìn Cháo** 晋朝: Jìn dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 266–420 – see page 15
- Jìnchéngdì** 晋成帝: Jìn dynasty emperor Chéng, Jìn dynasty emperor, 325–342 – see page 5, 15, see 显宗
- Jìngāo** 禁高: mythological ancestor of Āiláo, mentioned in the 《哀牢传》 – see page 8

- Jiǔlóng** 九隆: mythical son of a dragon and Shāyī 沙壹 in the 《哀牢传》 – see pages 7–12
- Jiǔlóng Shān** 九龙山: Jiǔlóng Mountains, mountain region near Yǒngchāng 永昌 – see page 12, 16
- Jùn** 郡: prefecture, historic administrative area, term in use before the Táng – see pages 5, 6, 16
- Kūnmíng** 昆明: Salt producing area of present-day 盐源 – see page 7
- Lántái** 兰台: Orchid Platform, library at the Hàn dynasty palace – see page 5, 16
- Láoshān** 牢山: Láo mountain, variant of writing Āiláo Shān 哀牢山 used in some texts – see pages 9, 10, 16, *see* 哀牢山
- Lì Dàojuán** 郦道元: scholar, wrote the 《水经注》 – see page 8
- Lín Chāomín** 林超民: Chinese historian, *see* <https://baike.baidu.com/item/林超民/1802034> – see pages 5, 6, 16
- Liǔchéng** 柳承: mythological ancestor of Āiláo, mentioned in the 《哀牢传》 – see page 8
- Liǔmào** 柳貌: mythological ancestor of Āiláo, mentioned in the 《哀牢传》 – see page 8
- Lǚ Bùwéi** 吕不韦: Zhànguó 战国 period scholar and politician – see page 9
- Lùnhéng** 《论衡》: ‘Discourses Weighed in the Balance’, Dōng Hàn 东汉 work, title translation by Needham (1946), vol. 1, p. 7 – see page 5, 16
- Mán** 蛮: historically a generic term for non-Chinese people in the southwest – see page 12
- Méng** 蒙: clan name of the ruling family of Nánzhào – see page 12
- Méng Jiā** 蒙迦: legendary father of Xīnúluó 细奴逻 – see page 12, *see* 细奴逻
- Méng Jiādú** 蒙迦独: ancestor of the Méng Shì 蒙氏 – see page 10
- Méng Shì** 蒙氏: Méng clan, ruling clan of Nánzhào – see page 16
- Míng Cháo** 明朝: Míng dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 1368–1644 – see page 11, 16
- Míng** 明: Míng, usually referring to the Míng 明 – see page 16
- Mòliqiǎng** 茉莉婁: – see pages 10, 12, 13
- Nánzhào** 南诏: southern zhào, regional power with its center on Ērhǎi during the 8th and 9th centuries – see pages 10, 12, 16
- Nánzhào Túzhuān** 《南诏图传》: ‘Illustrated History of Nánzhào’, important picture scroll dating back to 898, telling the story of the arrival of Buddhism and the divine appointment of the rulers of Nánzhào – see page 11, 16
- Nánzhōng** 南中: ‘most common name for the southwest region (Yunnan, Guizhou, and southern Sichuan) prior to the Tang dynasty’, Herman (2009) – see page 7
- Nú Bōxī** 奴波息: – see page 11, 12
- Qiánshǔ** 前蜀: Former Shǔ, one of the ??, 907–925 – see page 16
- Qīng dynasty** 清朝: Qīng dynasty, last dynasty of imperial China, 1644–1912 BCE – see page 16
- Sān Guó** 三国: Three Kingdoms, period after the Dōng Hàn 东汉, with three powers dominating China, 220–280 – see page 8, 16



- Sān Hé** 三和: – see page 11
- Sāngǒu** 桑藕: mythological ancestor of Āiláo, mentioned in the 《哀牢传》 – see page 8
- Shāhú** 沙壶: – see page 12
- Shākǔn** 沙壺: – see page see 沙壺
- Shāyī** 沙壹: legendary ancestor in Āiláo – see pages 7–11
- Shītōng** 《史通》: ‘*Complete History*’, Táng dynasty history work, completed 710 CE – see page 17
- Shītōngtōngshì** 《史通通释》: ‘*Complete Commentary to the “Complete History”*’, Qīng dynasty commentary to the 《史通》, completed 1752 CE – see pages 5, 6, 17
- Shǔ** 蜀: name of a state during the Warring States period, later used to refer to the western part of present-day Sìchuān –
- Shǔ Guó** 蜀国: state of Shǔ, one of the states of the Sān Guó 三国, later also used as a term for present-day Sìchuān – see page 17
- Shǔjùn** 蜀郡: Shǔ prefecture, historical administrative unit in present-day Sìchuān, its name multiple times changing to Yìzhōu – see page 17
- Shuǐjīng** 《水经》: ‘*Water Classic*’, early, now lost, geographical work – see page 8, 17
- Shuǐjīngzhù** 《水经注》: ‘*Commentary on the Water Classic*’, classic text, commentary to the lost 《水经》 – see pages 6, 8, 17
- Sìchuān** 四川: Chinese province –
- Sòng Cháo** 宋朝: Sòng dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 960–1279 – see page 17
- Sòng** 宋: Sòng, Chinese dynasty – see page 10, 17
- Tàipíng Guǎngjì** 《太平广记》: ‘*Extensive Records of Tàipíng*’, – see page 11, 17
- Táng Cháo** 唐朝: Táng dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 618–907 – see page 17
- Táng** 唐: Táng, Chinese dynasty contemporary with Nánzhào, 618–907 – see page 17
- wáng** 王: king, ‘King, title commonly used in reference to rulers of foreign states and alien peoples’. It is important to note that this does not have the meaning of a ruler equal to the Chinese emperor, it is a designation of a ruler below him, when used in titles conferred by China, the ruler of a vassal state, see Hucker (1985), 7634 – see pages 10, 11, 17
- Wáng Jiàn** 王建: founder of the Qiánshǔ 前蜀, see Wang (2011) –
- Wēibǎoshān** 魏宝山: Wēibǎo mountain, holy mountain in today’s Wēishān 巍山 – see page 17
- Wēishān** 巍山: mount Wēi, mountain south of Ērhǎi, in the historic context probably not what is called Wēibǎoshān 魏宝山 – see page 11, 17
- Xī** 吸: mythological ancestor of Āiláo, mentioned in the 《哀牢传》 – see page 8
- Xīěr** 西洱: shorter form of Xiěr Hé, a reference to Ērhǎi –
- Xīěr Hé** 西洱河: Xiěr River, historic name for Ērhǎi, now in use for the river that flows out of the lake – see page 17
- Xīnúluō** 细奴罗: alternative writing of 细奴逻, used in the 《白国因由》 – see page 12, see 细奴逻
- Xīnúluó** 细奴逻: first ruler of Nánzhào, \*617 †674, ruled 649–674 CE – see page 10, 11

- Xiǎnzōng** 显宗: temple name of Jìn emperor Chéng –
- Xiàn** 县: county, administrative unit – see page 9, 18
- Xiǎoli** 小吏: junior scribe, ‘used for a minor clerical functionary’, see Hucker (1985), 2430 – see page 5, 18
- Yáng Shèn** 杨慎: Míng 明 scholar, originally from Sichuān, exiled to Yúnnán in 1524, compiler of the 《滇载记》 and many other works. His Hào 号 was 升庵 – see page 11, see 滇载记
- Yáng Zhōng** 杨终: author of the 《哀牢传》 – see page 5
- Yáng Zǐshān** 杨子山: *style name* of Yáng Zhōng 杨终 – see page see 杨终
- Yèyú Hé** 叶榆河: Yèyú River, ancient name for Ěrhǎi used in the 《水经注》 – see pages 8, 9, 18
- Yí** 夷: one of the collective terms for non-Chinese people in the south-west – see page 7, see 蛮
- Yīluōchí** 易罗池: Yīluō pond, – see page 12, 18
- Yìzhōu** 益州: Yìzhōu, one of thirteen administrative regions created by Hàn Wǔdì 汉武帝 in 106BCE, covering the region of present-day Sichuān with its center at 成都. In 742 it became Shǔjùn 蜀郡, but the name remained in use to refer to 成都 – see page 6, 18
- Yǒngchāng** 永昌: present-day Bǎoshān 保山, a Chinese outpost founded in 69, see Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1953) – see pages 5, 6, 9–11
- Yǒngchāng superior prefecture** 永昌府: Yǒngchāng superior prefecture, later administrative unit at Yǒngchāng 永昌 – see page 12, 18, see 永昌
- Yǒngchāng commandery** 永昌郡: Yǒngchāng prefecture, present-day Bǎoshān 保山, a Chinese outpost founded in 69, see Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1953) – see page 7, 18
- Yǒngpíng** 永平: reign period of Wáng Jiàn 王建, 910–915 – see page 5
- Yuán** 元: Yuán, Chinese dynasty, 1271–1368 – see page 10, 18
- Yuánlóng** 元隆: – see page see 九隆
- Yuán Cháo** 元朝: Yuán dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 1279–1368 – see page 18
- Yúnnán** 云南: at the time of the Táng dynasty the name for the geographic region south of its Jiannan district – see pages 5–7, 10, 11
- Zhànguó** 战国: Warring States, Warring States period, the time before the Qin dynasty, 475–221 BCE – see page 9, 18
- Zhāng Dào zōng** 张道宗: author of the 《纪古滇说原集》, a man from Yúnnán, who lived at the end of the Sòng dynasty and beginning of the Yuán Cháo 元朝, otherwise nothing is known about him – see page 10
- zhào** 诏: *zhào*, term for a local ruler or his realm – see page 18
- Zhūgé Liàng** 诸葛亮: historic and legendary official of Shǔ 蜀, see Crespigny (2007), p. 1172 – see page 7
- Zì** 字: *style name*, traditionally a name adopted at the age of twenty – see page 5, 18

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